

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday October 24, 2024, 2:00 PM
Surf City Town Hall, Surf City, NC

Commission Members Present

Mike Benson, Vice Chair
Larry Combs
Teresa Batts
William Snyder
Larry Strother
Hiram Williams

Associates Present

Congr. Mike McIntyre (advocate)
Chris Griffin (TFG rep)
David Ferrell (advocate)
Kerri Allen, NCCF
Kathy Zagzebski (Turtle Hospital)
Kyle Breuer, SC Manager
Carla Citarelli, SC Clerk
Alice Derian, NTB Manager
Doug Shipley, TB Manager
Christina Burke, TB Asst. Manager
Marley Peterson, Ward Smith

Guests

Morton Blanchard, TB Mayor
Conor MacNair, NC Shellfish Growers Assoc.

I. Call to Order & Greetings

Vice-Chairman Benson called the meeting at order at 2:04 p.m. Vice-Chairman Benson welcomed the commission members, associates, and those in the audience and online. Vice-Chairman Benson then asked for a moment of silence in memory of Chairman Steven Smith followed by leading the group in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

II. Public Comments

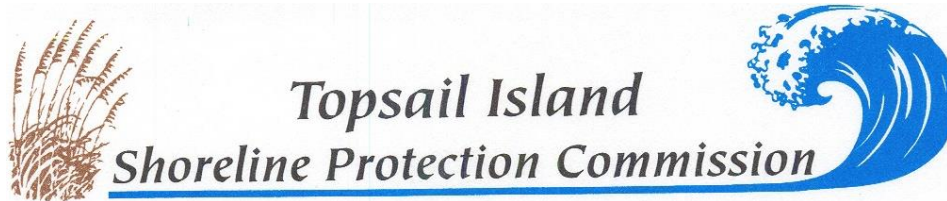
No comments.

III. Approval of Agenda

Vice-Chairman Benson asked to amend the agenda under New Business to add '2025 Goals and 2024 Accomplishments. William Snyder made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Teresa Batts seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes for August 22, 2024

Hiram Williams made a motion to approve the minutes. William Snyder seconded the motion, and it was carried unanimously.



V. Consultant & Partner's Reviews

a. Federal Legislation Activities - Ward and Smith, P.A. –Congressman Mike McIntyre. House and Senate Pass WRDA Bills. Congressman McIntyre reported that Congress is in recess for election season and has yet to pass a budget for 2025, but a continuing resolution is in place until December 20th. Hurricane Helene devastation appropriations will be considered in November when Congress reconvenes. Pender and Onslow Counties are eligible for disaster protective measures from the storm. Our representatives along with Commissioner Steve Troxler took a tour of the devastated area. Rep. Rouzer co-sponsored a bill to authorize 'block grants' for disaster relief program funding administered by FEMA.

North Topsail Beach CBRA Mapping Issue. H.R. 2437, Congressman Murphy's bill to amend the mapped boundaries of Coastal Barrier Resources System (CBRS) Unit L06 in North Topsail Beach, remains before the House of Representatives. Tom Leonard did an excellent job presenting this issue to the House Sub-Committee last November. Two committee staff members who visited Map Unit L06 last year were in communication with Manager Derian and Tom Leonard recently to discuss a map plat update for L06 that would detail the proposed new excluded portions of North Topsail Beach. Hopefully, it will pass before the new Congress convenes. Also, the technical corrections map for Barton Bay is not controversial so it should be approved.

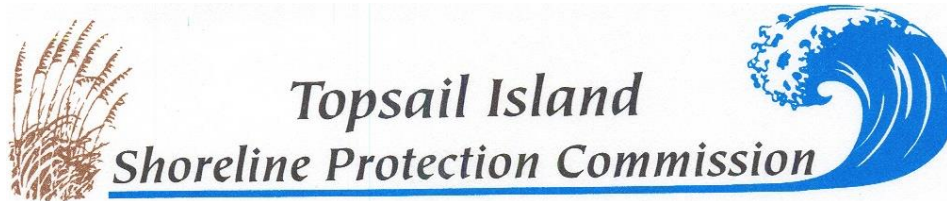
Sand Borrowing. H.R. 524, Congressman Rouzer's bill to allow certain Federally authorized USACE beach nourishment projects to borrow sand from within the CBRS for use outside the CBRS passed out of the House back in April, 2024, with Senate approval now needed but it is non-controversial so full Congressional approval may occur by the end of the year.

Surf City General Reevaluation Report (GRR). This has been a long process. The WRDA bill instructs the Army to expedite the report. Given the priority status of the study, we are confident this language will be included in the final version of WRDA that Congress is expected in bipartisan fashion to pass by the end of the year.

Congressman McIntyre recognized Marley Peterson who was online as a new member of Ward Smith who has been brought up to date on Topsail Island concerns and actions.

b. NC State Legislation Activities – Maynard Nexsen PC – David Ferrell

David Ferrell joined us in person to report on activities of the General Assembly. The legislature is out right now but came back for emergency work to support disaster relief part 2 efforts in Western North Carolina devastated by remnants of Hurricane Helene. My October report included information on the first round of state hurricane support in the recovery effort as well as funds for TC#8. New Hanover and Brunswick counties



were also included in the declaration. In the first pass, \$273 million was included to allow FEMA support to kick in. HB149 creates release of hurricane disaster relief funds. Permitting issues for local governments, for example, can be assisted by bringing in temporary permitting specialists. SB743 will be used today to bring part 2 support forward so it can move quickly through the legislature. It includes \$604 million to add to the previous funds. This will help with qualifying for FEMA funds. Overall damage estimates may be \$53.6 billion dollars including both mountains and coast. Even with federal help uncovered losses could be \$33.8 billion dollars. Some of the provisions approved previously by the legislature such as rebuilding docks and piers without need for a CAMA permit were added to this bill. Also, the dune line provision to assist Bald Head Island with their terminal groin was included in the legislation. Obviously, the reserves I reported earlier will be needed for hurricane recovery. The legislature will return in November for up to a couple of weeks to provide part 3 funding for recovery.

c. North Carolina Coastal Federation – Kerri Allen

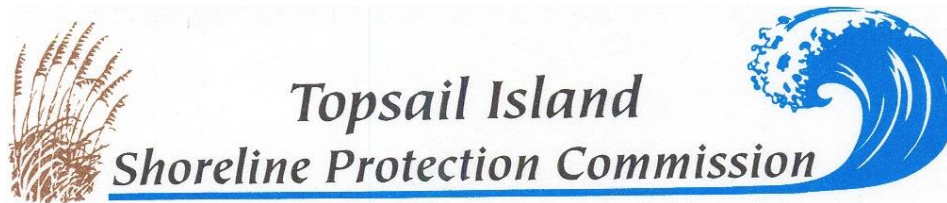
Kerri reported that the Marine Debris fund has been used this year for cleanup. There is work in progress among appropriate state agencies to make this program a state-run program taking over from the Federation. A state-run program will reduce the delay in abandoned vessel removal. The Marine Debris fund is also being used to develop a guidebook to building and maintaining docks, piers and water walkways. As much of the debris recovered (85%) is from residential properties the guidebook should help in resilient construction and save owners money in the future. We hope the guidebook can be linked to each municipality's website. NC received an EPA grant of \$421 million dollars for resiliency of which \$30 million goes to NC Coastal Federation for mapping coastal zone shoreline erosion. Two initiatives we continue are living shorelines and saltmarsh migration in the 20 coastal counties. Our coastal management team is looking at the use of public access funds to develop different solutions for oceanfront structures to see if there is local interest, for example in North Topsail Beach, for buyouts and demolition to create public access facilities and parking to the beach. One commissioner questioned Kerri about state funding for buyout programs that would greatly reduce the cost of debris clean up after a house falls into the ocean. Kerri responded that Rep Murphy is aware of this and working in the House to facilitate insurance buyouts.

d. North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association – Kathleen Riely

Kathleen was not able to attend but the fall meeting of NCBIWAs will be held on November 18-19 in Wilmington.

e. Turtle Hospital – Kathy Zagzebski

Sea Turtle hospital: Activity is slowing down, although overall we had 183 turtles so far



and cold stunning season is approaching. We released 130 turtles back into the environment. We thank both Surf City and North Topsail Beach for their efforts in the four public turtle releases we had this summer with one just last week in N. Topsail Beach. There are 12 turtles still on site. Tours will be open Thanksgiving and one weekend in December. Fall Education Days were held with over 800 school kids touring the facility.

Sea Turtle nesting season: The season is almost over. We lost over half of the remaining 15 nests in the tropical storm, but we still have 1 nest. We had 104 nests this year.

VI. Old Business & Updates

a. DEQ award for Vitex Removal for Topsail Island – Christina Burke

Christina reported that work continues behind the scenes to get the documents needed completed. We have gotten an Interlocal Agreement (ILA) in place with all three towns. Topsail Beach will be the 'physical agent' for the program. We are waiting for the state funding agency to approve our plan of action since three towns are working together. A draft of the waiver that property owners will need to sign, has been created. The next step is to draft an RFP for a contractor to perform the eradication program. The Vitex website is pretty much ready to post at tispc.org.

b. Status of Shellfish Leases Moratorium – Mike Benson

Mike reported that all three towns and both counties passed either a letter or a resolution asking our representatives to consider a moratorium on new shellfish leases in Pender and Onslow counties. A copy of the letter from North Topsail Beach is included in the agenda packet as an example. We will need a strategy to bring this to the legislature next spring; possibly by a delegation trip to Raleigh coordinated by our advocate David Ferrell. We also need to educate the public about shellfish leases.

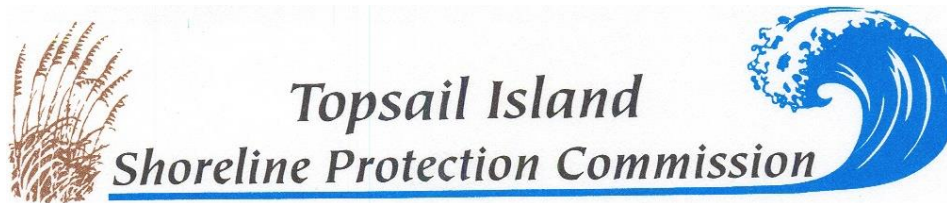
c. CBRs Letter to Congressional Delegation – Mike Benson

Mike reported that Chairman Smith had worked on this with Congressman McIntyre back in September. The letter he approved was sent under his signature. A copy is included in the packet for this month's meeting.

VII. Town Reviews

a. North Topsail Beach

Manager Alice Derian reported that Phase 5 beach renourishment was completed last season, and we are working towards starting our Phase 4 project. Phase 4 beach renourishment will start November 16th pending our grant contract extension with the state. If our extension is granted, we will proceed on November 16th and continue through December 18, 2025. NTB experienced erosion with some significant dune loss as a result of the unnamed storm, Potential Tropical Cyclone #8. We have been picking up beach debris from wood crossovers and I have had numerous communications with



the County, and state emergency management officials about beach condition concerns. We had our beach fully surveyed post storm. Governor Cooper amended Executive order No. 314 on September 18th expanding the emergency area to additional counties to include Onslow County. A declaration was just announced for CAT B and CAT G work so we will be submitting our formal request for public assistance by the November 19th deadline.

b. Surf City.

Manager Kyle Bruer reported that continuation of the Banks Channel beach renourishment project is underway. It will finish off what Topsail Beach had done with about 800,000 cy of sand placed on the beach at the Surf City/Topsail Beach boundary going north to 1,000 ft north of the Surf City Pier. We qualified for the NC Shallow Draft Fund receiving about \$19 million dollars for the project. The project will start in December. This is an interim solution not affecting our federal project. A couple of stormwater projects are underway with RFQs. Funding was from NC Emergency Management and NC DEQ as part of our RCCP process. The Federal project with the GRR report is moving forward okay. Easements for 90% of the project reach are in hand. A boat ramp upgrade will be done at Soundside Park to increase availability.

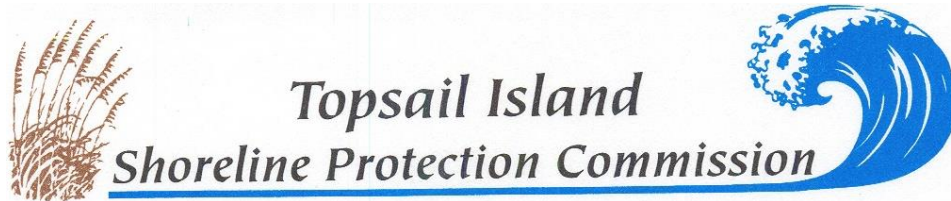
c. Topsail Beach

Manager Doug Shipley reported that the Town is working with TI Coastal to update our beach management plan. A final draft should be given to our BIS committee for a recommendation back to town commissioners for approval. Our next project is a storm water improvement project under WK Dickson that included a public hearing, surveys, and asset evaluation. We received a CAMA access grant for \$350,000 to improve parking at the south end under the assumption that the Land Trust will purchase that land. Beach crossovers at two locations were drifted over by blowing sand so we are replacing them.

VIII. New Business

a. CRAC & CRC Review- Kyle Breuer and William Snyder

Kyle Breuer reported that at the August 27 CRAC meeting, they continued the update discussion of the Inlet Hazard Area boundaries and the new rules for IHA with a target date of December, 2025. A thin-layer sediment placement tool is under evaluation for use in North Carolina to improve marsh resiliency with sea-level rise. CRAC considered whether temporary structures used for hurricane buoys could be made permanent for long-term data collection. Clean up at Rodanthe site along with the fuel leakage contamination issue at Buxton was discussed as well as coordination with the Corps to remediate.



CRC meeting included variances on oceanfront setbacks; one was denied for a lot in Surf City but one approved in Hampstead area. Rule making process for culverts and measurement line for dune building were discussed as was a review of the CAMA Land Use document. Use of wheat straw bales for sand fencing with rule making as an alternative source since sand fencing is expensive and in short supply. CRC is asking towns to take over CAMA permitting responsibilities, but the risk is financial and resource availability.

b. Accomplishments 2024 and Goals 2025 – Mike Benson

Mike said we should put together a draft of our 2024 accomplishments and 2025 goals for our December meeting so we can move forward in January. William Snyder and Larry Strother volunteered to assist in this process.

c. Future Leadership – Mike Benson

We will hold our election for chairman and vice-chairman at the December meeting so that leadership will be place for 2025.

IX. Upcoming Meetings & Conference

- a. CRC - Nov. 13-14, 2024, @ Ocean Isle Beach Town Hall, 111 Causeway Drive, Ocean Isle Beach**
- b. NCBIWA's Fall Conference – Nov. 18 & 19 @ The Aloft by Hotel, 501 Nutt Street, Wilmington**

X. Public/Commission Members Comments

None made

XI. Next Meeting – Thursday, December 12, 2024 – Topsail Beach Town Hall

XII. Adjournment and thank you for your support

Mike asked for a motion to adjourn. Hiram Williams made the motion with a second by Teresa Batts and it passed unanimously.