

TOWN OF EDISTO BEACH
May 24, 2023
BEACHFRONT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
10:00 a.m.

MINUTES

Call to Order

Chairman Dallas Lovelace called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Present

Chairman Dallas Love; Marie Bost, David Blauch, Stanley Hergott, Paul Oakley, Bob Ringer, Committee members. *Quorum of Members Present.*

Absent

Pat Deloach (excused)

Others Attending

Crawford Moore, Mayor; Council members Jerome Kizer, Bob Renner, Jay Watts; Mark Aakhus, Town Administrator; Dee Stalvey, Assistant Town Administrator; Ms. Chrissa Waite, Project Manager, USACE.

Chairman Lovelace welcomed new committee member Marie Bost. He also welcomed Mayor Moore and the Council Members attending this meeting for informational purposes.

Approval of Minutes – March 9, 2023, and April 13, 2023

Mr. Oakley made a motion to approve the minutes of March 9, 2023. Mr. Hergott seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Mr. Oakley made a motion to approve the minutes of April 13, 2023. Dr. Lovelace seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Comments from Town Administrator

Town Administrator Aakhus provided the following comments:

- Mr. Aakhus recapped the procedure to be used if a hurricane hits and we need nourishment between now and the project completion. At this point and until the USACE project is completed, FEMA is still responsible, and repairs will be a 75/25 split with the Town. Following the USACE project completion, USACE will be responsible for any renourishment projects.
- Mr. Aakhus also gave an update on the groins. It was confirmed by the USACE and Coastal Science Engineering (CSE) that groin improvements in 2017 went above and beyond so they approved this to be in the project, and we will ask for reimbursement for approximately \$3.1 million. If there is major groin work needed, it will go through the USACE permitting process.
- Regarding groin height, Steven Traynum of CSE noted raising height of the groin will not improve sand trapping and is not a benefit. Question from Mr. Hergott regarding any plans

for lengthening of the groins. Mr. Aakhus noted throughout the years the groins have been adjusted as needed; in 2017, the goal was reached and the USACE validated and approved the work we did, and we completed work further than what was required. Ms. Waite noted the USACE used modeling; when CSE did the project in 2017 it was all based on modeling and deciding what length the groins need to be.

- Our job is to maintain the groins in working order; anything major needs to be evaluated and reviewed.

New Business

USACE Project/Discussion with Ms. Chrissa Waite, Project Manager:

- Ms. Waite shared the draft schedule as of May 24, 2023, for the project. Winter season is the best time to do the work.
- Work is continuing on the preliminary design. There will be an easement line established, as well as the actual construction area. 35% design will establish the easement line and then the real estate acquisition can begin. This 35% design plan is to be completed by June; then additional data is collected on the off-shore and near-shore environment in order to know the requirements for ordering materials. The USACE will work on this while we work on the acquisition of easements.
- The real estate acquisition could delay us in hitting the October 2024 date of awarding the contract area if we are unable to acquire all the real estate we need by that time. Acquisition right now is scheduled for August 2023 to June 2024, but this could be delayed.
- The focus is to complete construction by March 2025.
- Mr. Aakhus noted we will plan a public meeting at the Civic Center after the USACE shares the real estate schedule with us. The public meeting may take place in August 2023, but this will be discussed and confirmed at the appropriate time. Ms. Waite will share with the public the timeframe target. Also, will explain what the project will look like, where the dimensions of the project are, and what the 15 ft elevation dune will look like in an effort to help residents understand the dimensions of the project and how it will look on the ground, and why the 15 ft elevation is important. Dr. Lovelace noted we first need to have this presentation to this committee and Council prior to the public meeting. Ms. Waite agreed this is a great idea.
- Mr. Hergott asked if the easements are permanent. Yes, they are, for future nourishments, etc. Mark noted the benefit to the homeowner is that we do not need to go through this process again in 50 years. Ms. Waite noted the Town owns the easements. If the Town desired to stop the partnership, the Town could do away with the easements. "Perpetual" means it is forever unless the Town removes the easements. The Town can give the easements back to the owners. The Town cannot sell the easements. These items are all important to the homeowners. Discussion on the need to send letters to beachfront owners on what the 15, marking means. This is a critical piece for homeowners.
- The easement is a public-use easement. Vegetated dunes will be there, and people cannot cross the dune or hang out there. It is not practical or allowed that people can be on the dune.
- Ms. Waite noted a dry run of this presentation is crucial; and do as many as needed until we have the messaging down. She would like to consider a format different from a roomful of people and one person speaking – this kind of opens the door to one or two people dominating the room. Perhaps small group conversations

- or different ways to get people discussing the project and their concerns – might help diffuse things and allow for more discussion. Ms. Waite will think about this. Mr. Aakhus thinks some sort of hybrid is a better option. She will go to the Wilmington June 13 meeting to get some ideas.
- Ms. Waite noted the intent of the project is to protect property; both the beachfront home and the road and property behind it. The goal is not higher property valuations, but if this does occur, it is because we are reducing risk. Top three topics of the public meeting should be risk reduction, minimize storm damage, and ensure storm damage is handled.
- Mr. Renner asked if we should have two different meetings with property owners where we get very specific; and another with everyone to explain economic impact. Some concerns about separating the meetings; perhaps the break-out sessions of the public meeting can accomplish this. Ms. Waite noted it might be a good idea to meet with beachfront owners separately because beachfront owners are impacted in a different way. Or perhaps the easement signers have a different meeting after the first meeting. Mr. Blauch noted the resident owners who do not live here full-time, and those who rent, may think differently from those who live here full-time. Ms. Bost also noted a separate meeting with rental companies and real estate people might be a good idea.
- Any other groups like rental companies we should talk to who could spread the benefits? Mr. Aakhus noted the committee members can do so and help with this. Ms. Bost noted we all need the same talking points. Mr. Hergott suggested an article in the Edisto News. Ms. Waite noted at some time in the future this may be a possibility, but usually neighbor-to-neighbor conversation is best.
- Ms. Waite suggested a dry run earlier than August; but we can work on messaging, etc. we will use with residents over the next few months. Perhaps do so at this Committee's July meeting – July 13? Mr. Aakhus and Ms. Waite will see how the timeline and schedule are working out and will keep the Committee updated on the dry run.
- Dr. Lovelace noted photos and pictures from the past would be helpful in an effort to show what has happened to the beach in the past years.
- The Committee will also think about possible questions people ask and prepare a FAQs list. Project overview, fact list, common concerns, FAQs need to be included, and we should have these items and project updates on the Town website; perhaps before the meeting so people can be aware of this before they come to the public hearing.

Other Issues/Concerns/Information

Regarding the regularly scheduled June 8 meeting, it was the Committee's consensus to cancel that meeting and plan to meet for the July 13 meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Blauch made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 11:06 a.m.

APPROVED BY THE BEACHFRONT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE



Donna Iskra, Municipal Clerk
July 13, 2023