

WEST COAST INLAND NAVIGATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF DECEMBER 1, 2000
ROBERT L. ANDERSON ADMINISTRATION CENTER, VENICE, FL

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COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Ray Judah, Chairman
 Joe McClash, Vice-Chairman
 Shannon Staub, Sarasota Co. Alternate
 Adam Cummings, Charlotte Co.

STAFF PRESENT: Charles W. Listowski, Executive Director
 Philip E. Perrey, Counsel

Chairman Judah opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. and noted the presence of a quorum. There were no additions or deletions to the Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT – None at this time.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION – No spokesperson was present.

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS' COMMENTS – Mr. Don Fore from the Jacksonville District office spoke about the public meeting held last night about New Pass. It was quite a heated discussion with the City of Sarasota preferring a straight-out alignment while many boaters prefer the deep-water navigation route to the southwest.

Commissioner McClash spoke about the natural drift of sand on the west coast of Florida and how it would be better to dredge where the pass wants to go. Otherwise, it won't last longer than the last dredging project. He is advocating sending a letter to the Coast Guard requesting a remarking of the channel for boaters so they will have six-foot minimum low water depth. We can also indicate to the Corps that we support an evaluation of the alternative route through what the Corps calls "best water". This is a navigation project, not a beach renourishment project. Mr. Fore said he would discuss this issue with his supervisors and could not make a decision now. Commissioner Staub hoped everyone's views would be taken into account.

Commissioner Staub moved and Commissioner McClash seconded to have the Corps make the required hydrological models and bring back the results at the next WCIND Board Meeting (if possible) for final action. Commissioner McClash clarified that we should be looking at the option that makes the most sense. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner McClash moved and Commissioner Staub seconded that Mr. Listowski notify the Coast Guard and ask them to mark the channel where best water is available. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Fore addressed the issue of dredging Fort Myers Beach. The sediment data has been collected, and the Corps is now devising a dredging plan that DEP will find acceptable. Dredging could be completed by May 1, 2001. Mr. Fore suggested the possibility of making the channel wider and deeper and then ask Congress to accept the project for maintenance. Ships using the channel draw more than the project depth, so he suggests doing a feasibility study to look at a deeper and wider project.

Sarasota County has put in a Section 22 request for Midnight Pass, but the Corps does not have \$10,000 for the study. Regarding Section 111 for Lemon Bay, the total amount is earmarked for Virginia Key, but there will be unspent funds which Mr. Fore has asked to be moved into the Lemon Bay project. The three-line survey is almost completed. This is a bathymetric study of the entire waterway. Mr. Listowski said the District is working on a Dredged Material Management Plan and has signed a letter of agreement with the Corps to facilitate that activity. It would include the disposal properties and the disposition of those properties. Taylor Engineering is working with the Corps and the State on this plan. Commissioner Staub requested that WCIND get enough information on disposal sites before things are set in stone to prevent upsetting the public. Mr. Fore said U. S. Fish and Wildlife is now involved in that project because of the scrub jays.

The Venice jetties will not be rehabilitated with Corps funds because they are primarily used for recreation. Mr. Listowski said that after a local meeting with several parties concerned about the jetties, a group went out and got bids for what it would take to make the north jetty stable for public use. WCIND could do a quick fix which would precede a larger rehabilitation project that the Corps would ultimately fund. The rough bid was about \$90,000 and Mr. Listowski recommended taking \$100,000 from reserves to fund this project. Longboat Pass is part of the New Pass project. Commissioner McClash asked Mr. Fore to look into the shoaling in the area of Jewfish Key which is within 300 yards of Longboat Pass. Perhaps it could be incorporated into the New Pass/Longboat Pass project. Mr. Listowski said that Chief Slapp of the Venice Police Dept. said that the boats on the lifts at the marine law enforcement dock by the Hatchett Creek Bridge cannot be lowered all the way because of shoaling. Mr. Listowski asked that he be directed to file an application for a permit in cooperation with Mr. Fore. Commissioner Staub moved and Commissioner Cummings seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA – Commissioner McClash moved and Commissioner Cummings seconded to approve the agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

1. New Pass Public Meeting – already discussed.
2. Venice Inlet Conditions – Commissioner Staub moved that \$100,000 be taken from contingency reserves to accomplish the temporary rehabilitation project at the north jetty in Venice. Seconded by Commissioner Cummings. Commissioner McClash asked if we are responsible for the jetties right now, and if we improve them, are we liable for accidents on them? The answer is uncertain except that Sarasota County seems to take care of the area around the north jetty and the City of Venice takes care of the south jetty. Sarasota County would do the work, and the District would reimburse the county. Motion passed unanimously.

3. WCIND 5-Year Comprehensive Plan – Mr. Listowski said he is working on this plan, utilizing the resources of the U. of Florida Sea Grant and SWFRPC. We have a framework based on our legislation that encompasses three program areas: inlets and beaches, inland waterways and anchorages, and the Intracoastal Waterway. The plan is moving along nicely.
4. Notice General Permit Initiative – Counsel Perrey reported that Secretary Struhs signed an order on November 17, 2000 which granted our petition to initiate rulemaking proceedings. We are now in the process of developing a rule that would give WCIND a general permit. The next step would be to schedule a rule workshop, probably in the northern part of the District, because this rule, if adopted, would affect only Manatee and Sarasota Counties for now as they are the only two counties where Dr. Antonini has finished his work.
5. Volume II Southwest Florida Historical Geography – We are now involved in the production of Volume II of Dr. Antonini's work which will take us south from the end point of Volume I into Collier County. This work has met with accolades from just about everyone who has seen it.
6. NOAAA Grant Award to WCIND – The District applied for and received \$58,770 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to purchase specialized equipment to help facilitate the work of the Regional Waterway Management initiative for Southwest Florida. Commissioner Cummings moved to formally accept the NOAA grant. Commissioner Staub seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
7. FSBPA – Mr. Perrey reported that the Executive Director and he missed some of the sessions because they were meeting with Rick Cantrell in Fort Myers about the General Permit, but he has submitted a brief summary of the sessions they attended. Commissioner McClash asked if the entire length of Lido Beach is to be renourished. Mr. Listowski said that as a result of the meeting he attended last night, the project does not include the area of controversy that is closest to the pass. He suggested to the City of Sarasota that they give some thought to extending that project to include some of the most chronic and troublesome features. Commissioner McClash said he thought that when beach renourishment takes place, the sand sources used first should be those that are least damaging to the environment. Why doesn't FDEP look to the passes themselves as being the first sand sources and then to the burrow sites? Counsel Perrey said that is not current state policy. A recent article he read included disparaging remarks about inlet sand. Commissioner Staub moved to draft a letter to Secretary Struhs asking for clarification of DEP policy and advocating WCIND's position of using the inlet sand as the first sand source. Commissioner McClash seconded. Motion passed unanimously.
8. Phillippi Creek Report - Mr. Listowski reported that the Phillippi Creek construction project has begun. The Phase I oyster relocation project involving the mouth of the creek has been expanded to include moving oyster cultch material. To date we have moved 198 yards of material for \$50,000.

The Chairman recognized Mr. Larry Evans who lives in the Sarasota County portion of Englewood. He spoke about the seriousness of the condition of Lemon Bay and the Section 111 study that was asked for. If funding is in jeopardy through the Corps, he suggested that perhaps

WCIND could fund or loan the needed money. Mr. Fore was uncertain if he could get the funds for the study. Commissioner Staub wondered if some of the money that cannot be spent on Virginia Key could be used on a Lemon Bay study. She suggested that Sarasota County meet with Congressman Miller and ask him to release the funds to WCIND.

COMMISSIONERS' ITEMS – Commissioner Staub referenced a letter from the Venice Area Audubon Society dated November 27, 2000 which criticizes WCIND for property management/land clearing activities on WCIND property off U. S. Business 41 behind Darby Buick. Mr. Listowski said that several meetings ago he was prepared to offer a proposal for a revegetation plan in that area, but we did not have the support of the Audubon Society at that time for this work. This letter gives us an opportunity to work with Audubon and implement a plan proposed by a Gainesville nursery for \$8675 to revegetate this area, covering at least 50% of the area with plants on the Audubon's native habitat list. Commissioner McClash moved and Commissioner Staub seconded to bring back a more detailed plan that has been worked out with the Audubon Society for the next meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Judah reported that the new Lee County marine extension agent and the Charlotte County marine extension agent have requested a working vessel from WCIND. Mr. Listowski said this is the type of regional sharing and cooperation that WCIND has been trying to foster,

Commissioner McClash is a bit concerned about spending regional funds since we don't have an appropriate policy established. He feels that the county's own funds are the best source of funds for this type of equipment. We should focus on what we want regional monies to go for. Mr. Listowski thinks we could go either way, i.e. either regional funds or the county's own money. Commissioner Cummings was asked to isolate earlier funding requests that might not have come to fruition or any monies left over from earlier projects.

Mr. Bob Wasno from Lee County was asked to explain the urgency of the request, and he described various projects already underway that could use the new boat. They have the boat they want already lined up but not ordered. Commissioner McClash suggested to have the proposal brought back in January for further discussion. Commissioner Staub asked that the extension agents check with Sarasota County whether they could use the boat also.

Mr. Rich Novak, the Sea Grant agent in Charlotte County, said he does consider the situation somewhat urgent since the county does not have a boat that he can use for his work. He has used borrowed boats last year and spent his own money for gas.

Commissioner McClash moved that WCIND purchase the boat, (not to exceed \$60,000) which will be owned by WCIND, and will be available to all four counties for their use. Commissioner Staub seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Mr. Listowski introduced Mr. Ken Stead from the Southwest Florida Marine Industries Association. He has packets of information relative to meetings with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the manatee protection issue. Mr. Listowski will attend next week's meeting.

Minutes of December 1, 2000

NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME: Friday, January 19, 2001 at 10:30 a.m. in Venice, FL.