



TOWN OF WESTBROOK
HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

UNAPPROVED MINUTES FROM SEPTEMBER 22, 2020
WESTBROOK HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Attendance/Roll Call: John Rie, Chairman; Evan Cusson, Vice Chair; Dean Arktop, Andy Calderoni, Bob Charrette, Tom Fahey, Lee McNamar, Gary Nolf, Ronny Stevenson and Harry Plaut, Harbormaster

Absent: Dean Arktop

Call to order: J. Rie called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes:

Motion to approve the August 25, 2020 Harbor Management Commission Meeting Minutes as submitted was made E. Cusson; seconded by R. Stevenson. All members voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Bills:

Motion to pay Olsen Sanitation \$100.00 for the port a potty for September was made by E. Cusson; seconded by R. Stevenson. All members voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Motion to pay Recording Clerk Kathy King \$102.26 for August was made E. Cusson; seconded by R. Stevenson. All members voted in favor, and the motion passed.

Harbormaster's Report:

H. Plaut said there are 65 paid beach mooring permits. There are more coming in. There are 12 Patchogue River permits that have been paid for. He received 6 new notices of non-compliance from the CT DEEP for violations of docks in the Menunketesuck River area and Indian Trail. H. Plaut has not yet met with any of the people in non-compliance yet. He just received the notices recently. He picked up 7 no trespassing signs to be placed out on Duck Island. They will be

placed next spring. There have also been many abandoned anchors. Removing them has proved problematic. Some people have been difficult to deal with.

A. Calderoni said there are still 2 beach moorings marked with seat cushions that need to be removed. H. Plaut said he will go out next week and remove them. His boat is in for repairs at the moment.

Chairman's Report:

J. Rie said that the Council of Beaches had a Zoom meeting. A. Calderoni gave a report from the Harbor Management Commission. The members of the Council of Beaches are getting the messages about registration of moorings and mooring maintenance.

First Selectman Noel Bishop received a letter with complaints about mooring removal. H. Plaut said the best time for him to remove the moorings was at low tide which happened to be at 8:30 a.m. on a Sunday morning. There were some people complaining that this was being done especially at this time on a weekend.

Old Business

1. Review of town ordinances & Harbor Management Plan regarding beach moorings

- **Discussion of requirements regarding moored floats or docks**

J. Rie sent copies of the town ordinances and the Harbor Management Plan to Commission members in advance of this meeting. He said there should be something in the ordinances and the Harbor Management Plan about moored floats or docks. The Commission members would like to handle both of these separately.

T. Fahey asked what other surrounding towns do about floating docks. H. Plaut said in Old Lyme, they are allowed. A swim float no greater than 10' x 10' can be put out without a permit.

Assistant Harbormaster D. Russell feels strongly that these mooring floats are dangerous. There was discussion as to why they are dangerous and if there have been any instances where there have been injuries.

H. Plaut said most towns that allow swim floats have them located in designated and approved swim areas.

J. Rie will talk with the Town Attorney to get his opinion.

Further discussion of moored floats and docks was tabled to be brought up again when Dave Russell is present at a meeting.

All Commission members agreed that no mooring tackle should be exposed at low tide. Those pose a danger for beach walkers

E. Cusson left the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

- **Discussion of mooring tackle (Danforth anchors, requirements)**

H. Plaut said he'd like to regulate the anchors that can be used for the floats. They cannot be Danforth anchors due to safety reasons. A pyramid would be safer.

In summary, the Commission will hold off on regulating the rigid floats until they hear from Dave Russell. K. King will contact Dave Russell about his concerns, so the Harbor Management Commission will know what those concerns are.

There are people who have their whole beach area covered by other people's swim floats. There can be several floats tagged to the same anchor.

T. Fahey expressed concerns about over regulation. He suggested that the beach associations talk to their association members about this. Commission members agreed.

Commission members discussed what the Harbor Management Commission's focus is versus what the beach association's focus is.

No part of the mooring anchor should be less than 2 feet below low tide. H. Plaut and J. Rie will clarify the Mooring Tackle Requirements which require all mooring anchor parts to be at least 2 feet below low tide.

J. Rie and H. Plaut will review and rewrite the mooring tackle specs and have them ready for the next HMC meeting.

- **Discussion of mooring tackle inspections and inspectors**

Item 5 of Section 8-5 of Westbrook Town Ordinances states that every mooring has to be removed every 2 years for inspection. This has not been enforced. H. Plaut said marinas can become inspectors so that no one person is burdened with the task. The inspection should be co-signed by the inspector and the mooring owner. A permit will not be issued without an inspection.

H. Plaut suggested that every mooring be inspected every 2-3 years.

Commission members feel the burden should fall on the mooring owner to get their own inspection. The permit language needs to be compatible with the ordinance. The interval of inspection is set by town ordinance. Some of the abandoned moorings have been in the water 5-20 years.

The permit language needs to be rewritten to put the onus on the mooring owner to arrange their mooring inspection.

J. Rie would like H. Plaut to send K. King the information sheets for the mooring holders, so she can maintain a spreadsheet. H. Plaut said he will send K. King that information as soon as it's up to date.

Motion to require that mooring inspections be performed by an authorized mooring inspector, a marina or the Harbormaster was made T. Fahey; seconded by R. Stevenson. All members voted in favor, and the motion passed.

H. Plaut offered to come up with a list of inspectors. He suggested that this be posted to the town's web site on the Harbor Management Commission's page.

2. Patchogue Moorings

- **Realignment of moorings over winter**

The moorings are still not property aligned. R. Stevenson suggested waiting until winter when they're not being used and line them up in a straight line then. H. Plaut agreed to do that at no charge.

- **Public mooring holder list**

The Town Clerk needs to have a list of the public mooring holders. H. Plaut said he will make up an additional list and give it to Town Clerk Joan Angelini.

3. Communication to public about moorings

- **How to communicate**

J. Rie will summarize each month's meeting and share that information with the Council of Beaches for distribution to beach association members.

H. Plaut suggested going to a Council of Beaches meeting in person perhaps next summer to educate people and answer questions about moorings.

The Zoom meeting ended abruptly at 7:00 p.m. due to technical difficulties.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen King

Kathleen King
Recording Clerk