

**CITY OF NORWALK
HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE
DECEMBER 16, 2020
VIA TELECONFERENCE**

The Chairman reserves the right to change the order of the agenda

ATTENDANCE: John Romano, Chair; John Crespo; Laurie Jones; Alan Kibbe;
Jeffrey Mangels; John Pinto; Christopher MacDonnell (6:12 p.m.);
Dennis Santella (6:12 p.m.)

OTHERS: Greg Scully, Harbor Master; Michael Silva, Norwalk Marine
Police; Geoff Steadman, Consultant; Steve Bartush and Pete
Johnson, Shellfish Commission; Joe Schnierlein, Water Quality
Committee

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Mr. Romano called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. and led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. ROLL CALL

Mr. Romano called the Roll as indicated above.

3. APPLICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE – Dr. Pinto

There were no applications reviewed this evening.

Dr. Pinto said he received a request for a pre-application review. He will send comments to the applicant by Friday.

6. SHELLFISH COMMISSION – Johnson and Bartush

Mr. Bartush reported that last Wednesday, it was reported to him that the DOT was dredging during an outgoing tide. The silt curtains were inadequate. He said there was an investigation and he sent his documentation to the State.

Mr. Bartush said there was a flag posted, indicating a diver was in the water, but the Police were not notified as required. In addition, a safety boat showed up, but then left.

Mr. Santella and MacDonnell joined the meeting at 6:12 p.m.

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Mr. Bartush reported that new maps and permits were being printed.

4. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** – Romano

Mr. Romano said the only new issue is the DOT issue with dredging and that the Police were not notified so they could provide support.

a. Introduction of new Harbor Management Commissioner, Laurie Jones

Mr. Romano welcomed Ms. Jones to the Harbor Management Commission. Ms. Jones reviewed her background and experience.

5. **STAFF REPORTS**

a. Harbor Master – Scully

Mr. Silva discussed the DOT dredging issue. He said he sent a video to the Commission and the Mr. Johnson. He said that the work had to be done during an outgoing tide, but according to the time stamp, that is not when the dredging took place. He said that at one point, there were signs up that divers were in the water and there was construction going on, but the Police were not notified. In addition, there was no safety boat there; it came and then left. He said dredging is supposed to take place during an incoming tide.

Mr. Scully said that he tried to contact Chandro regarding the dredging, but no one has responded to him.

Mr. Johnson commented that this is a small job and if they are messing up now, what is going to happen when they start the big stuff.

Mr. Romano agreed with Mr. Johnson. He noted that this Commission has been cooperative and pro-project.

Mr. Silva said that several people saw the dive flag displayed, which would indicate it is a dive zone and that they are supposed to have Police present. Mr. Romano said that agreement goes back three years.

Mr. Steadman said that about five years ago the Commission recommended that a project manager be hired to be a liaison between the Commission and the DOT with respect to the plan. He asked if it would be worth looking at hiring someone. Mr. Romano said that was a good idea and that the Commission needs to be proactive. He said they need someone who will be paid by the State and chosen by the Commission. He noted that this project has many components to it.

Mr. Romano said that he understands that the Public Works Department is part of the contact, but he cannot get anyone from Public Works to interact with the Commission. Mr. Steadman said he will give some thought to this position.

It was noted that the Commission does not get regular updates. Mr. Romano said that no one was notified that the project was going to start. Mr. Bartush said the DOT started dredging for the cable and were off loading material into dump trucks. Mr. Santella agreed that there needs to be someone overseeing the project.

Mr. Johnson said that Jeffrey Knapp wanted to have an in-person meeting, but he declined because of Covid. Mr. Johnson said he believes Mr. Knapp is an environmental engineer and that he is a long time DOT employee.

The Commissioners continued discussing the issue with dredging and the DOT not following appropriate protocols.

The Commissioners agreed to draft a letter to various people, including Mayor Rilling asking that they advocate on behalf of the Commission for a person to oversee the project. Mr. Steadman will revisit the letter submitted five years ago and make some revisions.

Mr. Steadman noted that the former Director of Public Works indicated that they did not have the resources to oversee the project. Mr. Romano added that their resources are even thinner now. Mr. Steadman said he will work on the letter and make it a priority.

Mr. Silva said that the permit requires notification of various departments and commissions. It also requires having a Police boat present during construction. When the crane is swinging, the Police boat is supposed to be there. The DOT agreed to have the Police boat present, but Mr. Silva said he did not know why they went against the agreement. He said having a member of the Police Dive Team on the boat would cover the specifications. He added that the whole Dive Team are certified as Public Safety Divers. He said that the DOT agreed to have a Police boat present and he does not know why Chambro went against that.

Mr. Steadman said he wants a strong condition in the permit having to do with public safety. Mr. Silva said that he and Mr. Johnson had a call from someone who said there were rowers in the River at 6:00 p.m. when it was dark out. He said that it is a safety issue if the rowers are out and the DOT is also there working. Mr. Romano commented that if something happens and the Police are not there, the Coast Guard will ask why they were not there. He said he will develop a letter and move this issue forward. He said this Commission has always been consistent with its requirement; this project has many moving parts and a lot of safety issues.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Mooring and Harbor Safety – Santella

Mr. Santella did not have any thing to report this evening.

b. Finance – Kibbe

Mr. Kibbe reported that he is working on the financials. Mr. Romano said that Mr. Kibbe is working hard reconstructing and reconfiguring the financials to make them more user friendly.

The Commission had \$8,000 on November 1st and ended November with \$7,100. Mr. Kibbe said that one of the checks for the managed fields just came in.

Mr. Kibbe said he is working to familiarize himself with the financials.

Mr. Romano said there is a committee working on recognizing public access so they can increase moorings and get it to where it was financially.

The Commissioners discussed the financials. Mr. Romano said Ms. Casey from the City of Norwalk's Economic Development Office has been working with Mr. Kibbe and himself and has been very supportive. She is aware of how valuable the Harbor is.

Mr. Romano said Mr. Kibbe has been doing a terrific job.

c. Plans and Recommendations – Mangels

Mr. Mangels said he passed along to the Commissioners a plan for Harbor use. He said they are meeting every Thursday and have a good plan going forward. The plan includes transient moorings to bring in additional funds.

Mr. Romano said there is a lot going on and a lot of the projects start landward, but end up water ward, but there are no inspection criteria. He said building start at Zoning. He said the City should be collecting a fee for the construction of piers and bulkheads. He suggested having a discussion with Ms. Casey.

Mr. Steadman said that the City is within its legal rights to require a permit for a dock. Mr. Romano said they need to get a permit into the mix of things.

d. Newsletter/Website – Kibbe

Mr. Kibbe reported that the Commission’s Facebook page honored Mr. Mobilia. He said he reached out to people at The Seaport Association and The Maritime Aquarium to discuss sharing information on their Facebook pages. Mr. Romano said everyone should be linked.

e. Water Quality – Crespo and Schnierlein

Mr. Schnierlein reported that the problem with the water supply at the First Taxing District has not been resolved. They do not know the source of the problem.

Mr. Schnierlein said that Sarah Crosby will join the next meeting of the Water Quality Committee. She is going to explain what happens with the data and who can access it. He said the interns are with the Health Department for three days a week and Harbor Watch for two days a week.

Mr. Schnierlein said he had a lot of push from the media and private citizens about the dead menhaden in the water. He explained that they can kill themselves because they live in large numbers in a small body of water. They are very oxygen sensitive and are a victim of their own circumstances.

f. Bridges

There was no discussion.

8. PUBLIC COMMENT

No members of the public wished to comment this evening.

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

October 28, 2020

**** MR. GIFFORD MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS AMENDED
** DR. PINTO SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

November 18, 2020

**** MR. MANGELS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS AMENDED**
**** MR. SANTELLA SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Mr. MacDonnell said he spoke to a friend who is the Captain of the *Armistad*. He said that it has never been to Norwalk Harbor. Mr. MacDonnell said they conduct programs and that it would be a good idea to get on their travel schedule to visit the City dock. He suggested that the Board of Education and the Harbor Management Commission could sponsor the visit. Mr. Romano said this would be very appropriate but would have to be coordinated with Parks and Recreation.

5. STAFF REPORTS (continued)

b. Consultant – Steadman

Mr. Steadman asked about presenting the Dunavan award honoring Mr. Mobilia. He said it was agreed to create an outdoor interpretive panel.

Mr. Steadman said they did not have a State of the Harbor meeting this year. Mr. Romano said they would not be having one this year.

Mr. Romano said it would be nice to make the Dunavan presentation to Ms. Mobilia in person.

Mr. Steadman suggested creating a written State of the Harbor report. The Commissioners agreed.

Mr. Steadman said he will write a letter to the DEEP as discussed earlier. Mr. Romano said the Mayor has to be aware of this.

10. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

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