

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Special Meeting

Monday, November 22, 2021 – 8:30 AM

Courtyard by Marriott 100 Charlotte Avenue, Carolina Beach



MINUTES

INTRODUCTIONS

Mayor LeAnn Pierce opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. and asked those in attendance to introduce themselves. A list of participants is included.

Legislative Updates from Municipal, County, and State Leaders

Congressman David Rouzer opened by recognizing the first responders in the room. He stated that there have been some challenges regarding beach nourishment for the three beach communities. They have cleared some hurdles for Carolina and Kure Beach and will continue to work on Wrightsville Beach. He expects that Congress will be in session until Christmas Eve. The three big topics are the debt limit increase, the National Defense Authorization Act, and the end of year appropriation package.

Representative Ted Davis from District 20 reported that it has been an unusual year in Raleigh. They have had to attend more meetings on Zoom than in person. He stated that Representative Miller is doing a great job and they are working well together.

Representative Charlie Miller from District 19 thanked Congressman Rouzer for getting the beach sand. He stated that it was an uphill battle. He also mentioned that he plans to run again and wants to continue building relationships.

Army Corps of Engineers Colonel Benjamin Bennett thanked the communities for their partnerships, and introduced the Project Manager, Bob Keistler.

Civil Programs and Project Manager Bob Keistler spoke about the Carolina Beach Inlet and Coastal Storm Risk Management (CSRМ). They have been working since January of 2020 to find funding for the renourishment of Carolina, Kure, Wrightsville, and Ocean Isle Beaches. It has been a tennis match of discussions between the Corps and Congress. Carolina and Kure Beach were awarded federal funds. They will advertise that contract this month and hope to award it in January, in hopes to dredge by late March or early April. The Kure Beach contract goes until 2046, Carolina Beach is 2036. They could not get federal funds for Wrightsville Beach because they do not have an offshore borrow source. They are in the process of trying to identify one. There recently was a nor'easter that caused a lot of damage to Kure Beach. The Corps is currently evaluating the damage to all three beaches to see if there is enough damage to request funding.

Colonel Arnold with MOTSU thanked everyone for the relationships that have been built with the local communities. They are working with the Corps on projects that are scheduled out to 2040. He reminded everyone that he will be changing out command on February 23, 2022.

Malcolm Charles with MOTSU informed everyone that the Joint Land Use Study was completed in 2019. They will be focusing on land usage. There are 2,200 acres on the Carolina/Kure Beach side of the river. Some of the projects will take a long time. The installation tour will be the first Friday in January from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Invitations will be sent out.

Captain Matt Baer with the US Coast Guard said that they are honored to be a part of the communities of New Hanover, Pender, and Brunswick. He is the sector commander for all operations in North Carolina. They have 8 coastal stations from Elizabeth City to Oak Island. He is also Captain of the Ports which manages the free flow of commerce through the marine transportation system. \$15-16 billion flows through the Port of Wilmington. Their job is to keep the Cape Fear River open to keep the ships coming through. The North Carolina Ferry System is the second largest in the nation. The Coast Guard is responsible for inspecting that fleet as well as any commercial vessels that carry 6 or more passengers. They have had a 15% increase in case load since COVID. People were buying boats and puppies during the pandemic.

New Hanover County Chair Julia Olson-Boseman recognized that all the County Commissioners were in attendance and that they felt this meeting was important. She thanked Representative Davis, Representative Miller, and Congressman Rouzer for securing the sand. She also thanked them for the recent military incident where it was proposed that they stop all military traffic coming through the International Airport.

Wilmington City Council Member Clifford Barnett said he was recently re-elected to the Wilmington City Council. He reported that the economy is doing well in Wilmington.

Tony McEwen Legislative Affairs for the City of Wilmington thanked the State Representatives for their work. He said that Representative Davis secured half a million dollars for prevention of opioid overdose and abuse. After that money ran out, he was able to get an additional \$750,000 to keep that program going. That includes all of New Hanover County. Representative Charlie Miller assisted in getting over \$100 million for flood mitigation and policy changes. They will be holding a meeting on December 8th in Goldsboro to communicate these changes to the community.

Wrightsville Beach Town Manager Tim Owens thanked everyone for assisting in keeping the beaches on track for beach nourishment.

Mayor Bloszinski of Kure Beach thanked everyone in attendance because everyone has played a part in the betterment of the community. They are focusing on how to use the resources they have efficiently. He expressed how important it is to continue to work together.

Mayor Pierce of Carolina Beach mentioned that Carolina Beach will be getting sand in the spring of 2022. She thanked the Representatives and the Army Corps of Engineers for their support. She also informed everyone of the large mixed-use project coming to Carolina Beach called The Proximity. It will be on the property where Harris Teeter was planning to build on. She mentioned that the room occupancy tax amounts have been through the roof in Carolina Beach. Carolina Beach recently

purchased the remaining parcels on Freeman Park. This will allow the Town to have easement rights for beach nourishment forever. The first priority was to obtain the easements and the second priority was to preserve that as open space. The Town will erect a monument on this property in honor of the Freeman family.

Mayor Pierce asked if anyone had any items they wanted to discuss.

Commissioner Barfield thanked Representative Ted Davis for all his hard work.

Chair Olson-Boseman congratulated the soccer team. They are the State champions.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting concluded at 9:45 a.m.