

HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Zoom Virtual Meeting, 2:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Tucker Braddock, Mayor Peter Nystrom, Alderman Mark Bettencourt, City Manager John Salomone, Michael Aliano, Michael Gualtieri, Sofia LeWitt and Mark Sicuso

OTHERS PRESENT: Consultant Geoff Steadman and Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: All present

CITIZENS PRESENT: Keith Neilson of Docko, Inc., Niantic, CT

1. Call to Order: Chair Tucker Braddock called the meeting to order at 2:01 PM. Alderman Mark Bettencourt read the rules of the virtual meeting. He clearly stated that the meeting would be recorded and would be posted on the city's website.

2. Determination of Quorum: It was determined a quorum was present.

3. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Alderman Mark Bettencourt, seconded by Michael Aliano, the February 23, 2021 meeting minutes of the Harbor Management Commission (HMC) were unanimously approved as presented by a roll call vote.

4. Community Policing Report: None

5. Correspondence:

a) Financial Report: Michael Gualtieri reviewed the February report. He noted the doubled data line charge in January was actually a catch-up from last fall so the charge was correct.

6. Harbor Master Report: Harbor Master Rich Thayer was not present.

7. New Business:

Pandemic Relief Funding: City Manager John Salamone reported that the city is in line for \$20 million over the next two years. The regulations for this federal funding, which is coming directly to the city from the U.S. Treasury, are not yet available. Regulations will be generated by Treasury upon interpretation of America Rescue Plan. The funding is reported to have broad parameters, including infrastructure, wastewater, water, and internet. Mr. Salamone noted that there is the potential for a project to be done in the harbor. In general, the funding will cover projects that support economic development. Also the allotment will make up for revenue shortfalls to the city, such as lost revenue at NPU due to delinquencies and major businesses lost. The funding cannot be used to reduce taxes below previous year or pay for pensions. He is awaiting the regulations which will provide more guidance. He stressed that these are significant funds for the city and much be spent within two years.

In response to questions, Mr. Salamone reported that separate funding will be received for education. This again is a significant amount but will be processed through the state.

Consultant Geoff Steadman inquired if the funding can be used to improve outdoor spaces in response to pandemic and how the HMC would request funding. Mr. Salamone replied that the city does not yet have a structure set up to determine which projects may qualify. He reported that the process would include the City Council and be based on the forthcoming federal regulations.

Mayor Nystrom reported that since Connecticut does not have a county form of government, Norwich will receive an additional allocation based on its pro rata share of the county's population.

Mr. Salamone summed up by saying that if the regulations are broad enough this funding could be a game changer for Norwich.

#### 8. Old Business:

- a) Chair Braddock spoke regarding the Weise Proposal to change the previously-approved vertical slips to parallel slips. The original application approval has expired. The proposal would allow for lateral parking of boats to new bulkhead system already installed at 190 Thames Street.

Keith Neilson of Docko, Inc. spoke to the proposal, summarizing his previous presentation to the HMC last month. He clarified that the facilities and parking will be on the land side of the train tracks. There would be room for 40 cars and 40 slips, for a one-to-one slip to parking spot ratio. There are already 40 excess parking spaces.

Mr. Steadman mentioned that this is a pre-application submittal, a necessary step prior to an actual DEEP application. It is a lengthy process which will include a public comment period. As Chair of the HMC, Mr. Braddock will be asked to sign a form with description of the project. Mr. Neilson confirmed that it would be a commercial marine facility and noted that the description is Note 3 on the pre-application drawing. Mr. Steadman asked if the proposal would require review from Planning & Zoning. Mr. Neilson replied that he is not aware that P&Z approval is necessary.

Mayor Nystrom asked Mr. Neilson what he required from the HMC to move the pre-application forward. Discussed ensued around whether the project is consistent with the Harbor Management Plan of the city. Mr. Steadman advised the HMC to vote on a statement that the commission had no objection in the applicant moving forward with the pre-application to DEEP. He noted that the HMC can comment during the public comment period.

Mayor Nystrom made a motion to have Chair Braddock issue a statement that the HMC has no objection to the pre-application and to complete the necessary form. Michael Aliano seconded the motion. With a roll call vote, the HMC unanimously approved the motion.

Mr. Neilson left the meeting.

- b) Harbor Management Plan (HMP) Update

b) Chair Braddock introduced the agenda item and turned the discussion over to Mr. Steadman. Mr. Steadman reported that the HMP update is close to being buttoned up. Once the HMC has approved the

draft, it will be sent to DEEP for their review and approval. Then the HMP will go to the City Council. He noted that the pandemic affected forward progress on the draft of the update. He noted that a draft copy of Chapter 2 was emailed to the HMC members. Chapter 2 covers the city's activities. He would like to have the city departments review and update their roles. Chapter 1 is a description of existing conditions. He will spend more time looking to update that chapter. He reviewed the need for specific recommendations to include in Chapter 6 for specific areas/site/locations on the harbor that are of special note such as Hollyhock Island, New Wharf Road and Shipping Street/Terminal Way. Chair Braddock reported that City Planner Deanna Rhodes is following up on a plan to declare certain floodway properties as historic. The city has hired Regan Miner to identify the sites and create an inventory. Then the city will approach the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to review potential development requirements. Mr. Steadman will reach out to Ms. Miner. Mr. Steadman requested that HMC members review Chapter 2 and send comments to him. Mr. Salamone and Mark Sicuso both agreed to review Chapter 2.

9. Citizen Comment: None

10. Other: Chair Braddock asked Mr. Steadman for an invoice. Mr. Steadman replied that he had submitted it earlier in the day. Mr. Gualtieri will review it.

Chair Braddock inform the HMC that next month, he would like to hold a Zoom meeting at 5 pm. A notice will be sent out. Mr. Gualtieri requested that the notices be copied to his personal email address.

11. Adjournment: On a motion to adjourn by Mayor Nystrom, seconded by Sofia LeWitt, the Harbor Management Commission meeting adjourned via roll call vote at 2:46 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Melinda Wilson  
Recording Secretary*