

Norwalk Harbor Management Commission

Bridge Committee

Norwalk City Hall – Room 220

October 26, 2015

Minutes

Attendance: Tony Mobilia, Committee Chair; Dennis Santella; John Romano; Geoff Steadman; Michael Griffin Harbormaster

1. 08:45 Call to order
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Discussion of concerns/interests/needs of the Harbor Management Commission regarding the Walk Bridge replacement. A wish/laundry list was put together to be forwarded to the DEEP analyst, for informational purposes, for an internal department meeting at the DEEP.

The committee voted for the following list to be brought forward to the full commission for a vote:

Preliminary issues and opportunities for discussion:

- DOT should give more thought as to whether to purchase/take properties of water dependent and water-enhanced businesses or temporarily relocate affected businesses and water-dependent uses and lease the affected properties for the duration of the project. When the project is finished, the owners (who would have been relocated by DOT) would have the option of returning to their properties instead of having to buy their properties back from the DOT.
- Instead of taking some of the properties on the south side of the bridge in the Liberty Square area which include water-dependent and water-enhanced uses, perhaps the DOT should consider opportunities for using properties on the north side, in the vicinity of the Norwalk wastewater treatment plant and public works facilities. Consideration should be given to possible use of the city's yard waste area and other properties near the DOT-owned parcel. This requires further discussion with the city DPW and other agencies.
- DOT should clarify its plans for construction-related use of properties in the Norwalk Marine Commercial District along South Water Street, south of the Route 136 bridge.
- DOT should investigate whether the Seaport Ferry and Maritime Aquarium Research vessels should be relocated for the duration of the project and, if so, investigate feasible relocation sites for continuation of the normal operations of these vessels. In this regard, consideration should be given to relocating the vessels to the Norwalk Visitors Dock area and other locations.
- A feasible plan should be developed and implemented for relocation of the rowing club and marina now operating on the east side of the river between the railroad and Route 136 bridges to ensure no loss of existing water-dependent uses. With respect to the rowing club, consideration should be given to tem-

porary relocation to other suitable locations. Some possible locations to be investigated include City parks such as Veteran's Park and Calf Pasture Beach, and the now closed Ascension Beach Club.

- Consideration should be given to use of the decommissioned power plant site on Manresa Island as a construction staging and business relocation area.
- A feasible plan should be developed and implemented for mitigating adverse impacts on coastal resources, including wetlands, intertidal flats, shellfish resources, and water quality. Regarding water quality, DOT should undertake a pre-construction sampling program to establish a baseline of water quality conditions, and then monitor water quality conditions during construction. Best Management Practices such as silt curtains and containment booms should be planned by DOT and approved by OLISP.
- Methods of dredging and dredged material disposal should be discussed at this time, including, if necessary, planning and location of a Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) area. DOT should be responsible for a pre-construction survey of the federal channel, including the entrance channel to be used by project barges, to establish a baseline of channel conditions.
- An emergency communications system including the Norwalk Police and Fire departments should be established similar to the system employed during the harbor dredging projects.
- River traffic, including recreational boating and commercial barge traffic to the upper harbor should be able to continue during construction. DOT should consider building a "pass-through" docking facility just upstream of the bridge from which a small tug can operate to push barges upstream that are passed under the bridge when the bridge cannot open. In addition, the DOT should provide for continuation of the existing boat store and repair yard on the west side of the upper harbor.
- An agreed-upon plan for maintaining safe rowing activities during construction should be prepared and implemented with input from the affected rowing clubs.
- No work barges should be permitted to sit on the bottom during any tide cycle; any adverse impacts on channel dimensions caused by work barges should be corrected by DOT.
- All underwater utilities should be properly identified and all appropriate care should be taken to avoid disturbance.
- The Route 136 and railroad bridges should be operated in coordination with each other throughout the project.
- It should be a project goal that following completion of the project, the harbor should be returned to its original conditions without any loss of water-dependent uses or significant adverse impacts on navigation conditions.
- All construction and RR debris should be removed entirely.

4. Adjournment 10:15 am

Please note: Added to the list was the Planning and Zoning Department's opportunities for consideration during this stage of the project planning process

- Construct bikeway/walkway on west side of the river to link the Maritime Aquarium to the Imax theater deck on the south side of the bridge

- Construct a bikeway / walkway on the east side of the river linking the existing walkway at the wastewater treatment plant to the marina property on south side of bridge
- Construct a link for the bikeway/walkway from the marina property to Rt 136. This could be along the water and/or back through Goldstein Place
- Construct a link for the bikeway/walkway along the north side of the railroad tracks (east of the river) to provide an option of returning to Smith St. without back-tracking along WWTP
- Provide interpretive signage along the bikeway including a panel documenting the history of the bridge (there is similar signage at Veteran's Park and along the Heritage Park walk)
- Give right of first refusal to the marina to return to its site after construction
- Consider possible improvements to the public docks at Vet's Park to accommodate the Maritime Aquarium and Seaport Association vessels. There may be an opportunity to construct additional docking facilities to mitigate loss of docking facilities at the existing marina on the east side of the river.
- Due to the work at the Walk Bridge, there might be a need to reconstruct / upgrade the existing bikeway at the WWTP.
- Are there any other potential Vet's Park improvements / opportunities that can be tied to the impacts of the project?
- Consideration should be given to wetland improvements at the edge of Oyster Shell Park