

Official Minutes
Recreational Fishing Advisory Board Public Comment Meeting
September 9, 2002

Members Present

George Hudgins
Edward Rhodes
Bob Bois
Jesse Duell
Charles Randolph
Jim Diebler
Carolyn Brown

Members Absent

Andy Ligon
Parks Rountrey

At 7:02 Chairman George Hudgins called the meeting to order.

Mr. Routh stated that the total available for projects would be about \$420,000 and there are about \$900,000 in project submissions.

Mr. Routh asked for an approval of the minutes from the July 8, 2002 RFAB meeting. Mr. Rhodes made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Randolph seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous to accept the minutes as posted.

Mr. Routh asked the RFAB to reschedule the October 7th work session. The board decided to reschedule the work session for October 8th at 7pm.

Col. Steve Bowman introduced Lt. John Croft of the Special Investigative Unit (SIU). Lt. Croft made a short presentation about the results of the SIU programs. Mr. Croft stated that his program has been very successful.

Mr. Hudgins opened the floor for Public Comment on the Project Proposals.

Project A. 2003 CCA Children's Fishing Clinic

Dr. Bob Allen of the PSSFA stated that their organization supports this project.

Project B. 2003 Hampton Roads Kids Fishing Day

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA supports this proposal.

Project C. 2003 Virginia Game Fish Tagging Program.

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA support funding of this proposal.

Mr. Larry Snyder of the CCA of Virginia reiterated the written comments received from the CCA Fisheries management Committee. Mr. Snyder stated that the CCA supports funding of this project.

Project D. Casting for Recovery

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA does not support the funding of this project.

Mr. Jim Hayden with the CCA of Virginia stated that there was a lot of discussion about this project. Mr. Hayden said that for such a high price it reaches only a few people. Therefore the CCA does not support the funding of this project.

Project E. Expansion and Rehabilitation of the Oyster Boat Ramp

Mr. Bob Bois stated that he personally visited the site and noted that there is definitely a parking problem. Mr. Bois said that the current lot is designed to hold 57 vehicles with trailers, that day there were 182 vehicles with trailers in the parking lot. He stated that 148 of these vehicles were from North Carolina, 11 from Virginia, 3 from New Jersey, 1 from New York and 1 from Maryland. Many of these vehicles were parked in front local resident homes.

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA does support the proposal, but thinks that there needs to be more financial help from Northampton County.

Mr. Snyder said that the CCA usually places access projects at a higher priority than other projects. Mr. Snyder said that the CCA supports the funding of the project but suggests the county of Northampton should apply at the next cycle.

Mr. Rhodes asked Mr. Kline if they could defer to the next cycle or reduce the requested amount? Mr. Kline stated that they would be willing to work with VMRC on any suggestions for funding.

Mr. Rhodes asked if the \$35,000 was just for the purchase of the land. Mr. Kline stated that the \$35,000 is for the land only.

Mr. Randolph asked if the opportunity to buy the land was currently open. Mr. Kline stated that the land was available but he was not sure for how long.

Mr. Hudgins asked if the land was open or needed to be cleared? Mr. Kline stated that the land was overgrown and needed to be cleared.

Mr. Randolph stated that there is a budget crisis in this cycle, and that the immediate need is to purchase the land. Mr. Kline stated that this was correct.

Mr. Hudgins asked if the parking problems occurred during the weekends or occurred during the week. Mr. Bois stated that the problems occur when the croakers are available and that the weekends are much worse.

F. Wisharts Point Landing

Mr. Keith Bull Accomack County Administrator stated the project could be delayed if the VMRC would provide \$25,000 for engineering and design. And, in order to get dredging from the Army Corp. of Engineers, there needs to be some commitment to the project.

Mr. Keith Boyd of the Eastern Shore Resource Conservation and Development council, stated that this council recognizes the importance of boating and fishing access on the eastern shore. They also recognize the need for boating access on the seaside of the northern eastern shore. Mr. Boyd stated that their council strongly supports this project.

Mr. Allen stated that the PSSFA is opposed to funds going to the Wisharts Point project.

Mr. Tommy Mathews of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors asked for the support of this project. He stated that there is a definite need for fishing access at this location.

Mr. C.D. Flemming, Jr. from the Accomack County Board of Supervisors presented a letter of support from Delegate Robert S. Bloxom to the Board. He stated the board of supervisors strongly supports this project and stated that partial funding for engineering would be acceptable.

Ms. Pat Bane a resident of Accomack County stated that she is not aware of a marina, apartments, or condominiums that will benefit from this project. Ms. Bain stated that this is a rural area with a need for navigable fishing access. She urges any support from the RFAB will be accepted.

Mr. Bill Watson a resident of Accomack County said that in the 1940's Wishart's Point was privately owned and flourished. It has been in disarray for several years. In 2001 the land was donated to the county. Mr. Watson stated that the site could be one of the best fishing access sites on the eastern shore. He stated that there are no signs of commercial construction near the landing.

Mr. Bois asked if there would be significant use of the project. Mr. Watson stated that no one uses the current facility because it's disarray and that improvements will increase usage.

Mr. Rhodes asked how much dredging will be needed and how often. Mr. Bull stated that once it is dredged it should be navigable for 20-30 years.

Mr. Snyder stated that the CCA supports this project but suggests that it should be last in priority of all the access projects under consideration.

Mr. Rhodes asked about the storage of commercial gear at the site. Mr. Bull stated that storage of gear at the site has never been allowed.

Mr. Dan Hayworth Legislative assistant to Senator Nick Rerras, read a letter of support from Senator Rerras that was addressed to Mr. Jack Travelstead. Mr. Hayworth stated that Senator Rerras was aware of the funding state and the willingness of Accomack to adjust the funding request to meet current budget requirements.

Mr. Allen stated the there should be some way to get a fee from out of state users of these facilities.

Mr. Ron Greenley of Accomack County stated that the residents of the seaside of the eastern shore have been buying saltwater fishing licenses, since they were required, and have been supporting the license fund from the beginning.

G. 2002 - 2003 Vessel Support for the VMRC Artificial Reef Program

Mr. Rob Holtz of the CCA of Virginia, stated that the CCA supports everything that the Reef Program does and regrets that the program does not request more funding.

Mr. Snyder stated that this was the most favored project for funding on this cycle. The CCA strongly supports this project.

H. Little Island Fishing Pier Improvements

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA does not support the funding of this project at this time but requests that the City of Virginia Beach contribute more funds and resubmit the project at another funding cycle.

Mr. Tim Waters a resident of Norfolk stated that due to an injury he is a shore bound fisherman.

Mr. Waters pointed out that piers are the only way that some individuals can enjoy saltwater fishing. He stated that this pier would benefit all shore bound anglers.

Mr. Hayden stated that this project would serve a lot of anglers, but because of the fiscal situation should be deferred to another funding cycle.

Mr. Lot Gilmore a resident of Virginia Beach stated that the pier would provide fishing opportunities for individuals who do not have access to a boat, and asked for any support that is possible.

Ms. Carolyn Brown asked Claude Bain to talk about the recreational fishery around the pier. Mr.

Bain stated that if extended, from a fisheries standpoint, the pier could become one of the best facilities in Virginia.

I. Undercover Law Enforcement Vehicles for the Virginia Marine Police

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA commends the efforts of the Marine Police: however, they do not support the funding of this project.

Mr. Snyder said that the CCA of Virginia supports the funding of this request. However, the CCA requests that some general funds be requested for future law enforcement projects.

Col. Bowman stated that the undercover program requires specialized vehicles that do not look like government vehicles. He stated that the \$60,000 is a maximum amount and may not all be utilized and the unused amount will be returned to the fund.

J. Challenger Little League: Fishing and Marine Biology Education.

Mr. Hayden stated that CCA supports the funding of this project.

K. CCA/Virginia Beach Oyster Project

Mr. Hayden said that this is a worthwhile project that will benefit the Chesapeake Bay. However, due to budget concerns the project could be deferred to another funding cycle.

Mr. Bois asked if plans were been made for the legal transportation of the oysters. Mr. Hayden said that these oysters are going to be placed in state owned oyster reefs.

L. Tale of the Striped Bass

Dr. Allen stated that the PSSFA requests that this project be given low priority because of the state of the current license fund.

Ms. Alice Scanlan stated that the Virginia Marine Science Museum would be applying this information and improvements to several exhibits that needed to be upgraded. She also stated that licensed anglers will receive a discount of up to about 50%. Ms. Scanlan said that the entry fee covers almost all the museums operating cost.

Mr. Snyder stated the CCA does not support the funding of this project at this time.