

**CITY OF NORWICH  
HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION MEETING**

1. Call to Order

The Harbor Management Commission Meeting of June 22, 2009 was called to order by Chairman Ron Aliano at 5:00 p.m. at Howard T. Brown Memorial Park. Attendance was as follows:

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ron Aliano, Chairman  
Richard Benoit  
Alan Bergren, City Manager  
Alderman Mark Bettencourt  
James Paulsen  
Edward Seder

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Alderman Pete Desaulniers

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Claire Bessette, The Day  
Michael Gannon, Norwich Bulletin  
Geoff Steadman, Harbor Management Commission Consultant

2. Determination of Quorum

It was determined a quorum was present.

3. Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Alderman Bettencourt, seconded by Mr. Bergren, the minutes of the meeting of May 26, 2009 were unanimously approved.

4. Citizen Comment

Under citizen comment, Mr. Aliano started a discussion of the new City Pier at Brown Park and the other pending projects to enhance the park and provide safe and enjoyable public access to the Norwich Harbor from the park. The Commission reviewed the recently completed work to replace the old wooden pier which had been closed because it was in danger of collapsing. Mr. Aliano described the history of planning for the new pier, including the role of the Commission in the planning and development process. The Commission acknowledged the exceptional work of the Public Works Department in achieving successful completion of the project and specifically thanked Public Works Director Joe Loyacano for his role in directing the project to completion. The

Commission noted the pier's concrete structure, synthetic "wood-grained" decking, new lighting, and green metal railing, and described the completed work as a community asset.

The Commission also discussed the other pending projects at the park, including the City's plans to build a handicapped accessible fishing pier and to reconstruct a portion of the existing seawall. The seawall project, the Commission noted, in addition to providing necessary shore protection, will also support enhanced public access along the Heritage Walkway trail on the east side of the Yantic River. The seawall project is funded and currently under construction; the fishing pier still requires funding. Mr. Bergren said that funding for the new City Pier and seawall project was provided by a \$1 million state grant from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and \$500,000 allocated by the City. The cost of the City Pier was about \$700,000. The cost of the fishing pier is estimated to be about \$900,000.

Commission members discussed the need to place new signs in the vicinity of the City Pier to inform boaters that Norwich Harbor is a "slow-no-wake" zone.

The Commission recessed the meeting and then reconvened the meeting on the site of the American Wharf Marina in order to view the new City Pier from across the waterway. From this vantage point, the Commission discussed possible aesthetic enhancements to the new pier, including façade improvements and the addition of rose symbols on the concrete façade, similar to, but smaller than, the rose symbols on the Harbor wall near the police department. Mr. Aliano will bring the Commission's ideas for aesthetic improvements to the attention of Mr. Loyacano.

The Commission noted that the enhancements to Brown Park, including the City Pier, seawall project, and fishing pier, should be considered as part of a three-part comprehensive plan for Park improvements. The Commission expressed its support for the pursuit of funds needed to construct the fishing pier.

## 5. Correspondence

Mr. Aliano received an e-mail communication from Mr. Bergren concerning the City's request to the Connecticut Department of Transportation for economic stimulus funds that would be used for construction of the Brown Park fishing pier. Mr. Bergren said that he had not received a response from the DOT.

Mr. Aliano said he had contacted the offices of the City's U.S. Congressional delegation, also to request funds for construction of the fishing pier, but has not received any responses.

Mr. Aliano said he had received a notice of a DEP grant program that would provide funds for upgrading marina fuel-dispensing systems and may have more to report on this program at the next meeting.

6. Harbor Master Report

There was no report. The Commission will notify Mr. Harrison about its desire to place additional “slow-no-wake” signs in the vicinity of Brown Park.

7. Old Business

a. Cadle Mill

There was nothing new to report.

b. Community Boathouse/Boat Launch

There was nothing new to report.

c. Harbor Management Plan Update

Mr. Steadman reported that he met with City Planner Mike Schaefer to discuss revisions to the Plan concerning waterfront land-use and to make sure that the revisions correctly describe and update the land-use conditions and issues that have changed since the Plan was adopted. Mr. Steadman reported that he is incorporating the information provided by Mr. Schaefer and that the Plan revisions concerning waterfront land-use conditions and issues will then be complete. He also said Mr. Schaefer would like to review the completed Plan document with Planning and Development Director Peter Davis.

d. City Pier/City Dock/Seawall

Discussion of this matter took place earlier in the meeting during the site visits. Mr. Aliano reiterated that he will contact Mr. Loyacano to inform him of the Commission’s ideas concerning additional aesthetic enhancements to the new pier.

e. Yantic River Dredging Update

Mr. Steadman reported that he has recently discussed, with Mr. Wisker of the DEP, the Commission’s request to the DEP for a sediment sampling and testing plan for the proposed dredging project. That request was made by Mr. Steadman on behalf of the Commission in the letter of May 4, 2009 to Mr. Wisker. Mr. Steadman said that Mr. Wisker is currently working on developing the sampling and testing plan on the presumption that the dredged material would be placed on an unspecified upland site. Mr. Wisker said that the Commission will probably have to collect 10 to 15 samples of the sediment to be dredged and then have those samples tested for certain contaminants that will be specified by the DEP. If this is the case, Mr. Steadman estimated that the cost of collecting the samples and conducting the tests might range from \$12,000 to \$18,000. Mr. Wisker also

said that additional tests might be required following review of the first tests, and he asked Mr. Steadman to show the area proposed for dredging on a series of 8½-in. by 11-in. sheets. Mr. Steadman said he will do so. Mr. Steadman said he will continue to pursue this matter with the DEP and hopes to have more definitive answers from the DEP for the Commission's next meeting.

f. PRA Development/Marina/Hotel Project

Mr. Aliano said that it may take five to six months to get this project moving again due to the current economic conditions.

g. Proposed Marinas/Boatyards along Thames Basin

The Commission discussed code standards for marina construction to ensure public safety, including building code standards and minimum standards for electrical service. There was consensus that appropriate minimum standards should be applied to marina construction. There was discussion of the extent to which structures waterward of the mean high water line are regulated by the building and electrical codes. Mr. Steadman reported that there is a written opinion of the state building department that all weight-bearing elements that are not floating are subject to the building code. Alderman Bettencourt said he will pursue additional information on this topic with the City Council's Public Safety Committee. Mr. Steadman will check with the building departments in Norwalk and Stamford to see how they may apply minimum electrical standards.

8. New Business

Mr. Aliano reported that he has received from the Commission on the City Plan a referral of a special permit application by Richard Thayer (SP No.09-04) for approval to conduct work involving an existing building owned by the applicant within a Waterfront Development (WD) zoning district. The Commission agreed that the applicant should be invited to attend the next meeting of the Commission to describe the proposed project. Alderman Bettencourt will contact Planning and Development Director Peter Davis to discuss the time frame for the Commission to comment on this application and Mr. Aliano will contact City Planner Mike Schaefer to discuss the details of the application.

9. Other

Mr. Aliano said the Commission would defer until its next meeting the review of the draft Harbor Management Commission Application Review Requirements prepared by Mr. Steadman and provided to the Commission during the Commission's May 26, 2009 meeting. The Commission will review these draft requirements during the Commission's next meeting when Alderman Desaulniers is expected to be in attendance.

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Benoit, seconded by Alderman Bettencourt, the Harbor Management Commission meeting of June 22, 2009 was adjourned at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted By:

Geoffrey Steadman  
Acting Recording Secretary