

JULY 30, 2014 – TDC PUBLIC WORKSHOP

The Board of County Commissioners, Walton County, Florida, attended a Public Workshop on July 30, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. at the Walton County Courthouse Annex in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida. The meeting was sponsored by the Tourist Development Council to discuss proposed new beach accesses including Topsail Hill State Park.

The following Board members were present: Commissioner W. N. (Bill) Chapman, Chairman; Commissioner Cindy Meadows, Vice Chairman; Commissioner Sara Comander; Commissioner Bill Infeld; and Commissioner Kenneth Pridgen. Mr. Larry Jones, County Administrator; and Attorney Sidney Noyse, Staff Attorney; were also present.

Mr. Jim Bagby, TDC Executive Director, introduced the Commissioners and county officials in attendance. He stated that Mr. Brian Kellenberger, TDC Beach Operations Director, would make a presentation as to the beach access possibilities and that public comment would be taken after the presentation. He asked that comments be kept brief due to the volume of people present and wishing to speak.

Mr. Kellenberger presented the Walton County Neighborhood Beach Access Initiative. Three topics were discussed during the presentation: Neighborhood Beach Access - a community oriented beach access portal; Destination Improvement Initiative - to relieve congestion and parking issues on C.R. 30A; and Six locations on state or county owned or county easement property along C.R. 30A. He discussed each of the six proposed accesses and what types of construction would be required to accommodate beach visitors. The goal is to promote foot and bicycle traffic. Mr. Kellenberger discussed construction, costs for each proposed access, project timeline, and additional options for beach access. He stated that if this initiative moves forward that construction could possibly begin mid-2016.

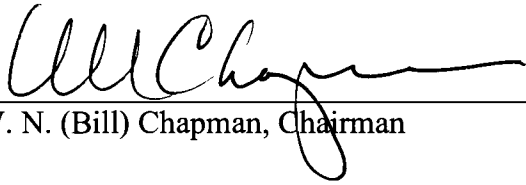
There were approximately 60 audience members who spoke during the public comments portion of the meeting. Many voiced opposition to the Tanglewood Street (Topsail Hill) Access citing environmental and safety concerns at the unmanned access. Some spoke in favor of the Tanglewood Street (Topsail Hill) Access and felt that the proposed boardwalk was environmentally safe and would be beneficial to those in the surrounding neighborhoods. There were a few who felt that the money would be better spent advertising our State Parks and purchasing property for a regional access which would provide amenities and ample parking. Many of those who spoke, both for and against, agreed that parking and safety are issues that must be addressed.

Mr. Bagby asked that if anyone had any solutions other than what was discussed or had knowledge of property available in which to consider for a possible regional access to please submit the information to his office. He said the recommendations would be researched and considered.

The Commissioners had no comments.


The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Approved:



W. N. (Bill) Chapman, Chairman

Attest:



Alex Alford, Clerk of Court and County Comptroller