

MINUTES

Milford Harbor Management Commission, 21 March 2024, 7:00 P.M., Lisman Landing

Board Members, Liaisons, and Staff Present:

Robert Brennan, Chairman

Nancy Bennett, Secretary

Jim Beard

Raymond Kirmaier

Dora Kubek

Dylan Mark

Richard Preneta

Aldermanic Liaison: Ray Vitali

James Donegan, Harbormaster

Lee Henschman, Deputy Harbormaster

Board Members, Liaisons & Staff Absent: Joseph Gilbert, John Nevin

Chairman Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

Consideration of the minutes of the meeting of 15 February 2024

A motion by Mr. Beard, seconded by Mr. Preneta to accept the minutes of the 15 February 2024 meeting passed unanimously.

Mr. Brennan said he would move the permitting agenda item forward as a courtesy to the applicants.

Public Comments: None.

Permit Reviews:

Coastal Area Management (CAM) Site Plan Application – 104 Edgewater Place

Attorney Kevin Curseaden, 3 Lafayette Street, said he represented Brenton Artz, owners of 104 Edgewater Place, also present, who had applied for a CAM review to the Planning and Zoning Board earlier in the month. He said they were in attendance to answer any questions during the Harbor Commission review of the CAM application as is required by statute. Mr. Donegan noted that he sent the commissioners an email with attachments that included the CAM application and project plans. Mr. Brennan asked for comments, none were offered. He said the sole consideration before the commission was to determine whether the CAM application was consistent with the Harbor Management Plan. He said he didn't see inconsistencies but expressed concerns about EV charging stations that might be placed in proximity to water and could present a risk to the harbor. Ron Wassmer, professional engineer for the project, said the ground elevation of the proposed garage is 6.4' above mean sea level in a flood zone 11. With no further comment forthcoming, Mr. Brennan asked for a vote.

A motion by Mr. Beard, seconded by Mr. Preneta, to find the Coastal Area Management application for 104 Edgewater Place consistent with the Harbor Management Plan passed unanimously.

COP – 159 Housatonic Drive

A Certificate of Permission to repair an existing pier and reorient a dock at the end of the pier was noted. Mr. Donegan provided details on the repairs, noting that there was no further encroachment. He advised that a COP was just a notification and did not require a vote.

Chairman's Report: R. Brennan

Chairman Brennan said he reviewed the Edgewater CAM with City Planner David Sulkis and reminded him that the Department of Permitting and Land Use must submit CAMs that may affect the harbor to the Harbor Management Commission per statute. He moved on to the harbor dredging project, saying that he and Mr. Donegan met with parties in the process of replacing helixes. He commended Mr. Donegan's patience and resolve during a process that has

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involved challenging obstacles and issues. He said more work was needed with the Army Corps to evaluate how dredging waste would be handled and whether funds might remain after this part of the project is complete. So far, he said upland disposal seemed necessary, but that determination requires more sampling in hopes of isolating what portion must be upland. He said there is now room for about 4 more docks in the mooring area, but additional approvals might be required. He said that the Port Authority will likely be combined with the airport authority, but he is hopeful this means more grants will be available. Milford harbor projects with large funding requirements include new loading docks and additional dredging of the north end of the harbor. He discussed a request by the previous mayor to participate in a Bureau of Ocean and Energy Management Review of a cabling project that is primarily in New York but has a section connecting with a cable in Waterford. The concern is to evaluate how the project might affect cables that already run north and south in the Sound. Mr. Donegan said that what he has seen so far doesn't impact Milford. Mr. Brennan noted that the cable will intersect with the Iroquois pipeline, involve some tribal jurisdictions, and possibly impact wildlife.

Director's Report/ Harbormaster Report: J. Donegan

Mr. Donegan reviewed progress in removing and installing moorings. He expressed appreciation for the flexibility of Waterfront Construction and Sterling Marine as Hazlett was late with some deliveries of bands. Hazlett also had to substitute a different product when the original type of bands turned out to be so stiff that they submerged floats. He described attempts to find a working solution which ultimately succeeded. He said about 2/3rds of the floats had been installed. He provided details on why the bands need to accommodate both routine tidal variation and severe storm events. He said the project is back on track now and must be completed in a week and a half. Discussion ensued on the number of bands ordered, how many might ultimately be needed, the expected lifespan of the bands, their cleaner design, and the guarantees in place to ensure they function once they are in use. Mr. Donegan said that if the current schedule holds, the project should be complete by the end of month. Mr. Preneta and Mr. Kirmaier discussed possible negotiations to recoup any financial issues due to delays or excess inventory of bands once the project is finished.

Regarding mooring contracts, Mr. Donegan said he had long waiting list, but was about ¾ through it as he reassigned open moorings. He said marina reservations were brisk with much interest from cruising groups.

He raised the possibility of a SHIPP matching grant to replace floats on the boat ramp. He noted a submittal date of 7/1. Mr. Brennan expressed concern about a grant requirement to charge out-of-town boaters the same fees as Milford residents for ramp use passes. Discussion ensued on applying for money to do a feasibility study, design and planning, and for dredging the marina beyond where the federal channel ends. Mr. Donegan said grants for writing HM Plans can potentially receive a 50% cost match. Mr. Preneta and Ms. Bennett were concerned that the same-fee requirement for seeking a SHIPPs grant would be a mistake by opening the ramps to even more traffic. Mr. Donegan said that the boat ramp already has more traffic than can be accommodated on many weekends. He said he can review the balance between Milford usage versus others. Mr. Brennan said his and Mr. Donegan's preliminary analysis of self-funding the repairs indicated a 7-year payback. Mr. Vitali asked about potential impacts of the Founder's Walk road rerouting; the group thought it was hard to predict. Mr. Donegan said there are many projects that need attention, and they should be prioritized. Discussion ensued on space for the 4 additional docks, the possible need for approval from DEEP and the Army Corps, as well as other ideas on how to reconfigure or optimize the space. There was also discussion on the unusable mushroom anchors that have been removed from the harbor.

Deputy Harbormaster Report: L. Henchman

Mr. Henchman noted no changes from last month.

Report of Standing Committees

Lisman Landing (Dylan Mark, John Nevin): **None**

Finance (Bob Brennan, Nancy Bennett):

Checking \$344,193.07

Savings \$271,881.81

Total \$616,074.88

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There followed some discussion on revenue from moorings relative to prior years; that although the revenue was encouraging, there are many projects requiring funding. There was discussion of increased sampling costs that include biological testing with strict standards. There was also discussion of materials coming downriver due to the recent heavy precipitation, with less sediment since dredging but a great deal of consumer waste and large tree stumps that could damage docks and boats. Mr. Preneta wondered what happened to a deflector that was once near the footbridge and whether it could be replaced.

Nominating Committee (James Beard, Nancy Bennett) **None**

Harbor & Mooring (Richard Preneta, Bob Brennan) **Discussed.**

Housatonic (Raymond Kirmaier, Dora Kubek) **None**

Amendments (James Beard, Joseph Gilbert) **None**

Shell Fishing (Robert Brennan, Joseph Gilbert, Ray Kirmaier) **None**

Correspondence: None.

Old Business

Ct. Port Authority – SHIPPS Grant: discussed above.

Memorial Plaque: Still looking for alternative ideas.

New Business: None.

Liaisons – Mr. Vitelli asked about possible transient confusion from inconsistency with signs saying both Milford Landing and Lisman Landing.

Adjournment was at 8:13 pm.

Attest: M.E. Greene, recording sec'y

Any individual with a disability who needs special assistance to participate in the meeting should contact the Operations Director, 874-1610, five days prior to the meeting if possible.