

Newburyport Harbor Commission
Harbormaster's Facility
May 3, 2023
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, Bob Dow, Jay Lesynski, Ron Thurlow, Justin Dutcher, Chris Charos, George Sass and Jamie Knapp. Adam Armstrong was absent. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

2. Minutes

Justin Dutcher moved to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2023, meeting. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

3. Committee Reports

a) Coast Guard City

A gathering will not be scheduled until after the monument has been installed. It appears that the City might take the lead when the next renewal application is due. The Commission must continue to provide assistance to the Coasties as necessary and to keep a log of its activities. Articles that appear in the *Daily News* are especially helpful.

b) Public Safety and Regulations

The next kayak safety class is scheduled for May 10.

c) Dredging

Senator Bruce Tarr attended the meeting to discuss dredging. In the past, the Army Corp. dredged every three years to maintain the conditions at the mouth, but this practice has been stopped. When the maintenance dredging was done on a regular basis, the mouth was transitable at all times. Now, boaters frequently do not use the channel when leaving the river due to its condition. It is especially important for the Coast Guard to always be able to navigate the river. The Commission has the knowledge necessary to take a role in re-establishing dredging on a regular schedule.

Senator Tarr said maintenance dredging is routine in the south but not in New England. There are not a lot of commercial fishing vessels using the river. The main use is by recreational boaters. There is a great deal of competition for funding for dredging. The Army Corp. will only dredge to improve navigation, not to obtain sand to place on the beach. Dredging is done when surveys demonstrate the need.

The current pattern of boat traffic in the river is not in alignment with the channel. The first step towards the re-establishment of regular dredging should be changing the channel to a proper alignment. The channel was recently changed in Essex through an Act of Congress. The issue of changing the channel should first be discussed with the Coast Guard, and then the Army Corp. It should be known that silt is already beginning to fill back in the

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channel. It should be possible to achieve the goal of having dredging done on a more regular basis, but it is unlikely a commitment would be made for maintenance on a three-year cycle.

d) Marketing

No report.

e) Docks, Moorings and Infrastructure

No report.

f) Finance

The line item for additional equipment was cut \$10,000 during the budget review process.

4. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported that:

- He will attend training sessions with the Salisbury Police Department on May 4 and the Coast Guard on May 5.
- He is working on setting up the software for the online mooring system.
- Many reservations have already been made through Dockwa.
- The office has been busy processing permits.
- The ramp at Cashman Park will open for the season on May 6.
- He has purchased new life jackets for the staff, along with first-aid kits and additional AED devices.

5. Other Business

Reappointments

Jamie Knapp and Bob Dow met with the Mayor about their reappointments. They expressed that the group works together. The members have projects they wish to accomplish and would like to keep their momentum. Andrew Casson said the time is appropriate for him to step down as Chair. Bob Dow moved to nominate Jamie Knapp for the position of Chair. Justin Dutcher seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

6. Adjournment

Bob Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:29 p.m. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved.