



COUNTY OF DARE, NORTH CAROLINA

District 1: Roanoke Island & Mainland; Dist 2: Nags Head, Colington, Kill Devil Hills; Dist. 3: Kitty Hawk, Southern Shores, Duck; Dist. 4: Chicamacomico, Avon, Buxton, Frisco, Hatteras; Dist. 5: At Large

DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING

To Discuss the Serious Problem of Impaired Waterway Access Through Oregon Inlet
with the Oregon Inlet Users Group

January 15, 2013 — 5:00 p.m.

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

Commissioners Present: Chairman Warren Judge, District 3; Vice-Chairman Richard Johnson, District 1; Virginia Tillett, District 1; Max Dutton, District 2; Robert L. "Bob" Woodard, Sr., District 2; Allen Burrus, District 4; Jack Shea, District 5

Commissioners Absent: None

Others Present: County Manager/Attorney Bobby Outten; Public Information Officer, Dorothy Killingsworth, Clerk to the Board, Gary Gross

Presentations:

A draft resolution was presented by the Oregon Inlet Users Group calling for the formation of an Oregon Inlet Task Force

Actions:

The Board created a 7 member Oregon Inlet Task Force as an advisory board to the Dare County Board of Commissioners consisting of:

- 4 Representatives from the Oregon Inlet Users Group
- 1 Representative from the Oregon Inlet and Waterways Commission
- 1 Dare County Commissioner

The Chairman of the Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park Authority Board

Chairman Warren Judge called the January 15, 2013 Special Meeting of the Dare County Board of Commissioners to order at 5:02 p.m. He outlined the purpose of the meeting and acknowledged Senator Bill Cook, Representative Paul Tine, and Betty Jo Shephard who was attending on behalf of Senator Richard Burr.

Harry Schiffman thanked the Board for calling the meeting and asked the public to limit remarks to three minutes. Ray Sturza spoke on behalf of the Oregon Inlet Users Group (Users Group). He said the Users Group has developed a resolution to frame the discussion about the emergency situation at Oregon Inlet. He said the Users Group wants to create a partnership with the County to focus on the inlet. Mr. Sturza said they propose a taskforce be formed to find a long-term solution. He said the Users Group wants to lend a hand and partner with the Board of Commissioners and the private sector to resolve this issue.

The meeting then opened to a general discussion of problems related to Oregon Inlet. In addition to the economic harm that is caused by shoaling, the environmental impact was explained by David Hughes. Mikey Daniels said dredging is a band-aid and we may have to compromise to meet everyone's needs in looking to the future. He said a grassroots effort is needed because nobody can convey the message in Raleigh and Washington, D.C. like those who use Oregon Inlet.

Jim Tobin presented information on the economic impact of Oregon Inlet from the Moffatt & Nichol study. He identified over \$682 million as the total annual economic benefit to Dare County and the surrounding region, which generates over \$43 million in state and local taxes. He provided details of the benefits generated by 1) Recreational Fishing & Tourism, 2) Boat Building & Support Services, 3) Seafood Packing & Processing, 4) Commercial Fishing. It was noted that Oregon Inlet is ranked number one in commercial landings of seafood for North Carolina. Commissioner Burrus pointed out that the tax impact is even higher when you add in the federal tax revenue.

Senator Cook said the economic numbers could be doubled if we could depend on a permanently open inlet. He added that stabilizing the inlet is a win-win situation in terms of tax revenue for the State. He said spending a little would generate a lot of benefit for the region and the state. However, he cautioned that the high cost of a terminal groin would be a hard pill to swallow for some legislators in Raleigh. Commissioner Shea said the economic potential for Oregon Inlet is a wonderful return on investment and represents 10,000 jobs. He called on Senator Cook and Representative Tine to push that theme in Raleigh.

Chairman Judge explained efforts to get dredging of the inlet following Hurricane Sandy. He said Congressman Walter Jones traveled to Raleigh and met with leadership there about the problem. Commissioner Burrus said there is a memorandum of agreement in place that will allow us to get things done and we are working to get the money moving.

Representative Tine said Oregon Inlet is a vital transportation infrastructure. He said we have short term and long-term issues to address. He said the Board of Commissioners has done an excellent job and it would help things move forward if someone was able to work on this issue all day, every day. Chairman Judge noted that resources may be available from the beach nourishment fund if dredging could be tied to a beach nourishment project. There was discussion of money that may be available in a Hurricane Sandy bill that is before the U.S. Congress.

Senator Cook said the squeaky wheel gets the grease and someone concentrating their time on this issue would have benefit. He added that there may be a way to creatively get money out of Washington for Oregon Inlet. He noted that the environmental movement in the past has had the nation by the throat. However, he said there are signs that they are losing their favor and that common sense is prevailing. Senator Cook said that he and Representative Tine are new resources in Raleigh that are available to help. Jordan Hennessy reported that he has discussed Oregon Inlet with staff at Governor McCrory's office. He said a McCrory aid is aware of this issue and will be discussing short and long-term solutions with the Governor tomorrow.

Lynn Small asked if money were available, would the solutions be discarded because of environmental pressure and political considerations. Commissioner Burrus said we have to work smart and wear out those who would oppose us.

Malcolm Fearing expressed appreciation for the Board's service on this issue. He said the group attending tonight seeks the opportunity to work together to help the Board in seeking a short-term fix as well as a long-term solution

to stabilize the inlet. He said Oregon Inlet is a conduit to and from the ocean that is important not only for fishing, but for developing energy alternatives that cannot be tapped without a viable way to get through Oregon Inlet.

Chairman Judge asked County Manager, Robert Outten, to read the draft resolution prepared by the Users Group. Mr. Outten read the document, which called for the Board of Commissioners to create a Task Force and provide funding to hire an executive director. Following the reading of the resolution, Chairman Judge explained that the Board is open to discussing the creation of a Task Force; however, it might not be possible to discuss funding tonight without the County Manager having had an opportunity to review it with the Finance Department.

After extensive discussion on how many people should be on the Task Force, it was agreed that 7 would be a good structure. Chairman Judge suggested the 7 members consist of – 4 from the Oregon Inlet Users Group, 1 Dare County Commissioner, 1 from the Oregon Inlet & Waterways Commission, and the Chairman of the Seafood Industrial Park Authority Board. Mr. Schiffman said this sounded like a fair arrangement.

Chairman Judge added that this is a call to action that needs a lot of volunteerism with people who are committed. Mr. Schiffman said members of the Users Group are willing to help in any way possible. He explained that their vision is to have Ray Sturza be the Executive Head of the Task Force. Commissioner Burrus suggested that the Board act tonight on the structure of the Task Force and let the County Manager determine what resources are available for funding. Commissioner Tillett said the Users Group should be given an idea whether the County can afford the cost of this. Mr. Outten said we can staff it in the short run the best we can, and then address it in the upcoming budget.

Vice-Chairman Johnson said rather than the Task Force giving the Board of Commissioners a report every six months as outlined in the draft Resolution, he suggested that they report more frequently, perhaps every two weeks. Chairman Judge said this will become a regular, standing item on the Board's agenda.

MOTION

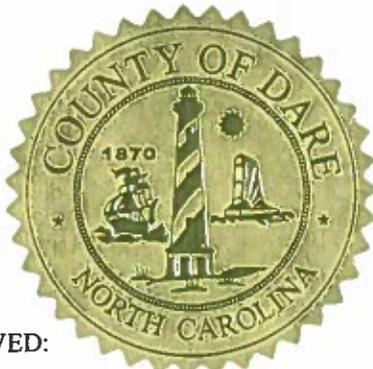
Commissioner Burrus motioned to create a 7 member Oregon Inlet Task Force as an advisory board to the Dare County Board of Commissioners consisting of 4 representatives from the Oregon Inlet Users Group, 1 representative from the Oregon Inlet and Waterways Commission, 1 Dare County Commissioner, and the Chairman of the Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park Authority Board.

Commissioners Dutton, Shea, Woodard, and Johnson seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Chairman Judge expressed appreciation for the large number of people who attended and asked Mikey Daniels to conclude the meeting with prayer.

AT 6:23 P.M. THE DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS ADJOURNED THE SPECIAL MEETING.



Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Gary Gross, Clerk to the Board

APPROVED:

By: 
Warren C. Judge, Chairman
Dare County Board of Commissioners