

New Hampshire Dredge Management Task Force Meeting Minutes – October 9, 2019

The meeting was held on Wednesday, October 9, 2019 at 10:00 AM at the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, 222 International Drive, Suite 175, Pease Tradeport, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

Attending members in alphabetical order:

Bob Boeri, Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management
Noah Elwood, Appledore Marine Engineering
Stefanie Giallongo, NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Wetlands Bureau
Olga Guza-Pabst, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (via call-in)
Mark Habel, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)
Carol Henderson, New Hampshire Fish & Game Department (NHF&G)
Chris Holt, Portsmouth Pilots
Richard Kristoff, ACOE
Eric Nestler, Normandeau Associates
Cheri Patterson, NHF&G
Todd Randall, ACOE
Coral Siligato, ACOE
Tracy Shattuck, Pease Development Authority – Division of Ports and Harbors (PDA-DPH)
David Trubey, NH Division of Historical Resources
Mike Walsh, ACOE
Chris Williams, Chair, NHDES Coastal Program
Cara Wry, Senator Shaheen

Guests:

Leo Axtin, PDA-DPH
Don Blouin, Town of Rye
John Brosnihan, Kittery Harbormaster
Wendy Gendron, ACOE (via call-in)
Kate Hill, Senator Shaheen (via call-in)
Vincent Iacozzi, Hampton River Marina
Aboul Khan, Town of Seabrook Board of Selectmen
Theresa Kyle, Town of Seabrook Board of Selectmen
Reid Lichwell, ACOE
Dot Lundberg, ACOE
Regina Lyons, EPA
Nick Malatesta, Senator Hassan (via call-in)
Dorothy Parsons, Senator Hassan
Alex Pelczar, Senator Collins
Bonita Pothier, Senator King
Susan Reynolds, Town of Rye
Chris Veinotte, ACOE
Phil Winslow, Town of Rye Board of Selectmen

Approve Minutes from May 22nd Meeting:

Minutes from the May 22, 2019 Dredge Management Task Force meeting were approved and will be posted on the Task Force web page at <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/coastal/dmtf/index.htm>.

Legislative Update:

Kate Hill of Senator Shaheen's Office in Washington stated that the Senator visited Rye Harbor in August to witness the shoaling and is working with key leadership at the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to ensure that the ACOE has the resources it needs to complete projects like Rye Harbor. She stated that the Senate Appropriations Committee, on which Senator Shaheen is a member, recently passed an Energy and Water Appropriations Bill for the upcoming fiscal year. The bill proposes \$7.75 billion for the ACOE, which is approximately \$750 million above last year's funding level. The bill provides \$200,000 for the maintenance dredging of Rye Harbor and includes two construction new start allocations for navigation projects for which the Piscataqua River Turning Basin Improvement Project can compete. The bill also includes language offered by Senator Shaheen to encourage the ACOE to expedite scheduled maintenance at small harbors. The bill must still be passed by the full Senate and conferenced with the House of Representatives before it can be signed into law. Once the bill becomes law, the funding for Rye Harbor and the new start allocation for the Piscataqua River Turning Basin project will have to be designated in the ACOE's Work Plan.

Dorothy Parsons of Senator Hassan's Office stated that the Senator continues to advocate for New Hampshire's priorities in Washington and asked that members reach out directly to her or Kerry Holmes of the Senator's Office with questions or concerns.

Mark Habel stated that the 2020 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill is currently being debated in the Senate. Kate Hill of Senator Shaheen's Office stated that the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is currently working on the WRDA bill and Senators have been asked to submit their state's priorities before the end of October. She encouraged members to reach out to their Congressional delegation with priority projects.

Hampton-Seabrook Harbor Maintenance Dredging:

Coral Siligato, ACOE Project Manager, gave a brief summary of the proposed project. Approximately 150,000 cubic yards of sand will be dredged from the federal navigation project, including approximately 115,000 cubic yards of material located in Seabrook and approximately 35,000 cubic yards of material located in Hampton. An additional $\pm 2,500$ cubic yards of sand will be dredged from the state recreational anchorage in Hampton. The dredged material will be used beneficially as follows: a) approximately 105,000 cubic yards of sand will be placed on Seabrook Beach; b) approximately 25,000 cubic yards of sand will be placed on the beach at Hampton Beach State Park; c) approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sand will be placed adjacent to the southwest corner of the Route 1A bridge in Hampton; and d) approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sand will be placed behind an existing sheet pile wall built in 2005 to protect the middle ground sand flat in Seabrook.

The ACOE awarded a contract, in the amount of approximately \$4.4 million, to H&L Contracting of New York on September 12th. The ACOE gave the contractor notice to proceed on September 26th and the contractor is now completing safety plans and inspecting equipment. Dredging is scheduled to begin on October 18th. The contractor

plans to work 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Dredging of the inner harbor can begin October 15th and must be completed by February 1, 2020, while dredging of the entrance channel can begin October 15th and must be completed by March 15, 2020. All work on the receiving beaches must be complete by March 15, 2020.

Mark Habel, ACOE, reminded members that the ACOE has received a request from the Pease Development Authority – Division of Ports and Harbors to determine the feasibility of initiating a study, funded partially by the ACOE, to help identify long-term solutions to the shoaling issues in the harbor. The ACOE New England District has ranked the request highly and is awaiting funding. Mr. Habel stated that while a feasibility study of this nature typically costs approximately \$50,000 the ACOE would have up to \$100,000 available. If the ACOE were to proceed based on recommendations in the study, costs would be split 50/50 between the ACOE and the state.

Vinny Iacozzi, Hampton River Marina, requested a schedule of dredging activity. Ms. Siligato stated that the contractor would be required to provide daily updates of dredging activity and that she'd make sure that Mr. Iacozzi received such updates.

Aboul Khan, Town of Seabrook, thanked the Congressional Delegation for their efforts and requested an update on the project at the next Task Force meeting.

Rye Harbor Maintenance Dredging:

Mike Walsh, ACOE Project Manager, reminded members that approximately 50,000 cubic yards of fine-grained material needs to be removed from the federal channels and anchorages and approximately 8,000 cubic yards of material needs to be removed from the state anchorage. Total construction costs are estimated at \$3.5 million, which include approximately \$500,000 to dredge the state anchorage.

Mr. Walsh stated he anticipates completing the Environmental Assessment and all necessary environmental coordination by the end of the calendar year. He reminded members that the ACOE does not have money for project construction. If construction funds are made available, he anticipates putting a contract out to bid in June 2020 with construction anticipated to begin in November 2020.

Phil Winslow, Town of Rye, asked where the ACOE anticipated placing the dredged material from the project. Mr. Walsh stated that the ACOE is pursuing two disposal options, the Cape Arundel Disposal Site (CADS) and the proposed Isles of Shoals North Disposal Site (IOSN). The IOSN is the ACOE's preferred disposal location because it is closer to Rye Harbor. However, because the IOSN has not yet been designated to receive dredged material, the Environmental Assessment includes both sites as potential alternatives. Mr. Walsh stated that current project cost estimates are based on hauling the dredged material to CADS. Mr. Walsh then stated that the ACOE has identified one structure that's currently encroaching into the federal anchorage. The ACOE is working with the owner to ensure that it's removed prior to construction.

Richard Kristoff, ACOE, reminded members that the proposed dredging of the state anchorage will require an Individual Permit (IP) from the ACOE. Before the ACOE can issue the IP, the state must obtain Coastal Zone Management Act federal consistency decisions from both New Hampshire and Maine. The state must also obtain a 401 Water Quality Certificate from the state of Maine in case the dredged material is placed at CADS.

Portsmouth Harbor/Piscataqua River Navigation Improvement Project:

Wendy Gendron stated that the ACOE is still awaiting federal construction funds and a new start authorization. She is hopeful that both will be authorized in the ACOE's workplan.

The ACOE also continues to work with communities in Massachusetts that have expressed interest in using the sand for beach nourishment. She believes the communities of Salisbury and Newbury have permits and funds in hand to receive the sand and are working on where the sand will be placed and in what quantities.

Bob Boeri, Massachusetts CZM, confirmed that the Towns of Newbury and Salisbury have permits in hand and that the beaches there can handle a total of approximately 300,000 cubic yards of sand. He stated permits are also in hand for the placement of sand approximately 300,000 cubic yards of sand directly on Nantasket Beach in Hull. It is estimated that this project would cost \$13-\$15 million. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has requested an ACOE Section 204 study start to help reduce project costs. The Town of Scituate has also received the necessary permits to place material directly on the beach at an estimated cost of \$12-\$15 million. Due to the estimated project cost, the Town has determined not to pursue the project.

Mr. Habel, ACOE, stated that if construction funding for the Turning Basin project is made available in the ACOE's FY20 workplan, construction would begin before the Section 204 Study for Nantasket Beach would be initiated. As a result, the ACOE would not likely enter into a Section 204 study agreement with Mass DCR. Mr. Boeri stated that he is uncertain whether Mass DCR would proceed with the project without ACOE funding.

Given that the Turning Basin project is estimated to generate approximately 680,000 cubic yards of sand, and only the Towns of Newbury and Salisbury have secured permits and funds to accept approximately 300,000 cubic yards of that material, there will be nearly 380,000 cubic yards of sand available for use beneficially. If the material cannot be used beneficially, it will be placed at an offshore disposal site. Discussion followed.

Isles of Shoals North Dredged Material Disposal Site Designation:

Regina Lyons, EPA, gave a presentation summarizing that status of the proposal by EPA and the ACOE to designate a new ocean dredged material disposal to serve southern Maine, New Hampshire and northern Massachusetts. She discussed the difference between site designation and site selection and reviewed the criteria that EPA must consider when proposing a site for designation. She also reviewed site alternatives which included the no action alternative, the historic Isles of Shoals Disposal Site, the Cape Arundel Disposal Site and the Isles of Shoals North Disposal Site. She stated that based on a number of factors, EPA's and the ACOE's preferred alternative is the Isles of Shoals North Disposal Site (IOSN). She then discussed next steps in the site designation process and encouraged Task Force members review and provide comments on EPA's proposed rule to designate IOSN, which was published in the Federal Register on September 18, 2019, and the draft environmental assessment developed by EPA and the ACOE. Finally, Ms. Lyons informed members that EPA and the ACOE are holding a public meeting on October 9, 2019 at 6pm at the Kittery Community Center to discuss the proposed designation of IOSN.

Main Wharf Reconstruction, Market Street Terminal, Portsmouth:

Noah Elwood of Appledore Marine Engineering gave a presentation summarizing the proposal to reconstruct the main wharf at the Market Street Marine Terminal in Portsmouth. He stated that when the Sarah Mildred Long Bridge was replaced the new bridge alignment resulted in removal of a portion of the Pease Development Authority – Division of Ports and Harbors (PDA-DPH) barge wharf. To compensate PDA-DPH for the loss of the barge wharf, an agreement was reached to improve the main wharf at the Market Street Terminal. The proposed improvements include extending the wharf to the north and south and dredging the north end of the wharf to provide sufficient water depths for the commercial vessels. The proposed dredging will remove approximately 18,000 cubic yards of sand and gravel and approximately 1,000 yards of ledge that will require blasting. The preferred alternative is to place the dredged material at an offshore disposal site. The ACOE and EPA are currently working to determine if the material would be suitable for offshore disposal. Mr. Elwood stated that he anticipates that applications for both state and federal permits will be submitted in the next couple of months. When asked about the timing of construction, Mr. Elwood stated that the timing is uncertain due to funding issues.

Other Business:

Wendy Gendron, ACOE, stated that a Supplemental Appropriations Act was recently passed that provides additional funding for ACOE projects that have been damaged by natural disasters. One of the projects that has been authorized is the repair to the three breakwaters at the Isles of Shoals. The ACOE is not anticipating and changes to the footprint of the breakwaters at this time, but the extent of the repairs will be based on the results of future site inspections. Once the ACOE receives funding, it will begin project design and environmental coordination with the states of New Hampshire and Maine. The timing for the repair work is dependent on funding but the ACOE is hopeful that work could begin in the next 2-3 years.

Next meeting date: December 18, 2019 @ 10am

Meeting adjourned @ 11:15