

Shore Protection Manager

Greg L. Rudolph  
Tel: (252) 222.5835  
Fax: (252) 222.5826  
grudolph@carteretcountync.gov



## CARTERET COUNTY BEACH COMMISSION MEETING

### Minutes

\*Emerald Isle Board Room (in person with spatial distancing - COVID-19 Precaution)\*

\*Remotely via Carteret County Zoom Account (<https://carteretcountync.zoom.us/>)\*

*May 17, 2021, 2 pm*

### Attendance.

Commission Members Jim Normile (chair), John Brodman (vice-chair), Larry Baldwin (remotely), Larry Corsello, Jimmy Farrington, Douglas Guthrie, Mike Luther (remotely), Danny Navey, Tom Rule, Woody Warren, secretary Greg Rudolph, and the general public. Member Harry Archer was absent.

- (1) **Call to Order.** – Chairman Normile welcomed everyone in attendance (both live and remotely) and proceeded to call the meeting to order.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes - Regular Beach Commission Meeting (February 16, 2021).** – Chairman Normile asked the Commission if there were any corrections, additions, or comments regarding the February 16<sup>th</sup> regular session minutes presented in the agenda packet. With no comments forthcoming, vice-chair Brodman subsequently made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, which was seconded by member Rule and unanimously approved.
- (3) **Room Occupancy Tax (ROT) and “Beach Fund” Update.** – Secretary Rudolph noted we have received the first occupancy tax collection reports for this calendar of 2021 (January, February, and March), and each monthly total is the record for that particular month (see [Slides 1 & 2](#)). In particular, January 2021 broke the monthly record by +79.7% (2020), the February 2021 total beat the 2019 total by +45.4%, and March 2021 exceeded the March 2020 high water mark by +97.7%. This slug of record revenue has placed our young calendar year-to-date total at a position +136% higher than this point in time last year (granted March 2020 was slightly impacted by COVID-19). Moreover, our current fiscal year total (FY 2020-21) through 9 months is already higher than all of FY 2019-20 (\$7,428,416 through 9 months vs. \$7,271,245 total in FY 2019-20). As we have discussed before, much of this record growth is an offshoot of COVID-19 and the resultant change to travel/vacation and work patterns regardless of the season (i.e., vacationing restricted to “within driving distance” and remote working).

The secretary concluded that our nourishment reserve estimate was \$21 million at the conclusion of March 2021. We started the fiscal year at \$17.2 million, and over \$10 million of reimbursement funds have been received via the Bogue Banks municipalities for the Phase II Post-Florence Renourishment Project – that’s in addition to routine revenue emanating from the occupancy tax collection itself. The entire Phase III Project is expected to cost ~\$34 million total; of which, ~\$10 million has been invoiced and ~\$1.75 million reimbursed – again current through

March 2021). The secretary turned the floor over to member Warren for any additional comments to which he continued that reservations are up – even compared to last year’s record-breaking values. Members Farrington and Guthrie commented that remote learning has also helped occupancy rates during the COVID-19 pandemic, but this small demographic push may subside as schools are beginning to re-open for in-person learning.

- (4) **Master Plan Borrow Site Sustainability.** – Chairman Normile introduced the subject by noting that we’re not expected to vote or come to any final conclusions today, but rather provide the Shore Protection Office guidance and thoughts on how to proceed (or not proceed) with our “sand inventory”. The secretary continued with a PowerPoint presentation ([Slides 3 – 12](#)) and noted that we started our Master Plan (planning phase) in 2010 and went through an extensive “sand search” as part of formulating all the necessary NEPA/SEPA documentation for the project that ultimately resulted in the issuance of permits in summer 2018 – literally weeks before hurricane *Florence* impacted Bogue Banks. Fast forward less than three years later, and we have placed ~5 million cubic yards (cy) of sand along 21 miles of Bogue Banks (surveyed in-place) under the guise of the Master Plan – likely closer to ~6 million cy actually excavated. To these ends, the purpose of today’s discussion is to quickly perform a “desktop” type of inventory of how much sand is available for our 50-year Master Plan considering we unexpectedly utilized 5 to 6 million cy for the Post-*Florence* Renourishment Project in such a short amount of time.

The secretary continued by discussing the borrow sources for the Post-*Florence* Renourishment Project (the Offshore Dredged Material Disposal Site - ODMDS), and all of the other potential sand areas offshore the Corps of Engineers evaluated while developing the Bogue Banks Coastal Storm Risk Management Project. We also investigated separate offshore areas for sand for the Master Plan as well using remotely-sensed technology and vibracoring ([Slides 3 – 8](#)). Thus we had a rich dataset to draw from to identify sand resources (what is currently or could be feasible to dredge) and those that can be classified as the reserve (what part of the resource that can be economically extracted today). Moreover we classified the resources and reserves as being renewable (channels that are dredged and shoal in with “new” sand) vs. non-renewable (areas like offshore borrow sites that don’t readily infill with sediments). The bottom line is that we utilized 6 out of the 18 million cy available in the ODMDS for the *Post-Florence* Project - leaving us about 12 million cy in the ODMDS (last few million cy will be difficult to extract). This is our main source of sand for the next 47 years of the 50-year Master Plan, and while we have some offshore “resources” – in reality they are very poor quality sand. We also could work with the Corps of Engineers to get actively dredged material placed on the beach, but there is some permitting and legal interfacing to do before that could become a reality. Chairman Normile posited that the legal and permitting work required for these types of Corps “delta” projects would have to be included in any future efforts pertaining to sand resources moving forward.

On a similar series of notes, the secretary reviewed what has changed since the Master Plan was permitted – and actually there has been a lot. For one the Corps expanded the footprint of the nearshore berm disposal site associated with the Morehead City Harbor and also created a new nearshore berm in front of Shackelford Banks. Two, the Corps also conducted more offshore sand search efforts associated with the Coastal Storm Risk Management Project but were unsuccessful in finding new sources of sand ([Slides 10 and 11](#)). Thus in conclusion it might be worth evaluating these and other potential sources of sand - the new Corps nearshore berm disposal sites, Corps “delta” projects, the Cape Lookout shoal complex, or looking again well

offshore. Member Navey commented that we should seriously consider the Corps disposal sites – we know the sand quality and it's close by – also understanding that permitting will be a challenge. Members Baldwin and Luther mentioned that cost (per cubic yard) will be a consideration but we need to plan for the future. The secretary subsequently asked if the Beach Commission would like to see a rough scope of work (no cost yet) representing a new sand search, and would include permitting, legal type of tasks, field work, etc. Member Corsello agreed this would be a good approach and added we all need to understand this will take years to fully develop.

- (5) **Long View Assessment for the Future (Shore Protection Office – Mission Objectives & Personnel Organization)**. – Akin to what was articulated in the agenda package, the secretary introduced the topic by noting that over the past several years we have experienced a good type of mission creep if you will as we successfully nourished our beaches in the wake of the 1990s hurricanes and subsequently developed the Master Plan. During and since then we have become “all things coastal” and have put considerable efforts towards waterway dredging. And while the occupancy tax can only be spent on oceanfront beach nourishment, we have spent other types of resources on these other endeavors. Today’s discussion and again, for discussion only is to think about where the Shore Protection Office may need to go in terms of personnel and directives moving forward with this mission creep in mind – it has been a topic that has re-surfaced many times for the Commission over the past few years. The goal is to think about how to re-frame things from the ground up for the betterment of the County, and Secretary Rudolph noted that he serves the Beach Commission first and foremost and will look forward and follow any direction they provide.

Chairman Normile thanked the secretary for that introduction and emphasized that we need to work with the County as we move forward, make sure we address all the tasks at hand, make sure we’re consistent with the law, and ultimately...make changes if necessary. Each Commission member was asked for their preliminary thoughts while understanding it will take several meetings to work everything through. There was overwhelming consensus that a succession plan is needed, and additional staff is also very important considering all the tasks that has fallen into the web of Commission. Chairman Normile asked the group if it would be acceptable for he and the vice-chair to come back to the Commission with more “bite-sized chunks” to tackle one at a time. The Commission agreed and Member Navey emphasized that we should speak to the County Board of Commissioners soon and make sure they are conceptually on board before we go through a lot work and develop plans.

- (6) **Public Comment**. – None.
- (7) **Other Business**. – None.
- (8) **June 2021 Meeting Date (June 28, 2021)**. – It was agreed upon that the next Beach Commission meeting would be held on June 28<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 pm, Emerald Isle Board Room and remotely.
- (9) **Adjourn**. – Chairman Normile asked for any additional comments and with no additional comments forthcoming, the meeting was adjourned.