



County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

MINUTES

DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS SPECIAL MEETING

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

9:00 p.m., August 11, 2022

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Sr., Vice Chairman Wally Overman
Rob Ross, Steve House, Jim Tobin, Danny Couch, Ervin Bateman

Commissioners absent: None

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Robert Outten
Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, David Clawson
Master Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester
Clerk to the Board, Cheryl C. Anby

A full and complete account of the entire Board of Commissioners meeting is archived on a video that is available for viewing on the Dare County website www.darenc.com.

At 9:02 a.m. Chairman Woodard called to order the Special Meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. He invited Commissioner Danny Couch to share a prayer, and then he led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

AIRPORT ROAD BIKE PATH DISCUSSION

At 9:04 a.m. the Manager outlined the procedure for making public comments. Following is a summary of all citizen remarks:

1. Allen Poole provided information regarding the 2015 Comprehensive Transportation Plan and a May 20, 2019 resolution with mention of recommendation of a multi-use path along Airport Road. There was a grant opportunity in September for feasibility studies. He stated there were residents of Airport Road that would not approve of widening the road, a bike path or a multi-use path. He added there were more in favor of it. A feasibility study would bring about at least one public hearing to gauge interest.
2. Larry Warner, the Director of the NC Aquarium on Roanoke Island, acknowledged the concern of safety along the road. Four members of his staff bike along Airport Road for work each day. He stated a walking path would help with safety, especially during special events. The aquarium averaged 1,800-2,000 visitors daily on weekdays and approximately 800-1,500 during the weekend. He supported a study to create a safer environment for those who traveled along Airport Road.
3. Stephen Goodale, a twenty-seven-year resident, appreciated the quality of life the area provided. He supported the addition of a bike path noting it would not be simple. He biked for fitness and applauded the effort to make things safer.

4. Mark McKay, a retired deputy with Dare County, was a twenty-year resident and loved his Airport Road neighborhood. He walked or ran along the road several times a week and stated it had gotten dangerous. He thanked the Board for considering a pathway be added for safety.
5. Denise Goodale stated it had gotten more difficult to bike along the road and it was not safe, especially along the curve near Sunnyside. She recalled an incident when her grandson had gotten hurt during a bike ride. She wanted some “share the road” and public awareness that the road was not solely for cars.
6. Connie Poole shared she had stopped riding her bike on the road a long time ago because it was too dangerous. There were also speed limit issues. She appreciated the Board’s discussion.
7. Gretchen Byrum, NCDOT District Engineer, advised there used to be enhancement funds; but they no longer existed. Craig Midgett and she were not aware of the availability of a grant for feasibility studies. They would follow up and look into methods of quieting the road with a traffic engineer.

After public comments were concluded, the Board began to discuss this item. A full account of the Board’s discussion and action on this item is archived on a video that is available for viewing on the Dare County website. Following is a brief synopsis –

Commissioner Tobin commented the road had multiple issues. It was concrete with no shoulders. He suggested a traffic count be done. Ms. Byrum stated shoulders and drainage would be a major undertaking which gets tricky where residents maintain their frontage.

Vice-Chairman Overman asked if the fact the road was concrete impacted what could be done. Ms. Byrum responded in 2015 a secondary road improvement program had spent \$135,000 repairing some of the road. The size of this project would likely require a STIP process.

Commissioner Bateman offered the entire road needed to be replaced with extended shoulders which included a rumble strip to keep bikers or pedestrians separated. The right of way was 60’ wide, which Ms. Byrum stated in some locations was way up in resident’s frontage.

Chairman Woodard noted it would be difficult to get the numbers to apply for a STIP. Commissioner Ross asked for Gretchen Byrum’s recommendations. She suggested reaching out to legislative representatives and perhaps the NCDOT Division of Bicycle & Pedestrian Unit.

Chairman Woodard suggested the developer could participate with a pathway on his portion and have DOT assist. Mr. Outten responded the developer could not be made to participate. Chairman Woodard proposed the Visitors Bureau could provide matching funds.

Commissioner Couch commented the aquarium had impressive attendance and perhaps deputy enforcement of speed could be enhanced or the speed limit lowered.

Vice-Chairman Overman noted he had received an email from Patricia Raves favoring the installation of a bike path and asked it to be added to the record by reference.

The cost for a path was uncertain as cost for materials had risen, but Ms. Byrum offered to provide follow-up. She added there were inconsistent driveway culverts and the requirement to separate a pathway would drive costs up. If a bike path were added, the flow to the ditch would increase.

Mr. Outten explained there was a county project to remove the culverts where the new houses were being built. The recent low bid also included some other work at the north end for a total of \$413,000. The application for a grant was unsuccessful. He offered we could apply for a grant in the fall; however, that would delay the work for three-four months. There was \$2 million in the Stormwater Fund. He requested guidance on whether to use the funds in total or break it up for three projects. Commissioner Tobin asked if the pipe was substantial enough for the 57 new houses. Mr. Outten advised the engineers' recent studies were to look into moving the water that was coming into the system.

Mr. Outten summarized there had been an easement through several developer lots on Airport Road. The County had agreed to allow the easement to be relocated. It had been discovered it would be necessary to move the culvert to properly connect to the junction box. Additional drainage work was being done on Daphne Lane and nearer to the aquarium. Dustin Peele confirmed the initial project from Stan White's lot to the airport and aquarium was roughly \$207,000. The balance was for the work along Airport to the north.

MOTION

Commissioner Bateman motioned to spend the \$413,000 from the Stormwater Fund and to authorize the County Manager to sign the budget amendment.

Commissioners House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Mr. Outten summarized a proposed plan moving forward on Airport Road could include obtaining a better estimate of the cost, looking for funding sources (grants, legislature, Tourism Board) and perhaps the need to conduct the project in phases. The Board could revisit the subject once more information was gathered.

Mary Helen Goodloe explained how they succeeded with the Scenic Byways project through national grants, allocations from the Tourism Board and by raising local funds. She explained the window of opportunity for Tourism Board funds was September. Special tax districting was also a possibility.

Commissioner Couch stated the nearby developer should be brought in to the conversation and perhaps Dominion Power as well. Commissioner House asked what would be the estimated completion of such a project. The response was an approximate \$2 million cost with a minimum of six months to a year for design work and eighteen months to complete. A new road could take three years to construct. Craig Midgett offered that widening a road where there was already a speed issue could invite speed to continue. He added there were some advantages to a narrow road. Commissioner Couch asked if it was advantageous to create a community group. Mr. Outten stated it would be best to have a plan set out first.

Commissioner House suggested there may be possible grants from FAA for airport access. Vice-Chairman Overman agreed it could be argued the airport had historic interest.

Commissioner Tobin advised EJE Dredging Services would be taking possession of Miss Katie today and she would be beginning her trip to Dare County.

MANAGER’S/ATTORNEY’S BUSINESS

County Manager Outten presented the Board with two budget amendments. He explained the issues with Woda Cooper and Coastal Affordable Housing were resolved and the budget amendments would allow moving the funds. Copies of the amendments were provided.

MOTION (as amended)

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to approve the budget amendment for Woda Cooper’s project and amended to authorize the County Manager to sign an amended agreement. Commissioner Couch seconded the motion’

VOTE: AYES unanimous

MOTION (as amended)

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to approve the budget amendment for Coastal Affordable Housing project and amended to authorize the County Manager sign the final agreement. Commissioner House seconded the motion’

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Mr. Outten said the owner of the Pioneer Theater had inquired if the County was interested in their building. There was nothing in the Capital Improvement Plan and he needed response from the Board. The Board reached a consensus of disinterest after a brief discussion.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Woodard asked for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION

Commissioner Tobin motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

At 10:44 a.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned until 9:00 a.m., September 6, 2022.



APPROVED:

Respectfully submitted,

By: Cheryl C Anby
Cheryl C. Anby, Clerk to the Board

By: Robert Woodard, Sr.
Robert Woodard, Sr., Chairman
Dare County Board of Commissioners

Note: Copies of supporting material are on file in the office of the Clerk.