

**Newburyport Harbor Commission
Harbormaster's Facility
February 7, 2024
Minutes**

1. Call to Order

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

2. Minutes

Justin Dutcher moved to approve the minutes of the January 3 meeting. Bob Dow seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

3. Review of Watersheet and 10A Applications

2 Spofford Street

The applicant has not yet submitted the required information.

4. Committee Reports

a) Coast Guard City

Jamie Knapp will contact the Chamber of Commerce and Custom House this month about ways they could become engaged in supporting the Coast Guard. He provided the outline Ron Thurlow prepared to the Mayor. He will provide updates to the Mayor and request support as needed. The plaque for the Cashman Award will be installed and a dedication ceremony might be held at a later date.

b) Moorings, Dock and Infrastructure

The draft 10A permit has been revised based on the comments from Commission members. The members discussed including a requirement for an annual inspection if private docks with electricity. The draft permit will be sent to the City Council, with the goal of having fines in place for the upcoming season.

Ron Thurlow drafted a document similar to the 10A permit for the marinas. This will be finalized at a later date and will be informational in nature. Its purpose would be to make the marina operators aware of the need to regularly inspect their facilities. Unlike the 10A permit, it would not be required that the document be signed and submitted, as this would create a liability for the City. However, because the docks are installed annually, a permit could be required that ensures the electrical service is up to code. Fines could be issued to marinas that are not in compliance. Electrical Inspector Jeff Mattheson will be invited to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss the matter.

c) Public Safety and Regulations

No discussion.

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d) Finance

Justin Dutcher presented a long-term review of revenues and expenses. He said the Plum Island parking lot accounts for 23% of the Department's revenue, which he sees as risky. The use of the lot peaked during Covid. A part of the increased revenue from this source is attributable to the raising of the rates. The expenses related to the operation of the lot have increased as well. The desired change to an automated system would increase revenue while decreasing costs, and would provide for added security, as license plates would be recorded. An added number of boats in the Department and a raise in the salaries of the Assistant Harbormasters are factors that have led to an increase in operating expenses.

e) Marketing

No discussion.

5. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported that:

- He has been working on the budget.
- The Coast Guard is being realigned nationally. Information was posted briefly on the internet that Station Merrimack River is to be reclassified and will lose its status as a surf station. This has not been made public information. If it occurs, it would be necessary to develop a policy regarding the role of the staff in rescues. He suggested that boaters could be given access to the camera that shows conditions at the mouth of the river. The members discussed installing a rough bar light, but there is a concern that this could create a liability issue.
- There are now 15 cleats in the embayment, where the plans had called for four. Four additional cleats could be added to the corners.
- New power receptacles are to be installed on the docks.
- He is to attend a training session in Gloucester on February 9.
- The shellfish purification plant was heavily damaged by flooding and has been closed.

6. Other Business

Adam Armstrong reported he attended a recent meeting of the Eight Towns and the Great Marsh Committee.

Jamie Knapp said Rocky Morrison, founder of the Clean River Project, made an online comment about wanting to do work in Newburyport. He might wish to attend an upcoming meeting.

7. Adjournment

Bob Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m. Jay Lesynski seconded the motion. The motion was approved.