

April 6, 2020

A Special Meeting of Town Council was held on the above date at approximately 6:00 p.m., all requirements of the Freedom of Information Act having been satisfied.

Present were: Patrick M. O’Neil, Mayor
Chauncey Clark, Mayor Pro-Tem
Sarah Church, Councilmember
Greg Hammond, Councilmember
Tim Reese, Councilmember
Bachman Smith, IV, Councilmember
Kaye Smith, Councilmember

Mayor O’Neil called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and stated the press and public had been notified in accordance with State Law. There were approximately sixty (60) members of the public present with no members of the media present. This meeting was conducted via virtual meeting as a result of COVID-19 Pandemic.

Consideration of an offer from Biohabitats, Inc. to prepare a grant pre-proposal letter to the National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF) for the conceptual design of a back-dune ridge and stormwater retention infrastructure in the Accreted Land as described in their final report dated March 27, 2020:

Dr. Jessica Hardesty Norris presented on behalf of Biohabitats. Biohabitats reached out to Town Administrator Andy Benke, Mayor O’Neil and Mayor Pro-Tem Chauncey Clark to make them aware of an opportunity and offer to draft a brief pre-proposal, which allows the NFWF to screen projects before issuing invitations for a full proposal. Dr. Norris recommended that Town Council authorizes the April 8, 2020 submittal date of a pre-proposal to the National Coastal Resilience Fund for project site assessment of the Accreted Land. Applications are welcome from municipalities who want to restore and strengthen natural systems so they can protect coastal communities from the impacts of storms, floods, and other natural hazards and enable them to recover more quickly and enhance habitats for fish and wildlife. Priority is given to projects that are innovative or replicable, use nature-based designs and have habitat implications. The grant requires a 1:1 non-federal match, which can be in the form of in-kind services. The pre-proposal or full proposal can be withdrawn or altered.

Mayor Pro-Tem Clark thanked Dr. Norris for her presentation. He then asked for a timeline schedule for the grant. The pre-proposal due date is April 8, 2020 and the full proposal due date is June 25, 2020. If the Town was awarded the grant, project completion deadline is December 2021.

Councilmember Sarah Church expressed concern regarding the budget and stated that this was not an appropriate time to deal with this controversial topic during a State of Emergency and added that Town Council should focus their time on the residents.

Councilmember Greg Hammond stated that the business of the Town should still continue even during the current State of Emergency.

Councilmember Kaye Smith stated that the Town needs to prepare to be resilient now and plan for the future, especially with the storm season approaching.

Councilmember Bachman Smith, IV stated that he believes this is a wonderful opportunity and appreciates everyone's effort. He expressed concerns regarding lack of clarity that was presented and stated there is not enough information to make a decision.

Mayor O'Neil stated that he agrees with Councilmembers Sarah Church and Bachman Smith, IV and stated he believes there is not enough time to make a decision.

Motion: Action: That the Town proceeds with the grant application as written by Biohabitats, Inc. to be applied by April 8, 2020 to meet the deadline.

Moved by Mayor Pro-Tem Clark. No Second.

Motion failed.

Motion: Action: Adjourn Meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Moved by Councilmember Tim Reese, Seconded by Councilmember Bachman Smith, IV.

Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,


Courtney Sottile