

WEST COAST INLAND NAVIGATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
MINUTES OF JULY 10, 1998
SOUTH COUNTY ADMINISTRATION CENTER VENICE, FL

MINUTES OF JULY 10, 1998

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Joe McClash, Chairman
 Adam Cummings, Vice-Chairman
 Jack O'Neil, Secretary
 Ray Judah, Treasurer

Chairman McClash called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. Mr. Listowski called the roll. Commissioner Cummings arrived a few minutes late. There were no deletions or additions to the Agenda.

PUBLIC COMMENT - none

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION - no comments

U. S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS - Mr. Don Fore from Jacksonville addressed the Board. The reimbursement check to Lee County for the emergency dredging of Fort Myers Beach is closer to fruition. Three bids were received for the Charlotte Harbor project but were returned to the bidders for reworking. Final bids are due next Wednesday. Commissioner Judah wanted clarification because he thought Lee County might not have enough money available. Mr. Listowski explained that DEP has a sub-fund called "Sand-Inlet Transfer" which has \$134,000 available for a project somewhere, but it must be matched locally. Manatee Harbor bids came in a little bit high, but workable. The contractor is delayed bringing his equipment through the Okeechobee Waterway locks. Commissioner Judah wondered if WCIND could accommodate \$45,000 from our reserves so we could become equal partners with the Lee County Tourist Development Council and the GICIA to capture the state money for Boca Grande/Charlotte Harbor. Commissioner Judah moved to direct not more than \$45,000 from WCIND reserves for a one-third portion of the local match required to capture \$134,000 in state funds. Commissioner Cummings seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

The House and Senate have both earmarked \$1 million for dredging Fort Myers Beach in FY 99. The Corps will set up a hydrocyclone test to show that sand can be separated from the muck, will work with Lee County to set up a disposal area, and will accommodate the Coast Guard dredging at the same time.

The Corps has completed its three line survey of the entire west coast waterway. Mr. Fore hopes to plot the channel limits, easements, and rights of way. This should be a very useful tool. The Corps will be doing some dredging in the Okeechobee Waterway and restoration of a nesting island. Mr. Listowski asked about the status of a dredging project around Snake Island and the

Venice Inlet. Mr. Fore said the permit got delayed, but the Corps has resolved with DEP the standard provisions for water quality certificates. He will make sure there is money for the dredging. Commissioner O'Neil moved and Commissioner Judah seconded that the Corps do a study of Snake Island, realizing that there may be some cost-sharing responsibilities with the District. Mr. Listowski said the study should be of the disposition of the island. What does it represent to the Corps? Commissioner O'Neil thought the funds should come out of his county's funds. Mr. Fore was asked to focus and define the scope of study at a further date. Motion was withdrawn Mr. Fore confirmed that the waterway inspection trip was still on for October 19-20th.

CONSENT AGENDA - Commissioner O'Neil moved to approve all four items. Commissioner Judah seconded. Motion approved unanimously.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

Regional Waterway Management Overview - Dr. Antonini reported that the draft of the final report on the south Sarasota County extension was submitted to the county about a week ago. Approximately 50 copies will be printed and will be available before the presentation scheduled for September 1st. Phase I of the waterway study in Manatee County has been completed. There are over 7,000 boats and mooring facilities between the Cortez Bridge and the Hillsborough County line. Phase 2, the bathymetric work, has begun, using the WCIND boat. Commissioner McClash was asked for help in providing a mooring site when work on the Manatee River begins, perhaps at the Bradenton Yacht Club. Dr. Antonini has been talking with Steve Boutelle, and there are approximately 600 miles of navigable waterways in Lee County. He will try to involve the new Gulf Coast University in this portion of his work. The District will administer the funding for this Lee County project.

On July 13 he is meeting with four of the senior staff from the Florida Marine Research Institute, and Mr. Listowski will attend. The aim is to draw the senior science and management staff of the DEP into the program implementation of the Memorandum of Agreement we have with DEP. Mr. Listowski wants to avoid being at odds with them, and he wants them to adopt our work as their product. This would help in the process of permitting. In the course of doing some work for the Sarasota NEP, Dr. Antonini has been preparing a regional evaluation from lower Tampa Bay to the southern end of Lemon Bay of the changes in the bathymetry of that area based on comparing the 1880's surveys with the 1990's. You can see the areas that have been deepened, dredged and filled. The waterway is a transportation system in need of a management plan. That should be our focus. FIND is riding our coattails on this issue. They want to move quickly pertinent to the just-passed legislation on developing an interlocal agreement with DEP. Dr. Antonini is also involved with NOAA and the redesign of the coastal chart. This will be a prototype design, using new technology, new information, and the way it will be portrayed on navigation charts. Commissioner McClash suggested that perhaps we should look into helping with the distribution of the new chart when it is published. The current chart is very expensive and very out of date.

Regional Initiatives and Specific Requests / Comprehensive Plan Review / HB3427 / Budget Presentation - Mr. Listowski mentioned regional initiatives with SWFRPC, Regional Harbor Board, Sarasota Bay NEP, and the Regional Beach and Inlet Convocation. He linked them to HB 3427, which is the recently approved legislative appropriation of \$30 million of dedicated funding for coastal erosion and related issues, of which he is involved. We need to fund in a cost-share fashion, funding that was approved for the District on behalf of Charlotte and Sarasota Counties.

In 1996 the District approved a Comprehensive Plan in order to focus our operations. Mr. Listowski reviewed it and said that we are working on or have accomplished much of what is in the plan. Mr. Listowski asked for suggestions on amending and updating the plan. As an example of projects of regional significance, he mentioned the recently-completed dredging of Stump Pass and produced photos for the commissioners to look at. A regional anchorage management pilot program is underway. The next generation water level management system project is going very well in Lee County and is widely used. We are always distributing pamphlets and fishing/boating guides from our office. We are using electronic record keeping to preserve our historical documents. Mr. Fore said Hillsborough and Pinellas Counties were not interested in joining WCIND. Collier County, however, might be interested. The mechanism is now in place for adjacent counties to join or to work with us through interlocal agreements.

Mr. Listowski hoped to expand the Comprehensive Plan to replace the annual Work Plan/Budget which does not have to be submitted to DEP any longer. Commissioner McClash suggested having a five-year plan for anticipated projects. The two WCIND bills our lawyers guided through the legislature became law on May 30, 1998 and enables the District to enter into management agreements with DEP and the Corps of Engineers and repeal our sundown review language. The Venice Marine Park Boat Ramp is still on schedule for a September 1st opening in spite of some snags. We are still working on clearing of lands of non-native vegetation, but there is much to do. The AmeriCorps workers have helped in that respect. We have received permits for dredging activities along Shakett Creek and Gottfried Creek.

Our enhanced legislation enables us to be pro-active, but that will cost more money. A budget discussion followed: .03 or .04 millage. Our reserves have and will continue to decline. Income from leases and investments have declined. Interest rates have gone down, and the income collected from leases costs us a lot of money in attorneys' fees. Some leases have expired and will not be renewed. Mr. Listowski explained a new line item in the budget: State/Federal Required Match Projects for \$745,000. If we want to do these projects, we will have to produce the match funds when the contracts are finalized. At a millage rate of .04 we will have more money for maintenance of the waterway, especially spoil area maintenance and legislative/environmental services for joint project agreements.

Our legislative focus for this year should be to get an umbrella permit from the state for maintenance dredging. Mr. Perrey said the basic strategy is to ask the DEP to initiate rule-making proceedings where they would formally adopt a rule that would give us a general permit, and probably, we would start with the Shakett Creek permit as a template model. We want to try to set up a situation where with a general permit we can put the DEP on notice that within thirty

Minutes of July 10, 1998

days we intend to dredge a specific channel. The general permit would allow us to do that based upon Dr. Antonini's data and certain general conditions. There were to be some parameters around the general permit.

Our reserves are being drained down, and at .04 mills we can begin to build them back up. The Board seemed to reach a consensus on striving to build the reserves up to \$1.5 million, while recognizing that there are a lot of needs along the waterway. Commissioner McClash requested a report on CIP funding, what projects are dragging, when they will expire etc. Mr. Listowski pointed out the difference in the two budgets in the category of Cooperative Assistance Program: \$74,199 at .03 and \$200,000 at .04. This is a significant difference.

When the Venice Marine Park opens in late summer, it will begin as a District-operated facility. We have not yet come to an agreement with Sarasota County Parks and Recreation Department, but we intend to do so. Commissioner McClash urged Mr. Listowski to get together with Sarasota County to get this issue resolved and come back to the Board in September with proposals.

Commissioner Cummings asked how he could explain a 1/3 increase in millage to taxpayers in Charlotte County. Mr. Listowski said that was easy and referred to the state/federal required match projects in Charlotte County: \$75,000 for a Stump Pass Inlet Management Plan and a portion of the \$470,000 earmarked by FDEP Erosion Control Assistance Program to Manasota Key. If we keep the millage at .03, our receipts are still going to increase by 5%-6% aggregate. Beginning in 1988-89 we had four years in a row at .03 millage. This was to establish the Gulf Coast Passes Fund, which the state decided it did not want to participate in. Regional projects should be identified very specifically. We are talking about three kinds of projects: emergency (paid back within three years according to our policy), regional (not charged back to the county or counties), and projects that directly benefit one county.

Commissioner O'Neil moved and Commissioner Judah seconded to adopt a tentative millage rate of .04 to be publicized for the first public hearing. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Items - Commissioner O'Neil said that at a State of our Bays meeting, the chief permitting officer in the Tampa office of the Corps of Engineers said that spoils from our dredging projects are okay for landfill cover.

NEXT MEETING DATE AND TIME: Friday, September 11, 1998 at 4:00 followed by the tentative budget hearing at 5:01 p.m. in Venice. The final hearing is September 18, 1998 at 5:01 p.m. in Venice.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.