

**City of Norwalk  
Harbor Management Commission  
Regular Meeting  
October 23, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Romano, NHMC Chair; Bill Gardella, Alan Kibbe, Dennis Santella, Jeffrey Mangels, Tony Mobilia

STAFF: Geoff Steadman, Consultant

OTHERS: Pete Johnson, Shellfish Commission; Steve Bartush, Shellfish Commission; Debora Goldstein, Commission, Third Taxing District; Sgt. Gregg Scully, Harbor Master; Bruce Lovallo, Deputy Harbor Master (7:40), Jim Dewitt, Joe Schnierlein

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Meeting called to order by Chairman Romano at 7:32 PM.

After the pledge, Mr. Romano asked for a moment of silence for Mr. Henry Palau, former commissioner. He said that Mr. Palau's wake was later that week on Friday at Collins Funeral Parlor.

**\*\*\*MR. MOBILIA MOTIONED TO SEND FLOWERS TO MR. PALAU'S WAKE**

**\*\*\*MR. ROMANO SECONDED.**

**\*\*\*MOTION TO SEND FLOWERS TO MR. PALAU'S WAKE passed unanimously.**

Mr. Romano asked that this meeting get done as quickly as possible, and to hold off the chit chat to next month. He said that the Application Review issues to address are preliminary.

**HARBOR MASTER'S REPORT**

Mr. Scully starts with 26 Shorefront Park. He said the boat is resting in the mud on the dock, and that he contacted the owner and his wife on the dock itself. Mr. Scully said that the owner is a little defensive and that he claimed the Harbor Commission signed off on the paperwork already. The dock owner is looking for paperwork to show to his attorney and he is ready to litigate on the matter. Mr. Scully said that by the end of the week, he'll be getting his boat out of there.

**On the Issue of the relocation of the Seaport Ferry and the Aquarium vessel.** Mr. Scully said that he went out there five times, but they were given the wrong coordinates from Department of Transportation. He said they went out two weeks ago, but they were given bogus coordinates. He continued to say that at which point, the boat captain came down in his free time. Mr. Scully said that the stars had to line up, and that they need all the pieces to fit together. Mr. Scully said that they were out anyway and that they set up the buoys and used Bruce's boat, but with no winds and no current, he couldn't make the sweep. Mr. Scully reported that they moved the buoys to swing around the barge edge at the farthest west corner of the barge, where it sticks out. He said he could not measure the 150 ft distance safely. Mr. Romano said he would like to see a motion from commission to support the Harbor Master and Deputy Harbor Master.

**\*\*\*MR. MOBILIA MOTIONED TO SUPPORT THE HARBOR MASTER AND DEPUTY HARBOR MASTER'S DECISION**

**\*\*\*MR. ROMANO SECONDED**

**\*\*\*MOTION TO SUPPORT HARBOR MASTER AND DEPUTY HARBOR MASTER passed unanimously.**

Mr. Steadman added that they have to highlight that the Harbor Master has the sole authority to stage vessels. Mr. Romano asked the Commission to consider the safety issues. Mr. Steadman noted that the outline of the barges shown on the map, shows the barges in a different configuration.

Mr. Romano said that they have 3 pre-applications ready for 38 Shorefront Park, 12 Shorehaven Road, and 67 Bluff Avenue. Mr. Steadman said that he thought on all three, was that the commission would have no objection and would reserve the right to review.

**\*\*\*MR. ROMANO MOTIONED TO INSERT LANGUAGE FROM HARBOR MANAGEMENT APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES RE: 38 SHOREFRONT PARK, 12 SHOREHAVEN ROAD, & 67 BLUFF AVENUE**

**\*\*\*MR. MOBILIA SECONDED**

**\*\*\*MOTION TO INSERT LANGUAGE FROM HARBOR MANAGEMENT APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE MINUTES RE: 38 SHOREFRONT PARK, 12 SHOREHAVEN ROAD, & 67 BLUFF AVENUE passed unanimously.**

Mr. Steadman provided the language for **12 Shorehaven Road, Dock Application, 38 Shorefront Park, Permit Application, 67 Bluff Avenue, Dock Application** as follows:

“No objection to the applicant’s plans being included in an application to DEEP and we reserve our right to continue to review the proposal at such time as it may be modified, additional information is provided, and the proposal at such time as it may be modified, additional information is provided, and the proposal is the subject of a Public Notice of Hearing

In addition, the Commission provides the following comments to the Applicant and DEEP.

- 1) There is no indication that the project plans have been prepared by a professional engineer or land surveyor.
- 2) The Commission understands that comments and recommendations from the Shellfish Commission are forthcoming. Those comments and recommendation should be addressed by DEEP and the applicant in the review process.”

Mr. Romano said that the next 4 items have been postponed on the Agenda and that Mr. Crespo wants it to be part of the record that the Commission is ignoring. He asked to review drainage system east of the Yankee Doodle Bridge and to review October 2016 imaging.

**\*\*\*MR. ROMANO MOTIONED TO ADD STATE PROJECT NO. 102-295 TO AGENDA  
\*\*\*MR. GARDELLA SECONDED  
\*\*\*MOTION TO ADD STATE PROJECT NO. 102-295 TO AGENDA passed  
unanimously.**

Mr. Steadman stated pre-application plans by CT DOT for median reconstruction and resurfacing of I-95 in Norwalk and Westport with drainage into Norwalk Harbor. State Project No. 102-295. He said the Commission has no objection to the Applicants’ plans of being included in a permit application to DEEP and the Commission reserves their right to continue to review the proposal at such times it may be modified, and/or additional information is provided, or the proposal is the subject of a Public Notice or Hearing. In addition, the Commission agreed to provide its standard comments in support of Best Management Practices to manage stormwater and protect and improve water quality in Norwalk Harbor.

### **SHELLFISH COMMISSION**

Mr. Bartush said that the Shellfish Commission’s responsibility follows the Department of Transportation’s outline to make it easy for DEEP counterpart to follow along. Mr. Johnson noted that the Harbor/Shellfish boat has been compounded, waxed, compounded again with

water separation, and the engine serviced. He said he will submit bills for this. The “Norwalk Shellfish Commission Report” was reviewed.

### **FINANCE REPORT**

Mr. Romano says the NHMC is broke. He says they are not getting enough funds, and they are applying for more money. Mr. Mobilia gets the running tally from the beginning of the year, including all bills submitted to from Telesco, online fees, Harbor Master’s stipend - all are paid to date. He said that there is a \$13,471 balance in the budget. He also said there is a bill coming in from for maintenance of the Harbor Master’s boat, and that Mr. Steadman’s consulting fee must still to be paid.

Mr. Mobilia said the NHMC is at a deficit at the moment, and one of the reasons is that the Commission is on a calendar year, while the City is on a fiscal year. He said money will be coming in with the 2020 moorings and that it is not as dire as they think. Mr. Mobilia said the budget requests have a deadline of November 15. He said the Commission has been late in previous years. Mr. Mobilia recommended requesting more money. He said the Commission gets about \$9K from the City, and since they applied late, they had to adhere to the same amount year after year. Mr. Mobilia projected that, if the Commission requests \$3K in additional money from the city, they would have a chance of getting it.

Mr. Romano says the Commission has made requests early and they have been previously shortchanged. The Commission tried to get a harbor use fee and they wanted to put additional expenses into the City (i.e. visitor’s tackle, fuel for the boat, or the stickers we put on) and they are cutting short.

Mr. Romano says the Commission is not self-serving and that the spending, in conjunction with the Shellfish Commission, is for the good of the public. Mr. Romano recommends asking for an additional \$5K from the City. He supposed that if the Commission raises the fees, they can address the deficit in the budget. Mr. Bartush said that as Bruce’s counterpart in the Five Mile River little harbor to the west, that side does not have a use fee and it does not hurt the budget at all. Mr. Mobilia asked if the use fee would be in addition to the mooring fee. Mr. Bartush said that a sliding scale exists of up to \$200. Mr. Romano noted that that is the State cap.

Mr. Kibbe stated that given the value of the harbor's underwater resources, the Commission is running on a shoestring. He argues that the water needs supervision and organization. Mr. Kibbe did not think that \$5K was a big stretch at all. Mr. Mobilia agreed with Mr. Kibbe, but stated that the City’s grant money represents approximately one-third of the harbor income, specifically

representing the mooring fee, the management fee, and the donations received. Mr. Johnson said that that the mooring fees, or other fees, should go into a special fund for dredging. Mr. Johnson also asked the Commission to consider markers, buoys, and cleaning fees.

Mr. Romano said that, if the Commission pays its bills, then they are broke. Mr. Santella said that the mooring requests can always be fewer and that he thought the Commission should figure out the budget based on hard facts. He also thought that the City could deny the request if provided without good information. Mr. Johnson mentioned that the items and equipment need to change, and then they would get hit with the big bills. Mr. Romano said that the Coast Guard off-places a lot of equipment that the Commission could source at a bargain price for the Harbor Masters. He said that they need the resources to pull the plug if needed, and the City would have to get behind it. Mr. Steadman said that the State statute says that the money from fees has to go into a fund that is specific for the harbor. He said that two years ago, the Harbor Management Commission submitted an application for the new visitor's dock, and that it would be nice to get a \$3K exchange for that.

Mr. Mobilia said that, as part of the budget process, the Commission lists what it cost last year for each line item. He said that, years ago, the Commission had a fund for vessel abandonment, and the City removed it from the budget but that it is not money we can carry over every year. This year we paid for an abandoned vessel. He said that we should put it back in the budget,

**\*\*\*MR. MOBILIA MOTIONED TO INCREASE BUDGET BY \$5-10K**

**\*\*\*MR. ROMANO SECONDED**

**\*\*\*MOTION TO INCREASE BUDGET BY \$5-10K passed unanimously.**

### **MOORING AND HARBOR SAFETY**

Mr. Santella continued the finance discussion by stating that it is important now is to ensure that mooring fees are paid. He reviewed his "Mooring and Harbor Safety Report", inserted here as follows:

"NHMC  
Mooring and Harbor Safety Report  
October 23, 2019

Mooring Committee

- As we move towards the end of the season, the Committee will review each application, to ensure that the mooring fees have been paid, even though the required documents may not have been submitted.
- We will continue to work with the Harbor Master and inform him of any delinquent applications, so he can follow up with the mooring holders.
- 51 Approved applications
- 37 Renewals under review
- 21 Applications under review

Harbor Safety  
- No Report

Dennis J. Santella  
Committee Chairman”

Mr. Romano leaves at 8:16.

Mr. Lovallo leaves at 8:18.

### **PLANS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Mr. Mangels said he met with Mr. Santella. Mr. Kibbe reached out to Jan Schaefer to find out the history. He said that Joe Perrella did the website contact information needed and that it does change. Mr. Kibbe also reached out to the Seaport Association. He said that Recreation and Parks were looking for stats about the City docks to use for information for newsletters, and they requesting info for moorings. Mr. Kibbe said that people would come to Norwalk if they knew what the setup here was.

### **MAYOR’S WATER QUALITY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Mr. Schnierlein read from his typed report. He added that he found an EPS website that listed water filters that are PFAS and PFOS certified. He said this was not easy to find and that it was totally an accident. In “New Business”, he pointed out that there should be a representative from Shellfish and Harbor Management at the meeting planned for December 5. He highlighted the risk of high mortality to the Diamond Back terrapin with the current walk bridge plans. He said that there were emails out to the Mayor concerning developers’ responsibility for drilling more wells. Mr. Schnierlein concluded by saying that there has been no answer yet from the water districts.

The “Mayor’s Water Quality Committee Report for October 3, 2019” is included as follows:

Mayor's Water Quality Committee Report  
For October 3, 2019

**a. Old business;**

From Deanna D'Amore: PFAS and PFOS updates: The draft PFAS action plan was sent to Governor Lamont. There was a public comment period open through 10/15. The final action plan will be sent to the governor on 11/1.

Here is a copy of the draft for the action plan:

[https://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/pfastaskforce/Draft\\_CT\\_Interagency\\_PFAS\\_Task\\_Force\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.ct.gov/deep/lib/deep/pfastaskforce/Draft_CT_Interagency_PFAS_Task_Force_Action_Plan.pdf)

**b. New business;**

Plans are underway for the first meeting of the reinstated Norwalk River Watershed Initiative. The first meeting is tentatively planned for Dec.5 at the Wilton Town Hall at 3:00 PM.

Norwalk R. Watershed Association still working on pollinator area in oystershell park as well as clearing area near drainage pipes from the dense vegetation.

Walk bridge plans for developing marshland as well as Diamond Back terrapin Habitat and Environmental Impact needs to be looked at. Having a Diamond Back terrapin area on the river with all of the boat traffic is risking a high mortality of these animals.

DOT Yankee Doodle Bridge drainage plans upgraded to improve what is entering the Norwalk River from I 95. This is a dramatic improvement over the drainage going directly into the river. This now allows for filtration through vegetation and ground before entering the river.

Questions were raised about the sustainability of the water districts to supply water for the city with ongoing construction as well as sewage treatment. From an email I sent to Mayor Rilling, he is under the impression that the sewage treatment plant has more capacity than is needed, but he told me to check with the water suppliers. I suggested to the Mayor that the city, with any future development, make the developers responsible for drilling more wells to help with the city water supply.

I will be checking with the water districts, not only to answer the questions of sustainability for a growing Norwalk but also due to the fact that two wells are presently off line due to PFAS and PFOS. We also need to know if they are off line permanently, or, short term. If short term, how will they remediate the PFAS and PFOS

## **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

September 25, 2019

There were no amendments made.

**\*\*\*MR. KIBBE MOTIONED TO ACCEPT MINUTES**

**\*\*\*MR. GARDELLA SECONDED**

**\*\*\*MOTION TO ACCEPT MINUTES passed unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS/OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Steadman asked to consider giving a posthumous award to Henry Palau. Mr. Mobilia asked to consider Frank Strauss as well. Mr. Santella said that this room suits the Commission better for meetings.

**\*\*\*MR. MOBILIA MOTIONED TO ADJOURN**

**\*\*\*MR. SANTELLA SECONDED**

**\*\*\*MOTION TO ADJOURN passes unanimously.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

E.A.Sheils

Telesco Secretarial Services