

Town of Oriental, NC
Harbor Waterfronts Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes – June 13, 2019

With a quorum being present, Ms. Lisa Thompson called the meeting to order at 8:05 AM. Present were Ms. Lisa Thompson, Commissioner Diane Simmons; Town Manager, Ms. Diane Miller; Mr. Don McGuire, Mr. Pat Stockwell, Mr. Jim Blackerby, and Mr. Dan Allen.

1. Ms. Diane Miller gave update on the Coastal Resiliency Conference she attended.
 - a. A challenge exists with the current hurricane grading system, in that it is based on wind speed. In most cases for the local area, it's not the wind, it's the water level rise that does the vast majority of the damage, and it's a struggle to communicate that. The frequency and intensity of storms has increased, there is now a 30% chance of having 100 year storm every other year.
 - b. The state, counties and municipalities need to manage storm water better. Mainland Hyde County has a great water runoff plan and has invested heavily on dykes, ditches, walls, etc. Hydraulic modeling to manage storm surge is underway in many areas of the state to better understand risks. Locally, we have three times more flooding risk than is shown on FEMA maps (which are all prior Irene/Florence). USDA and RCS are studying and taking action to remit erosion in areas, specifics were not covered, but there may be some opportunity for us locally.
 - c. They did mention there is a proposal (just a proposal, not a plan) being drafted about buyouts for homes located in a flood plain, then designate the land as unbuildable. That decreases long term spend on homes that are continuously rebuilt after storms, but it also requires an initial spend to do the buyouts and shrinks the tax base. From the study, the average home value is \$550k.
 - d. Presentations are being distributed from the conference, and will be shared with the HWAC. Several representatives from all the councils/CAMA, etc. were there and hopefully will influence them on approval of our work to protect/rebuild Whittaker Point. Gave good stats on how much more stringent building codes save home owners, businesses and government money.
 - e. There is a new resiliency office looking at how to best prepare for storms. It's part of the state Safety office, not DEQ.
 - f. One of the biggest challenges faced by the Town is people that stay during storms and how much effort is spent either getting them to leave, or checking on

them to be sure they are safe. It takes all of law enforcement and others to try to get people to leave. People see forecasts for a Cat 1 storm (wind) and forget how much influence that will have on water level. During Florence 60% of people stayed, which is not favorable for the town. 275 structures and 50 businesses were impacted during Florence, people need to better understand the risk they take when they decide to stay. Need to consider getting more education out to people on a much more frequent basis due to the town's population turnover. One thing to consider is to educate the public on how much it costs the town for people who stay.

2. Status of Current Projects and storm repairs

- a. Whittaker Point Restoration – There is an on-site review of plans for the point today, the engineering firm invited all the groups that have a say in approval of plans to attend. There was a scoping meeting with state and federal authorities that sign off on plan a couple weeks ago. The group reduced some of the areas of fill, and retained some as well. Some planned fill areas were changed to oyster bags, and they recommended placing some of the bags closer to shore. The group also recommended placing more fill in the back (north) side of the point. Doing so would add to the cost, so more grant money may be needed to cover the additional expense. The group denied the 200 foot jetty that was proposed to protect the creek, but they will allow a 30 foot rock barrier to be installed off Whittaker Point. Part of the grant includes planting water born and upland vegetation/trees. We can ask the Tree Board for help if/when appropriate.
- b. Whittaker Creek Dredging – The dredging grant extension was approved which keeps the grant money available for three years. CAMA found the original dredging permit from the 90s, so a maintenance permit is all that is needed. This makes the process easier, and will save up to \$60k in fees. If other businesses in Oriental donate their fair share, the town would be over the dollar amount needed to receive the grant. Letters were sent to businesses and home owners adjacent to the creek that have not donated which did produce a slight increase in donations. Kevin Hart is the new CAMA representative for the Oriental area, the former representative, Brad, is still there, but changed roles. He may remain involved in our projects since he has all the history on them. Our request will be to get the channel to 100' wide due to safety rather than 50', we may end up settling at 75' wide, which will still be much improved and safer than it is now. Some dredgers have already expressed interest in doing the work, which is a good sign for competitive bids. We also need to start exploring setting up a vehicle to hold perpetual funds to use for maintaining the channel.

- c. Fishing Pier – Work is complete on the pier itself. The fish cleaning station still needs to be installed.
- d. Abandoned Boats – There is a growing issue with boats being moored in the harbor that are just “stored” there. Before the town can take any action to put an ordinance in place to prohibit such activity, official “jurisdiction” must be established. The first step in getting jurisdiction established is to get the survey completed. A Contract is awarded to an engineering firm to do so, they still need to start work.

3. Committee Action Items:

- a. All need to review the abandoned/derelict boats ordinance draft Mr. Dan Allen distributed via email and send suggestions for changes back to Dan prior to the next meeting.
 - b. All need to review the Storm Preparedness ordinance draft Mr. Jim Blackerby distributed via email, compare it Town Manager Miller’s Storm Preparedness notice distributed at the meeting and send suggestions for changes back to Jim prior to the next meeting.
4. Without objection, the meeting was adjourned at 8:58 AM with the next meeting scheduled for 11 July at 8:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Dan Allen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dan Allen', written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned to the right of the typed name 'Dan Allen'.