

HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, January 22, 2019
City Hall, Room 319, 5:00 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Tucker Braddock, Alderman Joseph DeLucia, Peter Barber, Michael Gualtieri, Jerry Martin, Mark Sicuso & Zechariah Stover

OTHERS PRESENT: Officer Michael Lax & Recording Secretary Melinda Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT: Alderwoman Joanne Philbrick

CITIZENS PRESENT: Dr. Wendol Williams, Ken Lee, Kyle Heard & Scott Young

1. Call to Order: Chair Tucker Braddock called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM.
2. Determination of Quorum: It was determined a quorum was present.
3. Approval of Minutes: On a motion by Pete Barber, seconded by Mark Sicuso, the November 27, 2018 meeting minutes of the Harbor Management Commission (HMC) were approved as presented.
4. Community Policing Report: Officer Michael Lax of the Norwich Police Department had no report.
5. Correspondence:
 - a) Financial Reports: Mike Gualtieri reviewed the financial report's year-to-date disbursements and revenues. On a motion by Mark Sicuso, seconded by Pete Barber, the December financial report was unanimously accepted as presented.
 - b) Jerry Martin notified the group that he had received a meeting notice for representatives of Connecticut's Harbor Management Commissions on January 30, 2019. Geoff Steadman explained that this meeting will be held in two parts next week. The first part will be the HMC representatives only. For the second part, DEEP will also be there. Part 2 of the Long Island Sound Blue Plan presentation will be made. This plan will be used to guide use and development of the sound itself. At the meeting, the HMCs will discuss how the Blue Plan interacts with HMC jurisdictions. Some of the issues being considered are aquaculture and energy development. The meeting will be held at the Sound School in New Haven.
6. Harbor Master Report: Harbor Master Rich Thayer was not present.
7. New Business:
 - a) Chair Tucker Braddock introduced Scott Young of Tropic Ocean Airways in Fort Lauderdale, FL. Tucker opened the meeting for Scott's comments and general questions.

Scott reported that his company was responsible for the sea plane landing and takeoff that recently took place in the Norwich Harbor. He updated the group on his company's plans regarding sea plane activity in the harbor. For the last year, he and his staff have researched the harbor for feasibility and safety of passenger flights with sea planes. They have met with police and fire departments, as well as the marina. They have also had discussions with Mohegan Sun. Tropic Ocean Airways has thirteen Cessna 208 Caravan aircraft in their fleet, all based in New Jersey. Refueling at regional airports would be factored into scheduling.

Jerry asked several questions. Scott verified that seasonal routes are being considered from Memorial Day through Labor Day. A flexible shuttle route schedule with an on-demand ticket system would be coordinated with fire department and police. The planes each have a two-person crew.

Pete raised questions about handling watercraft traffic in the harbor during take offs and landings. Scott referred to the common practice of overflying your potential landing pattern. As flights become more frequent, people gain common knowledge. Also there is a secondary landing spot in front of Mohegan Sun. A land spot needs to be 1,000 feet from the marina.

Tucker asked if the airline would need a wind sock. Scott replied it was not necessity but it would be a benefit.

Pete offered Scott and his staff a ride from the bridge to harbor at low tide in the springtime to allow the pilots to map the harbor for rocks and other hazards

Dr. Wendol Williams asked questions regarding the distance and width of the river for the use of the planes. Scott confirmed that he and his staff did not see obstructions, and the landings and takeoffs would happen within safety limits.

Geoff noted the need to comply with FAA regulations for aerodromes. He also noted that it would be important to add this use to the Harbor Management Plan. Scott said he would supply Geoff with more details on his airline's compliance with regulations.

Mark spoke in favor of the seaplane flights going in and out of the harbor. He gave details on the fire department and regional emergency response equipment for the harbor.

Alderman DeLucia noted that he appreciated Scott's enthusiastic approach. He cautioned that there are many details to be worked out. Seaplane flights would be an amenity for Norwich.

Ken Lee inquired about passenger security screening procedures. Scott answered that FBO (fixed base of operations) do not have a terminal so small regional flights don't have security checks.

Dr. Williams asked about the business plan in terms of the number of flights needed to be profitable. Scott replied that the airline uses the number of seats sold as its gauge. There are contracting options

that can also be in place. Scott noted the airlines flexibility to adapt to customer demand, whether the customer is the casino or another entity or passengers

Officer Lax will provide Scott with a point of contact at the police department. The PD monitors the harbor and can share information with the airline.

Scott asked about debris in the harbor. Pete described the general conditions. The Shetucket River crests 24 hours after a rain and that's the time debris is in the harbor. It collects at boat ramp or on other side along the western shore and at marina. DPW clears the boat ramp. Jerry noted that the harbor cam provides a live feed of the harbor. Mark said that the Harbor Master is also available with up-to-date information on conditions in the harbor.

On a motion by Alderman DeLucia, seconded by Mark Sicuso, the HMC unanimously voted to make recommendation to city council in favor of pursuing discussions for seaplane activity in the Norwich Harbor.

Tucker thanked Scott for flying up today and providing so much information to the HMC.

- b) Dr. Williams Request: Dr. Williams reported he has an interest in acquiring the marina. As a public/private partnership with a solid vision, the harbor can become a travel destination. He thanked Scott and spoke in favor of seaplanes in the harbor. It dovetails well with this project. Scott noted that seaplanes become an attraction themselves. People will come to watch landings and takeoffs. Also, there is a ripple effect in encouraging events to be held in the area.
- c) Payment for Consultant: Geoff will work with Mike on the separation of billing for Geoff's time and will report next month.
- d) Payment for Harbor Cam: On a motion by Mark Sicuso, seconded by Mike Gualtieri, the HMC unanimously voted to continue payment of half of the harbor cam bill for a twelve month payment term.

8. Old business:

- a) Survey Update: The survey is closed. Geoff has twenty-five paper surveys to enter into Survey Monkey. There were a total of 39 paper surveys. He will update the results and send to the recording secretary for distribution among the HMC.
- b) Osprey nest: Ken Lee of the Mohegan District of Scouts BSA introduced Kyle Heard an Eagle Scout candidate interested in the osprey project. Tucker reported that the determination on locations has not been made. He hopes to have answers within a month,. This delay has been due to the change in leadership at NPU. Kyle reported that he needs to complete the project by Jan 1, 2020. Ken said the scout would build the platforms. Tucker will be in touch with Ken. Ken will work with Kyle. On a

motion by Mark Sicuso, seconded by Pete Barber, the HMC unanimously voted to notify NPU that a decision is needed this week on whether the project will move forward or not.

- c) Obstruction on east branch of the Yantic River: Tucker reported that an anchor has not yet been found. He will continue to work with the Harbor Master to mark the obstruction.
- d) Harbor Management Plan Review Update: Geoff reported that he has created base maps for displaying the HMC's recommendations and is drafting the changing goals in the narrative, including the Terminal Way/Shipping Street area. The boat launch needs special consideration. He handed out printed copies of a draft of Chapter 4 for HMC members to review and comment.
- e) Port authority grant opportunity: Geoff reported that the SHIP grant opportunity will be issued again in February. Replacing the docks at Brown Park is a fundable project. Permits need to be issued for the project, per grant guidelines. Geoff and DEEP researched the permits and found the original dock permits from 1982. To replace in kind would not need a new permit, but only a Certificate of Permission, which can be issued within 90 days. This must be requested right away. Tucker reported that DPW estimates the project would cost \$600,000. Geoff noted the need for a 20% local share of the grant project. Discussion ensued about the city's match. Alderman DeLucia moved that the chair of HMC contact the City Manager by written correspondence describing nature of grant project and stating that matching funds from the city would need be 20%, not to exceed \$120,000, to be available for the matching funds. Discussion of the motion ensued. Pete Barber suggested amending the motion to \$150,000 as the city's potential maximum match. Alderman DeLucia amended the motion. Mike Gualtieri seconded the amended motion. The HMC unanimously moved that the chair of HMC contact the City Manager by written correspondence describing the nature of grant project and stating that matching funds from the city would need be 20%, not to exceed \$150,000, to be available for the matching funds.
- f) Capital Request: Tucker updated the HMC on the capital request to prepare for purchase of land for the boat launch. On a motion by Mark Sicuso, seconded by Peter Barber, the HMC unanimously voted to increase the capital request from \$400,000 to \$750,000 to acquire a piece of property to facilitate the development of a new boat launch.

9. Citizen Comment: None

10. Other: Mark reported on a citizen comment he received. The citizen saw the nautical flags by the police station, noted they are faded and suggested they be replaced. All agreed that Mark will get the price, work with Mike to assess the budget and bring this information to the next meeting.

11. Adjournment: On a motion to adjourn by Zechariah Stover, seconded by Mark Sicuso, the Harbor Management Commission meeting adjourned at 6:35 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Melinda Wilson
Recording Secretary