**Down East Council Meeting**

**Minutes of meeting March 7, 2017 at Williston UMC at 7 PM**

**10 members attended.**

**The meeting was called to order by Chairman Barbara Garrity Blake**

**The scheduled speaker could not attend, we will try to reschedule.**

**The minutes of the February meeting were accepted as given.**

**The Treasurer’s report was accepted as given. There is a balance on hand of $687.82 and all bills are current.**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

1. **There was a report on the meeting held regarding the proposed new Harkers Island Bridge. It was stated that most seemed to support option 5. That option will keep the beach and parking area that are presently there. The little island will also stay. The fish pier will also stay. The State is in the process of trying to purchase land at the boat launch area for more parking. They hope to have a decision by fall.**
2. **Barbara reported on the decision by the Division of Marine Fisheries to vote against the shrimpers. The members of the commission seem to be against all commercial fishing. The last Governor had appointed members that are in favor of recreational fishermen only. The next step is to require an economic impact study to justify the commercial loss. If the study shows a negative impact on the economy then the commission will have to be done over. It seems that there was no science involved in the decision. It may be possible for the new Governor to appoint new members to the commission to restore the balance between commercial and recreational user groups. The only possible change would be political.**
3. **Sign update: the two Down East signs are installed and completed. Thanks to Richard for seeing this effort through.**
4. **It was decided that we will revisit the citizen survey at the next meeting to decide what is will be next project to work on.**
5. **Discussed what is happening with the County Compass paper. Lillie will send possible articles to the publisher.**
6. **Nancy Lewis reported that the old crab house is up for sale. She has had a contact from a State official that agreed that the property would make a nice County park. He said that the State could possibly pay one half towards purchase if the County put up the other half. She will pursue this further.**
7. **We were informed that there is a new State law that requires tax free groups to pay a tax on items they sell.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

1. **Mark Eakes reported that his wife is planning on having a type of open air market at their store on the 3rd weekend in April. There will be space for yard sale and craft type booths. There is also a future plan for a free pig picking.**
2. **It was asked if the group wanted to take part in a Relay for Life in the Down East area. The group decided not to take any active part.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.**

**The next meeting will be April 11, 2017 at the Williston UMC at 7PM.**