

# Unapproved Westbrook Harbor Management Commission

## Special Meeting – February 7, 2011 – Minutes

**Attending:** John Rie, Chairman, Brian Faucher, William Angelini, Rita Lehto

**Absent:** Michael Farrell, Ron Stevenson, Keith Rich

**Also Attending:** Noel Bishop, First Selectman; Len Mierzejewski, Harbor Master; Jack Karalius, ACOE; Joe Salvatore, DOT; George Wisker, DEP; Reeves Potts, Manager, Pilots Point Marina; Paul Cusson, Ritts Marine and Atlantic Outboard; Jim Wille, Ritts Marine; Tony Cozza; Jenny Contois, Congressman Courtney's Office (via telephone); Gerri Lewis, Clerk

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 1:36 p.m.

### **Plans for Dredging the Remainder of the Patchogue River Entrance Channel:**

**Permitting:** George Wisker reported that the Water Quality Certificate that was issued for the last dredging expired June 27, 2010. He noted that a new one can be applied for easily and should be done as soon as possible as there is, by federal law, a 30 day comment period. ACOE will apply for extension of existing water quality certificate for dumping spoils of harbor dredging at Cornfield Shoals within 2 weeks.

Mr. Karalius told the commission that the Currituck was scheduled to be in New England May 15, 2011 – June 30, 2011. There are 5 New England sites, Westbrook being one of them. He noted that by May 1<sup>st</sup> he should know when the Currituck would be coming to Westbrook.

The commission pointed out the priority sites for the dredging on the dredge survey chart. ACOE will apply for a dredge permit for the stretch of channel from R2 to just south of the gas docks at Pilots Point, and ask for 20K cubic yards to be dredged. The commission asked whether or not dredging after June 1<sup>st</sup> would be an issue. George Wisker agreed to determine that and said that would depend on quality, silt, and size of sand being dredged, and replenishing beach at Hammonasset.

A long discussion ensued regarding the congressional appropriation that was earmarked 3 years ago and the dredging process. There is approximately a balance of \$470K in the ACOE budget. The rest was used for permitting, water testing, and for the Currituck last year.

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Mr. Wisker noted that sediment quality is important to the water quality. The sediment quality's impact ultimately affects the water quality. During the discussion, it was noted that Cornfield Shoals will be closed to federal projects in November, 2013.

The town may be open to funding the rest of the harbor dredging, and if so, the Harbor Management Commission must determine the cost and ask for money at a Town Meeting. Mr. Karalius estimates that after the Currituck dredges this year, there will be 30,000 – 35,000 cubic yards to be removed from the rest of the harbor. The town estimates a cost of \$15 to \$20 per cubic yard for this dredging if the town contracts it. That would make cost \$450,000 – \$700,000 if the town were to contract the dredging.

As a matter of information, Mr. Karalius estimates that the cost of the remaining dredging, before the Currituck comes this spring, to be \$1.2 million if the ACOE manages the dredging.

Joe Salvatore brought up the fact that during his campaign, Dan Malloy made a point of stating that our harbors are a real problem, and dredging them was high on his priority list. Joe suggested that we get together with Clinton and ask the state for \$3 million for the ACOE to dredge both harbors completely.

The point was made that if more than 25,000 cubic yards was to be disposed of at Cornfield, it would trigger biological testing at a cost of approximately \$100K that would be required by the EPA. It was noted that it is questionable whether the existing testing already done by the ACOE would still be accepted by the EPA for anyone other than the ACOE doing the dredging. George Wisker agreed to check into this.

Joe Salvatore suggested that if the town does dredge, the amount permitted should be less than 25,000 cubic yards to avoid the biological testing which is triggered by disposal of more than 25,000 cubic yards of spoils by anyone other than the federal government. Joe suggested that if we got the Currituck here this spring, and used the remaining estimated \$200,000 left in the ACOE budget after dredging this year, we could get the Currituck back next year and dredge the remainder of the channel. As noted above, Mr. Karalius was going to apply to dredge 20K cubic yards this year.

The timeline is as follows:

1. Mr. Karalius will apply for Water Quality Certificate within 2 weeks of this meeting; this will be a modification of last year's; (Jack will email Sue Bailey right away);
2. Mr. Karalius will post the Public Notice within 3 weeks;
3. Schedule Currituck; ask for as many days as possible

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At this time, Selectman Bishop said how he appreciated the hard work and focus on every level including federal, state and private sector that everyone displayed. At this time, Ms. Contois wished everyone the best and disconnected.

#### **Overview and discussion:**

Chairman Rie reported that he and Reeves Potts found shallow spots all the way to the Singing Bridge. This will be a problem for small boats that draw 5 feet. Approximately 350 boats will be affected.

Mr. Salvatore reminded the HMC that the new governor took a stand during his campaign. There is still a Harbor Improvement Account. He noted that even if it's not funded, if enough people get to their congressman, this could be a source of funding. He noted that Norwalk, Clinton and Westbrook are always on his radar screen for dredging.

It was noted that the Lt. Governor will address the chamber in 2 weeks. State funding for the harbors should be brought up by Westbrook and Clinton.

Mr. Bishop asked if the search for a DEP Commissioner would stop this process and the answer was no.

Chairman Rie asked who would talk to Susan Bailey at DEP and George Wisker said he would and Mr. Rie will as well.

Chairman Rie will be in touch with the press and give them "appropriate" information.

At this time Chairman Rie asked for a motion to approve minutes of the last meeting.

A motion to approve the minutes of January 25, 2011 as presented by Brian Faucher and seconded by Rita Lehto was so VOTED unanimously.

Chairman Rie thanked everyone for coming and asked for a motion to adjourn.

A motion to adjourn at 3:16 p.m. by Rita Lehto and seconded by Brian Faucher was so VOTED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Gerri Lewis*

Gerri Lewis, Clerk  
WHMC