

TOWN OF FAIRFIELD
HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES OF JUNE 15, 2021

A Meeting of the Harbor Management Commission (HMC) of the Town of Fairfield was held on Tuesday, June 15, 2021 at 4:45 p.m. via teleconference.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kim Taylor, Chairwoman; Jacob Herschler; Ted Schwartzman, Harry French, Mark Foster, Eric Sundman, Libby Tritschler, and Sam Cargill;. **ABSENT:** Doug Metchick. **ALSO PRESENT:** Geoffrey Steadman, HMC Consultant; Jeff Engborg, Manager, PYC; Harbor Master Edward Billings.

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 4:45 p.m. by Chairwoman Taylor.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Chairwoman Kim Taylor reported receipt of the following:

1. May 18, 2021 letter from Attorney John Casey commenting on the HMC's decision at its April 2021 meeting that the HMC finds no exceptions to the Harbor Master's requests for additional ownership information from Mr. Casey's client Tom Owens concerning property at 789 Harbor Rd.
2. May 18, 2021 letter from the Harbor Master to Tom Owens with copies to Kim Taylor, Jac Herschler, Attorney John Casey, and Kim Czapla of DEEP denying Mr. Owens request for a priority mooring permit.

HARBOR MASTER'S REPORT: Edward Billings, Harbor Master: Mr. Billings reported that there are approximately 70 people on the waiting list for a mooring location, and 8-10 permits are pending upon submittal of registration and insurance information. Two mooring holders are not using their moorings this year as the one year grace period allowed under the Rules. Mr. Billings reported that although it has been a privilege to serve as the Southport Harbor Master, and he is proud of the accomplishments he has been part of, he has accepted a full-time position in Maine which he feels is in the best interest of his family. Chairwoman Taylor and Mr. Steadman thanked Harbor Master Billings for his good work and congratulated him on his new opportunity in Maine.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. **LOWER WHARF PROJECT:** Mr. Steadman noted that he has reviewed the RACE proposal for obtaining the new permit and that the available funds are not sufficient to cover both the new permitting costs and the anticipated cost for project implementation. Mr. Steadman spoke with Marina Coordinator Justin Cathcart who advised him that realignment of the Town Boat Yard south docks would not be a beneficial addition to the project. Mr. Steadman also spoke with the representative of the CT Port Authority and is optimistic that additional grant funding may become available for the project. The availability of "capping" material to enable open water disposal of Lower Wharf dredged material continues to be an issue.
2. **SAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT:** Mr. Steadman and Mr. Foster: Mr. Steadman reported that a meeting with the ACOE prior to an on-site meeting involving DEEP is being scheduled.
3. **MOORING COMMITTEE:** Mr. Herschler reported that the Mooring Committee met on June 9th. Documents were submitted to the Town Attorney relative to the FOIA request. Harbor Master Billings noted that he had communicated with mooring permittees concerning the requirement for submittal of the CT Safe Boating Certificate and received many e-mails in response, indicating that people were having difficulty uploading the document for submission via the Online Mooring system.

- 4. PLAN UPDATE COMMITTEE:** Chairwoman Kim Taylor reported that the Committee met on May 27th at which time they reviewed parts of Chapter 6, including the sections concerning coastal resources, water access, and the responsibilities of the HMC and Harbor Master; some sections are being updated with suggested revisions. The review was a good reminder of the necessary interaction among the HMC, other Town agencies, and state agencies. The Committee had sought Conservation Commission opinion/clarification relative to certain public access ways and jurisdiction; another meeting is scheduled for next Thursday for further review of the survey responses.
- 5. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE RULES AND PROCEDURES:** Mr. Herschler reported that the next step in the process is RTM approval of the HMC's recommended changes to the Town Code. Chairwoman Taylor had submitted the final proposed revisions to the RTM Committee members for their review and consideration at their meeting next week. Following review by the RTM Legislation and Administration Committee it will go to the full RTM for a vote. The adopted changes to the HMC's Rules and Procedures are posted on the Town website.

APPLICATIONS: 50 Bay Edge Court, Fairfield: Out of HMC jurisdiction.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Harbor Master Resignation: Mr. Foster, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Steadman: The HMC discussed the resignation of Harbor Master Billings and the procedure for selecting a new Harbor Master. The Governor will appoint a Harbor Master from a list of not less than three individuals recommended by the HMC. The HMC discussed the possibility of hiring a special agent who could assist with the Harbor Master activities in the interim. Regarding mooring permit applications, it was noted that the Online Mooring system maintains the data relative to the date of submission by an applicant; that position is locked in a pending status until such time as the documents are reviewed, deemed satisfactory, and a permit is approved/issued. Only the Harbor Master can issue mooring permits. The possibility of the appointment of a Deputy Harbor Master by the Governor's Office was also discussed, as that position has all of the powers and duties of the Harbor Master. Mr. Steadman will continue to review this matter with DEEP and Governor's office. Following discussion, Jac Herschler moved and Harry French seconded to authorize Chairwoman Taylor to investigate whether to pursue appointment of a Deputy Harbor Master and how to otherwise proceed in the absence of a Harbor Master and to report back to the HMC. Motion passed unanimously. A Southport Harbor Master search committee was established as follows: Cheryl Beacock, Harry French, Sam Cargill, and Kim Taylor. Mr. Herschler indicated that he has been in communication with John Boyd of Online Mooring who has offered to provide administrative assistance.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Commission, Jac Herschler moved, and Harry French seconded to adjourn at 6:22 p.m. Motion passed unanimously.

The audio recording can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rx0wSY8ZTmE>

Respectfully submitted,

Betty Gabriel