

# **Topsail Beach Citizen Roundtable on Beach Nourishment**

## **Summary of March 20, 2010 Meeting**

By John Stephens, School of Government, UNC-CH, March 22, 2010

### Actions and Developments between the March 6<sup>th</sup> and March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting

The main items were to seek presenters and relevant documents to help Roundtable members address questions they developed at the end of March 6<sup>th</sup> (Document = Questions-March6-CR).

Jim Gregson, Director of the NC DENR Division of Coastal Management and Dr. Spencer Rogers (Sea Grant – UNC-Wilmington) were available to be presenters. Ken Wilson of Coastal Planning and Engineering attended and replied to topics made by the two presenters and questions from Roundtable members.

Written materials distributed in advance included:

1. Most sections of the Environmental Impact Statement prepared by Coastal Planning and Engineering for the interim beach project that the Topsail Beach Town Commission approved in fall 2009.
2. Two documents from Gahagan and Bryant Associates of NC: a report about the cost and feasibility of using sand from the sound for beach nourishment; and a presentation made March 10<sup>th</sup> by Gahagan and Bryant Associates of NC to the Topsail Beach Town Commission.
3. Audit of Topsail Beach financial statements for the period ended June 30, 2009 by Goodson and Taylor.
4. A draft of the American Shore & Beach Preservation Associations statement on beach nourishment (from Tom Jarrett of Coastal Planning and Engineering).

### Mislaid Roundtable applications and change of Roundtable membership

On March 15<sup>th</sup>, John Stephens emailed the Roundtable and town officials about an envelope he had mislaid which included applications from:

Greg Garner  
H. Leon Gatlin  
Nash P. Gray  
Bill Stipe  
Linda Stipe

[The final summary of the full pool of applicants is document = Grid-Applicants-TB-Roundtable-March15-5mislaid-applications.doc]

Stephens apologized because these applications were not considered when the Roundtable membership was determined.

Across the March 8-19<sup>th</sup> period there were a few emails among the 13 Roundtable participants who agreed at the end of the March 6<sup>th</sup> meeting to make their email addresses known to one another.

On March 16, William Jordan emailed that he was withdrawing for personal reasons. Stephens noted that Dianne Barnes would move from alternate to member, and he contacted Ms. Freddie King, the next person in the “undecided” category to see if she could serve as an alternate. Ms. King replied she could not serve.

On March 19, Kimberlee Carter emailed her resignation from the Roundtable.

### March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting – morning session

After a welcome from the mayor, and a review of the draft agenda, the Roundtable considered whether to seat other people due to these vacancies. One proposal was to add Nash P. Gray, since he was in the “opposed” category as was Ms. Carter, had attended the first Roundtable meeting and was present at this meeting. A majority favored deferring any decision about new members until later in the morning in order to hear from the presenters.

Just before lunch, Using the Green/Yellow/Red card voting method (Green = support, Yellow = undecided, Red = opposed) the two votes were:

- a) Seat Mr. Gray in place of Ms. Carter

Green = 4  
Yellow = 2  
Red = 7

- b) Move next alternate from list to take the place of Ms. Carter

Green = 10  
Yellow = 2  
Red = 2

Thus, the March 20<sup>th</sup> Roundtable composition was:

### Members

John A. Barker  
Dianne Barnes  
Gary Compton  
Judy Compton  
Jean B. Daniels

Sandra Ledbetter  
Kim McCallum  
Bobbie Morrison  
Harold Netherton  
Grayson W. ReVille  
Lee Roseburgh  
Steven T. Smith

Alternates

Bill Stewart  
Jennifer Stewart

Dr. Spencer Rogers presented, using the PowerPoint document “Topsail fill performance.ppt” to highlight points and show pictures of beach engineering and nourishment. Jim Gregson offered his views. Questions came from Roundtable participants and audience members, with input also provided by Ken Wilson.

There were two periods for speakers from audience to address the Roundtable

Morning:

- Lynne Ingram
- Bailey Jacobs
- [One other speaker – no name on sign-in sheet, but there were three speakers]

Afternoon:

- Dave Hansen
- Betsy Johnson
- Terry Buschbach
- Butch Parrish
- Terry King
- Lynne Ingram
- Ray McNeely

At the end of the morning, a proposal was made to hear from leaders of two different viewpoints on Interim Beach Nourishment. After discussion, it was determined that invitations would be made to Butch Parrish, chair of the former Shoreline Protection Committee and Town Commissioners Grier Fleischhauer and Buck Taylor. Each “side” would have ten minutes to present the key features of the interim beach nourishment plan as supported by the Town Commission prior to the November 2009 election (Mr. Parrish) and the concerns and/or criticisms of the new majority of the Town Commission and actions taken since the November 2009 election (Commissioners Fleischhauer and Taylor). It was agreed there would not be a separate question period from the Roundtable.

## Afternoon session

After lunch, Stephens passed out copies of a “Proposed Scale of Agreement” to test for the level of agreement for possible recommendation of the Roundtable (document = 1-5-Fist-Gradient-of-Agreement).

Presentations were made by Butch Parrish and Commissioners Fleischhauer and Taylor. There were some questions from Roundtable members and a couple from the audience. Roundtable discussion continued, with occasional input from Parrish, Taylor, Ken Wilson and audience members on particular points.

Stephens asked if the Roundtable was ready to begin formulating possible recommendations. All participants voted “green” but wanted to hear from audience member prior to the mid-afternoon break.

## Preference votes by Citizens Roundtable

After a break, a series of proposals were first recorded by Stephens. Then, after brief discussion, the Scale of Agreement was used to test for the level of agreement of the Roundtable for each proposal. The eleven proposals and the respective degrees of agreement were:

**Proposal 1:** We the Topsail Beach Citizens Roundtable on Beach Nourishment recommend that Topsail Beach Town Commission do everything in their power to nourish our beaches by putting sand on our beaches at the best cost to the taxpayers of Topsail Beach with the goal to accomplish the same end as the original Interim Beach Nourishment project. The timeframe of completion would be January 2011 or sooner.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	6	2
2	Medium Support	4	
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	2	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	0	

**Proposal 2:** We recommend that the town move forward with approved, funded Interim Beach Nourishment plan (Proposal 1 – has permits right now, uses ocean sand) as it currently exists. Town Commission re-adopts the Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 1. Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 2 – using inlet/sound sand is not permitted and cost savings are not assured).

As soon as possible, take action on easements; they need to be in hand by April 30, in order to assure the timing for the November 2010 dredging contract.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	5	2
2	Medium Support	1	
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	3	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	3	

**Proposal 3:** In favor of Interim Beach Nourishment Project 2 because it saves money compared to Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 1. Complete this project by 2012. This project does not require a permanent easement.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	3	
2	Medium Support	0	
3	Low Support	2	1
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	1
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	6	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	0	

**Proposal 4:** We are in favor of dredging spoil areas, with the majority of sand to go to areas where it is most needed without an assessment to the property owners. Plus develop a contingency plan if the federal plan does not come through.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	2	
2	Medium Support	2	
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	1
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	5	1
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	3	

**Proposal 5:** We the Topsail Beach Citizens Roundtable on Beach Nourishment recommend that Topsail Beach Town Commission do everything in their power to nourish our beaches by putting sand on our beaches at the best cost to the taxpayers of Topsail Beach with the goal to

accomplish the same end as the original Interim Beach Nourishment project. The timeframe of completion would be January 2011 or sooner.

Work with the federal program to make sure we do not lose our standing with the federal program and to explore the easement wording with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lawyers to read “permanent for the purpose of beach nourishment.”

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	1	2
2	Medium Support	5	
3	Low Support	1	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	3	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	0	

**Proposal 6:** It is a good thing for Town Commission to have a firm budget for the new source of sand (RE: Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 2) by June 1<sup>st</sup> to compare costs with the Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 1. It would be appropriate to adjust for flexing costs of the new budget to add a percentage for possible change to assure a fair comparison (to allow for time to get permits).

Where else can the town cut costs?

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	0	1
2	Medium Support	4	
3	Low Support	2	1
4	Neutral or Undecided	2	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	2	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	0	

**Proposal 7:** Move forward with permanent easements because it is important to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Be able to mobilize again for beach nourishment in 5 years (RE prepared for permits, budget, etc.)

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	1	
2	Medium Support	0	1
3	Low Support	1	1
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal	8	

	and test again		
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	1	

**Proposal 8:** Town Commission should have a plan prior to Interim Beach Nourishment to financially ensure the ability to pay for upcoming beach nourishment maintenance projects.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	2	
2	Medium Support	0	
3	Low Support	0	1
4	Neutral or Undecided	2	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	7	1
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	0	

**Proposal 9:** Go ahead with Interim Beach Nourishment with costs for said nourishment being the lowest cost for the highest outcome. Aim for completion of Interim Beach Nourishment by April 2011. Town Commission needs to include a financial contingency plan. All property owners should be polled Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 1 and Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 2.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	2	
2	Medium Support	1	
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	1	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	5	1
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	3	1

**Proposal 10:** We recommend to the Town Commission an Interim Beach Nourishment plan as permitted (RE: Project 1) begin taking place in Nov. 2010. Interim Beach Nourishment-Project 2 is OK if the new sand source does not cause a delay, and the grain size is compatible. Continue to work with FEMA (RE: be sure we will be supported when a storm hits).

Town Commission must be responsible for articulating a long-range plan: to be financially prepared for the federal plan and be prepared in five years to fund federal plan-level of work in its entirety if federal funds are not available. Town Commission should create a new committee to come up with \$47 million on our own if federal funding not available. Look at current funding sources; consider new sources (taxes, fees or assessments).

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	0	

2	Medium Support	3	2
3	Low Support	1	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	6	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	1	

**Proposal 11:** Town Commission should move on easement issue and complete collecting easements by May 1 so that the eminent domain issue can be followed-up on for those who have not granted an easement.

Town Commission should bring forth eminent domain issue immediately to give approval to move forward if a property owner does not provide an easement.

Town Commission should decide between Interim Beach Nourishment-Project1 and Interim Beach Nourishment-Project2 by end of May 2010 such that a project could be started and completed between November 2010 and March 2011.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	6	1
2	Medium Support	0	1
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	0	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	5	

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Following the votes above, Proposal 1 was modified by participants in order to seek agreement on other elements of beach nourishment. The degree of support for each of the modifications (i.e., Proposals 1a to 1d) was determined.

**Proposal 1a:** We the Topsail Beach Citizens Roundtable on Beach Nourishment recommend that Topsail Beach Town Commission do everything in their power to nourish our beaches by putting sand on our beaches at the best cost to the taxpayers of Topsail Beach with the goal to accomplish the same end as the original Interim Beach Nourishment project.

The timeframe to begin work is no later than November 2010 with completion in January 2011. Need to have solid financial planning beyond Interim Beach Nourishment (RE: further maintenance).

		Members	Alternates
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1	Strong Support	0	
2	Medium Support	2	
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	3	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	4	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	3	2

**Proposal 1b:** We the Topsail Beach Citizens Roundtable on Beach Nourishment recommend that Topsail Beach Town Commission do everything in their power to nourish our beaches by putting sand on our beaches at the best cost to the taxpayers of Topsail Beach with the goal to accomplish the same end as the original Interim Beach Nourishment project. The timeframe of completion would be January 2011 or sooner.

Get easements ASAP (a minimum of temporary easements).

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	9	2
2	Medium Support	1	
3	Low Support	2	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	0	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	0	

**Proposal 1c:** We the Topsail Beach Citizens Roundtable on Beach Nourishment recommend that Topsail Beach Town Commission do everything in their power to nourish our beaches by putting sand on our beaches at the best cost to the taxpayers of Topsail Beach with the goal to accomplish the same end as the original Interim Beach Nourishment project. The timeframe of completion would be January 2011 or sooner.

Get easements ASAP (a minimum of temporary).

Verify nothing we are doing removes us from the federal project. To the best of the Town Commission’s ability stay within guidelines of the federal project.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	2	
2	Medium Support	2	
3	Low Support	2	
4	Neutral or Undecided	0	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal	1	1

	and test again		
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	5	1

**Proposal 1d:** We the Topsail Beach Citizens Roundtable on Beach Nourishment recommend that Topsail Beach Town Commission do everything in their power to nourish our beaches by putting sand on our beaches at the best cost to the taxpayers of Topsail Beach with the goal to accomplish the same end as the original Interim Beach Nourishment project. The timeframe of completion would be January 2011 or sooner.

No property assessment is to be used to pay for beach nourishment.

		Members	Alternates
1	Strong Support	3	
2	Medium Support	0	
3	Low Support	0	
4	Neutral or Undecided	1	
5	Opposed – want to amend proposal and test again	0	
Fist	Strongly Opposed – Firmly Decided	8	2

Mayor Braxton thanked the Roundtable for their service and the meeting was adjourned.

=== End of Report ===