

Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterway Committee

**ESRNWC July 16, 2020 Minutes**

At a meeting of the Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee held on the 16th day of July, 2020 at 2:00 p.m. via virtual meeting platform ZOOM.

Members Present:           John Joeckel, Chair  
                                  Granville Hogg, Vice Chair  
                                  John Tavoraro  
                                  William J. "Billy" Tarr  
                                  George "Danny" Bowden  
                                  John Coker

Members Absent           Donald L. Hart  
                                  James Dixon  
                                  J.T. Holland  
                                  Dixon Leatherbury

Others Present:           Shannon Alexander, A-NPDC  
                                  Grayson Williams, A-NPDC  
                                  John Walsh, Waterway  
                                  Tracy Quast, Waterway  
                                  Rebecca Francese, Waterway  
                                  Stewart Hall, Accomack County  
                                  Chris Hein, VIMS  
                                  Chris Turner, USACE Norfolk District  
                                  Jeff Tabar, Stantec  
                                  Todd DeMunda, Stantec  
                                  Kim Huskey, Cherrystone Aquafarms  
                                  Jason Norris BMC, USCG STA Wachapreague  
                                  Albert Grimes, USCG  
                                  Michael Hall BML, USCG Ant Chincoteague  
                                  Steve Soherr, NOAA  
                                  Joe Betit, HydroDrone Team  
                                  Lucas Antunes, HydroDrone Team  
                                  Jesse McCaleb, HydroDrone Team  
                                  Jeff Deem, Resident

**Call to Order:**

Chairman John Joeckel called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

**Minutes**

**Mr. Tarr made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 16, 2020 meeting. The motion, seconded by Mr. Joeckel, carried unanimously.**

**Old Business:**

- a. Hydrographic Surveys/LIDAR/Coast Pilot- Steve Soherr, NOAA presented an update for the hydrographic surveys to be completed on the Eastern Shore of Virginia. Mr. Soherr explained to the Committee that the information NOAA currently has is out of date and needs to be updated. John Joeckel, Chairman agreed with Mr. Soherr and explained to Mr. Soherr that completing LIDAR surveys soon is crucial for the Eastern Shore, prioritizing waterways that require dredging. Mr. Soherr stated that the Quinby Channel will be surveyed next year but other waterways on the Eastern Shore will not be considered for another two years. Mr. Joeckel explained that the Quinby Channel has already been surveyed and the channel doesn't need to be surveyed again next year. Mr. Soherr stated that because of surveys not being completed for another two years, the Coastal Pilot Sub Committee would be able to provide guidance in updating this information. Mr. Soherr suggested the option of using recorded depths from local stakeholders to update this information until the surveys are complete. Mr. Joeckel and the Committee will address this concern soon.

Mr. Soherr went on to explain that NOAA electronic navigational charts (NOAA ENC) are undergoing major improvements and asked the Committee for a prioritized list of channels that they would like to see at a 1:20,000 resolution vs the standard 1:40,000 resolution.

- b. VIMS NFWF Cedar Island Update- Chris Hein, VIMS provided an update for the VIMS NFWF Cedar Island Project. Mr. Hein explained that it was decided to proceed with concept number two for the restoration of Cedar Island. This concept is known as The Northern Marsh Platform and will restore and stabilize the northern sector of the marsh to decrease the risk of the island breaching from its northern beach. Mr. Hein stated that the preliminary designs are currently at 30% and VIMS submitted their second proposal to NFWF. Final designs will be completed in the fall of 2021. Jeff Tabar, of Stantec, explained that their previous restoration project in Delaware was funded through the relief and recovery funds that were created by Hurricane Sandy. Mr. Tabar said those types of funds will not be available for the Cedar Island project and are still looking at other

funding sources to complete this project. In the winter of 2021, Stantec will have an 89% idea of the overall construction costs for the project.

c. VA Commonwealth WMF

- i. 2020 WMF Projects Funded- Grayson Williams, A-NPDC stated that all the applications submitted on behalf of Accomack and Northampton County were accepted and fully funded for 2020. He went on to say that the Wachapreague Channel for Accomack County will be a full phase one project. Folly Creek will be Part A of Phase One which will include surveying the channel, sediment sampling, and developing a disposal strategy. Part A of Phase One will be for all the projects under Northampton. Shannon Alexander, A-NPDC added that it was decided to proceed with Part A of Phase One after discussions ensued with local stakeholders and the needs for local waterways. These projects will bring a better understanding of prioritizing state waterways for future dredging needs.
- ii. Current Project Progress- Tracy Quast, Waterway explained their status of the Quinby Channel project and the Kings Creek project. Mrs. Quast first presented the hydrographic survey they completed for the Quinby Channel. She stated the highest concern from this survey is the shoaling that is occurring in the Federal Channel. There are only roughly 12,000 cubic yards of sediment in the state channel to dispose of and roughly 84,000 cubic yards of sediment in the federal channel. Mrs. Quast also stated that sediment from Peelers Point seems to be moving into the federal channel causing the extensive shoaling issue since its previous dredging in 2017 by the USACE. Rebecca Francese, Waterway added that based on the sediment sampling, there is a correlation between the Federal Channel and Peeler's point sediment to confirm this statement from Mrs. Quast. Mrs. Francese said that it would be best not to dispose at Peeler Point unless geotubes, a kind of containment technology, were to be used. Chris Turner, USACE Norfolk District stated that he was very surprised at how much the Federal Channel has shoaled in a short amount of time since its last dredging project. Mrs. Francese provided three different disposal strategies for the sediment: 1) Offboarding Site (location unknown) 2) Upland Disposal Site 3) Geotubes at Peeler Point. She explained that geotubes are a great long-term investment to stabilize the marsh at Peeler Point but the cost to purchase these are high. Mr. Joeckel stated that the dredging need in the state channel is low based on the cubic yards provided by Waterway, particularly compared with the federal channel and that once the process begins to dredge the federal channel, the Committee will need to work with the USACE to create a separate contract to also dredge the state waterway.

Mr. Turner added that the earliest the USACE could start the Quinby channel would be in 2023.

Mrs. Quast proceeded to present the preliminary survey for Kings Creek, potential sample sediment areas, and a proposed widening area for the channel. There are roughly 24,000 cubic yards to be disposed of in the Kings Creek Channel. Mrs. Francese added that SAVs are highly protected on the bayside and when applying for the permit, there should be zero impact to SAVs in the area. Kim Huskey, Cherrystone Aquafarms stated that Cherrystone's beaches will take as much sandy beach sediment from the channel but is unknown to a specific disposal site. Granville Hogg, Vice-Chairman asked if Waterway is aware of the new pier in the channel. The aerial photo on Waterway's preliminary survey does not show this pier and will cause disturbances when dredging starts. Mrs. Francese answered that their final survey will incorporate this pier and its exact coordinates along with an updated aerial photo. Mr. Soherr also added that he will request project data to update NOAA's system. He is also able to see if an access permit was done for the pier and would be able to see if there is an obstruction to the channel.

- d. USACE- Chris Turner, USACE Norfolk District reviewed the USACE update that was provided in the packet, and a discussion followed. Ms. Alexander asked if Mr. Turner knew where funding was being reallocated from to complete the Tangier Emergency Dredging Project. Mr. Turner was unaware but will follow up and provide an answer.
- e. USCG- Discussion ensued with regards to how the USCG analyzes and considers navigable waterways as opposed to how the USACE looks at specific project areas. Albert Grimes, USCG answered saying that buoys were replaced with danger beacons in the Quinby Channel due to the extensive shoaling occurring in the federal channel near the marina. Though the state channel may be safe to navigate, mariners need to be aware of the dangers when entering the marina. Michael Hall BML, USCG Ant Chincoteague added that the USCG examines waterways in their entirety compared to separating into federal and state channels. Mr. Grimes stated that once dredging is complete in the channel, they will reevaluate the consideration of replacement of AtoNs.

John Cooker asked for an update in regards to the anchorage that was to be set in place outside of Cape Charles. He stated this was put in place but has yet to be utilized by the pilots. Mr. Hall will follow up with his colleagues and update Mr. Cooker.

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- f. Update on ESRNWC membership- Mr. Williams reviewed each Committee's member term and acknowledged the new Committee member Dixon Leatherbury succeeding in Spencer Murray's position.

**New Business:**

- a. Shallow Draft Navigation Funding- Mr. Williams reviewed the letters sent to our state representatives to recognize the importance of funding to maintain our state waterways.

**Other Matters:**

William J. "Billy" Tarr stated that the Chincoteague Harbor Master is requesting that the private markers near Lewis Creek in the Chincoteague Bay are still yet to be approved. He asked if the USCG could investigate this and provide an update.

**William J. "Billy" Tarr made a motion to create an Executive Committee, made up of the Chairman and the Vice Chairman, to be capable of carrying out actions, if the two are in agreement, such as providing comment letters and letters of support that align with the Resolution for the Eastern Shore Navigable Waterway Committee for a period of 1 year (through July of 2021). Once the action is agreed upon, a notice will be sent out to inform the remainder of the Committee. Regular quarterly meeting will still be held and the action agreed upon will not replace such meetings. The motion, seconded by Committee Member Coker, carried unanimously.**

**Public Comment:**

None

**Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn**

The Committee agreed the next meeting will be on October 15, 2020 at 2:00 pm, venue to be determined. Chairman John Joeckel adjourned the meeting at 4:30 pm.

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John Joeckel, Chair

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Shannon Alexander, Secretary

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Date