

Newburyport Harbor Commission
Online Meeting
November 4, 2020
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Acting Chair Bob Dow called an on-line meeting of the Newburyport Harbor Commission to order at 7:04 p.m. In attendance were Bob Dow, Justin Dutcher, Jamie Knapp, Chris Kealey, Adam Armstrong, Jay Lesynski, Ron Thurlow and George Sass. Andrew Casson was absent. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

2. Minutes

Jamie Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the October 7, 2020, meeting as amended. Chris Kealey seconded the motion. The motion was approved by an 8-0 vote (Ron Thurlow, yes; George Sass, yes; Bob Dow, yes; Justin Dutcher, yes; Jamie Knapp, yes; Adam Armstrong, yes; Chris Kealey, yes; Jay Lesynski, yes).

3. Ordinance and Fees

The discussion about revising the ordinance to regulate kayaking was continued to allow for public comment. No comments were received. The following points were made during the discussion:

- While paddling should be allowed in the river, steps must be taken to reduce risk.
- The most problematic area is east of the Whittier Bridge.
- The river near MerriMar is narrow and the currents are strong.
- Kayaks launching from Cashman Park West should be allowed back river only.
- Launching at Joppa should be encouraged.
- Signage with a colorful map should be installed.
- Brochures could be distributed at the marinas and information could be posted on Constant Comment and the website.
- Safety classes could be conducted through the Department of Youth Services or the adult education program.
- Restrictions should be in place between May 1 and November 1. In October, the currents are the strongest and the docks are still in, but boating has tapered off. Fewer bystanders would be on hand to offer assistance if a rescue is needed.
- The planned restrictions should be shared with the Salisbury Harbor Commission.
- The Master Chief at the Coast Guard will provide a letter of support if possible or data on the number of calls that were received.
- Signage should be added to prohibit launching at the ramp at Brown's Wharf. The treatment of this area should be included in the RFP for the waterfront park.

4. Committee Reports

A) Coast Guard City

Regular activities have been put on hold due to Covid-19. The ceremony for the Cashman Award should be scheduled and a date in July or August should be selected for a clambake. A library of books with a nautical theme will set up at the Coast Guard Station after a space has been identified. Jamie Knapp will contact Representative Kelcourse about establishing a

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contact at DOT to install Coast Guard City highway signs. A sign could also be added at the waterfront park.

B) Dredging

Mark Cutter will attend the next meeting to discuss dredging. In order to focus the discussion, he should receive questions before the meeting. These should be sent to Paul Hogg to be forwarded.

C) Waterfront Trust

No updates.

D) Public Relations/Community Outreach/Marketing

The committee has been considering revisions to the website to make it a more robust communication tool and easier to use. George Sass said he could complete about 90% of the work and 10% would be outsourced. He will obtain a quote for the cost of the final development, which he estimated at \$1,500. The Coast Guard City information could be integrated into the website and a video on kayaking could also be included. Justin Dutcher commented that the content should focus on the mission of the Harbor Commission, such as safety and education, rather than the promotion of the city.

5. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported:

- He is working to update the database. The excise tax bills will be sent out next week. Compliance for the past year was improved. The number of unpaid bills is normally 150 to 175. This was reduced to 12.
- He met with members of the Coast Guard to recap the season. They will be coordinating a navigation class in the spring.
- The past season was very busy. Calls to the Coast Guard were up 50%.
- He will look for a center console boat after the \$85,000 check for the Whaler has been received.
- Wilson Welding has not yet provided a quote for the work that is needed on the pivot point.

6. General Discussion

Paul Hogg has been attending the meetings of the Ad Hoc Waterfront Committee. The Harbor Commission should have a presence at these meetings as well. Justin Dutcher will attend the November 5 meeting. A location for the storage of the docks should be included in the RFP for the park.

7. Adjournment

Justin Dutcher moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. George Sass seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Harbor Commission will be scheduled for December 2.