

Newburyport Harbor Commission
Harbormaster's Facility
July 13, 2017
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, Chris Kealey, Jamie Knapp, Adam Armstrong, Dan May, Bob Dow, Justin Dutcher and Jay Lesynski. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also present.

2. Minutes

Jamie Knapp moved to approve the minutes of the June 8, 2017 meeting as submitted. Chris Kealey seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. House Float Discussion

The Commission members continued the discussion begun at previous meetings on the need for an ordinance to govern houseboats. Justin Dutcher researched the issue and found a 2012 Supreme Court ruling that houseboats are not vessels. This, along with the marina's marketing of the houseboats as waterfront homes, makes it appear it would be more appropriate for real estate taxes, rather than excise taxes, to be collected on them. Waterways permits were required for the houseboats in Newburyport this year, which creates a conflict. Paul Hogg is working to obtain Chapter 91 license information. The marina was licensed for recreational boats and appears to be operating outside of the limits of its permit because it is now selling floating homes. A change in operations requires a revision to a Chapter 91 license. The Conservation Commission and the Building Department also have an interest in the matter. It is possible that more than one ordinance might be required. The Harbor Commission would have purview over the placement of houseboats, while the Building Commissioner should handle inspections and building permits. Justin Dutcher will put together a list of the issues related to houseboats and the entities that should be responsible for each. The members of the subcommittee will meet with Mike Goodrich, the new owner of the marina.

4. Rough Bar Light

The Commission had previously sent a letter to the Coast Guard regarding the need for a rough bar light. Mark Cutter of Waterways Management in the Boston Sector had responded that a notice was sent to mariners requesting information and the matter is being studied. No further communication has been received. Dan May will contact him about any action that is being taken.

5. Group Mooring Permit

Using Salisbury's permit as a guide, Jamie Knapp will prepare a draft group mooring permit applicant for review at the next meeting. The application process would be instituted for next year.

6. Long term Planning

A boat trip that had been planned for June 30 to initiate a discussion on dredging at the mouth of the river did not take place. An alternative date will be selected.

7. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported:

- he has been very busy over the past several weeks, especially due to the good weather over the Fourth of July four-day weekend.
- Tom Benson, owner of the New Orleans Saints, attracted attention on the boardwalk and spent a great deal in money in the city when he visited aboard his 150-foot Burger yacht.
- a shark spotted off of Plum Island was reported as being a great white but was actually a basking shark.
- a letter of support for the acquisition of a shallow water response boat was sent on behalf of the City to the Coast Guard. The Coast Guard often requires his assistance because it is currently not able to respond to calls about incidents in shallow water.
- he received a certificate of appreciation from the Massachusetts Special Events Division of the 101 Airborne Division for his assistance with fishing trips arranged for veterans.
- an article about the duties of Plum Island lifeguards appeared in the *Daily News* on July 8.
- new signs were installed in the embayment to prevent swimming and warn of the possible presence of electrical currents in the water.
- the public restrooms in the new facility are working out well.
- a new Mule must be purchased for Plum Island as the current one is at the end of its life expectancy. Jay Lesynski recommended the Polaris Ranger.

8. General Discussion

- The construction of the website will be completed by the September meeting.
- The Hines road race was successful, with over \$70,000 raised.
- Jamie Knapp will follow up on an advertisement he submitted to the *Daily News* to fill the vacancy on the Commission. Interviews will be held at the September meeting.

9. Adjournment

Dan May moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Newburyport Harbor Commission will take place on Thursday, September 14, 2017.