

**FINAL**  
Town of Stonington, CT  
Stonington Harbor Management Commission  
Regular Meeting  
June 14, 2010  
7:00 PM  
Stonington Police Public Meeting Hall

A regular meeting of the Stonington Harbor Management Commission was held on Monday, June 14, 2010 at the Stonington Police Public Meeting Hall. Attending were Chairman Peter Vermilya, Alan Banister, George Kenyon, Rodney Johnstone, William Abt, Jesse Diggs, Jean Dixon, Ed Smith, Harbormaster Eric Donch and Deputy Harbormaster Charles Estabrooks. Mr. Crites did not attend.

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM by Chairman Vermilya.

- A) Agenda Item 6A (Dive Survey) was not moved to the beginning of the meeting
- B) Chairman Vermilya announced the appointment of Mr. Sherman Crites to the Stonington Harbor Management Commission representing Stonington Borough and replacing Mr. Gorby who has resigned his position on the commission. He noted that one Borough commissioner position remains open.
- C) Chairman Vermilya distributed a current SHMC commission address list to commissioners.

**II. Minutes**

Mr. Kenyon motioned to accept the minutes of the May 10, 2010, meeting as written and Mr. Johnstone seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**III. Correspondence**

Chairman Vermilya reported the following correspondence:

- A) Out of Jurisdiction
  - 1. Christopher Dixon – COP, new pier and float, Quanaduck Cove
  - 2. Dino Polselli – COP, alterations to an existing dock, Lamberts Cove (Quanaduck Cove)
  - 3. Town of Stonington – app to DEP for Repairs to bridge over Anguilla Brook
  - 4. GERVAL, inc. – COP, Dock repair - Mystic River
- B) In Jurisdiction
  - 1. 149 Wamphassuc Point – tentative determination by the CT DEP to approve an application submitted by Meryl Wiener for permission to construct a fixed pile and timber pier and boatlift for private recreational boating use. The commission had no comment.

- C) Change of Address form for Waiting List from Craig Appel – given to Harbormaster.
- D) Application for Waiting List from Bernhard Liegl, received 6/6 – given to Harbormaster
- E) Quote by Atlantic Marine Construction for the Harbormaster dock received from CUSH – discussion deferred to Old Business item.
- F) Notice from DEP OLISD of the availability of funds for wildlife and habitat restoration – Commission identified no applicable project for this funding opportunity.
- G) Bills Paid/Outstanding
  - 1. Paid: Port Supply for \$41.24, incurred 5/15/2010

#### **IV. Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Abt presented the Treasurer's Report (Attachment A). Mr. Abt noted that the numbers were provided by the town finance department and may differ from Mr. Donch's report because of timing. Mr. Kenyon motioned to accept the Treasurer's Report as presented and Mr. Smith seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **V. Harbormaster's Report**

The Harbormaster's Report, June 14, 2010 was presented by Harbormaster Donch (Attachment B).

Extended discussion:

- a) HM Donch reported that 6 new mooring assignments were offered to wait list persons in letters mailed on June 14, 2010

6 of the 14 pending replies to date have been removed from pending.

Of the 12 "not received" renewals, HM Donch has spoken with 4. Mr. Smith suggested that a letter be sent to non-respondents to close the renewal process with them.

\*Mr. Johnstone will attempt to contact the remaining non-respondents as a final effort.

- b) Discussion was held about the complexities associated with allocating new moorings to wait listed people within the current guidelines of the Stonington Harbor Management Plan including children as applicants and multiple applications per household. Consideration is given to adhering to the plan's intent while ensuring that maximum mooring opportunities are available to the general public. The Commission supported HM Donch's policy of requiring that a boat be immediately available to occupy a new mooring assignment from the waiting list. Otherwise the assignment will be deferred for reconsideration until the following year. The commissioners reviewed wait list applications.

- c) HM Donch stated that he is working with Avalonia Land Conservancy and the Fish and Wildlife Department to determine the status of the missing "Slow No Wake" sign on Sandy Point. Maintenance of the sign is the harbormaster's responsibility. Mr. Banister motioned to authorize up to \$800 to replace the sign and Mr. Diggs seconded. The motion was approved unanimously. Chairman Vermilya, HM Donch and Ms. Dixon will work to resolve the missing sign issue including coordination with Avalonia and Fish & Wildlife Department, filing a police report and exploring reimbursement through town insurance coverage.

\*Ms. Dixon will contact Ann Pierson of Avalonia to clarify the current status of the sign, i.e. legitimately removed or vandalized.

- g) Mr. Banister presented his report of the "Slow No Wake" buoy meeting with DEP (Attachment C). A plan to locate the buoys under "marker" permitting was recommended by the Director of DEP Boating Division and agreed to by DEP enforcement officers, HM Donch, and the SHMC representative.

\*Mr. Banister will investigate acquiring the buoys (loan or gift) from the Stonington Shellfish Commission or the New London Mohegan Aquaculture group who have unused buoys.

\*Mr. Donch will meet with Mr. Payton (DEP) to precisely locate the buoys.

\*Mr. Banister will complete "Marker" permits and buoy location specifications for submission to the DEP. This type of permit does not require a town ordinance for enforcement.

- h) Mr. Banister motioned to authorize up to \$250 for wiring costs associated with moving the ROBERT G batteries from the transom forward into the cabin. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnstone and passed unanimously.
- i) The commission discussed HM Donch's request to purchase and install radar for the ROBERT G. HM Donch stated that radar would enhance his ability to safely and efficiently perform his duties and cited a recent mission to assist the ALABAMA vessel as noted in his harbormaster report. The request was deferred for further consideration during the capital expense budget discussion where proposed capital expenditures will be presented, reviewed, approved/disapproved and prioritized for 2010. This is scheduled for the July, 2010, meeting.
- j) Mr. Banister made a motion to accept the Harbormaster's report. The motion was seconded by Mr. Johnstone and passed unanimously.

## **VI. Old Business**

- A) Proposal for Removal of "Ghost" Fishing and Mooring Gear – Drew Domnarski

Mr. Domnarski was unable to attend the meeting as scheduled; HM Donch reviewed the project to inform the commission of this planned harbor activity. Mr. Domnarski is associated with Stonington Harbor as an employee of Dodson's Boatyard and will conduct a harbor dive-survey project as part of a marine science project. The project will locate unused lobster/crab gear as well as unused submerged mooring gear in Stonington Harbor that endanger marine wildlife and people who use the harbor.

Mr. Domnarski will dive under HM Donch's supervision and plans to engage other experienced divers to assist him. 90% of the ghost gear will be removed and the remainder will be tagged to enable Mr. Domnarski to plot its movement on the harbor floor over time. The commission considered safety and liability issues and suggested that the town might help with disposal of the retrieved rogue gear. 2 floats have been located in the harbor to temporarily store the recovered gear.

B) Sonar Technology for Harbormaster Boat

Mr. Diggs presented his research on side scan sonar systems and their potential use by the SHMC (Attachment D). Mr. Diggs proposed the technology's use to image objects at the bottom of the harbor, including anchors and ground tackle, capsized boats, hazards on the bottom (like pilings, etc), and other debris. The commission will review and consider the technology during its capital expense budget discussion at the July, 2010 meeting.

C) Stonington Harbor Marina Permit Change

Chairman Vermilya reviewed data used to support permit change as explained by DEP Environmental Analyst Michael Gryzwinski.

D) Reporting of Mooring Data

Reported under Harbormaster Report (V. a).

E) 2010 Budget

Discussion deferred until July, 2010, meeting

F) Dock for Harbormaster Boat and Pump out Station

Chairman Vermilya reported that Atlantic Marine Construction submitted a quote on the dock construction for \$30,000.

\*Mr. Vermilya will develop a history and fact sheet of the dock project for clarification of the issues going forward.

G) Accuracy of .pdf format version of Harbor Management Plan

Nothing was reported

H) No Wake Buoy Proposal

Reported under Harbormaster Report (V.g).

## **VII. New Business**

A) Town Boating Ordinance Review for Compliance **with** Connecticut General Statute Sec. 15-136.

Mr. Banister reported that during his meeting with HM Donch and DEP, Eleanor Mariani, DEP Law Administrator, recommended that harbor-related ordinances be submitted to the DEP Commissioner.

Ordinances dealing with vessel operation would be reviewed by the Department for compliance with Connecticut statute. Approved ordinances would appear in the Connecticut Boater's Guide and DEP's website resulting in wider circulation. The process would also identify unapproved ordinances which would not have legal standing if challenged.

Commissioners agreed with the proposal and ordinances will be reviewed at the July meeting.

## **VIII. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

## **IX. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 upon a motion by Mr. Johnstone. The motion was seconded by Mr. Banister and approved unanimously.

Submitted by Jean D. Dixon

\*Indicates action items

**Attachment A**

Treasurer's Report  
Stonington Harbor Management Commission  
June 14, 2010

	<b><u>May(\$)</u></b>	<b><u>YTD(\$)</u></b>
Mooring Fees Received	80.00	7,460.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>80.00</b>	<b>7,460.00</b>
Expenditures:		
Reproduction & Printing		
Equipment & Support		
Harbormaster Expenses	0.00	2,328.18
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>2,328.18</b>
Cash Available to Harbor Commission		23,375.40
Cash Reserved for Boat		300.00
Cash reserved for new dock		9,840.00

**Attachment B**  
**Harbormaster Report**  
June 14, 2010

New Mooring permits issued: 0  
Mooring being given up (this month): 0  
New Mooring assignments offered: 6  
Additions to Waiting List: 0 Total: 196  
Deposits to SHMC account since last report: \$ 420 (2010 YTD = \$7420)

Mooring Renewal Status:

Renewals sent: 275 (272 private, 3 commercial (114 DBY, 11 DD, 5 CC)) 402  
total

Replies to date: 246 Approved

14 Pending (includes Larsen – Deployed)

12 Not received (includes Marston - will be late, Buck - Jail)

3 Given up(Farrell, Galindo, Robins)

“SLOW NO WAKE” sign on West end of Sandy point has been removed. Contacted Ann Pierson of Avalonia Land Trust, they did not remove sign. She was to contact Fish and Wildlife to verify they did not remove sign. Per the permit, the Harbormaster is responsible for maintenance of the signage.

Worked with Stonington PD June 1<sup>st</sup> answering a call from USCG Group New London concerning a 127’ vessel anchored “in the channel”. Due to fog/dark we were unable to positively verify vessel from Stonington Point. I took boat out and found “Alabama” anchored on West side of channel. USCG also arrived to investigate. We agreed that due to draft concern this was the best place for vessel and instructed them to display additional lights and maintain a topside watch.

Met with DEP regarding “Slow No Wake” buoys in Stonington Harbor. Report will be given by Alan Banister.

Robert G

Propose moving both batteries from current location at transom forward into cabin. This will help trim the boat when it is at the dock to keep the scuppers above waterline. Estimated cost \$250.

Request permission to purchase and install radar on Robert G. Estimated cost \$ 2500 (unit and mount)

Respectfully Submitted

Eric Donch  
Stonington Harbormaster

## Attachment C

DEP Boating Division Meeting

June 10, 2010

Location: DEP HQ, Old Lyme

Attending:

Ms. E. Mariani, Law Administrator Boating Division, DEP

DEP Enforcement officers: P. O'Connell and R. Healy (Eastern Enforcement)

E. Donch, Stonington Harbormaster

A. Banister, Commissioner, Stonington Harbor Management Commission

Commenced: 9:25 am

1. Reviewed the interest by Stonington Harbor Management Commission to place "Slow No-Wake" buoys in Stonington Harbor to reinforce existing State boating laws, educate the boating public, protect moored and docked boats and increase safety in the harbor.
2. DEP recommended making the whole harbor "No-Wake". The Commission had previously discussed and rejected this idea due primarily to potential effect on the commercial fishing fleet.
3. DEP concern of the proposed buoys was they appear to mark a gate rather than an area. DEP understands the need for marker buoys one at southwest entrance to harbor at west end of the breakwater and east of Wampassac Point and others at the beginning of the north end of the harbor.
4. DEP suggested eliminating the buoys along the edge of the west side mooring area to eliminate the "gate effect". It would be ok to have two buoys at the north end of the harbor to create a "gate effect" before the densely moored area and the existing fairway which is narrow, less than 200 feet from moorings. Also, it would be ok to keep two buoys on the east side of the harbor, one off the inner breakwater and the other off Harboredge within 100 feet of moorings to protect the east side moorings and the docked boats which was the original public concern. It was agreed this would be a "Marker" permit for the suggested buoys because this all falls under existing State statutes. DEP Enforcement officers, Harbormaster and Harbor Management Commission agreed with the recommendations by Director of DEP Boating Division.

Next Steps:

1. Ms. Mariani gave permission to SHMCommission to order 5 No-Wake buoys at the next meeting of the commission. Also, she will review the meeting discussion and the recommended relocation of proposed buoys with Michael Payton next week (June14). After that review, she will contact E. Donch, SHMaster.

2. E. Donch will then set a time to take M. Payton out in the harbor to precisely locate the five buoys with Lat/Long, bearings and distance.

3. A. Banister will fill out "Marker Permit" forms found on the DEP web site. Forms will be signed by the Commission and the First Selectman of Stonington. Attached will be exact buoy locations from M. Payton and E. Donch (#2 above) and submitted to DEP for "Marker Permit" approval.

## Attachment D

Scanning Sonar Systems  
Report by Jesse Diggs  
6/17/10

In order to gain more operational information on scanning sonar systems for potential use in the Harbor, on May 24<sup>th</sup> Eric Donch and Jesse Diggs attended a 1 hr in-the-water demonstration of a forward-looking system made by FarSounder. ([www.farsounder.com](http://www.farsounder.com)). The system was geared towards identifying large objects and bottom contours for navigation in anchorages and was not suitable for the potential harbor application.

Of the three major companies that make forward or side looking sonar, the Humminbird Model 798 ci SI Combo (\$1000) had the most potential ([www.humminbird.com](http://www.humminbird.com)). It scans either side of the vessel and "paints" a shadow-gram of the bottom and objects on it. The uses could include:

1. Identifying sunken boat off of SSBA area last fall
  2. Scanning Harbor Edge breakwater for piling and board conditions
  3. Verifying Lamberts Cove RR bridge work debris is recovered
  4. Finding and identifying semi-submerged winter stakes
  5. Checking "gross" condition of dock pilings
  6. Checking along base of breakwaters for extended debris and rocks
  7. Search and rescue missions
  8. Bottom contour mapping, including extent of rock "piles" into the harbor
  9. Identifying location and orientation of "ghost" moorings and traps
- BEFORE sending divers in for more detailed assessments

A more detailed summary will be prepared for further discussion.