

Town of Stonington, CT  
Stonington Harbor Management Commission  
Final Minutes  
September 9, 2008

The Stonington Harbor Management Commission held a regular meeting on Monday, September 9, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. at Stonington Police Headquarters. Committee members present were Chairman Peter Vermilya, George Kenyon, Jack Gorby, Edward Smith, Rose Raffo, Rod Johnstone, Alan Banister, William Geary, and William Abt. Harbormaster Eric Donch and Assistant Harbormaster Charles Esterbrooks were also in attendance.

Chairman Vermilya called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. The published agenda was re-ordered, moving Old Business to the top of the agenda, to accommodate the number of individuals in attendance for the Dodson 10 year plan discussion.

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**Dodson 10 year plan** - Copies of the Dodson 10 year plan had been previously distributed to the Commission. Chairman Vermilya asked the commission members if there were any questions on the proposed plan. Mr. Smith requested clarification on the unreadable boundary agreement wording depicted on map #1 (between Dodson Boatyard and the Wadawanuck Club) and if there was a similar agreement and/or boundary line established between Dodson Boatyard and the Ingrid Feddersen property. Ingrid Feddersen stated that there was an agreement when (they) purchased the property that Dodson Boatyard would not build any structure between the (then) existing Dodson Boatyard docks (pointing to the southern most dock shown on map #1) and (their) property. Mr. Abt took issue with the statement in the plan regarding efficiency stating that efficiency of the boatyard was not a factor that the commission should be concerned with. Woody Woodworth indicated that for the boatyard to be profitable it had to be efficient. Mark Arruda, Yard Manager, stated that the boatyard currently handles 200-220 boats per year and the addition of the existing floating docks helped the situation. He stated that they (Dodson Boatyard) need the additional floating docks for safety and efficiency. Robert Snyder provided an overview of the previous owners loss of revenue stating that his family had been working for twenty nine years to "get up and get going" safely and efficiently. Robert Snyder asked if any one [yard employee] would like to comment on their experiences at the boatyard. Alan Smith, a Dodson Boatyard employee stated that he had fallen off a Whaler while boarding a vessel and landed on the swim platform with the Whaler ending up at the railroad bridge. Dennis Sousa stated that he had been working at the Dodson Boatyard for twelve years and that the boatyard was more efficient internally moving large boats, that Robert Snyder had purchased a new travel lift and other equipment so that boats were handled "more safely and efficiently". He went on to state that environmentally, which is a major concern; it

is easier to control a spill from a dock. Customers are happier and they spend money in the town. Ingrid Feddersen asked if the existing floating docks were only for repair/maintenance. She stated that she has photographs of customers using their boats while on the floating docks. A statement was made that customers often request to "leave me at the dock when you can." It was noted that the yard accommodates disabled customers in at least one occasion lifting them on board by crane. Clay Burkhalter stated that he uses the working dock at no charge and that customer boats rotate in and out of the floating docks. "The docks are full of boats being taken apart and put back together." Eric Donch asked for their (Dodson Boatyard) definition of deep draft, referring to page 3, second paragraph of the plan, in reference to the Stonington Harbor Management Plan definition of shoal draft. He also inquired as to the depth of water at the existing floating docks. Robert Snyder responded with his definition of deep draft as over six feet. He stated that the water depth on the south side (fixed dock side) was approximately ten feet at mean low water and that the inside varied from six feet to three feet at mean low water. Dennis Sousa referred back to the shoal draft issue stating that the yard sometime uses a two hour window (full moon tide) to get dock usage for deep draft boats. Chairman Vermilya recognized Peter Guille, Wadawanuck Club President, and asked if the Wadawanuck Club had a position. Peter referred to the 1988 agreement, noting that it was modified in 1989, and stating that the Club has not taken a position at this time. Ingrid Feddersen asked how many moorings would be displaced by the proposed floating docks. The response from Eric Donch was the Dodson Boatyard would give up 4 of their moorings. Ryan Chapman, Dodson Boatyard employee, stated that he had fallen into the water once. He stated that the issue is that as newer larger boats are accommodated, their sides are higher and there are no ladders making boarding from a boat difficult which also increases the chances for a spill such as anti-freeze. Peter Guille clarified the 450 foot wedge shown on map#1 as a no construction zone, stating that there are private and Dodson Boatyard moorings in this area. Joan Bell asked how many workers work on the docks. Robert Snyder responded with 47 employees not including the 10 dock hands and 10 launch drivers during the summer months. That figure was adjusted by Mark Arruda to account for the 4 office personnel. Jesse Diggs voiced his concern for safety and navigation. He questioned the location of the pvc pipes that supposedly mark the limits of the proposed docks, stating that they do not appear to be 180 feet from the end of the existing floating docks. Robert Snyder stated that Steve Kingsley had measured and installed the pipes. Jesse Diggs indicated that extending the proposed 180 feet would interfere with navigation and suggested a compromise of 1/2 the distance then possibly an additional extension. Mr. Smith asked what considerations were taken into account and what actions were planned in preparation for a major hurricane. Would the floating docks be removed? Mark Arruda stated that the docks would stay deployed. He stated that the docks were over-built and that the pilings were staggered. Robert Snyder stated that he had consulted with Gwenmore and that the docks were built with the heaviest timber that was cost effective and that the pilings were placed as close as feasible. He stated that the strongest winds

come from the west. Robert Snyder asked Chairman Vermilya when he could expect a response. Chairman Vermilya stated that the commission was working on a wharfing out policy and that it would move as quickly as it can.

**Wharfing out policy** – A meeting will be set up this week

**Harbormaster dock Pumpout boat facility** - No formal progress

\$\$\$ for seawall repairs – No Progress

Template for SNEFLA/SHMC relationship – No Progress

**Winter Stake removal/mooring locations (GIS)** – Gathering data

Transient Anchorage area

DEP tour – Addressed in Harbormaster Report

Buoys - Addressed in Harbormaster Report

Deputy Harbormaster/Harbormaster duty sharing – Going well

#### **MINUTES:**

Mr. Kenyon motioned to accept the minutes of the August 11, 2008 meeting and Mr. Johnstone seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **CORRESPONDENCE:**

Chairman Vermilya stated he had received the following in jurisdiction correspondence:

- Application: Eric Baum of Handcox St. for dock modification to rail and stairs. No review of the provided material was requested by the commission.
- Application: Ingrid Feddersen, 31 Front St. for retention and maintenance of existing dock. Mr. Gorby questioned Ingrid Feddersen relative to the word “retention” to which she declined to comment, and requested the material for review.
- Approval: Paul Capuano, 257 Wamphassuc Pt., for a new fixed dock.
- Notice from OLISP of the streamlining of the permit process.
- Letter from Tony Inzero to SHMC

No Bills had been paid this month. Pending bills include a bill from Eric Donch for expenses thru 8/15/2008 for \$131.39

#### **TREASURER’S REPORT:**

Mr. Abt reported:

August income - \$7280

Expenses - \$2,500.76

Town finance office processed - \$4,779.24

Cash available - \$16,411.83

**HARBORMASTER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Donch reported no new mooring permits issued, and no additions to the waiting list. No moorings had been given up, and no new mooring assignments were offered. Mr. Donch and Mr. Esterbrooks and Mr. Gorby met with Mike Payton from DEP on Wednesday 8/13/2008 for a site review of the transient anchorage buoy placement and received verbal approval to place the mooring markers in the harbor. Relative to the placement of "Slow, No Wake" buoys at Sandy Point, Mike stated that the area would need to be further defined and made a town ordinance. Eric spoke with Captain Desmond, SPD who is not in favor of creating a town ordinance for this purpose. Special Olympics Sailing Regatta will be held 9/13-14/2008 in Stonington Harbor.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A question was asked "How many new moorings were issued this season. Eric Donch responded that there is a difference between "assigned" and "offered". Assigned indicating that the paperwork was done, offered indicating in the process. There were ten offered this season. As second question of "How many are on the mooring list? was answered with 213.

Mr. Kenyon motioned to adjourn the meeting and Mr. Gorby seconded. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Peter Vermilya, Chairman