

MINUTES

Milford Harbor Management Commission, August 16, 2023, 7:00 P.M., Lisman Landing

Board Members, Liaisons and Staff Present:

Robert Brennan, Chairman
Nancy Bennett, Secretary
Jim Beard
Dora Kubek
Richard Preneta
Dylan Mark
James Donegan, Harbormaster
Lee Henschman, Deputy Harbormaster
Raymond Vitali, Board of Aldermen

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

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

Consideration of the minutes of the meeting of 19 July 2023

A motion to accept the minutes of the 19 July 2023 meeting was made by Ms. Bennet, seconded by Ms. Kubek, and passed unanimously.

Public Comments: None.

Chairman's Report : R. Brennan

Chairman Brennan said he and Mr. Donegan had been reviewing several issues to be raised in Mr. Donegan's report.

Permit Reviews: None.

Director's Report/ Harbormaster Report: J. Donegan

Mr. Donegan reported that the Army Corps of Engineers got 3 bids for the dredging project. Coastline Construction's bid was lowest at \$2.9 million but it exceeded the government's estimate of \$2.2 million such that a bid verification will be required before a contract can be awarded. The time frame for the bid verification is about 2 weeks. He said he also is in contact with the City Attorney's Office, the Purchasing Department, and Race Coastal Engineering to get boring removal, replacement, and reinstallation ready to be posted for bid by tomorrow. He said bids are due 8/30, so the original timeline, while tight, is still intact. This date will also coincide with receipt of the results of the government review. Mr. Henschman asked about the high bid, which was \$3.6million. Other bidders were Land Remediation of Waterford, NY, and Burnham of Salem, MA. Chairman Brennan acknowledge that the \$2 million remaining after awarding the contract should be safeguarded for completion of the project. He said he plans to contact Senator Blumenthal about this. Discussion ensued about several procedures that could be used to ensure the dredging is complete and successful. Mr. Donegan reviewed the schedule milestones including having moorings empty by 10/15, followed by removal of moorings, and dredging. He said some removal and dredging activity might be concurrent. He described the marina as incredibly busy with bookings running ahead of this time last year. He noted that the Oyster Festival was this weekend, that he is losing much of his summer staff to school, and that Labor Day weekend, Porchfest, and the Irish Festival are imminent. He said bookings for these events as well as Columbus Day weekend are coming in. He said he will email updates and reminders to boat owners to ask that they haul as early as possibly but definitely by 10/15. He also said that comments made to him about the landing improvements have been very positive.

Deputy Harbormaster Report: L. Henschman

Mr. Henschman said the inspections by owners have occurred for about 15 of 55 Housatonic River mooring holders, but that recent rains and storms have created bad visibility conditions in the river. He said divers are very busy, and that he will send reminders to the 40 or so boat owners who still must get their moorings inspected. He said a group of four or so owners plan to get a helix. He said some equipment is now 35 years old, and that a couple boats broke loose and drifted into the Sound. Discussion ensued about technology for deeper drilled connections.

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Report of Standing Committees

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

Finance (Bob Brennan, Nancy Bennett):

Checking \$271,723.19

Savings \$322,515.48

Total \$594,238.67

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.

Channel & Anchorage Dredging – Covered.

Ct. Port Authority – SHIPPS Grant: Nothing new.

Memorial Plaque—Nothing new, but it was said to be getting there.

New Business: Discussion concerning facilities, control of use pursuant to City Ordinance Sec. 16.1-5

Chairman Brennan noted increasing complaints, including one in a Dockwa review, about unhoused people sleeping near the marina and under the pavilion. Some short-term mooring renters have expressed concerns for their family's safety while visiting the marina. Mr. Preneta said he walks in the area very frequently and while he feels concern for the homeless persons he sees, he is worried that a perception may build of the marina being unsafe. He feels this can quickly ruin its success and that such a reputation could be hard to get rid of, once established. Mr. Donegan said he has tried increasing nighttime lighting and is in discussions with the City Attorney's Office (CAO) about enforcement alternatives. The group discussed efforts in recent years to address the presence of homeless people gathering behind library, such as having the area declared a park with posted hours of use and seasonal or event restrictions, but there has been no enforcement. Further discussion ensued about a large permanent encampment near Wampus Lane where many individuals who may be eligible for services have made it clear that they don't want help. Safety concern included fears for the homeless men themselves, one of whom was attacked. Mr. Donegan said he has begun shutting power off to outdoor outlets at night and left lighting on all night. He said the ice cream shop in the marina had received complaints from people waiting in line who have been bothered by strangers. He also noted that some of his younger staffers who are only 16 and work until 9PM have shared that they are concerned about their own safety. Ms. Kubek felt that a police substation could be a solution. Discussion ensued about trying to balance freedom of movement in a publicly accessible space versus making visitors feel safe. Mr. Beard speculated that the landing would ultimately need to hire security to differentiate between guests and trespassers. Mr. Donegan and Chairman Brennan said discussions would continue with the CAO, major's office, and police department to try to find a solution to this complex but pressing problem.

Liaisons –None.

Adjournment was at 7:56 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.