

Newburyport Harbor Commission
Harbormaster's Facility
November 7, 2018
Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Andrew Casson called a meeting of the Newburyport Harbor Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. In attendance were Andrew Casson, Adam Armstrong, Bob Dow, Jamie Knapp, Ron Thurlow, Dan May and Justin Dutcher. Chris Kealey and Jay Lesynski were absent. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

2. Minutes

Justin Dutcher moved to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2018 meeting. Dan May seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

3. Waterfront Trust Discussion

Ron Thurlow was the representative from the Harbor Commission to the advisory committee that was formed to review the NRA's disposition of the Custom House and its associated parcels of land. He summarized the questions he asked the advisory committee meeting, which centered around mitigation for hazardous materials, insurance coverage for liability claims and any potential future sale of the property. The NRA voted to award the sale of 25 Water Street to the Newburyport Maritime Society with the conditions the use shall be restricted to that of the operation of a maritime museum open to the public and the property shall not be sold, leased or mortgaged without the consent of the Newburyport Redevelopment Authority or the City of Newburyport. The discussion about the submerged tidelands has been put on hold while the draft deed for the transfer of the Custom House to the Maritime Society is being prepared. The Harbor Commission and Waterfront Trust subcommittees arrange to meet again shortly.

4. House Float Ordinance

A simplified final draft of the ordinance was submitted to the City Council public safety subcommittee. Joe Devlin will be asked if any progress has been made.

5. Subcommittee Reports

Regulations, Safety and Moorings

No report

Finance

Last year's budget will be reviewed at the next meeting.

Long-range Planning

The long-term planning item of the highest priority is dredging. Progress has not been made due to the need in recent months to focus on the house float ordinance and discussions with the Waterfront Trust.

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Committee assignments will be reviewed at an upcoming meeting. Goals include the enhancement of Coast Guard City activities and the placement of advertisements in boating magazines in the spring. A marketing or boating tourism committee might be formed.

6. General Business

Sewerage Releases

Chris Kealy attended a meeting held by the Merrimack River Watershed Council on October 18 about the release of sewerage into the river by upstream municipal wastewater treatment plants. A key point made at the meeting was that no funds are available to fix the problem and federal assistance would be needed. It might be beneficial to notify the public when a release has occurred, although there is a concern this could deter boaters. Paul Hogg said the waters in the area the Harbor Commission oversees are tested regularly between Memorial Day and Labor Day. The Commonwealth's standards were consistently met in 2018.

Funding for Dredging

The Commission members discussed the addition of a surcharge on waterways permits to be used for dredging. A flat fee of \$25 was proposed, which would result in approximately \$37,500 yearly that could be placed in reserve. Before the idea is pursued further, information should be obtained about the availability of federal or state funding for dredging. Ron Thurlow will follow up with Mayor Holaday about a letter she sent to Senator Markey on the issue.

7. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported:

- the docks and boats have been taken out of the water. The boats are at Cashman Park and are being shrink wrapped.
- the restrooms are closed and have been winterized.
- The cost of a new pump-out boat is \$97,460. A grant in the amount of \$56,250 was received for the boat. The city council subcommittee approved the use of \$41,210 of retained earnings for the remainder of the cost. The full council will vote at their next meeting.
- The retained earnings were certified and total \$554,212. Income will be reduced next year because the Whittier Bridge has been completed and the details have ended.
- City Council approved the change to the ordinance with regards to the fee for dinghies.
- he met with Mark Cutter from the Coast Guard at the Whittier Bridge. An additional temporary foam buoy will be installed near the rocks.
- a training for lifeguards will be held at the Beverly YMCA on November 8. It has become difficult to find lifeguards and ideas for attracting applicants will be discussed at the meeting.
- the excise tax bills will be sent out on November 16.

8. Adjournment

Jamie Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Bob Dow seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.