

ASSOCIATION OF COASTAL TOWNS
April 1, 2019
MINUTES

A meeting of the Association of Coastal Towns was held on April 1, 2019 at 9:00 A.M. in the Margaret Rollins Community Center Lewes Meeting Room with the following present: Chairman Lewes Mayor Ted Becker, Henlopen Acres Mayor Joni Reich, Fenwick Island Mayor Gene Langan, Dewey Beach Mayor TJ Redefer, Rehoboth Beach Mayor Paul Kuhns, South Bethany Mayor Tim Saxton, ACT Consultant Tony Pratt, and Recording Secretary Jackie Doherty.

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Becker called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M. welcoming Sussex County Council Vice President I.G. Burton, Sussex County Councilman John Rieley, and Sussex County Administrator Todd Lawson. Bethany Beach Mayor Lew Killmer is not here today because he is attending a meeting regarding State MSA funding.

2. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 22, 2019 MEETING MINUTES

ACTION: *Mayor Langan made a motion to approve the minutes of February 22, 2019 as presented; Mayor Kuhns seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

3. FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

Mayor Reich reported the balance is \$10,275.00 with all bills paid. Mayor Reich requested the draft budget for the next fiscal year be reviewed at the next meeting. The financial report was accepted by common consensus.

4. UPDATE FROM TONY PRATT

- Lodging Tax (TID)

Mr. Pratt reported he has registered as an official lobbyist to allow him to speak to elected officials on behalf of the Association. This will provide an opportunity for discussion of the lodging tax and financial issues at local, county, state and federal level.

- Legislative Update

Mr. Pratt stated there have not been any updates on legislation in the General Assembly pertaining to the Association since the February meeting. Mr. Pratt had a meeting with Mr. Mike Powell and Mr. Jesse Hayden of DNREC to review budget issues. Meeting notes were sent to Mayor Becker to be forwarded to everyone for discussion over the next few weeks. Mr. Pratt will then speak to the General Assembly regarding these DNREC financial issues.

5. DISCUSSION OF ARMY CORPS 101 WORKSHOP (Held March 29)

Mr. Pratt stated the workshop meeting was very beneficial in helping to understand the processes and opportunities available for communities to work on projects with the Corps. If needed, there will be another workshop meeting scheduled. Congratulations to Senator Carper and Mr. John Kane on the success of the meeting.

Mr. Pratt reported he also attended a summit meeting in Washington D.C. regarding the Civil Works Project for the Corps. Lieutenant General Semonite, chief engineer for the Civil Works Programs, spoke of the need for better efficiency in the Corps for timing of the projects and the regulatory process.

Mayor Becker stated he also attended the Army Corps workshop meeting and noted very good representation of the Corps from Philadelphia and New York. The Feasibility Study is moving forward but will take three years to complete with an additional three years in the funding cycle.

Mr. Pratt spoke of the Back-Bay Study to include all Delaware Bayshore and Inland Bays with focus on the Inland Bays due to the ongoing Dredge Materials Utilization Study.

Mr. Pratt discussed the following:

- Section 1122 Pilot Program with one project to be funded by the Corps; the challenge for the community will be the start of the actual construction; may have an advantage with the support of Senator Carper and Senator Coons;
- Dredge Materials Utilization Study is extended for three years due to flood damage from Hurricane Sandy;
- The Back-Bay Study has not been started because the final agreement for the Feasibility Study has not been reached for the final signatures between the Corps and DNREC; attorneys are working on the language;
- Channel maintenance to provide sediment for shoreline stabilization and wetland development.

Mayor Becker spoke of the Lewes/Rehoboth Canal dredging project being identified in the 2020 budget for consideration but not being submitted by the President. Also, the importance of working with Senator Coons to represent the interests of the Association in having this placed back into the budget. The last dredging was in 2000 from Roosevelt Inlet to the Savannah Road Bridge.

6. UPDATE SEA GRANT

Ms. Danielle Swallow reported the University of Delaware and DEMA have plans for the week of April 15th to be named Severe Weather Awareness Week with information to include emergency evacuation planning during the hurricane season. Information is available on their websites.

Ms. Swallow continued stating Sea Grant, NOAA, and DNREC have scheduled a free, two-day training-session workshop for April 10th and April 11th. There are some seats still available. The plan includes case studies for city planners and municipalities to develop a communication plan with outreach goals regarding land-use issues, public health, infrastructure, severe weather, etc.

Ms. Swallow stated RASCL helped with the March 29th Corps event; began plans for the summit in Dover on November 15th with the theme being Land Use; the Sussex County Wetland and Buffer Working Group meets again on April 3rd from 2:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.; a briefing from the Delaware Geological Survey on groundwater, water tables, and the purpose of buffers is being planned for a future meeting.

7. DNREC UPDATE

Mr. Mike Powell reported the following:

- Rehoboth/Dewey Beach Nourishment Project schedule remains the same for late Spring bids with construction to begin in Fall 2019; DNREC has provided the Corps with the cost-share for the construction bidding process;
- Massey's Ditch Dredging Project will repeat the bidding process for more competitive, low-cost bids since only one bid was submitted the first time; changes have been made to the project to allow a four-month construction time from November 1st to March 1st to attract additional contractors to bid; flexibility changes have been added to the specifications for the pipe layouts from Massey's to the Indian River Inlet;
- Kitts Hummock and Pickering beach nourishments have been completed; Bowers Beach has begun and is scheduled to be completed by April 15th;
- Floodplain mapping group will be assembled this summer to review new floodplain mapping updates; community and county officials will be consulted to identify map corrections needed; Flood Prioritization Work Group will meet through the year to identify floodplain mapping improvement opportunities;
- Beach Nourishment Finance Committee meeting on January 31st included survey with results to be reviewed by Secretary Garvin to decide on the next steps for DNREC;
- Back-Bay Study includes the attorneys for DNREC and the Corps reviewing legal concerns about the language in the agreement regarding cost-share issues;
- FRAM workshops to be scheduled with the Corps regarding high-risk repetitive flood-loss areas in Delaware, mitigation strategies, high-level survey and engineering work, local government be included in the process, field surveys; there was discussion about having workshops for upstate and downstate areas.

8. UPDATE ON RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PARTNER GRANT

Mr. Evan Miller, Project Coordinator for Rehoboth Beach, reported meetings are being scheduled with city councils and commissioners. There was a meeting on March 4th to review the grant process with commissioners from Rehoboth Beach; April 8th meeting is scheduled with Lewes; June 14th meeting is scheduled with Henlopen Acres. The next Resilient Communities Partner Grant meeting is scheduled for April 22nd.

9. CIB UPDATE

- Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (CCMP)

Ms. Michelle Schmidt reported work continues on the CCMP with the final working meeting scheduled for this week. The next few months will be spent working on drafting the narrative with the final draft completed to submit to the EPA in about six months.

Ms. Michelle Schmidt stated she recently met with Mayor Becker for discussion of actions that are to be included in the CCMP. Ms. Schmidt reviewed the action regarding municipalities in the changing-climate category; 40% of municipalities in the Inland Bay Watershed will have completed some form of vulnerability assessment in the next five to seven years.

Mayor Becker stated the municipalities will need to do the assessments individually since there are different circumstances for each community. As the assessments are developed and placed in budgets to fund, the Association could then review the studies to work together on the Sea Grant funding.

10. SCAT LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST PRESENTATION

Mayor Becker spoke about what subjects will be presented at the SCAT meeting on April 12th to include:

- Importance of funding for beach nourishment and dredging; the critical economic impact;
- Review the agendas from the ACT meetings to show the details discussed and the importance of all those who attend with updates from various agencies;
- Mr. Pratt did a presentation to SCAT at this time last year; review the environmental issues important to coastal towns; awareness by Western Sussex of coastal towns' future problems;
- Bayside and Back-Bay flooding; navigation; sediment issues; opportunities for help from the federal government and need for their input; local issues being solved at local level.

11. ABC UPDATE

Mr. Jim Bailey spoke of the support from the bay communities for the accommodations tax. Thank you to DNREC for their work with the bay communities in the beneficial use of dredging materials. Thank you to the Association also for all your help and support.

Henlopen Acres City Manager Tom Roth spoke of concerns that the Sussex County portion of the accommodations tax money goes toward Delaware tourism and not to the towns. Instead of the tax being increased, the system should be restructured for a portion to go toward Sussex County projects.

Mayor Langan stated the offshore drilling has been delayed by a Supreme Court decision, brought by the Oceana lawsuit, that ruled the drilling was unlawful.

12. SCHEDULING NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, May 9th at 9:00 A.M.

Mayor Becker adjourned the meeting at 10:15 A.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Jackie Doherty, Recording Secretary
Association of Coastal Towns