

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



Alice Derian, ICMA-CM
Town Manager

Aldermen:
Richard Grant
Tom Leonard
Connie Pletl
Laura Olszewski

Nancy Avery
Interim Town Clerk

**Beach, Inlet, Sound Advisory Committee
Tuesday, January 16, 2024, at 10:30 A.M.
MINUTES**

The Beach, Inlet, Sound Advisory Committee held its regular meeting on January 16, 2024.
A quorum of the committee was present.

Committee members in attendance:

Larry Strother – Chair - Phase 5
Teri Ward – At Large
Deborah Coltrane – Phase I
Mike Benson – Alderman
Rick Grant – Alderman

Members absent:

Steve Scheibner – At Large
John Gardner – Phase 4
Tim Foster – Onslow County Commissioner

Staff present:

Alice Derian – Town Manager
Wendy Conant – Project Facilitator/Code Enforcement Officer

Welcome and Introductions

Chair Strother called the meeting to order at 10:30 am.

Approval of the Agenda

Motion - Member Grant motioned to approve the agenda as presented; seconded by Member Ward; unanimously approved.

Approval of December 5, 2023, minutes

Motion - Member Ward motioned to approve the December 5, 2023, minutes as presented; seconded by Member Benson; unanimously approved.

Public Comments - None

Current Status of Shoreline Protection Projects

Manager Derian stated:

Beach Projects:

- The contractor continues to work on the Phase 5 project. The contractor reported that the 421-sand production is slower than normal due to delayed expansion permitting. The contracted volume for the current project is 290,000 Cubic Yards and this is still the volume the Town expects to receive.
The slowed production of beach compatible sand has affected progress; however, it is the Town's expectation that the contractor completes the project by the end of the current environmental permitting window which ends on April 30th.
- The crossover at Oyster Lane has been repaired from recent storms and was re-opened on January 9th and fared well during the most recent storm.
- The Town's engineers were asked to complete a survey of beach conditions following the most recent storm. There is some change but not as bad as the previous one as it did not reach as far inland. The Board brought up Marina Way at the last BOA meeting and I have passed on some other hot spot areas to the engineer, such as Topsail Dunes, to assess and recommend any action.

Member Ward asked if we would be delayed on Phase Four because of problems with Phase Five.

Manager Derian responded that she thinks so.

Member Benson asked Manager Derian if she wanted to talk about the Beach Vitex grant now or later in the agenda.

Manager Derian stated last year she reported that we were looking at applying for a grant island wide with Surf City and Topsail Beach to remediate vitex. She asked TI Coastal to follow up with Coastal transplants for an updated estimate for removal for our area. We have budgeted for that in the event the grant did not come through this year. We will likely do the same thing this year. It does not make sense for one town to concentrate on removal as it is so invasive it will continue to spread across the island.

Member Grant asked Member Benson to talk about what vitex does to the beach grasses and why it is important to get rid of it.

Member Benson said vitex is a plant with a single tap root system, like a pine tree, but instead of growing up, it grows out. As it grows out, it shades the beach grasses so they cannot get sun light and cannot grow. When you remove the tap root, you have all this area of the dune surface that was covered by the foliage of a spreading out plant, so you have all this bare ground. If you do not replant with the coastal grasses, the vitex can get re-established. It is a two-phase process removal: removing the vitex and re-planting the dune with beach grasses because those root systems are fibrous and spread out. That is what holds the sand together, particularly when we have storms.

Member Benson asked Manager Derian if she spoke with the other town managers to determine a coordination strategy as to who is going to apply for the grant.

Manager Derian replied that she and the town managers have been touching base every few months while they wait for the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation (CSDM) grants to be

announced. It was just announced this month. We have a meeting later today and we will discuss a timeline to go forward.

Member Strother asked if the intent was for all three towns to apply so if one got it all would receive it?

Manager Derian said that is the intent.

Member Grant stated that his view as an Alderman is that this is something we need to do with or without a grant. We have budgeted for it with or without a grant. This is important enough for stabilizing the dunes, that we do this anyway.

Member Ward asked if the other towns would do it if they do not get a grant.

Manager Derian said she cannot speak for the other two towns so we will have to wait and see when the announcements are made. I will say we were the only town that put the money in our budget and were able to move forward if we wanted to. We decided to wait because we were pretty confident that these funds would be released again and we would have a very good chance for the project, especially because it is island wide.

Member Benson said dollar wise, this project will be relatively small. The CSDM fund received \$10 million investment from the state legislature and another \$10 million for next year. There is money in that fund for this kind of project.

Committee organization, terms ending and process for re-appointment to BISAC

Member Benson stated the Board of Aldermen passed a revised Rules of Procedure for committee at the last board meeting. We have changed some things around a little bit. There are three members of this committee whose terms will end next month - Members Grant, Gardner and Ward. If you want to be considered for re-appointment, please re-apply through the Town's website. A call was put out town wide through the Sunshine List for people that live in Phases Two and Three to apply, so we can have committee members represent the five different phases.

Member Grant said the way it is set up now is there is no pre-screening process. All of the Aldermen see all of the applications submitted. The Aldermen felt that they should look at all of the applications.

2024 Meeting Schedule

Chair Strother stated the committee has been meeting every third Tuesday except for the month of July. He proposes we maintain continuing to meet on the third Tuesday, if that is working for members. It has also been discussed as to whether there is a need to continue with monthly meetings or should we consider bi-monthly meetings.

He proposed meeting the third Tuesday of the month through June 2024. There is no meeting in July. At the June meeting the committee can make a decision on how we want to go forward from there. A lot depends on where the Five and Thiry Year Plan is

Member Grant said the budget is approved in June so it is definitely a good idea for the committee to keep the meeting date in June.

Motion – Member Ward motioned to keep the BISAC meetings the third Tuesday of every month at 10:30 am through June; seconded by Member Coltrane; unanimously approved.

CSDM fund opportunity

Member Benson said he thinks it would be good for them to discuss some possibilities for the CSDM fund. We had a pretty severe storm with dune erosion. We might consider, once we get the engineers' survey, using some of our un-earmarked funds in Fund 30 beach fund to possibly apply for a CSDM grant to work on those sections of the dunes that were pretty severely damaged. He opened it up for discussion.

Member Coltrane said as the representative from Phase I they have lost a considerable amount of sand. She has been here since 2014 and we have lost all the sand we got this summer and we are way below what it was in 2014. She is sure the engineer is going to talk about how much sand has been lost in that Phase. She highly recommends we look for ways to refresh and restore the dunes.

Member Ward said she agrees. If we have this opportunity, we should take advantage of it because it is just going to get worse. She questioned whether that would change anything in the Five- or Thirty-Year Plan.

Member Grant said it is too complicated with the litigation with the revetment committee but is a good question to put to Chris (engineer).

Committee members discussed the grants process.

Proposed Five Year Action Plan and Thirty -Year Plan

Chair Strother said he would like the committee to discuss what engineer Chris Gibson went over at the last meeting. He thinks we are to a point with what he has proposed and covered most of the bases that would be important to the Board of Aldermen for us to be able to send this to the Board of Aldermen for its review. He gave an abbreviated go-through of it to the Aldermen at the December meeting.

Member Grant stated he thinks it would be a mistake for us to take something to the Board of Aldermen that is not done and ask for approval. He does agree with Larry (Strother) that we have to get the ball rolling. It would be a good idea to have Chris (Gibson) at the Board meeting.

Chair Strother asked Manager Derian for her opinion.

Manager Derian stated her advice is to have it placed on the agenda for the February Board of Aldermen agenda. Chris (Gibson) does need to present this to the Board of Aldermen.

Chair Strother reviewed the proposed plans.

Motion – Member Ward motioned to move this presentation and discussion to the Board of Aldermen and have Chris Gibson from TI Coastal present to answer any questions; seconded by Member Coltrane; unanimously approved.

Public Comments - None

Next Meeting

Chair Strother announced the next meeting will be Tuesday, February 20, 2024, at 10:30 am.

Adjournment

Motion – Member Ward motioned to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Member Benson; unanimously approved.

I certify these minutes were adopted as presented by a unanimous vote of the committee on February 20, 2024.

*Nancy Avery
Interim Town Clerk*