

## **Newburyport Harbor Commission**

Online Meeting

May 4, 2022

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, Jamie Knapp, Adam Armstrong, Ron Thurlow and Jay Lesynski. Harbormaster Paul Hogg was also in attendance.

### **2. Minutes**

Bob Dow moved to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2022, meeting. Ron Thurlow seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

### **3. Watersheet Application**

#### **1 Spofford Street**

Tom Hughes represented the applicant. He said the new dock was viewed as the replacement of an existing dock and it was not known that a water sheet application would be necessary. He said the new dock is of a better design than the previous dock and its ramp is located on firmer ground. The shape of the dock was changed from a T to an L, which is more suitable in this area of swift currents. Mr. Hughes said the dock has been in place for five years and does not interfere with the channel.

In response to questions from the Commission members, Mr. Hughes said the applicant's boat is 27 or 28 feet in length. Small craft are not able to pass under the dock.

According to the Ordinance, the applicant must indicate that the dock would not project into the federal channel; the constraints of the waterway have been taken into consideration and the dock would not cause undue congestion on the waterway nor affect the navigation of vessels from neighboring properties. Jay Lesynski commented that while this is a tough location, the standing wave is in the middle of the river and not at the dock. Ron Thurlow said the dock would be in the line of sight. He added that the applicant should be made aware of the dangerous conditions that can be present in this location. No one from the public spoke in favor of or in opposition to the application.

Bob Dow moved to approve the water sheet application for 1 Spofford Street with the conditions that: 1) the number of docks shall be included in the permit; 2) the permit shall be contingent upon the applicant's receipt of a Chapter 91 license or 10A permit and 3) the permit shall note the hazardous nature of the river in this area. Jay Lesynski seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Commission members discussed the importance of inspecting docks from both the land and the water. Towards this end, docks should be tagged and a spreadsheet of watersheet applications should be created. The configuration of the docks should match the approved plans. The Commission might wish to consider the institution of a penalty for docks without a water sheet permit. Some communities charge an annual fee for docks, similar to a waterways permit.

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Ron Thurlow suggested that a letter might be sent annually to the marinas regarding an inspection of their dock systems. Paul Hogg said annual inspections of docks could be added to the 10A permit. Jamie Knapp pointed out that in the past the Commission held a meeting with the marinas at the beginning of the boating season. The mooring and docks subcommittee shall be re-formed.

**4. Committee Reports**

**a) Coast Guard City**

The recertification has been approved. The Mayor was of the opinion that City Hall was responsible for the initial application and its annual renewal. He was made aware of the history of City's designation and the role of the Harbor Commission in the process.

Andrew Casson attended a meeting of the Parks Commission to discuss the possible installation of a monument along the Rail Trail to recognize the Coast Guard's receipt of the George Cashman award. The Parks Commission was in support of the proposed location for the monument, but formal approval has not yet been given. Jay Lesynski said it would be meaningful to install a plaque on a boulder that has been taken from the old Coast Guard station. Andrew Casson and Ron Thurlow will work on a design for the monument.

For this year only, the Cashman award will be presented during Yankee Homecoming with the Rybicki award.

**b) Dredging**

No report

**c) Finance**

No report.

**d) Public Relations/Community Outreach/Marketing**

No report.

**5. Market Landing Park**

The City has applied for state and federal grants for the repair of the bulkhead. Additional documentation was necessary for one federal grant. There was a concern about 50% of the bulkhead being owned by a private trust. The project will be put out to bid after the amount of grant money that will be awarded has been determined.

**6. General Discussion**

George Sass and Justin Dutcher must be interviewed by the Mayor before being reappointed to the Commission. It will not be necessary for them to submit letters of interest or resumes. Andrew Casson met with the Mayor to discuss the appointment process. The Harbor Commission is the only board that advertises for and interviews its own candidates. The Mayor disagrees that the newest members should fill the alternate positions. Bob Dow commented that board members deserve to be reappointed until they choose to resign. Jamie

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Knapp said that many projects take multiple years to complete and the expertise of continuing members is needed.

**7. Harbormaster's Report**

Paul Hogg reported that:

- The Gillis Bridge is in poor condition. One beam has broken free. Problems with the supply chain could slow the repair.
- The municipal agreement with Salisbury to share the cost of permitting and dredging the area outside of the federal channel is before the City Council. A soil sample by GZA indicated the material to be dredged will be sand.
- The new patrol boat is being fabricated. It is expected that it will be shipped in November.
- Invitations will be sent to the Commission members for the change of command at the Coast Guard station.

**8. Adjournment**

Bob Dow moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m. Jamie Knapp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.