

HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 23, 2021
Zoom Virtual Meeting, 5:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Tucker Braddock, Mayor Peter Nystrom, Alderman Mark Bettencourt, City Manager John Salomone, Michael Aliano, Michael Gualtieri, Sofia LeWitt and Mark Sicuso

OTHERS PRESENT: Consultant Geoff Steadman and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: All present

CITIZENS PRESENT: Keith Neilson of Docko

1. Call to Order: Chair Tucker Braddock called the meeting to order at 5:01 PM. Alderman Mark Bettencourt read the rules of the virtual meeting. He clearly stated that the meeting would be recorded and would be posted on the city's website.
2. Determination of Quorum: It was determined a quorum was present.
3. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Alderman Mark Bettencourt, seconded by Michael Aliano, the October 27, 2020 meeting minutes of the Harbor Management Commission (HMC) were unanimously approved as presented by a roll call vote.

On a motion by Mayor Peter Nystrom, seconded by Mike Aliano, and with a roll call vote, the HMC unanimously approved a change to the agenda to hold Ken Nielson's presentation first.

Chair Braddock introduced Keith Neilson from Docko. Mr. Neilson presented an application drawing and consultation form for Mel Wiese's property at 190 West Thames Street, Norwich. Mr. Weise had a permit to install a bulkhead and dock at his property. The permit expired. The bulkhead is done but not the dock. The applicant wants to have the permit re-instated. The process started with Connecticut's Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP). The previously submitted certificate application had been previously approved but is no longer valid. The process is for full structures and dredging approval is starting over. The consultation forms were sent to HMC. The permit was originally for the condos which had docks in it and were approved. The current plan differs from that application in that the original went along the shoreline with floats parallel to the shore as a 100' perpendicular pier with a T for additional boats to be berthed. Now that Mr. Weise has operated the boat launch and condos for a while, he has chosen to go with shore hugging docks for entire length of property. This would be 650' of docks for 20-30 boats. The original plan served 50 boats. The site will have more than enough parking for that amount of boating access. These docks will be simple to build and have almost no encroachment. They would be back from the face of the bulkhead, well off the channel and cause no conflict with boating traffic. In this area along the shoreline, the water velocity is not as great as it is out in the river. The proposed docks present a good balance and serve the needs that Mr. Weise has expressed. Mr. Neilson expressed that Mr. Weise hopes this new plan is in coordination with plan as it was approved years ago.

Consultant Geoff Steadman commented. He suggested that the HMC utilized DEEP's 60-day comment period. He reminded the HMC that Mr. Neilson's presentation tonight represented a pre-application consultation form. Mr. Steadman recommended taking it up at next month's meeting so that the HMC can look at the proposed plan in more detail and also consider how the docks would be managed. When the HMC is satisfied then they could

take a position on the application, which would be to say whether or not the HMC has any objection with application moving forward.

Mike Aliano asked if tabling the item to next month's meeting would have a negative impact on the applicant. Mr. Neilson answered that the applicant has six other agencies to hear from and having all comments back in 30 days would be very helpful. He noted that the HMC should by all means take the time to review the plan.

On a motion by Alderman Mark Bettencourt, seconded by Mayor Peter Nystrom, the HMC unanimously by roll call vote tabled action on this item to the next meeting.

It was decided that Mr. Neilson would email the plans to City Manager John Salomone who would distribute the plan to HMC members.

4. Community Policing Report: None

5. Correspondence:

a) Financial Report: Michael Gualtieri reviewed the January report. He noted that in December the harbor cam payment was double its usual amount so he will check with the city's accountant. He also asked Mr. Steadman to submit and updated invoice.

6. Harbor Master Report: Harbor Master Rich Thayer was not present. Chair Braddock noted that Mr. Thayer has a Harbor Master boat that he uses. Chair Braddock has spoken to Mr. Thayer and was assured that he will report any issues to the HMC or to the proper authorities.

7. New Business:

a) Chair Braddock asked Mr. Steadman to review the Greenwich Harbor Management Plan case. Mr. Steadman reviewed the case that revolves around the binding nature of Connecticut Harbor Management Plans on municipal and state agencies. Other HMCs have agreed to pursue a legislative change to clarify HMC recommendations being binding upon DEEP. Mr. Steadman noted that the association of HMCs will send out the verbiage to all HMCs tonight or tomorrow. Chair Braddock noted that he would forward the verbiage to HMC members to give members a chance to review it before making a decision. With the legislative session underway, timing is a challenge.

Mr. Aliano asked if a special meeting would be necessary. Mayor Nystrom noted that this late in the legislative session it could be an amendment. He said he would to State Senator Cathy Osten.

Mr. Gualtieri suggested City's Counsel Michael Driscoll be made aware.

HMC members will review and call a special meeting if necessary. Chair Braddock asked that members review the information as soon as they receive it, in case a special meeting needs to be called.

b) Budget:

Chair Braddock reviewed the HMC annual budget. He asked HMC members to consider if an annual budget request of \$7,000 for FY22 would be appropriate again. Mr. Salomone noted that \$7,000 is in his estimated budget at this time.

8. Old Business:

- a) Chair Braddock reported that he spoke to a representative of the Connecticut Port Authority (CPA). He was optimistic that the dock repair project would move forward. Specifications for the project went to the city's new purchasing agent today. Mr. Gualtieri noted that some funding will come back to the HMC from the dock project and grant project for expenses previously incurred.

- b) Chair Braddock spoke regarding the update to the Harbor Management Plan (HMP). Mr. Steadman reported that he drafted all of the chapters. He reviewed it with DEEP and they are agreeable to everything put together so far. So, aside from the Superior Court decision, he is waiting on a decision on how to address the properties in the floodway. He asked what the HMC envisions for those properties. The draft of the HMP is almost complete. Chair Braddock noted that City Planner Deanna Rhodes has done an inventory of the buildings in the area in question so that they can be designated as historic.

It was decided that Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson would circulate the section on city responsibilities for comment by HMC members.

9. Citizen Comment: None

10. Other: None

11. Adjournment: On a motion to adjourn by Alderman Mark Bettencourt, seconded by Michael Aliano, the Harbor Management Commission meeting adjourned via roll call vote at 5:59 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Wilson
Recording Secretary*