

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday December 7, 2023, 2:00 PM
Surf City Town Hall

Commission Members Present

Steve Smith, Chair
Mike Benson, Vice Chair
Teresa Batts
Ed Broadhurst
Mark Price
William Snyder
Larry Strother
David Ward
Hiram Williams (virtual)

Associates Present

Kerri Allen, NCCF
Kyle Breuer, SC Manager
Christina Burke, TB Asst. Manager
Carla Citarelli, Surf City Town Clerk
Stephanie Missert, Ferguson Group (virtual)
Tammy Proctor, Topsail Chamber
Connie Wilson, TISPC State Advocate

Guests

Larry Combs, TB BIS
John Gunter, TB Councilman
Alicia Hawley, SC Councilwoman
Trudy Solomon, SC Councilwoman

I. [Call to Order & Greetings](#)

Chairman Smith called the meeting at order at 2:00 p.m. Chairman Smith welcome the commission members, associates, and guests in the audience and online.

II. [Public Comments](#)

None were made.

III. [Approval of Agenda](#)

David Ward made a motion to approve the agenda. William Snyder seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

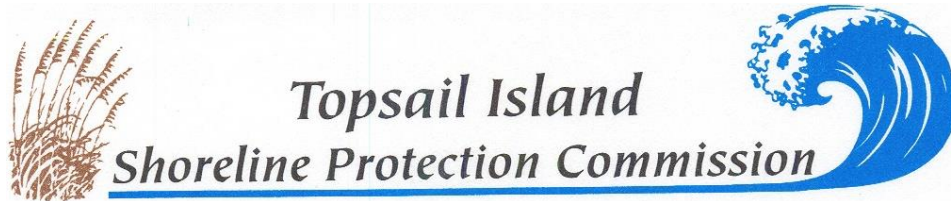
IV. [Approval of Minutes for October 2023](#)

Ed Broadhurst made a motion to approve the minutes. Larry Strother seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

V. [Presentations: none scheduled](#)

VI. [Consultant & Partners Reviews](#)

a. Federal Legislation Activities – Stephanie Missert for fmr Congressman McIntyre.



House leadership has delayed appropriation bills until early next year. Thus, federal funding is going to be held up. So, FY24 funding for the Army Corps waterway work in the New River/ICW/Channel to Jacksonville will be delayed. We are very pleased that the House Natural Resources Committee passed the CBRA bill by Rep. Murphy. This is the furthest this issue has ever gone in federal legislation. House floor consideration is the next step, so will not happen before next year. When the bill was approved in committee it was approved on party lines, but one Democrat from Alaska voted for the bill. Just yesterday, the Natural Resources Committee approved a package of bills that contains the technical correction for the 2.5 acres in Barton Bay that was wrongly included in CBRA. So now the House and Senate floors will be considering this legislative package. (see the full November report on the TISPC website at <https://tispc.org/minutes/advocate-reports/>)

- b. NC State Legislation Activities - Connie Wilson Consulting – Connie Wilson
Connie appreciates the honor of working with the commission as she will be stepping down as our lobbyist. She stated that we have been visionary looking to the bigger coastline issues not just your local problems. We had an aggressive agenda for our work in Raleigh and were able to accomplish good outcomes. The Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation fund was funded at \$20 million over two years with non-recurring funding. The Shallow Draft Dredging and Aquatic Weed Fund was protected by language (temporary rules) that only municipalities can apply for funding such that the Army Corps is limited to shallow draft inlet work under the Long-term Memorandum of Agreement with the Division of Water Resources (DEQ). A Wildlife Resources Commission request was removed from the Shallow Draft Fund. The large Shallow Draft fund balance is a target for other agencies, but we have to realize that when local dredged projects are requested, they are multi-million-dollar requests. We worked to ensure that the state portion of the 50-yr Surf City Federal project remains in reserve. Work to pass environmental improvements (HB600) was successfully completed with a state ban on derelict vessels as well as a future requirement that encapsulated polystyrene be used in construction of floating docks and piers. Resiliency projects for coast storm management were funded at \$10 million dollars. Also, stormwater management, and living shoreline projects were funded through the NC Coastal Federation.

Chairman Smith then presented Connie with a token of our appreciation in the form of a beautiful wall mural of Topsail Island!

- c. North Carolina Coastal Federation – Kerri Allen
Kerri reported that the federation has been working on several projects this year. She was appreciative of the state and federal funding with about 50 vessels to be removed. They are planning a workshop to highlight local programs in the coastal

area. Marine debris removal continues. Implementation of the Stump Sound Watershed Restoration Plan that was submitted to the state last year is ongoing. Living shoreline cost-share program was funded so we want to reach out to property owners.

- d. North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association – Kathleen Riely
 - Presentations from the Fall Conference now online at <https://www.ncbiwa.org/events/past-events/>
 - The Fall 2023 Newsletter is now posted on their website at: <https://www.ncbiwa.org/> under the "Newsletter" tab.
- e. Turtle Hospital – Kathy Zagzebski, no report
- f. US Army Corp – no report

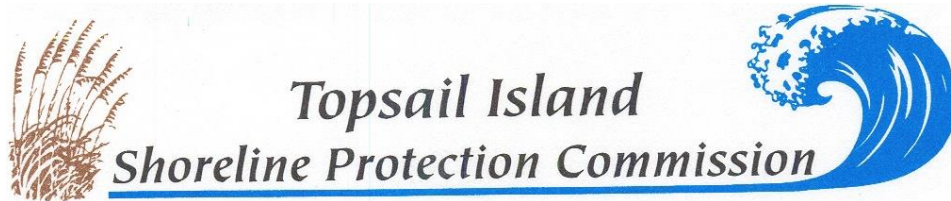
VII. Old Business & Updates

- a. CRC November 8th Meeting Review – William Snyder

Appointment process to the CRC and other commissions has changed as the Governor lost appointing to CRC and some other commissions. The CRC approved a building-code major permit variance for a dock along the ICW at Oak Island where low water in proposed dock area at low tide was used by CAMA to deny the permit originally. Discussion followed on whether or not the CRC could regulate floating structures with the outcome that they could not. CRC looking at sea-level rise in the future. Finally, the 30-yr BIMP for Wrightsville Beach was presented by Moffat and Nichols Engineers and noted the exemption for the Masonboro Inlet CBRA borrow area that Rep Rouzer facilitated since this sand source had been used for over 15 years. Their project will start this year to place a million cubic yards of sand. Interestingly, Wrightsville Beach receives the local share of funding through New Hanover County which collects all the county accommodation tax receipts then distributes to each beach community in the county.
- b. NCBIWA's Conference –

Chairman Smith noted several members of TISPC attended and that the presentations are now online (see link above). He has started a dialogue with Dr. Ken Halanych at UNC-Wilmington to see if their program might have some common areas that either the towns or TISPC could cooperate with the UNCW Coastal Management Program.
- c. Vitex Update – Kyle Breuer

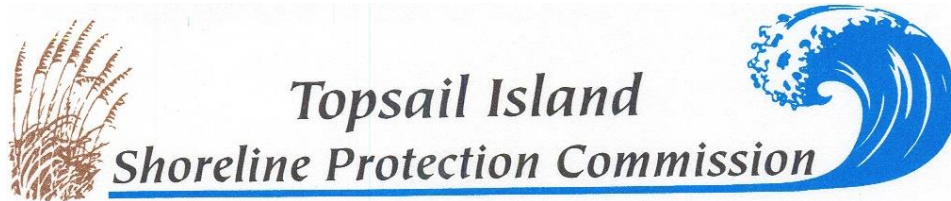
We are waiting for the Coastal State Damage Mitigation Fund grant window to open so we can apply for this island-wide Vitex project. Since large areas of dune surface may be exposed once Vitex is removed, we may need help from Steve Mercer, Coastal Transplants to get an idea of timeframe and dune plant transplant costs.



Legislative help with recurring funds may be needed long term. Easement issues will need to be worked out with property owners.

VIII. New Items

- a. 2024 Calendar – Chairman Smith reviewed the schedule and activities in various months. David Ward made the motion to approve and Ed Broadhurst seconded follow by unanimous approval.
- b. Shellfish leasing – Chairman Smith noted two leases requested for Pender County this year. Last year’s requests have not been approved. He displayed a whiteboard graphic with leased areas including a 10-acre request in Surf City. Public hearing to be held in Surf City Town Hall on January 31, 2024, 5-7pm. Thirty-two leases were approved in Surf City and 15 in Topsail Beach. ‘Stump Sound Oysters’ should be formalized as a recognized trademark by state or local groups. Mayor Batts noted that New Hanover County has a moratorium on any new leases and areas closed due to contamination. Kerri Allen added that the social aspects of oysters and public water access need to be addressed.
- c. HB600 – Chairman Smith noted a lot of coastal items in this comprehensive bill and encouraged commissioners to read it. For instance, dredging rules for ‘side channels’ now allow work all 12 months of the year. Water quality is a big issue to maintain clean water on island side of our coast.
- d. 2023 Accomplishments – Chairman Smith noted both Connie Wilson and Mike McIntyre have provided lists of our state and federal accomplishments. Ed Broadhurst and Mike Benson will work to finalize list.
- e. 2024 Goals – Chairman Smith asked if we have goals. There are some on the federal list. All three towns will or have discussed the list. He would like to see a list of 5-7 federal goals. With a short legislative session this coming year, state goals should be kept to a minimum such as Vitex funding, stormwater funding, funding to support tourism awareness through the Beach Clean Initiative, and permanent CSDM funding. William Snyder and Larry Strother volunteered to work with Mike to finalize our goals list for our January meeting.
- f. Selection of NC State Lobbyist – Chairman Smith asked us to review the five candidates and give him our top two so that interviews can be held.
- g. Selection of 2024 Chair & Vice Chair – A motion was made by Ed Broadhurst and seconded by David Ward to nominate Steve Smith as chair and Mike Benson as vice-chair for 2024. William Snyder made a motion to close the nomination with a second by Ed Broadhurst. David Ward made a motion to vote. Vote to elect Steve Smith as chair and Mike Benson as vice-chair carried unanimously.



IX. Town's Local Projects/Direction

a. North Topsail Beach – Alice Derian

Mike Benson gave the report for Manager Derian. Several truck haul projects are underway or will start soon.

- We are finishing up the second season of our FEMA Hurricane Florence Phase 5 beach berm nourishment project now. By February when the project is expected to finish, we will have re-nourished the first four miles of town beach from the Surf City line with over 600,000 cy of sand.
- As that project finishes up in February, we will use our Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation grant from the Division of Coastal Management to extend the Phase 5 project north for approximately 2 more miles ending on the beach opposite Town Hall. This truck haul project will nourish the beach berm with approximately 300,000 cy of high-quality beach sand.
- A third project is also under way this week at the north end of Town, to truck haul approximately 20,000 cy to the beach berm between the St. Regis Condos and the Topsail Reef Condos. This project finishes up last season's Hurricane Florence recovery work in this area.
- Our BISAC committee is also working with Chris Gibson, TI Coastal to develop a five-year beach plan as part of our effort to develop a 30-yr BIMP plan for the Division of Coastal Management. The 5-yr plan proposes to complete beach nourishment throughout the remaining 5 miles of beach to the north of Town Hall all the way to the New River Inlet. We are hopeful that BISAC can present a formal plan to the Board of Alderman for the February board meeting, so that Chris can start working on the permits that will be needed for the plan.
- We were pleased to learn last month that the final three chapters for the Draft EIS associated with our New River Inlet Management Master Plan were received by the Wilmington District Office of the US Army Corps of Engineers.

b. Surf City — Kyle Breuer

Mayor Batts gave the report for Manager Breuer. She was invited by Congressman Rouzer to testify next week before the Water Resources Sub-Committee about the Army Corps 50-yr project. The NCDOT has completed a portion of South Shore Drive storm water project to make the pipe connection to the lot. Once the DOT work is complete, a private contractor will install the infiltration chambers in the lot. Improvements are also underway to the Nelva Albury Park for handicap access, beach mats, crossover signage etc. Manager Breuer will present land use items to the CRC in January, so we welcome any issues the other towns would like presented. We will have a workshop to draft a derelict vessel ordinance for coastal consistency across the three towns. Work continues on our Federal Project with a hopefully start date of late 2024.

- c. **Topsail Beach – Doug Shipley**
Chairman Smith reported that Topsail Beach has started their beach management project with two dredges working one in Topsail Inlet the other a half mile offshore. Pumping about 30,000 cy per day. Small dredge work to be completed by end of December with large dredge work to continue until end of March. Project cost is \$26 million dollars to move about 2 million cy of sand the length of town. Funding is from the Shallow Draft Fund, the FEMA arbitration, and town funds.

X. **Upcoming Meetings & Conference**

- a. Waters Conference – January 24, 2024 – Hilton Hotel, Greenville, NC
- b. CRC Meeting – Virtual Meeting – December 13
- c. CRC Meeting – February 21 & 22, 2024 – Aloft at Coastline Central, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington
- d. Washington, DC – Legislative Reviews – April 15-17, 2024
- e. Raleigh, NC – Legislative Reviews – March-April (not established)

XI. **Public/Commission Comments**

- a. None made.

XII. **Next Meeting – Thursday, January 25, 2024 – Surf City Town Hall**

XIII. **Adjournment**

Mr. Snyder made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Strother seconded the motion, and it was carried.



Steve Smith presents Connie Wilson with a colorful wall mural of Topsail Island.