

## MINUTES

### Milford Harbor Management Commission, February 16, 2023, 7:00 P.M., Milford Landing

#### **Board Members, Liaisons and Staff Present:**

Robert Brennan, Chairman  
Nancy Bennett, Secretary  
Jim Beard  
Raymond Kirmaier  
Dora Kubek  
John Nevin  
Richard Preneta  
James Donegan, Harbormaster  
Lee Henchman, Deputy Harbormaster  
Gregory Harla, Board of Aldermen

#### **Board Members, Liaisons & Staff Absent:**

Joseph Gilbert, Vice-Chairman  
Dylan Mark  
Raymond Vitali, Board of Aldermen

Chairman Brennan called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

#### **Consideration of the minutes of the Special Meeting of January 19, 2023**

A motion was made by Mr. Nevin and seconded by Mr. Kirmaier to accept as corrected the minutes of 19 January 2023 special meeting; it passed unanimously.

**Public Comments:** There were no public comments.

#### **Chairman's Report :** R. Brennan

Chairman Brennan said the City Attorney's Office had forwarded information on the Coast Guard Auxiliary leases that were discussed at the January meeting. He said there was a 1960 lease with a term of 100 years and a 1973 lease for parking, which had expired. He said the lease described providing access to the water with no mention of slips and noted that the harbor consisted only of moorings in 1960. He said the City Attorney found the lease to be ambiguous. Chairman Brennan said that both he and Mr. Donegan had spoken with Chief of Staff Justin Rosen who is negotiating with the Coast Guard Auxiliary about the matter. Discussion ensued about the self-funding nature of the harbor as an enterprise zone and about what was known by the commissioners about the history of storing of the Coast Guard boat. Chairman Brennan said the decision to table was appropriate for now.

Chairman Brennan also shared a Memorandum of Decision from a court case in Greenwich that will reduce the significance of input by Harbor Management Commissions in granting permits. He said he had reached out to State Senator Maroney and State Representative Smith. Mr. Donegan said that under the decision, Harbor Management Commission's opinions would receive the same weight as those of private citizens and the commission's ability to enforce compliance with Harbor Management Plans for waterfront projects would be compromised. In worst case scenarios, waterfront homeowners could apply directly to DEEP, and be approved with no local review. Ms. Bennett noted that the process would take local knowledge out of important decision-making.

#### **Director's Report/ Harbormaster Report:** J. Donegan

Mr. Donegan reported that the bid for a dinghy rack made of galvanized steel produced 2 bids, each close to \$200,000, which was 5 times the anticipated budget. He said Mr. Henchman has drawn up revised plans using pressure-treated lumber. He said he had spoken with Pat Devine of the Department of Public Works, who previously helped with the pavilion. He said the current goal is to get the project back out to bid using wood and a target completion or partial completion of 5/1. He felt this was feasible as the required 2-week posting still left 6 weeks until May 1<sup>st</sup>. It was noted that the current racks have lasted approximately 20 years, thus a similarly constructed set should have similar longevity.

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Mr. Donegan said contracts for 2023 Milford Harbor moorings went out the previous day advising of the special season end date of October 15, as well as the new rate sheet for dinghies and kayaks advising that multiple storage is no longer available. He said 40 contracts had already signed with payment made. He said the due date is March 17.

He said a bid for Housatonic River mooring inspections is with the Purchasing Department and that as soon as this is returned, he will post for 2 weeks and send it to a list of qualified divers provided by Mr. Henchman.

He said he had spoken with the army corps, including their civil engineer to provide details as they prepare for dredging. Discussion included derelict moorings, location of a construction trailer, access on and off the water, possible hurricane or other storm preparation, and the sequencing of dredging as moorings are removed. Mr. Donegan advised the corps of new contract end date. He felt assured that the project seems to be on track.

He said that he is in discussion with Mayor's Chief of Staff Justin Rosen regarding funding for mooring renewal.

He described a proposal by middle-school enrichment teaching staff that is in the conceptual stage for a boat race in spring. He said students from East Shore, West Shore, and Harborside schools would be challenged to build boats of recycled materials and race them. It was suggested that a good weekend for the project would be Pirates Day at the beginning of June. He said the Board of Education has approved the concept, which would feature a teacher attempting to race the boat, and safety support from the Fire Department. Chairman Brennan commented that it sounded fun and a good use of harbor. Ms. Bennet asked where the student boats would be constructed and Mr. Donegan said the plan was to build them in the schools, then transport them to the harbor.

Chairman Brennan asked about any new information on the no-dredging zone. Mr. Donegan said he brings the topic up on every call with the corps, but the response has been that the problem must be addressed as a separate project.

#### **Deputy Harbormaster Report:** L. Henchman

Mr. Henchman said 2 people on waiting list and that he had offered a mooring that required the potential user to put in a new helix for \$3000 due to the one currently there being irreparable, but the offer was turned down.

**Permit Reviews:** None .

#### **Report of Standing Committees**

Lisman Landing (Dylan Mark, John Nevin) None.

Finance (Bob Brennan, Nancy Bennett):

**Checking**      **\$192,931.27**

**Savings**      **\$271,588.48**

**Total**          **\$464,519.75**

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

Harbor & Mooring (Richard Preneta, Bob Brennan) **None**

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**

20 Rogers Avenue – P&Z Updates: Nothing new was forthcoming from DEEP or Planning and Zoning.

Channel & Anchorage Dredging – Previously covered.

Ct. Port Authority – SHIPPS Grant: Nothing has been posted about SHIPPS grants for this year so far.

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Memorial Plaque—Jim Beard spoke with Alice Oliver, Ray Oliver's widow, who requested a dedication ceremony on a Saturday in mid-May with remarks from the mayor. In other activity, in preparation for the 2 plaques at the Landing, the large bluestone patio tiles were pulled up to be levelled, revealing a large sink hole under one, which was filled.

**New Business:** Bathrooms renovations are waiting for contractor response. The goal is for demolition work to begin next week.

Mr. Preneta said he felt compelled to raise the issue of excessive and constant garbage being left around edge of parking lot recently. Mr. Donegan said that during summer months, staff is directed to pick up trash, but it is a problem. Discussion ensued about security cameras in the general area that lack resolution to pick up details and where Wilcox Park boundaries are. New lights have provided more security but often trash is dumped from cars in the lot.

Chairman Brennan asked about the status of the Harbor Management Plan; it was noted that Mr. Gilbert, who could not attend, has offered to organize review of the document.

Mr. Nevin expressed frustration that no progress was being made regarding 20 Rogers Avenue. Mr. Donegan said he would contact DEEP to see if a notice of violation had been issued.

Liaisons – Stratford—None.

Adjournment at 7:58.

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.