**Down East Council Meeting**

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

**Attending, Barbara Blake, Bryan Blake, Bob Geller, James Johnson, Theresa Burkhardt, Simone Franks, Susan Wilder, Dave Boileau, Art Noyes and Mark Eakes.**

**Guests were Tommy Burns, County Manager: Steve Rhea was unable to attend.**

**We dispensed with regular business until next meeting.**

**Guest speaker Tommy Burns reported on the following items:**

**He regretted that Jonathon Robinson could not attend and explain the waterways project.**

**The waterways project to dredge Wainwrights Slough has been approved by Marine Fisheries, the Army Corps and the County and is going out for bid on February 20, 2017. The commissioners are planning to put aside monies every year for waterway projects.**

**The County is to purchase property at the site of the Harkers Island bridge boat ramp to enlarge the parking area. They have applied for a grant for land acquisition in that area, the grant will be mostly State money.**

**The County wrote in support of shrimpers and fishermen to the Marine Fisheries and passed a resolution of opposition.**

**The County is looking to take over a piece of State property on Cedar Island that needs to be cleaned of trash to be used as a park or for recreation. Britt Cobb, interim Sec of Administration for Governor Cooper, has a home here, may help with this. The Down East Council may write a letter of support in the future if needed.**

**The County met with Board of Ed and they will be offering more courses at East Carteret HS for college credits and transferrable for college credit. The courses will be taught by CCC faculty.**

**No new news on the proposed Harkers Island Bridge.**

**Simone Franks asked about having the County expand the small beach at the Harkers Island side of the present bridge. If area was cleared of brush and etc there would be more room for the public to use for swimming. There are presently no public swimming areas for residents to use. The Down East Council will send a request to the commissioners through Tommy Burns.**

**Simone also asked for help about local flooding and got no response. Have to call David Livingston, State DOT. Discussed at previous meeting.**

**Simone also asked how to handle cars racing and doing burnouts in her area. Art and Dave related Atlantic’s experience by going to Sheriff’s office with group from community and asking for increased patrols. It has helped with the problem somewhat. Tommy said to call 911 and keep making reports as needed. Simone will write a letter to Sheriff with concerns.**

**Theresa asked for help with trash on road sides. Bryan reported that the MVFD cannot keep up with the trash as before due to staffing limitations. There is no place for residents to take electronics for disposal. Tommy reported that the County has only one person assigned to trash enforcement. Most illegal trash dumping tickets get thrown out due to court overcrowding. May need new procedure to pay fine without going to court except for repeat offenders. Mark Eakes reported that Beaufort does not accept electronics either. Can we get County to have Republic put box for electronics at transfer stations. Tommy did not know, will check. Also no place to dispose of tires.**

**Susan questioned are there any plans to make bike paths. Tommy said that the DOT does bike and pedestrian planning, talk to local planning folks and DOT. Mark said Beaufort has approached the NPS about help with the Mountain to Sea Trail and that will go through the Open Grounds Farm to Cedar Island. Mark says that is a federal project and funds are available. He will contact the woman that does that for a future meeting.**

**The lack of storm shelters was brought up. Bryan brought up that each person needs 10 square feet in a shelter and the cost of building shelters is out of reach for small communities. There is a need for an updated evacuation/response plan for this region. The nearest County shelter is in Newport. There are too much liability costs involved in using County buildings for storm shelters.**

**Susan reported that people are having problems getting kerosene for heating. J M Davis is looking at getting a pump at either Smyrna or Davis, or they will make a 50 gallon delivery.**

**The people at Outer Island store say they have people needing kerosene also.**

 **Dave stated that the Council needs to revisit the citizen survey that was done to work on issues that were determined. To be placed on agenda for next meeting. Barbara will send copies of survey to council members and a copy to Tommy Burns.**

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.**

**The next meeting is March 7, 2017.**