



The Town of Fenwick Island

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DREDGING COMMITTEE MARCH 2, 2018 AT 1:30 PM

MINUTES

In Attendance

Bernie Merritt, Gardner Bunting, Vicki Carmean, Charlie Hastings, Karin Lakin, Terry Tieman, Mark Tingle, Bill Weistling

Absent

Alex Daly, Bud Tingle

Also in Attendance

Chris Bason (Center for Inland Bays), Wayne Carmean, Craig Lakin, Richard Mais

Bernie called the meeting to order at 1:30 PM.

Approval of Minutes

A motion was made by Vicki, seconded by Bill, to accept the December 1, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

Bernie reviewed the dredging memorandum with the Committee and updated everyone on what he and Bill have found out since the December meeting. He also attended the ACT Meetings once a month where dredging and the impact on the economic footprint, beach replenishment, and working with the University of Delaware on tourism were discussed. Bernie mentioned that he found out that the Federal Government controls the channel and the Town controls the entrances to the channel. Chris Bason stated that the Army Corp. of Engineers had jurisdiction but our channel does not meet their commercial requirements. Terry asked if permits would still be needed by them if we received outside funding for the project. Chris replied yes, although they would not control the project.

Vicki commented that dredging should be a priority since our waterways are a tourism attraction and tourism is the #2 industry in the state. Terry added that the waterways are also a means of transportation. Bernie spoke to Senator Carper who is pushing for Federal funding for dredging.

Bernie met with the Ocean City Engineer who was very helpful in discussing their practices in regards to dredging in Ocean City. The engineer stated that the most important priority is to find a disposal site for the dredge material. Bill mentioned that we have Seal Island that could be used. Mark questioned if the off-site on Route 54 would be in option for a disposal site, and Bill responded no since the disposal location needs to be closer to the channel. Bernie added the only drawback in using Seal Island is that the Town would need to obtain a permit from the Army Corp. of Engineers to use the island as a dump site. Gardner suggested that Cedar Island could be used.

Bernie discussed the John Hynes proposal that was received. Bill stated that John Hynes suggested getting soil samples done first then hire an engineering firm that is familiar with dealing with spoil sites.

Chris questioned what the cost estimate of the project would be. Bill responded that the estimate was \$400,000 for 8,300 cubic yards. Chris suggested that the area could be temporarily managed by placing structures in the water to remove sediment. He added that the wetlands are being destroyed by the sea level rise, so he also suggested that instead of using Seal Island that the dredge spoils could instead be used in the marshes that are deteriorating. DNREC could be contacted for a partnership with the Town to have the structures installed to remove sediment from the channel.

Terry questioned if the Sustainability Grant could be used for the project. Chris responded yes, or the Surface Water Matching Planning Grant. Chris volunteered to work with DNREC on the Town's behalf to construct a project plan. If something needs to be done right now, Chris suggested getting DelDOT involved. Terry added that KCI could also be of assistance or contact Karen McGrath from Senator Carper's office.

Bill mentioned that possibly an island in the middle of the canal could be developed from the spoils. Vicki is in favor of the "living shoreline" that Chris suggested.

Bill stated that the only way the dredging project can be done would be to partner with someone for the funding. Terry agreed, stating that partnership is the key since it worked with the Town's sidewalk project as we are partnering with DelDOT.

Vicki asked how long the soil samples are good for. Bernie stated that he will check, but he thinks 1-2 years.

Charlie questioned that since the channel is a Federal channel if they could provide funding. Bill responded that the Army Corp. of Engineers has control of the channel but since the channel is not used commercially, they are not concerned. Karin questioned what is considered commercial since tourism is commercial. Mark responded that unfortunately the Federal Government does not agree.

Craig asked that after the results from the soil samples if using the wetland area is viable. Bill responded when John Hynes looks at the soil samples he commented that the sandier the better. Chris stated in the past, to build up the wetlands, the Center for Inland Bays used hay bales to hold up the area temporarily.

Karin asked if the State has the equipment available for dredging then why could it not be used. Gardner added that it took the State over a year to do the Boat Island project.

Bill suggested another option is to do a competitive bid process for the project. Wayne commented that maybe we could get South Bethany and Bethany Beach involved since their channels are clogged as well. Mark responded that we should focus on Fenwick, and Terry added that possibly if we want to partner with other Towns we could do the project in phases.

Bill asked Chris if he could provide the Committee the grant opportunities available for funding.

Bill noted that when he talked to the Ocean City Engineer, dredging is done street by street. They do the middle of the canal only and not near the bulkheads. If an owner wants their area dredged, they need to pay for it and also sign a liability waiver.

Bernie suggested asking the Town Council for \$5,000 funding to get the geotechnical study done by Hynes. A motion was made by Vicki, seconded by Gardner, to ask the Council for funding for the study. The motion passed unanimously.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on April 5, 2018 at 1:30 PM.

Charlie asked if the agenda could be sent out sooner than 1 week prior to the meeting. Bernie will make sure the agenda is sent out as soon as it is available.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Bernie, seconded by Charlie, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting adjourned at 2:20 PM.