

MINUTES OF ILLAHEE PORT MEETING ON NOVEMBER 20, 2019

Commissioner James Aho called the Special Meeting of the Illahee Port Commission to order at 6:30PM. He explained the meeting was being held to discuss and seek input on development of the Port's draft Comprehensive Scheme of Harbor Improvements. Others in attendance included: Commissioner Jonathan Buesch; Commissioner John Burton; Theresa Haaland Administrator; John Piccone of Soundwest Engineering Associates; John Adair; Marilyn Adair; Roy Barton; Andre Besler; Peggy Cantrell; Troy Cantrell; Marnie Concannon; Dave Ditzler; Ray Hepworth; Cathy Johnson; Richard Kalyn; Donna King; Mike King; Tim Knapp; Leonard Knight; John Parvis; Pat Sechrest; Debbie Smith; MaryAnn Smith; Janet Soderberg; and Randy Sumrall.

Commissioner Aho introduced John Piccone of Soundwest Engineering and Associates and explained that the Port hired Mr. Piccone's firm to apply for Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) grant funding. The main reason it was decided to hire Mr. Piccone is because he has a very good track record in obtaining RCO grants. Mr. Piccone explained that the Port isn't updating its comp scheme just for possible RCO funding, but it is also a requirement of the Revised Code of Washington (RCW). He said that the draft comp scheme includes three projects in particular: the Illahee dock, the 5500 Illahee Road residence, and the 5507 Illahee Road aka the Illahee Store property. Since all of these properties are in need of some sort of renovation and/or improvement it makes sense to include all three in a project for possible funding. The first step is to develop a comp scheme, which the Port Commissioners are hoping to have finalized and adopted no later than February 2020. He provided attendees with a Port Improvement Survey Form and a list of Goals and Objectives. He explained that as well as verbal feedback at tonight's meeting he was also hoping everyone will complete the survey form and return it to the Port either at tonight's meeting or via mail. The results from the survey will help the Commissioners know if they are on the right track with the Port's future and it also looks favorable to the RCO and can help increase the Port's likelihood of receiving grant funding. Mr. Piccone explained that just because the Port meets the needs for a grant there is no guarantee that funding will be awarded. Applicants are scored on the merit of the application and showing public support is a big boost as the RCO is interested in funding projects that are supported by the public.

Leonard Knight asked about the Oceanview Boulevard residence the Port owns as there was no mention of it in the survey and/or goals and objectives paperwork. Mr. Piccone said that may be addressed later in the meeting, but for now he wanted to focus on the goals and objectives which are just one component of the grant.

Mr. Piccone explained that all of the Port-owned over-the-water facilities (i.e. the dock/pier, gangway, floating docks, piling) are referred to as the "Illahee Dock" within the paperwork. He began reviewing the survey and goals and objectives with everyone.

The first item is the Illahee Dock that is in very bad condition. Besides replacement, reconfiguration of the facility may also be an option. One of the best grants for this type of a project is funded by non-refunded boat gas tax and it is aimed at boats twenty-six feet and under.

Andre Besler was concerned as he frequently moors his 32-foot boat at the Illahee dock. Commissioner Burton reassured him that although the grant may be geared at boats 26-feet and below it doesn't mean somewhat larger vessels would be restricted from using the facility.

Janet Soderberg thanked the Commissioners for making the first goal the improvements to the dock and also for all the hard work on the survey, etc. She questioned what the costs are for the necessary maintenance and upkeep of the dock. Commissioner Burton explained that former Commissioners were very frugal with the Port's funds and even completed general-type dock maintenance voluntarily. As a result, there is very little to no historical data regarding the maintenance costs. Since he became a Commissioner there has been some money put into repairs and the Port entered into an interlocal agreement with the Port of Brownsville to begin completing maintenance, but Brownsville has since had some internal issues that have kept them from working at Illahee. Commissioner Aho said that when he first became a Commissioner, over six years ago, he noticed the dock could be moved just by shifting his weight while standing on it. Since then TIKAR Services replaced the cross bracing and it made a world of difference to the stability of the structure. Tim Knapp of TIKAR Services explained that the cross-bracing work was completed in 2016 and 2017 and the Port collectively spent \$40,000 on the main structure. In 2018 he replaced the toe kicks and some railing as it was becoming a safety issue. Mr. Knapp said that he didn't want the public to think that the Commissioners were just allowing it to wither away but they have in fact taken positive steps to make it safe and prolong the life. Richard Kalyn asked if the Port has received many complaints about the Port facilities along the waterfront. Mr. Piccone said that even if there is some usability, it is a community asset and if it is left for too long it gets to the point where it can't be maintained and has to be replaced. He feels the Illahee dock is to this point. Commissioner Burton said that he has heard some complaints, not a lot. He has viewed boaters attempt to tie up to the floats and end up leaving.

Mike King said that he is concerned that swimming and scuba diving may soon not be an option at Illahee dock because of the built-up silt caused by Illahee Creek. Commissioner Aho said that years ago the Port paid for an Illahee Creek Watershed study. The upland development was the main cause of the silt build up and Port Commissioners were considering purchasing uplands in an effort to squash future development. The public was not in favor of the Port purchasing the land and the Commissioners stepped back from that. Since then the County got involved and made requirements to stormwater runoff, which didn't alleviate the problem but did lessen it. Mr. Piccone said that it's not uncommon for marinas to perform maintenance dredging

periodically, so that's an option and this would be something to consider if/when determining reconfiguration of the dock and floating moorage. Commissioner Burton agreed and suggested installing a breakwater also be a consideration. Mr. Piccone said that water depth at high and low tide will be considered before design. Mr. King said that there is a reef out in the waters that consists of 10,000 tires. He knows because he helped install it.

Commissioner Aho explained that in all these years he has seen only one person with disabilities access the fishing hole at the dock. The individual parked his vehicle at the bottom of the parking area and wheeled out to the dock. It was really a beautiful thing to witness and creating more ADA access is very important. It's important to the RCO also. There is a grant manager that is in a wheelchair who will come out to the facility to insure the ADA requirements are met. Commissioner Aho said that on his recent trip to Santa Barbara, CA he saw an opened fishing area on a dock. He was surprised as that was the only other one he has ever seen besides Illahee's. He would like to see that area enhanced.

The second item is developing a public access Waterfront Marine Park at the 5500 Illahee Road. It was explained that the building would be demolished. Mr. Piccone said that connectivity between the park and the dock is important as it helps to provide a well-rounded use for a wide variety of people. It is thought this will include picnic tables, restrooms, playground equipment as well as water/beach access. It will draw the public to the waterfront.

Pat Sechrest said that she was concerned that this will not only draw the general public but also the homeless population. She used Illahee State Park as an example. There are many homeless individuals living there now in tents, etc. Commissioner Aho said that current Port Commissioners are adamant about what goes on in and around the dock/Port property. Many times, individuals are asked what they are doing and if necessary asked to leave. Mr. Knapp said that other Ports he works with post their rules including the hours of allowed use, normally dawn to dusk. If there are individuals failing to comply with the rules they are asked to leave, if they refuse the Sheriff is called and the individual can be trespassed. Debbie Smith said that with Illahee State Park so close, it seems a bit redundant to have another park. Commissioner Aho said that the marine park is really just an access to the water-type park that includes a couple picnic tables. Donna King said that it doesn't seem like a good fit to have a playground near that busy road. She was also concerned that the Port would be inviting more and more of the public to the area, as they already have a problem with the public wondering onto their privately-owned properties and beachfront. MaryAnn Smith was also concerned about drawing more people to the area as they then wonder onto the privately-owned beaches. Commissioner Burton's house is adjacent to the Illahee dock so he is personally aware of this issue. He explained that in Oregon and California the tidelands are State owned, which is different than Washington. There are plenty of privately-owned tidelands in Washington State. It was explained that after receiving complaints from the neighboring property owners the Port did

install signs, which apparently have slightly helped to alleviate the problem. The majority of the attendees agreed that creating any type of park with either just picnic tables and/or including restrooms and a playground would not be a welcomed project. MaryAnn Smith suggested demolishing the residence to create a parking lot. Mr. Piccone said that the parking is the main component for this item, but also connectivity from the Illahee store/community center to this area is important, so even including a walking path, maybe for kayakers, in this area to get to the water may be an option. Mr. King asked how non-refunded boat gas tax could be used to fund a path that supports non-motorized watercraft. Mr. Piccone assured him that there are many grants available the non-refunded gas tax is just one of many and he has much experience knowing which grant would be the best fit. Mr. Barton said that the store only offers six parking stalls, which isn't enough. He sees it as a possible nightmare with people trying to back up onto the busy Illahee Road. Commissioner Burton said that the current dock parking isn't even owned by the Port as it is the road end to Oceanview Boulevard, which actually belongs to the County and basically just managed by the Port. Mr. Piccone said that one of the items of focus will be to improve the parking overall and reminded everyone that the details are a topic of discussion at a future meeting. Tonight's meeting is to focus on the proposed goals. It is not set in stone that the Port will develop a park. Ms. Soderberg questioned if the survey was a bit premature. Mr. Piccone commended the Port Commissioners and explained that it is not common to ask for the public's input this early in the development of the comp scheme. Normally entities will decide amongst themselves what they want done and then publish notice of the meeting in the local paper and the meeting is more of an informative meeting telling the public this is what we are going to do. The Illahee Commissioners agreed to send out notice to every residence within the Illahee Port District inviting them to tonight's meeting for input. Informing everyone, here are some ideas we have and if it seems enough of the public is in agreement it will move forward and if not then changes will be made to accommodate the majorities hopes, thoughts and move forward from there.

The third item is renovating the old Illahee Store into a new community center including coffee shop and Port meeting space.

MaryAnn Smith was surprised and asked if the coffee shop would be open all day. She didn't think a coffee shop would be necessary. She agreed the community center would be fine. Ms. Soderberg asked what the vision is for the community center as she would like to know before answering the survey questions. It was explained that it is unknown at this point exactly what it will be used for other than to hold monthly Port meetings. Commissioner Aho said that Ports were created in the 1920's to create and support economic development. Besides maintaining the dock and water access to the public the Port is also supposed to try to bring in commerce to the area and that could be as simple as having a coffee shop. There were questions if a coffee shop would be profitable. Commissioner Buesch has had coffee shops and said in his

experience yes, they are profitable. It seemed the attendees weren't in favor of an actual coffee shop, but were positive about having a community center and a Port office area. Mr. Barton suggested take out the word "coffee shop" and replace it with income producing commercial space. He reminded the Commissioners that another item that will need attention is placement of a septic tank. There was talk about placing a holding tank in the area where the gas tanks currently sit. It was agreed this would be determined in the future. Everyone also seemed to agree that additional parking is important and keeping the boat ramp is useful although, Mr. Knight said that the ramp is troublesome for him at times when people use it and end up blocking his adjacent driveway. Making it a hand-launched watercraft ramp was discussed. Ray Hempworth asked what is in the Illahee Store right now. It was explained that a bunch of old refrigerator equipment. Commissioner Buesch received a bid today from an individual who will totally gut it and leave it as a blank pallet for an architect or designer.

John Adair said that he has heard a lot of great ideas tonight and plans to comment on them later. He said that once things are developed, security will need to be addressed and possibly adding cameras as there is a lot of vandalism in the area. Commissioner Buesch agreed that vandalism is around and it's everywhere. He said that the more an area is used the less it is vandalized.

Debbie Smith asked about installation of a crosswalk along Illahee Road near the store. Mr. Piccone said that the County would need to be involved with that, but it's a possibility.

Mr. Barton questioned if the State would actually be able to fund this project since they are losing money to maintain the roads due Tim Eyman's recent initiative 976. Mr. Piccone said that it will not be approved until the State Budget is approved. There has been delay in funding before, but he has never seen the account swept.

Mr. Knight mentioned that the Port had cash to pay for the store property but not maintain the dock.

Randy Sumrall said that there are plenty of nice piers, docks within the County. Would this project be piece-mealed? Commissioner Burton said that a lot of those piers and docks have been awarded RCO grants. If the Port doesn't receive funding, Commissioners will continue with maintenance one project at a time.

John Piccone said that they anticipate mailing the survey out on or around December 2nd. John Parvis asked if tonight's notes will be available on the website. It was explained that they will first need to be adopted and that won't happen until the regular meeting scheduled for December 11th. Ms. Soderberg said that the public not in attendance might have more questions and having the notes available might be beneficial. She suggested rescheduling the mailing. She also had concerns about the questions on the survey. Cathy Johnson said that

maybe the questions are a little too specific. Maybe they should be more general. The wording of the survey was further discussed and it was agreed that changes will be made prior to mailing.

Mr. Piccone said that the surveys will be mailed to all the residences within the Port District boundaries. Please respond and spread the word that responses are needed. Commissioners thanked everyone for their input and attending and also thanked Mr. Piccone for all the hard work.

At 8:27PM the meeting dispersed.


Commissioner


Commissioner


Commissioner