



**TOWN OF HOLDEN BEACH
INLET AND BEACH PROTECTION BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2019 10:00 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Myers called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Present were Chair Vicki Myers, Vice Chair Mike Pearson, Members Dean Thomas, Ronda Dixon, and Tim Gible.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Motion by Member Thomas to approve the agenda, second by Member Dixon; approved by unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Member Gible to approve the minutes of the August 22, 2019 meeting, second by Vice Chair Pearson; approved by unanimous vote.

STATUS OF BEACH, INLETS, AND ISSUES

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson stated that Hurricane Dorian visited us on September 5, 2019. The Town had survey crews on the beach the following week and ATM is currently quantifying the data. She said the Town got preliminary numbers from Mr. Way to offer a cost estimate at the County FEMA scoping meeting last week. That estimate was \$ 4,661,560.00 for Category G (beach losses in this case). The early estimates from Mr. Way are that we lost approximately 197,352 cy in the engineered beach area and 339,575 cy for the entire shoreline. She said those are early estimates and they are still finalizing the report. We also lost about \$46,000 in sand fence and about 5000 plants. There were questions about the places for loss of sand fence. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said it was the length of the shoreline. She discussed sand fence getting covered in the Central Reach area during the storm. She said the staff spoke to the FEMA Beach TAC, Bob Glassen yesterday, as he Doug Krafft and Johnathan Marshall of the Corps visited Holden Beach. They are required to do a visual survey and take some measurements, but planned to rely on the hard surveys we provided and was glad we had such. Town Manager Hewett added that the reason why this preliminary county-wide assessment happened is that the President has to make a federal declaration. Chair Myers asked about Tom Tillis and the governor having a debate over the declaration. Town Manager Hewett said he is speaking to the specific federal declaration and supporting the efforts. Chair Myers asked about a timeline. Staff stated they don't have one. Chair Myers asked about repairing and replacing fencing. Assistant Town Manager

Ferguson said we would have to wait until we find out if damages would be covered by FEMA. Chair Myers asked about trash cans going back on the beach after storm season. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said it would be up to public works to follow the same procedure they had done in the past. She could not speak for them.

Regarding Florence and Michael worksheets, Assistant Town Manager Ferguson stated they are still held up in environmental review. She said that Town Manager Hewett took the opportunity at the County FEMA Dorian meeting last week to speak to one of the environmental representatives and express our frustration with the long process this has been for approval. It sounds as if the problem has been with internal agencies working together to assimilate data. Sand fence as part of some permits for beaches and not for others was also mentioned as a backlog. Town Manager Hewett suggested that FEMA reach out to the municipalities directly with questions to aid in speeding up the process. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said the representative was somewhat assuring that he expects projects to begin to move through and be released. Chair Myers stated that she read that Carteret County's (Bogue Banks) Florence was approved but it was under \$25 million so it didn't require another level of approval. Town Manager Hewett said he would hesitate to draw that correlation because as we understand it there is a whole que of federal projects that have been held up.

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said the sand search is underway with ATM as the lead contractor and subcontractors being used. The sonographics data collection was completed before the storm. Athena is collecting vibracores this week. Mr. Way contacted the Town to let us know that he was recommending five additional vibracores based on the seismic data collection. The additional vibracores are recommended in order for the Town to have two usable borrow areas (assuming favorable results). This is incredibly valuable for project success. One borrow area will have 21 vibracores and another will have 9 vibracores collected. Chair Myers asked if they would need a BOEM permit if they are more than three miles out. Town Manager Hewett said it would be in permitting that an approval process would happen if BOEM needed to be involved. Chair Myers asked how long it takes to analyze the data. Town Manager Hewett said it is about a year process. She asked if we are looking at a year from now. He said no since we already started. He estimated nine more months. He mentioned a Gantt chart that Mr. Way prepared.

Discussion turned to the Comprehensive Long-term Plan. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said that the BOC heard a presentation from ATM at the September meeting. They decided to digest the information for the month and it will be on the October meeting agenda for a possible decision on the document. She told the board while they voted on changes last month, the IBPB, as a committee, should make a recommendation for approval of the plan by way of a spokesperson speaking at agenda time during the October meeting. How that process might unfold as far as a staff transmittal memo in the BOC agenda packet was discussed. Town Manager Hewett said there is a punctuation mark on that project to be made by the IBPB to support the document if you want to do so. He would not think it would be overkill if there is a spokesperson and the entire board stands up while they speak. Member Dixon asked if everyone was around for October 15th. Town Manager Hewett stated that Mr. Way will be presenting the results of the annual monitoring report. He will be around to answer technical questions. Further analysis would require more funding because the contract is winchestered. Member Thomas clarified the process of how the BOC meeting might go. Chair Myers asked if anyone would like to speak. Member Dixon said she would volunteer. Chair Myers said Member Dixon would be serving

as the champion for this. The board agreed. Member Thomas will assist with preparing remarks. Member Dixon will deliver them at the meeting.

Assistant Town Manager Ferguson stated that Chair Myers had asked for a detailed recap of the AIWW/LWF Inlet Crossing Bend Widener Project that is still on hold. To recap the project, it was supposed to happen this Fall/Winter. The AIWW Crossing project is part of a federal project that includes several crossings throughout the state. They usually start in the northern part of the state and move down. The board was provided a picture of the inlet to help with the explanation and the picture was referenced. That was expected to yield approximately 80,000 cy with an additional 135,000 cy available in the bend widener. She said that staff worked with the state and expedited funds through the MOA so that the Corps could receive the Town's \$388,295 and the State's contribution from the Shallow Draft Navigation Fund in the amount of \$776,705. As a side note, the Town approached the County for ½ the local share and ¼ was approved. The Town was then notified that US Fish and Wildlife was requiring a Biological Opinion because of the spit that was growing from the Oak Island side of the inlet. That meant that we got pushed to an option instead of included in the base for the Corps' contract. The Town was informed by the Corps on 8/26 that when the bid opening occurred the apparent low bidder actually did not receive favorable reviews from other districts when completing projects. The Corps was going to appeal to the Small Business Administration (SBA) to try to prove the contractor was a non-responsive bidder. The second low bid was twice the Independent Government Estimate so it was not seen as viable. The Corps is waiting to hear from the SBA about a decision on the low bidder. That was supposed to occur this past Monday. Town Manager Hewett and I attended a SACS meeting Tuesday (9/24) in Wilmington and engaged with Brennan Dooley and Bob Keistler on the matter. They had no update but said if they received word prior to this meeting, they would let us know. Early on in finding out about the problem with the bid, Town Manager Hewett did engage with Poyner Spruill and we had a conversation with Earl Stockdale who used to be chief legal for the Corps. He said there is nothing we can do to truncate the process. We have to let it play out. Town Manager Hewett said he didn't want to put a wet blanket on a fire but if we cast out the apparent non-responsive guy the next guy is twice the government estimate. He wonders what is involved in another federal contracting effort. He wonders what happens when the second guy who fit the profile is a viable SBA contractor. If they come back to the town to pony up more funds, that is a different ball game. If the project doesn't happen, he has a problem with the Corps of Engineers holding on to \$400,000 of the Town's money. He said there are other worries with this. He said we continue to be engaged with the Corps to keep this project on track to help the East End of the Beach. Chair Myers asked when we think the drop dead deadline is for the project in regard to environmental windows. He said they can't start before November 15th but have to be done by the end of March or mid-April. He said historically this contract has been let and they work north to south and we end up right before Easter. He said that has worked well for us because the nor'easters are done by then but we beat the environmental windows. Member Dixon asked if we have ever run into issues with U.S. Fish and Wildlife. Town Manager Hewett said they are always a player. Chair Myers asked if it is the essential fish habitat they were looking at. Town Manager Hewett said his personal opinion is that it is shorebirds. Chair Myers said if the biological opinion was back we could request a copy. Town Manager Hewett suggested letting the process play out. Possible ways that it might play out were discussed.

The staff report then turned to the South Atlantic Coastal Study (SACS) meeting that was held Tuesday (9/24) in Wilmington to glean information from stakeholders about the process, proposed products of

the study and problems and opportunities on the local, state, and federal level. The two handouts that were provided by the Corps at the meeting were distributed to the IBPB. We will continue to keep an eye on the study.

Relative to the GRR study, Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said that we are still waiting to hear regarding Holden Beach receiving funding through the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Bill. The Mayor received a letter from R.D. James, Assistant Secretary of the Army to confirm they were in receipt of our request for a pre-authorization study dated July 31, 2019. They were still in the process of determining which studies and projects will receive funding. Town Manager Hewett confirmed with Christine Brayman at the SACS meeting on Tuesday (9/24) that she did not have any additional information to put forth regarding either the study or construction. Chair Myers said we were all supposed to read the Poyner Spruill reports and discuss the projects at this meeting. She asked if the staff wanted to discuss. Town Manager Hewett said that the GRR is still in flux as to whether funding for the study will occur and he doesn't think we can participate in a sane conversation into that at this time. Member Dixon said when she personally looks at the GRR as compared to other projects the Town does, she doesn't like it. She questioned whether the study might reveal why it might be good. Town Manager Hewett said losses or gains haven't been determined yet. We would need to get information from the study. From management's perspective it is about looking for potential options. He stated what if something happens to FEMA, we have put all our eggs in the FEMA basket. He compared it to the federal funding for inlet navigation maintenance that occurred for 40 years and dried up 10 years ago. He said a Plan B and Plan C had to be developed so the Town could still participate in least cost method of disposal. He stated that he sees this being similar because we need to develop potential options for the future. He said that the worst case scenario is that we can glean what might happen. He said even if a 50 year project is seen as viable, the Town may choose not to participate. He thinks we are preliminary in setting up a FEMA versus GRR debate before we know what the options are. Member Thomas commented that made sense.

In regard to budget items, the "Keep Off the Dune" signs have been ordered. Mats will be ordered in the winter. The UNCW scope of work came in Tuesday of this week and we are currently reviewing to make sure it matches with the Town's discussion of what was wanted as study outcomes. Also as part of the budget, it was mentioned that plant variety may be a desire in regard to vegetation planting this year. After the storm, staff rode a section of the beach with Steve Mercer, our vegetation contractor with Coastal Transplants. The storm blew sand around in the dune system and allowed plant varieties that we have volunteering to show through. We have Croatan, Seashore Elder, Beach Morning Glory, and Bitter Panicum in our system besides the prevalent Sea Oats and American Beach Grass. Mr. Mercer is recommending American Beach Grass be planted as a means to catch the fines that are blowing around after the storm. He thinks it should be planted pretty quickly and we should focus more on that and sand fence than variety planting this year as a way to enhance our dune system. As a side note, he said that Seashore Elder had a 30% survival rate when introduced from the greenhouse so it is better for it to be voluntary than to try to introduce it. Chair Myers asked how that pairs with what UNCW is doing. Member Thomas said UNCW is higher level showing variety and density. It will take a year to get results and then we can compare them to what you see driving down the beach. He said if two or three years from now there is evidence to show dumping more money into vegetation is needed, the study will help support that. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson spoke about how much money was in vegetation and sand fence lines in the current year budget. Town Manager Hewett said if we didn't

get a declaration for Dorian as the executive agent he would reprogram vegetation money into the sand fence line because it stops it first and best. He said that is his general going in feel on it. Chair Myers said the plan would be to use the money from the sand fence line and vegetation line to do some combination. Town Manager Hewett said that is correct. Town Manager Hewett said it will take a month to process it. The turnaround time on the UNCW proposal was discussed to be up to a month based on processing. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson said at first glance it appears it came in slightly higher than the estimate they submitted.

In an update on the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) meeting, staff reported that Mrs. Wooten and Mr. Evans from the Inspections Department attended the CRC meeting last week. She read an initial report that there will be a public hearing on inlet hazard areas (IHA) and oceanfront erosion rates on Thursday, October 3rd at 2 p.m. at the Harper Library in Southport. Assistant Town Manager Ferguson read an update from Ken Richardson, with DCM that said the hearing on oceanfront erosion rates will be October 3rd as stated. The public hearing on inlet hazard areas will not happen until December or January with potential for the CRC to review public comments in February 2020 or later in the spring. Chair Myers explained to the board what the IHA and oceanfront erosion rates were. She said her biggest objection was that it did not look at how the islands have changed over time and trends. Town Manager Hewett said we don't support the science they used.

Chair Myers asked if we had heard anything more about the NC Storm Damage Mitigation Fund. Town Manager Hewett said he had not.

INLET AND BEACH PROTECTION BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair Myers announced that the Brunswick County Shoreline Protection meeting is scheduled for October 2nd at 10 a.m. The ASPBA national meeting is October 22nd through 25th in Myrtle Beach and the Town will be presenting on the Central Reach Project. Chair Myers said that she asked Assistant Town Manager Ferguson to give the board a schedule. She was going to suggest they divide and conquer, but if there are only two of them going to the conference, that will not work. NCBIWA Conference is November 12th and 13th in Wrightsville Beach. The ASBPA meeting in Myrtle Beach was discussed as conflicting with the next IBPB meeting. Town Manager Hewett said he thinks they should look at it as a field trip opportunity and cancel their meeting. Chair Myers wondered if they would release the presentations afterward. Town Manager Hewett said the presentations are normally PowerPoint. They are not audio and video, but they typically post them to the ASBPA site. The AIWA conference versus the ASBPA conference in terms of benefit were discussed. Member Dixon asked about moving the IBPB meeting. Chair Myers said her only concern about not meeting in October is that there seems to be a lot going on. Member Thomas said if he puts his Town hat on, they are spending four days at the conference and they are presenting. He said we have things on the BOC agenda. He thinks a lot of work is going on in the month. Town Manager Hewett said that he would be providing updates at the BOC meeting for any changes in projects. He said the board might want to go ahead and look at November because it falls on Thanksgiving. November was discussed. The board decided to tentatively look at November 21, 2019 based on the availability of the room. Town Manager Hewett said the EOC training room was also available. The date for December to look at was December 19th. Chair Myers asked if we could skip the October meeting but asked if Town Manager Hewett would send a briefing to update any issues covered today if any arise. The board agreed by consensus. Chair Myers asked about special

meeting versus rescheduled regular meeting. Town Manager Hewett said he will check with the Town Clerk.

CONSENSUS OF SHORT REPORT TO BOARD TO COMMISSIONERS

Comprehensive Long -Term Plan- The long-term plan was on the commissioners' September meeting agenda and will be back on their agenda in October. The IBPB will recommend adoption.

Status of the Beach and Inlets- Staff provided updates of the current and future projects, efforts and conditions, and issues relative to the beach strand and inlets. An update on the SACS study was given. Highlights included:

CRR-Florence Michael- The status of the \$25,000,000 FEMA Florence and Michael remediation project, know as the Central Reach Reimbursement (CRR) Project was discussed. The approved project worksheets needed before work can begin are still held up in environmental review.

Sand Search- The sand sourcing needed for the CRR project is moving forward. Acoustic testing has been completed and additional borings are being taken.

Hurricane Dorian-Staff met with the County and FEMA to assess damage. Total losses for the strand were 339,575. Sand fences damaged and trash cans will be returned to the strand after storm season. Member Thomas asked about adding the survey information and analysis. East Coast Engineering did the survey work and it will be analyzed by ATM. The total for plant cost and sand fence is included in the estimated \$4.7 million loss total.

LWFIX and Bend Widener- The Corps had previously confirmed that a dredging project would occur this winter and would place 80,000 in the crossing and 135,000 in the bend widener on the East End. Funds were secured from the Town, County and the State which were forwarded to the Corps. The Corps subsequently determined that a biological opinion would be required before the contract could be approved. The project was put out to bid. One bid was deemed too high and the other was deemed non-responsive by the Corps. It is receiving further evaluation through the Small Business Administration. The board is concerned about the viability of the project in regard to timelines and delays. Town management expressed they have done everything they can to help the process.

Corps Engagement- The GRR 50 year/15 year plan study and the separate 1966 Dune and Berm Construction Projects precipitated from the lobbyist's efforts and the Wilmington District of the Corps of Engineers were touched on. A decision was expected by the end of August but it is still a work in progress and still pending.

UNCW Collaboration- Representative from UNCW have submitted a proposal and scope of work to begin working on the vegetation study and inlet changes document. Town staff is reviewing this.

Other Updates/Budget- Keep off the Dune signs have been ordered. The annual Beach Monitoring report will be presented at the October meeting. Mats will be ordered this winter. Town management had engagement with Steve Mercer on vegetation status post Dorian and he recommends planting American Beach Grass as well as repair and upgrades to sand fencing.

Meetings- Members of the board will be attend the Brunswick Shoreline Meeting and the ASBPA conference October 22nd -25th in Myrtle Beach. The Town of Holden Beach will be presenting on the

Central Reach. Our meeting schedule has tentatively been changed for the remainder of the year. This would be canceling October and moving November and December up a week.

Motion to approve the short report by Member Thomas, second by Vice Chair Pearson; approved by all.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

ADJOURNEMENT

Motion by Member Dixon to adjourn at 11:52; second by Member Thomas; approved by all.