

Five Mile River Commission Minutes
June 6, 2013
The Boardroom, Rowayton Community Center
33 Rowayton Ave., Rowayton, CT 06853

Commission members in attendance:

Matthew Marion, Chairman
John deRegt, Commissioner
William Jessup, Commissioner
Dirk Leasure, Commissioner
Ray Meurer, Harbor Superintendent
David Snyder, Assistant Harbor Superintendent

Guests:

Devin J. Santa, P.E., President, Roberge Associates
Tim DeBartolomeo, P.E., Vice President, Roberge Associates

Chairman Marion took the chair at 7:36 p.m. and invited the guests from Roberge Associates to discuss their involvement in harbor dredging projects in Connecticut and how they could assist the commission in preparing for the dredging of Five Mile River.

Mr. Santa said his organization had experience in, and could help advise the commission about, the main stages of a dredging operation, including funding, permitting, biological testing, hydrological surveys, locating a suitable dumping ground, finding material to cap the dredged material if needed, estimating operational costs, hiring a dredging company and overseeing the dredging operations. He said it might cost \$200,000 to get ready for dredging. He noted dredging costs range from approximately \$20 to \$40 per cubic yard and that 20,000 to 40,000 cubic yards might need to be removed from Five Mile River to achieve a controlled depth of eight feet in the Federal Channel.

Chairman Marion noted the 1999 dredging of Five Mile River removed 48,000 cubic yards of material, and the Corps of Engineers paid \$75,000 for the biological testing. He said Congress provided \$700,000 for dredging and that the material was dumped in the eastern Long Island sound site using capped material from Five Mile River.

In response to questions from the commissioners, Mr. Santa said the Western Long Island Sound dumping grounds currently are open and that capping material often is found by coordinating with dredging projects going on concurrently. Land disposal sites are prohibitively expensive. The dredged material from Five Mile River is mud and silt and, as such, generally unsuitable for beach renourishment.

During discussions about timelines, Mr. Santa said the best time to start planning for the next dredging is now. Permitting can take one year or more and can cost \$200,000. Once a permit is granted, it is valid for three years with a one-year extension. Bidding can take one month. It might take one to two months to do the actual dredge. The dredging season is November through March.

Regarding funding, Mr. Santa noted that funds are sometimes available through the Corps of Engineers for low-commercial use navigation projects and from the state of Connecticut's bonding authority. He noted the fact that the commission has accumulated funds from the harbor use fee makes it easier to secure funds from government agencies. He highly recommended Geoff Steadman, a marine consultant who has worked with many harbors in securing funding for dredging projects.

Mr. Santa also discussed his company's use of the Corps of Engineers' small hopper dredge, Currituck. While economical, the dredge would probably not be available in Mr. Santa's view, because its use was limited primarily to dredging and relocating sand onto nearby beaches in need of replenishment.

Chairman Marion thanked Mr. Santa for his presentation and asked him to provide a brief written summary of the preliminary steps required to start a dredging project and Roberge's estimated costs and fees for this assistance.

Mr. Santa and Mr. DeBartolomeo left the meeting at 8:55 p.m.

Chairman Marion noted that the minutes of the April 11, 2013, meeting had been circulated to the commissioners and approved electronically. The minutes were emailed to the city of Norwalk and town of Darien on April 16, 2013.

Chairman Marion reiterated the commission's thanks to Gary Wetmore, a marine contractor who voluntarily used his barge and crane to remove a wooden dock and a metal ramp that had broken loose during super storm Sandy and come to rest against a seawall at 114 Five Mile River Road and the stone rip rap of a residence on Butler Island.

It was agreed that in November, a follow-up letter should be sent to Paul Tierney, 17 Butlers Island Road, Darien, Conn., inquiring about his efforts to reassess the safety of his dock, given the severe damage that it had during Super Storm Sandy and other recent storms.

Regarding the planned demolition of an existing commercial structure and the construction of a new eight-unit, multi-family residence at 71 and 77 Rowayton Ave. by R.G. Ely, Chairman Marion directed the harbor superintendent to report on the number of boat slips at the location and the number of mooring permit holders who access their boats from the site. He also asked for the same information about Five Mile River Works and All Seasons Marine Works.

Dirk Leasure directed the Harbor Superintendent to provide a report on the number of dock boat owners who did not pay the harbor use fee in 2012.

Tammy Papp, administrative assistant, 2013 year-to-date reports showed:
Expenses \$5,548.35. YTD 2012 was \$5,386.91. A difference of minus \$161.44.
Income from moorings \$13,600. YTD 2012 was \$14,450. A difference of minus \$850.

Income from dockage \$20,900. YTD 2012 was \$17,900. A difference of plus \$3,000.

Harbor Superintendent Report:

No tickets were issued since the last meeting.

Regarding the commission's interest in a website, the Town of Darien agreed to host a website for the commission and Cecil Wade, who created a website for the Darien Senior Men's Association, volunteered to build the website at no charge.

In an effort to improve compliance among boat owners who keep their boats at docks, applications for harbor use fee decals are processed only after each applicant provides an email address, a cell phone number and the boat's Connecticut registration number. The information is entered into a database maintained by the Harbor Superintendent and compared with the names of boat owners provided by the marina and boatyard operators. Non-payers are reminded by email and cell phone of their obligation to pay the harbor use fee.

(Note: In addition, the Assistant Harbor Superintendent inspects boats at docks in late June and early July and records the Connecticut registration number of boats not displaying current FMR decals. The registration numbers are used to identify boat owners who have paid the fee but are not displaying decals and owners who have not paid the fee. If a registration number is not in the database, the marina operator will be asked for the name of the boat owner. The registration number also can be faxed to the Department of Motor Vehicles Boating Division, which will provide the name and address of the boat owner.)

In a meeting with The Boatworks regarding the impact on boating activities of the proposed multi-family residences at 71 and 77 Rowayton Ave., it was noted the current 21-slip marina, the dingy docks used for access by mooring permit holders and the docks used for boat repairs will remain in use. The Boatworks will continue to provide marine contracting services for the installation, maintenance and repair of ground tackle. The existing winter storage area that also is used for parking and repairs in the summer will be turned into a 23-space parking area in the summer and a storage area for small center console boats in the winter. Larger boats will be hauled for repairs and winter storage using a travel lift at Wilson Cove Marina.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

The remaining meeting dates for 2013 are August 1, October 3 and November 7.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Meurer
Harbor Superintendent