

MINUTES

Milford Harbor Management Commission, May 18, 2023, 7:00 P.M., Lisman Landing

Board Members, Liaisons and Staff Present:

Robert Brennan, Chairman
Joseph Gilbert, Vice-Chairman
Nancy Bennett, Secretary
Jim Beard
Raymand Kirmaier
Dora Kubek
Dylan Mark
John Nevin
Richard Preneta
James Donegan, Harbormaster
Lee Henschman, Deputy Harbormaster
Raymond Vitali, Board of Aldermen

Board Members, Liaisons & Staff Absent: Gregory Harla, Board of Aldermen

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

Consideration of the minutes of the meeting of April 20, 2023

A motion made by Ms. Kubek, seconded by Ms. Bennett, passed unanimously to accept the minutes as amended.

Public Comments: Michael DeNapoli and Jessica Hall of 86 Gulf Street asked to be put on the commission's June agenda. Mr. DeNapoli and Ms. Hall said that since the Charles Island Music Festival was cancelled, they were organizing a similar event scheduled for July 15, 2023, called Bands on a Barge. Ms. Hall indicated that they are finalizing an insurance binder and attempting to secure a barge. Mr. Brennan instructed them to send full plans for the commissioners to review via Harbormaster Donegan. Mr. Gilbert asked that a public sanitation plan be included as there have been no such facilities at previous festivals and the Health Department will require some documentation. Mr. Brennan asked if the speakers understood the permitting process, including the involvement of DEEP and the Coast Guard, and said a plan for permitting should also be included.

Chairman's Report: R. Brennan

Mr. Brennan said he and Mr. Donegan are continuing the pursuit of funds but there has been no real change since the last meeting. He noted that the plaque dedication for Ray Oliver will take place at 10 AM this Saturday with a reception after on the pier at Gulf Beach.

Director's Report/ Harbormaster Report: J. Donegan

Mr. Donegan reported that building renovations and rest rooms are nearing completion. He noted the upcoming dedication and that the plaque honoring the late Ray Oliver is mounted at Gulf Beach Pier. Former Mayor Blake will speak, and Interim Mayor Smith will be there. He listed upcoming events including a visit from LI-based Black Rock Yacht Club, the United Way's duck-race fundraiser, and the Board of Education's enrichment program finale with racing boats built by students. He reported that many complaints have been made from mooring field and dinghy rack renters about not being able to get onto the dock because visiting boaters are tying up on the other side of the harbor. Ms. Bennett confirmed with Mr. Donegan that these boaters are not paying. He circulated photos and copies of the city ordinance regarding the need for staff approval to tie up and the maximum free use of 2 hours for taxpayers and permit holders. He underscored a need to define what the launch ramp dock is and how enforcement can be done. He said an effective police response has been missing and cited dangerous behavior during the last Oyster Festival. Ms. Kubek asked if Mayor Smith had been told of this and similar incidents, noting that he was formerly chair of the Police Commission. Ms. Bennett underscored the importance of signage to enforcement. The group discussed the right of mooring renters to a 30 minute tie up for loading, washing, and similar activities. Mr. Donegan noted the problem of boaters pulling into slips after 8:00pm and blocking transients. He said the summer dock crew will stay until 9 and that he provides directions ahead of time. He described incidents of flagrant defiance. Mr. Preneta cautioned about jeopardizing the harbor's hospitable mission. There was discussion about fines being too low to act as a deterrent. Mr. Donegan commented that

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the Harbor Management is not an enforcement agency. Mr. Vitali suggested signage with portions of the ordinance and suggested a meeting with the City Attorney. Mr. Kirmaier asked if the problem was associated with a certain time of day; Mr. Donegan said the traffic problem persists all day and that evenings can be even worse. He said there is a need to balance all groups' needs effectively. He said he had a meeting scheduled with Mayor Smith. Chairman Brennan said that the success of harbor operation is based on access. Discussion continued on access, signage, police presence/enforcement and the special challenges associated with the Oyster Festival.

Deputy Harbormaster Report: L. Henchman

Mr. Henchman said the Housatonic mooring field is full and that there was a huge turnout for the river cleanup.

Permit Reviews: A permit application was received from the Valley Yacht Club.

Report of Standing Committees

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

Finance (Bob Brennan, Nancy Bennett):

Checking \$ 271,514.59

Savings \$ 271,654.71

Total \$ 543,169.30

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

Harbor & Mooring (Richard Preneta, Bob Brennan) Mr. Preneta asked if there was an update on the cost of removing helixes from the mooring field; Mr. Brennan said the Army Corp wouldn't share estimates but it could range from 750,000 to several million dollars and that in a bidding process, when a budget number is shared, contractors will provide estimates to meet it. He said closed bidding will provide the best price. He noted that installing helixes is easy, removing them is much more complex and time consuming due to lack of visibility. Mr. Donegan noted the difficulty of starting a bidding process when there is uncertainty about funding. Mr. Preneta said he thinks potential costs may be less than mentioned in discussions. Ms. Bennett said the biggest unknown expense is the condition of sea flexes.

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

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

Shell Fishing (Robert Brennan, Joseph Gilbert, Ray Kirmaier) Mr. Gilbert said he met with Mr. Kirmaier at Gulf Beach to discuss. Mr. Brennan thought a consultant could help write a shellfishing management plan after dredging is done.

Correspondence: **None.**

Old Business

20 Rogers Avenue – P&Z Updates: Nothing new.

Channel & Anchorage Dredging – This item was to be taken up in the exec session to follow the public meeting.

Ct. Port Authority – SHIPPS Grant: This item was also to be taken up in the exec session to follow the public meeting.

Memorial Plaque—No action regarding flagpole.

New Business: None

Liaisons – Stratford—Mr. Preneta asked Mr. Vitali if he's been able to check on fundraising. Mr. Brennan said he has been contacting legislators at the federal, state, and local levels. It was noted that Mr. Donegan and Mr. Brennan had a meeting scheduled with Mayor Smith.

Ms. Bennett made a motion, seconded by Ms. Kubek to go into executive session; the motion passed unanimously.

Adjournment of the public meeting was at 8:22. The executive session began immediately thereafter and was adjourned at 8:39 with a motion by Ms. Bennett that passed unanimously.

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