

Harbor Management Commission



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Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 27, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
Town Hall Meeting Room A

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Bill Herlihy called the regularly scheduled meeting of the Essex Harbor Management Commission to order at 7:07 p.m.

2. Attendance

Members Present: Jeff Going, Bill Herlihy, Susan Malan, John Senning, Remote

Absent: Dave Fasulo, Kit Schellens, Terry Stewart, Brian Weinstein

Others Present: Henry Domenie, Safe Harbor, Remote, Paul Riggio, Harbor Master, Rachel Smith, Safe Harbor, Remote, Bob Ward, Steward, Bushnell Access

Guests

- Gregory Bugbee, Associate Scientist, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
- Riley Doherty, Research Technician, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
- Rhea Drozdenko, CT River Steward, Connecticut River Conservancy
- Summer Stebbins, Resarch Technician II, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

Bill Herlihy was seated for Terry Stewart.

3. Approval of the March 2023 Meeting Minutes

The March 23, 2023 regular meeting minutes were reviewed.

MOTION made by Jeff Going to approve the March 23, 2023 regular meeting minutes.
SECONDED: John Senning; **Voting in Favor:** Jeff Going, Susan Malan, John Senning,
Opposed: None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 3/0/0. **Discussion:** No further discussion.

Agenda Item 11 was moved up to this point in the meeting so the Hydrilla Study Team named above could make their presentation. Introductions were made by Greg Bugbee. He discussed the hydrilla problem and the research and efforts being done by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) and the US Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) to address it. Hydrilla is a very invasive plant that is a threat to the entire Connecticut River, its coves and tributaries. It is considered to be the worst invasive plant in the country and there is no other strain like it in the world. Education, boat inspections and herbicides. are being considered as management techniques. State listed species need to be taken into consideration to make sure they are protected.

DEEP approvals and permits will be involved. CAES and the USACE have received funding for this problem. and they will be working closely together to address it.

Rhea Drozdenko discussed the projects that the Connecticut River Conservancy has underway to address hydrilla. There is an effort to share with boaters the importance of cleaning their boats and trailers to prevent the spread.

The presentation was recorded and is available on the Harbor Management Commission page on the Town website.

4. Public Comment: None.

5. Financial Report

Bill Herlihy presented the April 2023 financial report for the Liberty Checking, Public Access, and General bank accounts, with a total funds closing balance as of March 31, 2023 of \$56,556.14.

MOTION made by Jeff Going to approve the March 2023 financial report as presented. **SECONDED:** Susan Malan; **Voting in Favor:** Jeff Going, Susan Malan, John Senning, **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None, **Approved: 3/0/0. Discussion:** No further discussion.

Bill presented two invoices for approval; one for EHMC administrative support in the amount of \$503.63 and one from Safe Harbor for harbor mark maintenance in the amount of \$863.27.

MOTION made by Jeff Going to approve the invoices presented. **SECONDED:** Susan Malan; **Voting in Favor:** Jeff Going, Susan Malan, John Senning, **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved: 3/0/0. Discussion:** Jeff questioned the itemized charges for HP Black Letters (A, D, E, H on the Safe Harbor invoice. It will be paid once Bill clarifies these charges with Safe Harbor.

The invoice from DOCKO, INC. in the amount of \$4,145.00 for Part II of the Thatchbed Island Project will be forwarded to the Selectman's office.

6. Harbor Master Report

Paul Riggio reported that he and Dave Fasulo completed the mooring inspections on or about April 7, 2023.

After a rough start with harbor mark placements, all has been resolved. When Rachel Smith needed some accurate guidance in harbor mark placement, John Lewis from Essex Boat Works offered and jumped in to help with the locations. John set up the harbor for many years when he ran what is now Safe Harbor Marina. Liz Horan from the Essex Yacht Club also spent half a day on the barge with Rachel helping to set up the harbor. He noted that it was impressive to see these commercial entities all working together to make the harbor be as good as it can be and thanked them for their efforts.

Paul noted that Rachel and Joel Tower from Safe Harbor have been very careful this year in measuring the distances between mooring locations. Although not totally complete, their work to date looks great.

Rachel and Paul have been working together to put as much mooring/boat data in the harbor layout maps as possible. This will help during the season with visiting boats, for example, what boat can go on what mooring.

Paul and Dave have discussed the possibility of creating a data cell within the Online Mooring system that would allow them to export mooring location data that would automatically populate the Excel spread sheet used for the harbor layout maps. More research is needed.

He noted that there is still a problem with the CRM visitor buses parking at and around the Foot of Main. There is no signage that states “No Bus Parking” and suggested that better signage and communication between the boats/ buses and the Museum is needed.

Paul also noted that the mooring process this year has gone very well.

James Daly has notified us that he is not able to take advantage of the boat storage at Bushnell Access and asked us to cancel small vessel permit #'s 558 & 559. Bob Ward has suggested that we keep them on the permit list so they will have an opportunity to renew next year if they choose to do so. Paul suggested that we treat these requests as sabbaticals for the 2023 season consistent with what we do for the mooring permit holders who are not able to use their mooring for the season. This allows them to take a one year “vacation” and the one-time opportunity to renew the following year. This needs to be decided by the Commission and was tabled to the next meeting.

Moses Lieberman notified us on March 6, 2023 that he is not able to use his mooring permit in the Meadows anymore and has requested that his fee be refunded. His permit will be cancelled and his fee refunded.

The revised mooring permit policy has been updated and will be posted to the website.

One new Mooring Permit Wait List applicant: John Morrison, Meadows, 4.8.23.

There is no waiting list for the Meadows but Paul wants to be sure we have enough space for John’s boat before he is offered a permit.

One new Bushnell Access Wait List applicant: Christine Rogers, 4.15.23

7. Harbor Management Business

Jeff Going reported that we finally got a response from USACE and they have again been sent engineering drawings of the project. They apologized for the delay and said they would prioritize this project and get back to us soon. Jeff noted that DOCKO, INC. has done tremendous work on this project and is doing so at no charge.

The Thatchbed restoration permit application is stuck at DEEP. There is a seed testing project being done by Rich Snarski from New England Environmental Services to demonstrate the ability to seed both tubes and back filled areas and to determine the best type of grass to use.

8. Town Public Access Points

John Senning raised his concern about the lack of designated parking at the Mack Lane public access. He will check into this further for the next meeting.

Bob Ward discussed his suggestion to reconfigure the small vessel storage racks to allow ease of use and enough storage for 12 more vessels. It was suggested that we start with the north rack as a test. Bob thinks he and Kit Schellens can make the changes.

9. Harbor Management Plan Update

Marcy Balint, the contact at DEEP who has been reviewing and commenting on our draft Harbor Management Plan, met with Jeff, Paul and Bill on April 26, 2023. They did a tour of the harbor to show her its unique characteristics as reflected in our Plan.

10. Correspondence: None.

11. New Business: Hydrilla Study Team Presentation

See above.

12. Adjournment

MOTION made by Jeff Going to adjourn the meeting at 8:23 p.m. **SECONDED:** Susan Malan; **Voting in Favor:** Jeff Going, Susan Malan, John Senning, **Opposed:** None; **Abstaining:** None; **Approved:** 3/0/0. **Discussion:** No further discussion.

Respectfully Submitted,

Betsy McLaughlin
Recording Clerk