

Newburyport Harbor Commission

Online Meeting

April 14, 2020

Minutes

1. Call to Order

Chair Andrew Casson called an on-line special meeting of the Newburyport Harbor Commission to order at 7:12 p.m. In attendance were Adam Armstrong, Andrew Casson, Bob Dow, Justin Dutcher, Chris Kealey, Jamie Knapp, George Sass and Jay Lesynski. Ron Thurlow was absent. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

2. Minutes

Justin Dutcher moved to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2020, meeting as submitted. Bob Dow seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. General Business

The Commission members discussed the timing of the installation of the docks. Mayor Holaday would like the installation to be put on hold. The peak of the COVID-19 outbreak has not yet been reached and she does not want boaters from other locations to be drawn to Newburyport.

Paul Hogg said he has been receiving many calls about the issue, especially with the haddock season set to begin on April 15. His first thought is that he would prefer to install the docks as soon as possible. Docks are being installed at the marinas, creating a safety issue, and at least one patrol boat should be in the water. The only revenue at this time is from the waterways and mooring permits. On the other hand, a hiring freeze is in place and he must be consistent with what is being done in other departments. The Coast Guard would be available to respond if the patrol boats are not in the water. At the latest, he would like the docks to be installed by May 15, which is generally considered to be the start of the season. A definitive date is important because time is needed to book the cranes. It was decided he should schedule the cranes for the second week of May. George Sass, Chris Kealey and Justin Dutcher will help to develop a Constant Contact message to keep boaters informed about the installation of the docks.

The members discussed possible interim locations for the patrol boats. Jay Lesynski offered space at Merri-Mar. Cashman Park would be more convenient. The ramp at Cashman Park is open. The use of the portion of the facility where there are pylons but no docks creates a liability issue for the City. The members discussed adding signage indicating boaters would be using the ramp at their own risk. This would create a safety concern and would be in conflict with the position of the Mayor. They also discussed installing a chain across the ramp. The Coast Guard and commercial fishermen both make use the ramp and might need to be given keys if a locked chain were to be installed. The safest solution would be to install the docks. Members of the Commission volunteered to install the docks at Cashman Park and in front of the Harbormaster's facility. Paul Hogg will give more thought to the issue and ask Mayor Holaday for her opinion.

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Jay Lesynski asked about putting the fee increase on hold. It has been approved by City Council and many permits have already been sold. No late fees will be charged this year. Paul Hogg said he hasn't received any negative comments about the new fees.

Bob Dow asked if it would be necessary to replace the netting at Cashman Park and if there are other items that need attention. The members should develop a list of projects they would like to undertake in order to be able to take advantage of any funding that might become available. This will be a topic for discussion at the next meeting.

4. Adjournment

Bob Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.