

**CITY OF NORWALK
STATE OF THE HARBOR MEETING
DECEMBER 14, 2016**

ATTENDANCE: Tony Mobilia, Chair; Jan Schaefer, Bill Gardella; Joe Perella; Tony Aitoro; Dennis Santella

STAFF: Geoff Steadman, Consultant; Harbor Master Mike Griffin

OTHERS: Mayor Harry Rilling; Officer Mike Silva NPD; Captain Jon Maggio, Norwalk Fire Department Marine Unit; Officer Pete Lepak Norwalk Police Department Marine Unit; Matt DeVito, Shellfish Commission; Joseph Sherline; Tony D'Andrea, Anthony D'Andrea, Boy Scout Troop 19; Nikki Cantatore, Harbor Watch Lab Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Mobilia called the meeting to order at 7:31 p. m. and led the assembly in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman's Comments

Chairman Mobilia welcomed all in attendance and reviewed the mission of the Harbor Management Commission and the different recreational and business uses of the harbor.

Presentation of the David S. Dunavan Award

Chairman Mobilia presented the David S. Dunavan Award to Mr. Joe Sherline. Mr. Sherline thanked everyone that helped him over the years, and that he was proud to have known Mr. Dunavan.

Mayor Harry Rilling thanked all of the Commissioners for their hard work. He stated that they have stood tall on the Walk Bridge issue. He stated that the Water Quality Committee will be put together soon and that it is possible that Mr. Sherline could be chairman of the committee.

Norwalk Police Department Marine Unit

Sgt. Lepak spoke about the importance of rowing and boating safety. He stated that complaints are down this year compared to last. He stated that safe boating instruction courses, including Spanish speaking courses, have made a big difference in educating the public. He stated that relations with neighboring jurisdictions have improved.

Officer Silva reviewed the number of calls for assistance, stops of boats, and arrests that were made in the past year. He stated that over the past three years, the numbers have remained consistent. He stated that through a Coast Guard grant, the communication systems on the boats has improved and we are better able to call on the resources of adjacent towns.

Harbor Master Mike Griffin

Mr. Griffin stated that he has been getting a lot of calls about the launch ramp project. He stated that the visitor's dock brings in a large amount of revenue from boaters. He stated that it is an easy and safe trip out to the islands to go camping. The negative is that the visitor's dock project was started before the end of the summer season, but that it was necessary to start then in order to be finished by the beginning of the spring season.

He stated that the Police maintained a safe environment while the Walk Bridge was being worked on. The Coast Guard required repairs to the fendering system.

Norwalk Fire Department Marine Unit

Captain Maggio stated that the addition of a marine equipment trailer has been a great help to the Fire Department. He stated that it helps in preparation for the Walk Bridge project and in response time for larger calls. A boat can quickly be loaded up from the equipment trailer and respond.

He stated that tactical drills were done in the Spring and the Fall to work on large scale emergencies such as a downed aircraft or a large boat emergency. He also stated that a \$34,000 grant from FEMA has allowed for the development of a regional scuba dive team which will, in part, benefit Norwalk.

Mooring and Harbor Safety

Mr. Santella stated that the Online Mooring System needs improvements. A number of boaters are not complying with the requirements. In the future, applications will not be accepted without full documentation.

Water Quality

Mr. Steadman stated that water quality is a large concern of the commission. He reviewed the concerns over the stormwater runoff from the Yankee Doodle Bridge as well as the drain at Hendricks Avenue near the bridge. He stated that sediment contamination in the past and the need to have data on the current pollution levels are two large concerns. He stated that the NHMC is working on a study to look at what other state DOT's are doing in regards to stormwater management.

Anthony D'Andrea, Boy Scout Troop 19

Anthony D'Andrea stated that members of Troop 19 have installed medallions on 504 storm drains that state "No Dumping, Drains to Waterways." He stated that he wanted to do this project because he heard about the Earthplace, Harbor Watch, and the Integration & Application Network at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science giving Norwalk Harbor a C+ in a report card published in 2015. This project aims to increase public awareness and prevent trash, pet waste, household chemicals, and other pollutants from entering the City's storm water drainage system.

Nikki Cantatore, Harbor Watch Lab Director

Ms. Cantatore stated that Harbor Watch monitors the Norwalk Harbor bacteria levels. From the Spring to Fall, the sites are monitored once a week and once a month over the winter. She stated that Harbor Watch has been recording this data since 1998 and as a result of the surveys some sections of the river have been removed from the list of Connecticut impaired waterways.

Ms. Cantatore stated that the storm drain bacteria levels are monitored and when elevated counts are found, the drains are investigated with the Department of Public Works until a point source is found. Harbor Watch has bacteria data on these storm drains from 2010 to the present.

Ms. Cantatore stated that profile surveys are used to capture conditions in the river from surface to bottom, tracking oxygen and monitoring salt wedges. The surveys are conducted in the early morning at 25 sites weekly.

Mr. Tony D'Andrea came forward to state that the Clean Water Act needs to be considered when looking at what is coming out of the 12 drains and going into the waterways. The de-icing agents, and their impact on shellfish and the water quality are important to consider. He stated that local businesses have standards they have to meet when washing boats. The DOT should be held to the same standard and account for pollution coming from cars going over the bridges.

Mr. Steadman stated that up to this point, we have not gone above the state level. He stated that we could develop a conversation with the Environmental Protection Agency. He stated that Rhode Island was sued for not having an adequate stormwater management plan. Connecticut needs to improve the stormwater management as New York has done.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. SANTELLA MOVED TO ADJOURN.
** MS. SCHAEFER SECONDED THE MOTION.
** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Blaney
Telesco Secretarial Services