

Town of North Topsail Beach

Joann M. McDermon, Mayor
Mike Benson, Mayor Pro Tem

Aldermen:
Richard Grant
Don Harte
Connie Pletl
Robert Swantek



Alice Derian, ICMA-CM
Town Manager

Danyale Lundy
Town Clerk

Nature's Tranquil Beauty

Beach, Inlet, and Sound Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes

April 26, 2022, at 10:30am

2008 Loggerhead Court, North Topsail Beach. NC 28460

Present: Mike Benson (Chair), Rick Grant (Alderman), Deborah Coltrane(Phase One), Thomas Garrison (Phase Two), Michael Pawelko (Phase Three), John Gardner(Phase Four), Larry Strother (Phase Five), Alice Derian (Town Manager), Tim Foster (Onslow County Commissioner), Chris Gibson (Coastal Engineer) and Danyale Lundy (Town Clerk).

1. Welcome and Introductions – Mike Benson, Chair

Chairman Benson called the meeting to order shortly after 10:30 am and welcomed County Commissioner Tim Foster who will serve as county liaison to the committee. Each member then gave a brief background of themselves and why they are serving on the committee followed by Commissioner Foster describing his background and interest in shoreline protection.

2. Approval of Agenda

Chairman Benson asked for a motion to approve the agenda. John Gardner moved to approve the agenda with a second from Larry Strother. The motion passed unanimously; 7-0.

3. Approval of minutes

Chairman Benson asked for a motion to approve the March minutes. Larry Strother moved to approve the minutes with a second from John Gardner. The motion passed unanimously; 7-0.

4. Public Comments

No one provided public comment.

5. Current Status of Shoreline Protection Projects – Manager Derian

FEMA Cat G & Cat B. Work continues on the Phase 5 Cat G project that is building back the beach where the contractor, ST Wooten has placed about 100,000 cy of sand. State funds in the amount of \$1.5 million have been received and will be used to restart the paused Cat B dune restoration work north of the SeaView Pier. Both projects were given CAMA extensions into turtle season but must pause on May 10.

Commissioner Foster questioned progress for County Beach Access no. 4.

Manager Derian replied that the work will be done from landward side so minimal impact on beach side. The Hatteras ramp will be taken up and re-installed once sand placed. Contractor estimates one day to mobilize and one day to haul and place sand in dune line.

6. Shoreline Protection – Chris Gibson

Chris Gibson, our coastal technical advisor, explained that the proper mind set is important when thinking about beach nourishment. Corps projects are all or nothing, but other strategies also can be successful if continued consistently over time.

Mr. Gibson then gave a tutorial to explain a typical beach profile and how sand moves in the dynamic environment among the dune, beach (berm) and underwater zone near the beach. Even though sand may disappear from the dune line or beach system, it is still in the profile but now underwater. Sand in this underwater zone is ready to come back to the beach when prevailing winds and currents favor onshore movement of that sand.

Mr. Gibson used the example of the Town of Topsail Beach nourishment plan in which sand was placed in 'layers' over a period of about 10-12 years to build the 4.6 miles of dunes and beach profile to where it is today i.e. a system that is in equilibrium. About \$12 million dollars was spent to achieve this goal with the NC State Shallow Draft Inlet Fund covering 66%, Federal FEMA dollars covering the other 33% such that Topsail Beach's out of pocket cost was zero dollars.

In shoreline protection, unforeseen consequences are going to happen both bad and good. Mason Inlet for example changed Mr. Gibson's fundamental view of how inlets and rivers leading to them work. Things taught in school were 'wrong.' In the process of re-aligning Mason Inlet, the severe erosion at the north end of Wrightsville Beach was reduced markedly and a bird island was established in the re-claimed land.

Sand sources can be an issue for Topsail Island. Trucked in sand from local sand mines is high-quality beach sand. Offshore sand borrowing areas from Topsail up to Bogue Banks are 'hard bottom' where the sand layer is thin and interspersed with hard marine sediment. Cutter head dredges bring up sand mixed with rock fragments from the marine sediment that is not good for beach nourishment. Hopper dredges 'suck up' the sand and loose rocks but thin sand layers make work tedious and unproductive.

Where does the money come from? State, shallow draft, federal and how to leverage once you know how your project can fit into the funding.

Given Mr. Gibson presentation, Deborah Coltrane stressed the importance of property owners getting the facts before making unbased assumptions on social media. She suggested that Mr. Gibson be asked to give public meeting presentations like turtle talks held at Town Hall to educate the public on beach nourishment.

7. BISAC Charter – Mike Benson

Chairman Benson asked for a discussion of the proposed committee charter as the committee has now had three monthly meetings and the Board of Aldermen have approved the vision and mission statement for the committee.

Deborah Coltrane raised the question of naming the entity a 'committee' versus a 'board.' She also questioned whether a charter should have a preamble. As an entity

that reports to the Board of Aldermen rather than an entity that sets policy, it was decided that 'committee' was the proper name for BISAC.

Alderman Grant noted the need to have a shoreline committee for strategic planning given that the terms of elected officials are limited. The body of knowledge carried forward by a standing committee will help to ensure that 'institutional memory' for shoreline protection is not lost as elected officials change over time. Larry Strother continued this idea by suggesting that it will be important to formally document the activities of the committee over time as the body of knowledge generated by the committee will become a basis of reference for the future work of the committee.

Larry Strother made a motion to accept the charter after the changes Deborah Coltrane suggested and Michael Pawelko seconded the motion. It passed unanimously 7-0. Chairman Benson will present the charter to the Board of Aldermen at its monthly meeting in May.

8. Impromptu Discussion of EIS Status and Stabilizing Inlets

Committee members brought up the status of the environment impact statement or EIS process and the terminal groin for New River Inlet. Chairman Benson emphasized that the committee should NOT assume that a terminal groin is the only possible outcome of the EIS work by the US Army Corps of Engineers. The EIS document contains an engineer's report by Mr. Fran Way, coastal engineer with ATM Inc. in Charleston, SC that proposes five alternatives to alleviating the erosion rate at the New River Inlet. One of the five is a terminal groin but another alternative is to do nothing at all. The Engineer's Report states that a terminal groin is the preferred option to reduce erosion, so that is a main focus of the Corps EIS study. The Town would like the best, affordable option to reduce the inlet erosion rate for protection of property and infrastructure in the inlet area. Until the Corps releases its final draft of the EIS statement, no further action can be taken by the Town.

When asked about the dredging of Lockwood Folly Inlet and the short benefit derived, Chris Gibson explained that only the inlet was dredged. Mr. Gibson used the example of Topsail Inlet, a project he coordinated, in which the key element was to 'connect up' all the 'back' channels behind Topsail Beach so that channel connectivity (depth and width) could accommodate the normal tidal flow into and out of the inlet. This connectivity has resulted in an inlet that has not migrated over the past 10-12 years since the project first started.

9. Unencapsulated Styrofoam Float Ordinance – Mike Benson

Chairman Benson reviewed the process for recommending ordinances to the Board of Aldermen. The BISAC committee does not write ordinances those are usually prepared by the Town Planning Director. Thus, the updated document for review today is a set of guidelines that could be used in writing an ordinance by the Planning Director after review by the Planning Board, if the Planning Board agrees that such an ordinance would be beneficial in protecting the environment and could be accommodated in our town ordinances without undue penalty to property owners constructing floating docks and piers. The ordinance would ban the use of unencapsulated polystyrene in dock floats and piers. Chairman Benson will make this recommendation to the BOA.

10. Public Comments (3-minute limit/person) -- None

11. Next Meeting – Tuesday, May 24, 2022, at 10:30 am

12. Adjournment -- Meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm by unanimous consent.