

Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterway Committee

ESRNWC April 18, 2019 Minutes

At a meeting of the Eastern Shore Regional Navigable Waterways Committee held on the 18th day of April, 2019 at 2:00 p.m. in the Conference Room of the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission in the Enterprise Building in Accomac.

Members Present:	George “Danny” Bowden Granville Hogg, Vice Chair John Joeckel, Chair John Tavoraro J.T. Holland William J. “Billy” Tarr
Members Absent	Donald L. Hart James Dixon John Coker Spencer Murray
Others Present:	Chris Turner, USACE Elaine Meil, A-NPDC Jason Brisson, USCG Sector Hampton Roads Jeff Deem, VMRC/FMAC Kim Husky, Cherrystone Aqua Farms Mihael Anderson, Norfolk District USACE Shannon Alexander, A-NPDC Thomas Walker, J.C. Walker Bros.

Call to Order

Chairman Joeckel called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. He requested all present to briefly introduce themselves.

Minutes

Mr. Holland made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2019 meeting. The motion, seconded by Mr. Tarr, carried unanimously.

Old Business

a. By-laws amendment

Mr. Tarr made a motion to amend the Committee ByLaws ARTICLE VI 6-1 to hold the meetings at 2:00pm instead of 3:00pm. The motion, seconded by Mr. Hogg, carried unanimously.

b. VA Commonwealth Waterway Maintenance Fund Applications Update – Chairman Joeckel and Ms. Alexander provided an update that both projects were presented to the VPA on February 14th and final applications submitted by March 1st. They reported that a Resolution of Award will be presented at the May 21st VPA Board meeting, and the VPA should give notice to applicants soon thereafter. There were about 8 total applications received by the VPA totaling about \$4M. Committee Member Hogg indicated that he had dredging plans on file from previous maintenance of Kings Creek and will share that with staff.

c. USACE written update on the following, with verbal discussion where indicated

i. Chincoteague Inlet Federal Navigation Project – Chris Turner

provided an update that the FY19 budget was \$0 and is usually between \$500-800k. However, \$750k was able to be used from another appropriation. The FY20 budget included \$400k. Typically the funds are sufficient to spot dredge twice a year (in front of the spring and fall fisheries) and complete some surveying.

ii. Chincoteague Bay (Greenbackville) Federal Navigation Project –

Chris Turner provided an update that the bid opened last Monday (4/8) and that they are working with Accomack County Department of Public Works about onsite material.

iii. Oyster Channel Federal Navigation Project

iv. WCV Federal Navigation Project (Bradford Bay & Finney Creek)

v. Tangier Island Jetty CAP Section 107

vi. Cedar Island CAP Section 204

vii. Assateague Island Beneficial Reuse Project – Chris Turner

reported that there was a meeting with Bart Wilson of Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge to discuss beneficial use project collaboration at that site. The Town of Chincoteague Mayor and Chairman Joeckel were also present. The intended use site would be the Swam Cove back barrier area. Neither the Murden nor the Currituck are capable. An estimated 100k yd³ will be needed for the beneficial use project. He referenced the area between AtoN 11 & 11A and Red 8 as the source for the material and the potential to alter the channel route to remove a dogleg and potentially shorten the overall length. Committee Member Tavolaro referenced a smaller dredge on the USACE force that could be a good fit for the project.

viii. FY2020 Work Plan Intentions – Michael Anderson provided an

update including the list of top 5 projects (in no particular order), listed here: Deep Creek, Little Machipongo (Parting Creek), Wachapreague/Finney, Parkers Creek, and Onancock Creek.

d. USCG update – BOSN Brisson reported that the needs of Hungars and Mattawoman Creeks have been approved to put out to bid, but that the soonest action

will be September due to Osprey nesting season. He reported that all of the damaged steel piles on Nassawadox Creek have been removed from the water and should be removed (by the contractor) from the marina property by June. He reported that the 8-week public comment period for Cape Charles changes will close April 22. He reported that all public comment periods have ended for the Cape Charles anchorage, but for a more detailed report we will need to contact Albert Grimes. He reported that Micahael Hall replaced BMC Warren Jefferies. Chairman Joeckel requested that the USCG supply a periodic contact list for appropriate points of contact (emails and phone numbers) as there are frequent changes. BOSN Brisson indicated that he would make sure that this happens.

e. Northampton County progress update – Committee Member Coker was not present to provide an update

f. Committee staff funding update – Ms. Alexander and Mrs. Meil reported that the Accomack County budget was finalized with the requested \$5k for staff funding, after Mrs. Meil had our Commission include in our budget requests to each county. The Northampton County budget has not yet been approved, but Ms. Alexander reported that Member Coker indicated he is doing all he can to ensure the funds are included.

New Business

- a. Section 408 Review** – Mrs. Meil reported that she attended a meeting with USACE initiated by Executive Director of the MPPDC, Lewis Lawrence, during which this was the item of concern. She gave a brief synopsis of the impact that Section 408 review could have on the Eastern Shore dredging projects (current and future). Mr. Anderson, of the USACE, contributed during this discussion, ensuring Mrs. Meil and the Committee that the Eastern Shore will not be excluded with regards to efforts towards a RP (regional permit/permission). During discussions about the Quinby VPA WMF project, which is adjacent to a Federal Project area and has the potential to request use of the same material placement site (Pealer Point), Mr. Thomas Walker indicated that he did not see a need for dredging beyond the federal channel in Upshur Bay.
- b. Eastern Shore Hydrographic Survey Presentation** – Chairman Joeckel introduced Mr. Joseph Betit and the importance of his efforts in creating baseline and ongoing data collection efforts, particularly with regards to our State Waterways, for which we have no hydrographic condition survey data with which to prioritize projects. Mr. Betit presented his efforts with Broadwater, ODU, and Go Virginia to bring a hydrodrone training institution to the Shore. He presented some of the capabilities of the technology and their applications and relevancy to the Committee, the USCG, the USACE, and the region.
- c. Initiative to increase annual WMF funding in 2020 GA**

Mr. Hogg made a motion to develop a memo for each County Board of Supervisor that requests placing an increase in the WMF funding on their respective legislative agenda to share with our state representatives in preparation for the 2020 General Assembly. The memo will include information about the need in our region and the total dollar amount requested to the VPA during the 2019 WMF application process. The motion, seconded by Mr. Holland, carried unanimously.

- d. Status of revised VMRC material placement regulations** – Ms. Alexander reported that she attended a stakeholder meeting at the VMRC office and that she did not think that this new fast-track legislation would have high impacts on the Committee’s projects, but rather had a list of all application components an applicant would need in order to have the permit issued in 60-days, plus 30 days for the local wetlands board. Ms. Alexander will share the draft VMRC process with members via email, as the draft will be taken to the Commission at their April 23rd meeting to request the regulation be scheduled for a public hearing at the May 28th Commission meeting.

Other Matters

None.

Public Comment

Mr. Thomas Walker of J.C. Walker Bros. spoke to the crisis situation that he feels the hatcheries in Willis Wharf are in with regards to water depths at low tide due to lack of maintenance (the last dredging by the USACE was about 30 years ago) and the shoaling that has occurred since that time. Last dredged to 14 feet, there is now about 5 to 6 feet of water at low tide in the area of highest concern, and the hatcheries need at least 4 feet of water for pumping during about 12 weeks of the year. The payroll is about \$30M and there are at least \$50M in gross receipts (total for both counties for each of these figures). The clam aquaculture industry region-wide relies on the hatcheries.

Mr. Tarr made a motion to make Parting Creek (Federal Project area: Little Machipongo River) the highest priority for receiving dredging maintenance. The motion, seconded by Mr. Holland, carried unanimously.

Mr. Anderson indicated that the USACE can proceed with completing a hydrodynamic survey of the project area as soon as possible and look into assessing the adjacent placement site, which will need maintenance and surveying in order to meet the needs of a dredging project.

Schedule Next Meeting and Adjourn

The Committee agreed the next meeting will be on July 18, 2019 at 2:00 pm in the DSS Conference Room in Eastville. Chairman Joeckel adjourned the meeting at 4:38 pm.

John Joeckel, Chair

Curtis Smith, Secretary

Date