

Newburyport Harbor Commission
Harbormaster's Facility
October 12, 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, Jamie Knapp, Adam Armstrong, Bob Dow, Justin Dutcher, Dan May and Jay Lesynski. Chris Kealey was absent. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also present.

2. Minutes

The approval of the minutes of the September 21 meeting was tabled.

3. House Float Discussion

Paul Hogg said he confirmed with DEP that a letter will be sent to the Yankee Landing Marina and the Newburyport Harbor Marina informing them they are in violation of their Chapter 91 permits because of the house floats. He and Andrew Casson are scheduled to meet with Mayor Holaday about the items that should be included in a house float ordinance. They will recommend that two ordinances governing house floats be adopted: one for the Harbor Commission and a second for the City. They will provide a definition of a house float, discuss the items under the purview of the Harbor Commission and make recommendations about the items that should be under the jurisdiction of other departments and boards, such as building, fire, planning, conservation and zoning and therefore should be included in the City ordinance. A follow-up meeting should take place soon with all stakeholders.

The term that should be used in the ordinances is floating homes. This would be defined as a structure constructed on a float designed to be used as a residential dwelling that does not have means of self-propulsion and is powered by utilities connected to shore. A boat without a working motor is termed a live aboard. The location of floating homes would be under the purview of the Commission. The Commission's ordinance would require that a watersheet application be approved and a special permit be issued annually that is similar to but separate from a waterways permit. The members discussed the need to impose a limit on the number of floating homes that would be permitted but did not reach a conclusion.

Because a floating home is a structure and not a vessel, it should be subject to the same requirements as a dwelling constructed on the land. The City's ordinance should include building, electrical, fire, safety and plumbing inspections. The Building Inspector should conduct an initial inspection before a floating home is occupied for the first time. It should be designed according to standards for marine vessels for plumbing and electrics because it is being kept on the water. The Commission members discussed requiring a holding tank for each floating homes that has a fixed connection to a central holding tank operated by the marina.

The existing floating homes would not be grandfathered. They would be subject to the regulations as they are adopted.

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4. Group Mooring Permit

Jamie Knapp is drafting a group-mooring permit. He sought input from Salisbury but has not received a response.

5. Harbormaster's Report

Paul Hogg reported:

- he met with Mayor Holaday about the dredging to be done by the Charos family in the spring. Fifty loads of sand would be made available to the City.
- he and three others received a national certification.
- he expects the docks to be taken out of the water on November 2 and 3.
- he purchased a new Mule.

6. General Business

- Jay Lesynski will test for stray electrical currents in the river. Finding the source would be important because it leads to corrosion.
- Jamie Knapp is working with the *Daily News* to advertise for candidates to fill the vacancy on the Commission.
- Chris Kealey attended a meeting of the Parks Commission at which the improvements to the Joppa boat ramp were discussed. Jamie Knapp will draft a letter to the Parks Commission expressing the Harbor Commission's preference for the ramp to be made wider.

7. Public Comment

Rob Germinara, 2 Ashland Street, said the number of house floats should be limited to five, which would circumvent the need for an ordinance. He said the Commission should instead focus its efforts on dredging.

8. Adjournment

Jamie Knapp moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:20 p.m. Bob Dow seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The next meeting of the Newburyport Harbor Commission will take place on Thursday, November 9, 2017.