

Newburyport Harbor Commission
Online Meeting
September 2, 2020
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, Chris Kealey, Adam Armstrong and George Sass. Jay Lesynski and Ron Thurlow were absent. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

2. Minutes

Bob Dow moved to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2020, meeting as submitted. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 7-0 vote (George Sass, yes; Andrew Casson, yes; Bob Dow, yes; Justin Dutcher, yes; Jamie Knapp, yes; Adam Armstrong, yes; Chris Kealey, yes).

3. Committee Reports

A) Coast Guard City

Many planned activities, such as a barbeque and clambake, have been put on hold due to Covid-19. The ceremony for the Cashman Award that was held at the Black Cow last year was very successful. The award remains important even if it is not possible to hold the accompanying event. It could perhaps be added to a meeting or other activity that the Coast Guard has scheduled. Andrew Casson will contact the Senior Chief about establishing a library of books with a nautical theme. Chris Kealey suggested the Commission might provide food or gift cards for Coast Guard members that have a financial need due to Covid-19. Jamie Knapp has been in touch with Representative Kelcourse about establishing a contact at DOT to install Coast Guard City highway signs.

B) Dredging

A meeting of the Merrimack River Beach Alliance is scheduled for September 11. Representatives from the Army Corp. are usually in attendance at the meetings of the Alliance and might provide an update on plans for dredging at that time.

C) Budget and Finance

Paul Hogg met with City Councilors halfway through the three-month budget period. They were pleased with the revenue collected to date for the period. Fishing and boating are two activities that are possible during the pandemic.

D) Public Relations/Community Outreach/Marketing

The use of Dockwa has been successful and has generated 80% of the reservations this season. Revenues from the docks for July and August reached \$50,000.

4. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported:

- he has not received any complaints about the new rate structure.
- the Plum Island parking lot will soon be open to non-residents. The lot has generated \$118,000 in revenue to date this season.
- the pandemic and hot weather have led to an increase in the number of inexperienced boaters on the river. Nine passengers from a 19-foot boat that capsized were all rescued.
- A Trump parade with 500 boats went smoothly.
- All staff members are being trained on the use of the new boat.
- He will receive \$85,000 for the boat that capsized earlier in the year. He will ask the insurance company about adding the trailer, which might have some value. He is looking for a replacement boat. He would like to acquire a boat with a central console that could be operated by one person. He has received one estimate for a boat, motor and trailer for \$145,000.
- He asked the members to consider banning kayaking from Carr Island to the ice breaker as a matter of public safety. A ban already exists in this area for wind surfing, water skiing, and stand-up paddle boarding. Many kayakers do not understand the currents in the river and get sucked under the docks. Three such rescues took place over the past weekend. Mayor Holaday supports implementing the ban, which would be a part of the ordinance. Kayakers could access the river at the Joppa ramp and by Plum Island. Launching at Cashman Park would be prohibited. The Waterfront Trust should be asked about blocking the access by the Black Cow.
- A sign has been installed by the sandbar indicating that swimming in the river is prohibited.
- The office is still closed to the public. The showers are also closed to the boaters.

5. General Discussion

- A boater approached Andrew Casson about installing a hose to remove duck waste from the dinghy dock at Cashman Park. The feasibility of the request will be considered in the fall. Water is available at the soccer field.
- The floating homes ordinance stalled in the City Council Public Safety Subcommittee. The ordinances will be reviewed again in the fall.

6. Adjournment

Bob Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Justin Dutcher seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Harbor Commission will be scheduled for October 7.