

Newburyport Harbor Commission

Online Meeting

April 7, 2021

Minutes

1. Call to Order

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

2. Minutes

Jamie Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the March 3, 2021, meeting as submitted. Justin Dutcher seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote (Andrew Casson, yes; Bob Dow, yes; Justin Dutcher, yes; Jamie Knapp, yes; Ron Thurlow, abstain; Adam Armstrong, absent; Jay Lesynski, absent).

3. Kayak Ordinance

The Commission has two options with regards to the proposed ordinance to restrict kayaking in the central waterfront. One alternative would be to expand the existing ordinance that places restrictions on the area between the Coast Guard Station and Cashman Park to include kayaks. The proposed change to the existing ordinance was met with some opposition from members of the public. It would be unlikely the proposal could be amended and approved before the beginning of the season.

The second option would be to not impose restrictions this year but to provide education and information. Two safety classes have been scheduled. A brochure could be produced that contains a map, warnings and recommendations. Safety signage could be placed near the fuel dock. Education and warning signs could be installed at the launch areas at Cashman Park, the Joppa ramp and Brown's Wharf. Parking should be improved at Joppa and Cashman Park, the areas where launching would be encouraged. A record of incidents could be kept to support any need for restrictions in the future.

The town of Salisbury and the Coast Guard will be asked to assist in track problems. Ron Thurlow will draft an incident report to be shared with them. He will also draft the trifold brochure and the fuel dock and launch area warning signs. Justin Dutcher and George Sass will be responsible coordinating the production of these items. Paul Hogg will work on designating additional car-top parking spaces at Cashman Park. He will also contact the marinas about gas dock warning signs.

4. Waterfront Trust Lease

At the March 3 meeting, the members edited the draft lease with the Waterfront Trust. Andrew Casson said these changes have been verbally accepted. The issue of indemnification might delay the signing of the document. The design of the expanded park is in its beginning stages and a commitment to the winter storage of the docks could not be made at this time.

5. Committee Reports

a) Dredging

The DCR Sediment Management Study will be the focus of the April 9 MRBA meeting. Paul Hogg said the Army Corp surveyed the area outside of the federal channel where dredging is needed. The City would be responsible for obtaining the necessary permits and funding for the additional dredging.

b) Coast Guard City

Jamie Knapp reported that DOT is not able to produce signs that represent a government agency. He and Bob Dow will meet to explore alternate locations, such as Storey Avenue near the Little River Trail parking area. Representative Kelcourse will reach out to his contacts in Boston about the highway signage.

The final application package for the renewal of the Coast Guard City designation will be reviewed at the June 2 meeting. The following assignments were made:

Jamie Knapp – obtain contact information for Governor Baker, Senator DiZoglio and Representative Kelcourse.

Andrew Casson – ask Mayor Holaday to contact Senator Markey and Senator Warren; contact Dan May about obtaining a copy of the last submission.

Paul Hogg - ask Mark Cutter for contact information for the Commander of the Coast Guard Sector Boston; draft paragraph on training and operational cooperation and support from the City.

Ron Thurlow – draft paragraph on support services; contact Custom House Maritime Museum. Justin Dutcher - draft paragraph on future events.

c) Public Relations/Community Outreach/Marketing

The committee is working on revisions to the website.

6. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported:

- The season is off to a busy start. The office opened on April 5 and 120 Waterways Permits were issued in three days.
- On April 12 the docks will be installed in front of the office and the central waterfront docks will be put in on April 14.
- He is working on a Port Security grant application for a new patrol boat.
- The City Council Planning and Development subcommittee has taken the lead for the repair of the bulkhead. A Marine Fisheries grant might be a possible source of funding.
- He has not yet received any applications for lifeguard positions.

7. Adjournment

Bow Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:55 p.m. Justin Dutcher seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Harbor Commission will be scheduled for May 5, 2021.