



CARTERET COUNTY BEACH COMMISSION MEETING

Minutes
Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall
August 27, 2018, 2 pm

Attendance.

Commission Members A.B. "Trace" Cooper (chair), Ken Jones (vice-chair), Harry Archer, Larry Baldwin, Douglas Guthrie, Jimmy Farrington, Joel Fortune, Jim Normile, John Wooten, secretary Greg Rudolph, and the general public. Member Larry Corsello and was absent.

- (1) **Call to Order.** - Chairman Cooper welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.
- (2) **Approval of Minutes - Regular Beach Commission Meeting (June 25, 2018).** – Chairman Cooper asked the Commission if there were any corrections, additions, or comments regarding the June 25th regular session minutes presented in the agenda packet. Member Archer subsequently made a motion to adopt the minutes as presented, which was seconded by member Fortune and unanimously approved.
- (3) **Room Occupancy Tax (ROT) and "Beach Fund" Update.** – Secretary Rudolph initiated the conversation by noting the last two months of reporting for the 2017-18 fiscal year (May and June) have been received providing an opportunity to evaluate occupancy tax collections trends. It is apparent that some of the May receipts were reported in June by noting the marked decrease and increase in these months, respectively (May down by -45% and June up by +30%). To this effect, the collection was up by +6.3% collectively for these two months if compared to the same two month total in 2017 (\$1,897,280 in 2018 vs. \$1,785,245 in 2017) = +\$112,035 total or +\$56,017 Beach Fund ([Power Point slide 1](#)). In terms of the fiscal year (2017-18), the occupancy tax was up by +6.9% compared to the previous fiscal year (2016-17), resulting in an additional +486,045 total or +\$243,022 to Beach Fund. The secretary continued by noting that out of the ~\$7.575 million overall collection in FY 2017-18; 62% is borne from the condo/cottage sector, followed by 29% from hotel/motel, and 9% from "other". Also, through the first half (six months) of the calendar year 2018, the occupancy tax is up by +8.5%; and our nourishment reserve balance at the end of June is estimated to be \$18.6 million. Chairman Cooper concluded by noting it will be interesting to see what impact the record rainfall we had in July will do to the occupancy tax receipts – our traditionally highest collection month.
- (4) **Master Plan (Project #1) – Approval, Release of Nourishment Reserve.** – Secretary Rudolph summarized/highlighted the first project to be constructed under the Master Plan umbrella, which has undergone some design changes since the last time the Beach Commission met in June (see [slides 2 – 5](#)). Most notable of course is the transition of the Pine Knoll Shores reach from the Master Plan, Project #1 to a beneficial use project associated with the Morehead City Harbor Federal Navigation Project that ideally would also include western Atlantic Beach. This effectively

removes 4.5 miles and 712,450 cubic yards (cy) from the original project scopes. The second macroscopic change to the project relates to the Emerald Isle reach that will be expanded +1,429 linear feet to the west from the Town's Eastern Regional Access to the "Dog-Leg" 4-Wheel Drive Ramp. This change is also coupled with an increase of the beachfill density in the hot-spot, or "numbered streets" area from 30 cy a linear foot (cy/ft) to 35 cy/ft.

The secretary continued in terms of cost, the Project is now estimated to be a \$16.8 million effort with \$5 million emanating from a State appropriation. The balance (roughly \$11.8 million) will be cost-shared 75% Nourishment Reserve and 25% individual municipality. This equates to approximately \$9 million of nourishment reserve monies to be distributed to the municipalities. Also, the \$5 million of State money will be received by the County and be subsequently transferred to the nourishment reserve to again be distributed to the municipalities. Thus if we consider the State appropriation and raw nourishment reserve dollars for the project, then the total to be ultimately released from the nourishment reserve is \$14 million (\$5 million State + \$9 million reserve). As a buffer, the Beach Commission is requested to authorize the release of \$15 million. Secretary Rudolph concluded the ultimate cost will be based on the bids received and hopefully the apparent low bidder will be below the estimate. If the bid(s) received are higher than anticipated, then we will reconvene to reconcile a strategy to move forward. The bid will have two alternatives – one to start and complete the project this winter (2018-19) and a second to start and complete the project next winter (2019-20). The lowest alternative bid price will be awarded (again, if within the estimate).

Member Guthrie expressed some of the comments/questions he has been receiving about the project from the Salter Path area, particularly; (a) is the project being constructed more out of aesthetics?, and (2) if we get a hurricane, are we going to be able to get sand to fix the beach again? Chairman Cooper and the secretary replied Mr. Rudolph that per our Master Plan, nourishment is supposed to "maintain" the beach according to those trigger points, but it's best not to reach the trigger points before a project takes place (i.e., don't get to crisis mode). Plus as we all know, it takes a long time to plan and get a project permitted, and if trigger points are reached or exceeded before nourishment, a hurricane would do even more damage. With respect to FEMA reimbursement in the wake of federally-declared disaster (hurricane); monitoring the beach and maintaining appropriate sand levels are the keystones of qualifying for FEMA reimbursement, and the proposed Project is true to the maintenance end. The secretary added, we have been successful in the past with this template (*Isabel*, *Ophelia*, and *Irene*), and is a good foreshadow for the future. Member Normile added that while the beach might look and measure moderately healthy, sand has been building up in the dunes, which are advancing seaward, while the recreational beach has been flattening and narrowing for several years, leaving less room for beach-goers, who are responsible for the brunt of the County's tourism revenue. It's particularly true of the far eastern end of Emerald Isle, where there are erosion hot spots that will get more sand than other areas in this project. Chairman Cooper concluded by noting that if we act before the Master Plan nourishment triggers are met, then when a hurricane does impact the area, we hopefully will be replacing sand, not losing oceanfront houses. Member Guthrie thanked the group for the explanations, and member Jones made a motion to release up to \$15 million of nourishment reserves at the appropriate time for Project #1 of the Master Plan. The motion was seconded by member Fortune and unanimously approved.

- (5) **2017- 2018 Annual Report: Bogue Banks Beach & Nearshore Mapping Program.** – Chairman Cooper introduced Johnny Martin and Nicole Vanderbeke from Moffatt & Nichol (M&N) to

summarize the results of our annual beach survey, which is utilized to track sand, look at nourishment triggers, and ascertain the overall health of the beach – not just Bogue Banks, but Shackleford Banks, and Bear Island as well. Mr. Martin continued by starting a [presentation](#), which summarized the methodology of the surveying program, an analysis of the key events (nourishment, storms, etc.) that took place over the course of the past year, and the results focusing upon volume changes, shoreline change, and the evolving geomorphology of the oceanfront beach.

Nicole Vanderbeke (M&N) continued the presentation from this point and summarized Bogue Banks is experiencing a continuing trend of sand transitioning from the dry sand beach down the profile to depths that are just offshore/underwater while concomitantly, sand just below the outer bar offshore is moving up the profile. The result from a volumetric standpoint is that we are gaining sand overall from the top of the dune seaward to -12 feet NAVD88 (our cut-off lens). Specifically we gained an average of +7 cubic yards per linear feet (cy/ft) across the entire oceanfront reach of Bogue Banks from Spring 2017 to Spring 2018. However, these volume gains did not translate to the shoreline position advancing seaward as one might think. To the contrary, the shoreline regressed -7 feet landward on average across the island. Ironically this makes sense because as mentioned immediately above, sand moved down the beach profile from the dry sand beach to slightly underwater/offshore.

Commissioner Guthrie asked if the additional nearshore sand, some of which undoubtedly came from previous nourishment projects, could have contributed to rip currents blamed for several drownings along Bogue Banks in recent summers, including two in Emerald Isle in recent months. Secretary Rudolph replied this was not the case, according to studies conducted in other places and the fact many of the beaches where drownings or rescues took place haven't been nourished in five years or more. Plus there were rip current and rough surf warnings along much of the Atlantic Coast this month, including places where there has been no beach nourishment. Frank Rush (Audience, Town Manager – Emerald Isle) also noted the town had not noticed any increase in injuries to ocean-goers, something one would expect if the nearshore water profile was too high and causing problems.

Mrs. Vanderbeke concluded the presentation with several slides demonstrating the new swath, laser scan survey data and some examples of what potential deliverables can be generated once multiple surveys are completed. Member Wootten and other Commission members commented positively on the potential of this technology.

- (6) **Public Comment.** – None.
- (7) **Other Business.** – Secretary Rudolph briefly mentioned the Shore Protection Office has been coordinating/administrating an emergency dredging project at Homer's Point, Salter Path, and provided a slide to illustrate the project ([Slide 6](#)).
- (8) **September 2018 Meeting Date.** – It was agreed upon that the next Beach Commission meeting would be held on September 24th at 2:00 pm, Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall.
- (9) **Adjourn.** – Chairman Cooper asked for any additional comments and with no additional comments forthcoming, the meeting was adjourned.