1. **CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Elliott called the meeting to order at 12:00 o’clock noon. Members present: Chairman Elliott, and members Beck, and Crouch were present. Vice Chairman Mull and member Mabry were absent. A quorum was present. Others present: Town Clerk Herrmann, Public Works Director Adair, and Dr. Susan Libes, Coastal Carolina University Director of the Waccamaw Watershed Academy.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Chairman Elliott led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **AGENDA APPROVAL.** The agenda was approved by acclamation.

4. **MINUTES APPROVAL.** Minutes of the January 17, 2017 stormwater meeting were approved by acclamation.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS – Agenda Items.** There were no public comments.

6. **COMMUNICATION & EDUCATION.** Dr. Libes said it has been almost a year since I last gave what were intended be quarterly reports for the volunteer water quality monitoring program. A PowerPoint with updated information is on file. Pages 2 and 3 bring forward in time the bacteria records. Lake Dogwood readings indicate that the water quality is generally very good. We only had one recent issue that was back on December 6th of 2016 that also was associated with elevation and turbidity. Mr. Adair was able to view trends and identify that the developers at new construction at Mallard Landing development drained a sediment pond. Mr. Adair communicated that information to Horry County, which investigated the site. The developer was asked to install more sediment control devices, which they did, and the levels returned to normal. Page 3 has results from Myrtle Lake. We’re continuing to see episodically high values that are above the water quality criteria. Remember, the criteria is only meant to be applied to classified water bodies and Myrtle Lake is not a classified water and we are applying the water quality criteria as a benchmark to understand how this site might play into downstream impairments in the surf zone. We sample at the site, and then sample at the surf zone. The Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) noted some impairments in the past. The field leader of the water monitoring program asked me for advice on explaining to individuals about water sampling. Page 4 is a summary of my response. The main issue is that the advisories means that DHEC advises you not to swim in posted areas. This is especially true for young people, the elderly, and those with compromised immune systems. Advisories do not mean that the beach is closed. Wading, fishing and shell collecting do not pose a risk. Advisories may be issued due to high bacteria counts or because of rainfall runoff. When a long-term advisory is posted, swimming is not advised within 200 feet on either side of the sign. Again, wading, fishing and shell collecting do not present a risk. Health problems typically come from swallowing the water. The good news is that we have no evidence of human source fecal bacteria in Myrtle Lake. The illicit discharge detection manuals I’ve reviewed state that you need to be over 12,000. There are no septic tanks in town, nor are there homeless people living in the Myrtle Lake area, so there is no human fecal bacteria source. We performed the genotypic assays on the samples collected; everything considered, there was no human source bacteria in Myrtle Lake. There is a risk of fecal contamination from domestic and wild animals, but there’s no reason for to take extraordinary measures beyond what DHEC normally advises. I don’t imagine many people want to swim in Myrtle Lake. If the storm water committee would like, we can develop an educational handout, card, or brochure for the water monitors to distribute. Mr. Beck said it might be useful to have a handout. We used to have caution signs on the beach when there were swimming advisories. Well, apparently wading is not a problem according to DHEC and so we don’t need to advise people not to wade around the outfalls. The likelihood of swimming in one of those outfalls is low, because they are shallow. But you wouldn’t want a toddler falling in there and drinking it. Dr. Libes asked how signs are permanently posted. Mr. Adair said we have three beach locations with permanent advisory signs: Dogwood swash on the beach side; Myrtle swash on the beach...
side, and 13th South on the beach side. DHEC tests six or seven different locations along our beach. Some are discharge points and some are not. They use criteria from the last five years of study; if you have a certain percentage over average readings, then the area is permanently posted. DHEC tests in knee deep water in the ocean where the runoff flows. The signs do not stop people from letting their kids play in the swashes. The signs state that wading is okay. Chairman Elliott said the state does not close beaches, they only issue advisories. Dr. Libes said I attended a water quality communication workshop in Myrtle Beach in early February with the hotel owners who also needed to be able to clearly explain to people what these advisories meant. We all worked very hard at the workshop to develop clear language on how to communicate that life is not a risk free enterprise, and you're probably encountering more risk on your drive to the beach than you are being in the water and coming in contact with bacteria. Challenges to your immune system help fight off bacteria. If you don't let kids play in the dirt, and pet dogs, etc. there seems to be some increased risk of asthma with these kids later in life. DHEC thinks it is because they have been living in a septic life, and not challenging their immune systems. I would say that knowledge on this is evolving. Absent any more information, I think we have to rely on DHEC as it pertains to Myrtle Lake. Mr. Crouch said I'm just incredulous that anyone would think to swim in any of the lakes. Do people go in and immerse their bodies in it? I know they go out in canoes; or boats with electrified motors, and they fish. The only instance I've ever heard in the 7 years I've been here was somebody was swimming in Elizabeth Lake for short period of time when they first moved to Harbor Lights, but that quickly ended. I haven't heard of any other person doing it. Mr. Beck said I don't think the water in Dogwood and Elizabeth is bad for swimming. What we see from the bacteria counts are really low. We tested zero and drinking water lets you have a 5. Mr. Crouch said and that's part of what you know what my memory reminded me of that and I thought but of course I'm sure there's a catch here as long as we don't put up a sign saying, you know, this is a swimming area. You know, then that were not in the position that is controlled, we have to meet controlled. John said we make no representation that these are recreational waters. Crouch replied that's right. And that's not their primary function anyway. There was much more discussion about the town's stormwater retention ponds not being classified water bodies, public education, outreach, and the stormwater monitoring program. Dr. Libes explained page 5 in the PowerPoint discusses sediment entering Dogwood Lake and how the report history was used to enable Mr. Adair to identify the problem and get it resolved. Page 6, addresses dissolves solids in the lakes, which is measured by conductivity that is present in the water. Page 7 cites oxygen levels, which reach their highest numbers during winter. There is a peak every January and sometimes you go above what is called 100% percent saturation, which means something is putting more oxygen in the water than would normally be; ordinarily cold creates a simple exchange in the atmosphere or it could be algae. Extra oxygen is a good thing. This is a seasonal phenomenon. A discussion was held regarding fountains in the lakes and methods used to clean them. Oxygen is lowest is during the summer, and those values look like they have improved since 2013. Page 8 are the ammonia readings, which basically indicate that ammonia has been detected. Mr. Beck explained how ammonia levels are tested and added that Dogwood Lake almost always has zero ammonia levels. Dr. Libes said page 9 addresses conductivity, which is a measure of salt levels in the lake. Myrtle Lake is tidal so there is a lot more salinity, and occasionally has very high numbers. Page 10 is the record from Myrtle Lake. These number range from about 5 to 10. There were high numbers in 2014, but that was immediately after a half inch rain. Page 11 is the oxygen record. There are more cases where the water is over 100% saturated, which are likely caused by algae. Page 12 and 13 were also oxygen related. Dr. Libes said in her opinion the oxygen levels are improving, and reiterated that the numbers were for classified waters that are being used for benchmarks, even though the town's ponds are not classified water. The committee members were invited to attend the annual water monitoring volunteer luncheon being held on April 19th at Coastal Carolina.

7. DIRECTOR’S REPORT. Director Adair said the stormwater committee participated in the barbeque festival, which I thought went extraordinarily well. Then we had the education session in Council Chambers that was attended by about 20 people. I commend the committee for their involvement and willingness to share information with the public, which is essentially what we are here for to the extent that people are willing to listen. Public works is in maintenance mode right now and are
cleaning out falls to prevent debris staying in the stormwater system; cleaning ditches, and catch basins. These are year-round endeavors. This past winter any ditches that were more than half-full or half-blocked were identified. Blockage prevents water flow and creates flooding. Cleaning them allows flow at the design capacity. That’s what we have to do to keep the town resilient against the flooding. We also can’t forget quantity. We talk about quality a lot, but quantity is also a problem in the town. We are spraying lakes for algae. We are getting ready for beach renourishment. Renourishment will be managed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Renourishment should raise the beach design height several feet higher. When that portion is completed, new sand fencing and dune grasses will be planted. Chairman Elliott said so, we already deposited $1.3 million with Horry County. Are the dunes and grasses included? Mr. Adair said yes. Although our stormwater utility fee has not been embraced by the council, we haven’t lost any funding and continue ongoing operations, including contracts with the Coastal Carolina University, the work volunteer program, the education program, our operating costs for spraying the lakes. I always budget some extra money for necessary spot engineering work. We won’t be doing any major projects this coming fiscal year. Chairman Elliott asked if the public is allowed to speak at the April 27th budget workshop. Ms. Herrmann said not only does the council allow the public to speak, it is relaxed workshop. Council welcomes the public to ask questions and make comments. Chairman Elliott asked if she should bring up the ERU (equivalent residential unit) resolution, because we need a funding source. Mr. Adair replied it couldn’t hurt. I’ve brought it up at the budget visioning meeting, and subsequent workshops, and also given a PowerPoint. I think there is a reluctance on the part of the council to pass any fees along to the public. I attended a conference a couple weeks ago in Atlanta of Southeast Stormwater Association and learned that utility fees are being used throughout the country. We are in a seven state region that uses utility fees to fund all sorts of projects like resiliency, capacity, storage, and infrastructure. If our town decides not to adopt the stormwater utility fee another funding source has to be identified, because this work has to be done. Mr. Crouch said or there’s going to be another emergency. Mr. Adair said the goal is to be proactive and less reactive. Mr. Crouch said a big part of the issue is making sure the basis for the fee is equitably divided among the businesses and residents. The second is to put it into a fund that can’t be expropriated. Mr. Adair said a stormwater utility fee that’s created the right way has everybody contributing to the stormwater equitably. Mr. Crouch said the message was received and I think our resolution was exceptionally well done, especially with the business coming in gradually up to the fair share level. The issue at this stage is we need to convert people. Chairman Elliott said we have not given up as yet. Mr. Adair said most municipalities that have a stormwater utility fee have larger populations and more square miles than Surfside Beach. This discussion will be continued in the future.

8. BUSINESS.

A. October 7 Family Festival. Members agreed that attending the BBQ festival with the education session right after was a success and planned to attend the fall festival with another education session scheduled concurrently. Details to be determined, but the plans are to use a similar process for distribution of information, magnets, etc.

B. October Education Presentation and Date. October 12, 2017 in Council Chambers from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Details to be determined.

C. Stormwater Video on Site with Links. Mr. Adair is still working on the stormwater video and will try again to get it loaded to the website. Additional education opportunities were discussed including publishing articles in the town’s newsletter, and public notices on the town’s website. Mr. Beck will submit articles for the newsletter addressing feeding water fowl and swales. The plan is to submit articles for each newsletter.

D. Council Tour. Mr. Adair agreed with the committee that Town Council would benefit from taking the stormwater system tour. However, before that could be scheduled, he needed to determine
whether councilmembers had interest in attending. An option would be to video the system components and offer it during a workshop.

E. Funding for Stormwater. As discussed during the director’s report, efforts to establish an on-going funding source for stormwater is vital for the maintenance and improvements of the town’s stormwater system. Efforts will continue by members to encourage councilmembers and the public to adopt the stormwater utility fee.

9. DISCUSSION. Any items of Interest or Concern to Committee Members.

Chairman Elliot said there was a foul odor near the surfing area during the recent tournament, and asked if Mr. Adair knew what caused it. Mr. Adair said no, but the waters flowing through that area were from several sources with the headwaters beginning behind BI-LO. Dr. Libes asked if the odor smelled like sulfur. Chairman Elliott did not know. Dr. Libes explained if it is organic matter that has been sitting under water for a long period of time because of no oxygen the bacteria decay generates hydrogen sulfide gas, which the human nose perceives as smelling like rotten eggs. By churning up that matter debris loosens and there will be a period of time there will be an odor until it completely flushes out.

Note: Mr. Adair left at 1:14 p.m.

Mr. Crouch suggested that the July meeting be a workshop to discuss how the committee would handle the family festival and upcoming education seminar. He also suggested that recognition certificates be prepared for the interns that helped with the last two events. Information would be sent to the town clerk.

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS. There were no public comments.

11. COMMITTEE COMMENTS. Chairman Elliott said Mr. Beck’s and her terms were expiring in July and August, respectively. She was afraid that a quorum would not be possible if appointments were not done quickly. Ms. Herrmann said pursuant to Town Code members may serve up to one year without being reappointed, so that was not a concern.

12. ADJOURNMENT. Chairman Elliott declared the meeting adjourned at 1:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved: July 18, 2017

Debra E. Herrmann, CMC, Town Clerk

Sandra Elliott, Chairman

Tabitha Mull, Vice Chairman

Alan Beck, Committee Member

Ron Crouch, Committee Member

P. L. Mabry, Committee Member

Clerk’s Note: This document constitutes summary minutes of the meeting that was digitally recorded, and not intended to be a complete transcript. Appointments to hear recordings may be made with the town clerk; a free copy of the audio will be given to you provided you bring a flash drive. In accordance with FOIA §30-4-80(A) and (E), meeting notice and the agenda were distributed to local media and interested parties via the town’s email subscription list. The agenda was posted on the entry door at Town Council Chambers. Meeting notice was also posted on the town website at www.surfsidebeach.org and the marquee.