

**Stonington Harbor Management Commission
Regular Meeting
August 13, 2012
Stonington Police Meeting Hall
Final Minutes**

Attending: Chairman Peter Vermilya, and Commissioners Sherman Crites, Jesse Diggs, Jean Dixon, George Kenyon, Bruce MacKinnon, Jay Spalding, Peter Tacy, and Harbormaster Eric Donch, and Deputy Harbormaster Charles Estabrooks. Absent was Commissioner Rodney Johnstone.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Vermilya called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

II. Review of the DRAFT Revised Stonington Harbor Management Plan

Ms. Dixon explained the approval process necessary for adoption of the Revised Plan. The Commission will evaluate the public comment heard tonight and received on the Commissions' website and incorporate the comments into the Revised Plan where appropriate. The Plan will then be submitted for review and approval by the Borough Warden and Burgesses at their meeting, August 20, and by the Town Board of Selectmen at their meeting, August 22. Public comment on the Revised Plan will be most welcome at both of these venues. Assuming all the approvals are in order, the Revised Plan will be voted on at a Town Meeting, probably in September.

Ms. Dixon expressed the Commission's appreciation for the constructive comments and ready cooperation given by the personnel at the CT DEEP. She also thanked those individuals who had emailed comments to shmc_comments@usa.com and assured them that their comments would receive serious consideration by the SHMC. She said that the Revised Plan could be downloaded at www.stoningtonharbor.org

Public Comments (and responses):

Concern was expressed that because mooring gear (mushroom shanks and chain) were generally laid out by the service vendors toward the Northwest that boats would be vulnerable to storms which came from that direction. *Mushroom anchors usually are set deeply after the first year and aren't then generally subject to flipping over.*

Question: Has the Commission explored mooring gear other than mushroom anchors? *Yes – Dormor-type or inverted pyramid moorings are in use for some shallow water moorings because their use eliminates the likelihood of a boat being impaled on its own anchor shank. At this point there are no local installers equipped to handle helix type anchors. The installation is expensive and inspection difficult.*

Concern was expressed that some mushrooms were manufactured using substandard iron and that their use endangered other boats in the harbor. *Regular inspection and minimum specifications of mooring gear are required under the present Plan. The Harbormaster has the ultimate say in whether mooring gear is acceptable.*

Question: Under the proposed gridding system, what will be done if a boat's swing radius endangers another boat? *When a boat is assigned a position in the grid, its behavior in that position will be monitored for safety under various wind conditions. Adjacent grid locations can be left vacant if necessary.*

Concern was expressed that Section 6 Subsection G of the Revised Plan is too general. It was proposed that the 2nd section of Subsection G be deleted so it would read, "Public use will be encouraged" *This will be considered by the Commission.*

Question: Can a barge be moored in the harbor and rented out as a house boat? *A barge would not meet the requirements for a mooring permit. Also, Article 3, Section 7 of the Proposed Ordinance limits the use of a vessel as an abode to 30 days.*

Question: Will the Commission consider allowing the “pass down” of a mooring from one generation to another within a family? *The Commission has considered this recently and voted to not allow it.*

Question: Will the Revised Plan regulate swim floats? *No – CT Statutes cover swim floats.*

Question: If a littoral mooring permit holder wishes to use his mooring only as place of safety for his boat during a storm but does not take advantage of this use at all during a 60 day period, will he loose his mooring as specified in Article 4, Section 2? *Yes, if he does not consult with the Harbormaster.*

Concern was expressed because no specific mooring permit fee was stated in the Revised Plan. *No fee is specified so that the fee can be changed as the need for funding changes to meet the costs of projects such as replacing the Harbormaster Boat or gridding the harbor. It is not clear, now, at what level of government a change in the fee schedule request would have to be approved. The Commission is limited by CT State Statute to charging a permit fee of between \$20 and \$200 dollars. The fee is now \$20.*

Concern was expressed about winter stakes left in the harbor beyond June 30. *Each Commission member monitors a section of the harbor and reports such winter stakes to the Harbormaster. The Harbormaster then requests that the vender who services the mooring get in touch with the permit holder to authorize installation of the mooring buoy.*

Question: What if a permit holder, as required by Article 4, Section 13, adds scope, weights, or extra anchors in preparation for a storm which endangers other boats? *The Harbormaster monitors the harbor when severe storms are forecast and is fully empowered to ensure that storm precautions are not a hazard to other boats.*

Concern was expressed that there was no buoyage which informed boaters that the harbor was a Slow No Wake area. *There is 1) a line of four buoys from the end of the Monsanto Breakwater to the east end of the Inner Breakwater, 2) a buoy is located in the pass between the west end of the Inner Breakwater and Wamphassuc Point, and 3) A sign is attached on the north side of each of the two railway bridges.*

Mr Daniel C. Verdler presented a letter from NESS expressing its support for the Revised Plan (see Attachment C)

Ms. Dixon took a survey of the public who attended the meeting to find out how they learned of the meeting – E-Blast = 4 people, newspaper article = 1 person, word of mouth = 1 person.

The SHMC thanked the Public for coming to discuss the Plan.

Discussion by the Commission:

The Commissioners were dissatisfied with the number of the public which attended the meeting. The e-blast apparently was not seen by many addressees because their spam filters did not let the e-mail go thru. The Letters to the Editors, although submitted, did not get printed. There was, however, an excellent article in The Day.

The Revised Plan will be reviewed by the Warden and Burgess on August 20 and the Board of Selectmen on August 22. Further public comment will be welcome at each of these meetings. The Commission agreed that another e-blast should be done. Also, letters to the Editor should be sent to The Day, the Sun, The Mystic River Press, The Stonington Times, and The Stonington Patch. Notices should be posted at the Stonington Harbor Yacht Club, the Wadawanuck Club, and at Tom’s News stand.

III. Minutes

A motion was made and seconded to accept the Minutes of July 9, 2012 as amended - Unanimously approved.

IV. Correspondence

Out of Jurisdiction

Permission granted by the DEEP to Jane Schaeffer for dock repair on the west side of Wamphassuc Point

In Jurisdiction – None.

V. Treasurer's Report

Mr. Crites summarized the Treasurer's Report for the period ending July 31, 2012 (Attachment A).

VI. Harbormaster's Report

A) Mr. Donch presented his report to the Commission. (Attachment B).

VII. Old Business

Mooring surveys by Commissioners

The Commission reviewed the progress of each Commissioner assigned an area of the harbor to monitor. Most had completed their July surveys.

Web development report

Mr Estabrooks gave a visual report on his progress developing the new website. The site is still in development but should be out of "beta" and fully operational by 1/1/2013. He explained how the Harbormasters would work with the site when completed, as well as how the Commissioners work with the site. Considerable discussion centered on how Commissioners would report their data concerning individual moorings in their areas of responsibility.

Comments on NESS dock expansion:

A motion was made and seconded to move this to the second item on the agenda – Unanimously approved.

Mr. Dennis Neumann read into the record a letter from a group of concerned neighbors of NESS. This letter is attached (See Attachment C)

At their presentation at the SHMC July meeting, NESS stated that they will return to the Commission with a report on their planned preparations for severe storm events.

VIII. New Business – None.

IX. Adjournment

A motion was made, and seconded, to adjourn and was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 9:25 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by:


Peter Vermilya, SHMC Chair

ATTACHMENT A - Treasurer's Report

Report Date: 07/31/2012

	Budget	May	Jun	Jul	YTD	Probable
Funds Generated:						
Balance Brought Forward:	22,754.26	25,198.29	23,937.07	21,279.07	22,754.26	22,754.26
Mooring Fees:	8,200.00	300.00			7,600.00	8,260.00
Miscellaneous Income:	200.00	5.00			105.00	200.00
Total Generated Funds:	31,154.26	25,503.29	23,937.07	21,279.07	30,459.26	31,214.26
Operating Expense:						
Mooring Admin:						
Mallings:	500.00				388.45	500.00
Telephone:	660.00	108.78			273.80	660.00
Computer Sftwr:	150.00				0.00	150.00
Miscellaneous:	75.00				94.00	100.00
Sub-Total:	1,385.00	108.78	0.00	0.00	756.25	1,410.00
Boat:						
Fuel & Oil:	500.00	204.84		29.44	234.28	500.00
Commissioning:	450.00				450.00	450.00
Storage:	600.00				0.00	0.00
Maintenance/Repairs:	650.00	320.78	464.00	986.30	4,757.06	5,000.00
Equipment:	635.00	181.84			324.34	535.00
Sub-Total:	2,735.00	707.44	464.00	1,015.74	5,765.68	6,485.00
Harbor Maintenance:						
Buoys Haul/Store:	600.00				0.00	600.00
Buoy/Mooring Service:	1,000.00				0.00	1,000.00
Signage:	1,100.00	750.00			750.00	750.00
Sub-Total:	2,700.00	750.00	0.00	0.00	750.00	2,350.00
Dock/Pumpout:						
Dock Eqpt./Maintenance:	20.00				0.00	20.00
Pumpout Eqpt./Maintenance:	0.00				0.00	0.00
Miscellaneous:	80.00				0.00	80.00
Sub-Total:	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Administrative:						
Supplies:	100.00				0.00	100.00
Professional Services:	0.00				0.00	600.00
Sub-Total:	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	700.00
Total Operating Expense:	7,020.00	1,566.22	464.00	1,015.74	7,271.93	11,045.00
Ordinance Update:	1,000.00				0.00	1,000.00
Admin Eqpt, Web Page (Charles):	2,300.00		2,194.00		2,194.00	2,194.00
Newsletter:	1,400.00				730.00	1,400.00
Robert G (Major Refit):	7,000.00				0.00	7,000.00
New Boat Fund:	520.00				0.00	520.00
Mooring Field Grid:	525.00				0.00	2,025.00
Total Project/Capital	12,745.00	0.00	2,194.00	0.00	2,924.00	14,139.00
Total Designated Funds	19,765.00	1,566.22	2,658.00	1,015.74	10,195.93	25,184.00
Undesignated Funds:	11,389.26	23,937.07	21,279.07	20,263.33	20,263.33	6,030.26

Notes:

Petty Cash Advance - 300.00	Spending - Aug	Mooring fees	660.00	Fuel, misc	301.84
Harbor Boat Reserve - 520.00		Plan Print	463.05		

ATTACHMENT B - Harbormaster's Report

Harbormaster Report

August 13, 2012

New Mooring permits issued: 5 Moorings being given up (this month): 1

New Mooring assignments offered: 5 Additions to Waiting List: 0 Total: 214

Deposits to SHMC account since last report: \$540 (2012 YTD = \$8120)

Seven (7) mooring renewals are still outstanding. 3 in Harbor and 4 on East side.

The 4' x 4' "Slow, No Wake" signs installed on Sandy Point.

New England Science & Sailing will be hosting the Special Olympics Sailing Regatta on September 8/9. This is the 5th year for the event in Stonington.

Robert G

All is in apparent good order.

Respectfully Submitted

Eric Donch
Stonington Harbormaster



New England Science & Sailing
STONINGTON - CONNECTICUT

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

10 August 2011

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Duke Savage

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Peter Vermilya, Chairman
Stonington Harbor Management Commission c/o
Town Hall
152 Elm Street
Stonington, Connecticut 06378

Re: Stonington Harbor Management Plan/Ordinance Update Plan
Public Comment Meeting 13 August 2012

Dear Chairman Vermilya,

New England Science and Sailing Foundation (NESS) is in broad agreement with the Stonington Harbor Management Plan/Ordinance Update Plan. We congratulate the Commission on the great work in formulating the plan. We also support the purpose of tonight's meeting, that being to seek public input on a document that will guide us all for the next decade and beyond for proper, non-biased and reasonable management of our harbor. As such, while specific examples may serve to illustrate a point of view, the document needs to be structured broadly enough to deal with a multitude of situations. It should provide guidance for those administering the management process, but still allow for the necessary flexibility to allow for sound judgment taking into account all relevant data to be able to reach an equitable determination.

The Stonington Harbor Management Commission is not the sole custodian charged with protecting our harbor. In addition to other Town and Borough entities, other agencies involved include the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the US Army Corp of Engineers. Any plan adopted by any one entity needs to find the balance between their protecting the resource, complementing and supporting the roles of others, while not creating unnecessary duplication of regulations and review.

One of the guidelines for the regulatory agencies involved in management of our coastal resources is to increase public access to the water. With the narrow shorefront of the NESS property, the broad spectrum of programs offered, and the number of individuals served by the facility, NESS probably has one of the greatest public access per linear feet of shoreline than anywhere else in the harbor.

10 August 2010

Stonington Harbor Management Commission

An example of how all this works is the current planned expansion of the NESS waterfront facilities. NESS currently is in the early stages of planning for additional dock facilities, all located within its current littoral area. This stage involves design development and engineering review, consulting with experts in relevant fields, preliminary review with all applicable regulatory authorities, coordination of our plans with those of our neighbors, and due diligence of the broader implications of the proposed structures.

NESS attended the Harbor Commission July meeting and gave an update on what we have accomplished, where we are today, and presented our draft master plan for the waterfront. We are also working on our pre-permitting application for the CT DEEP. For those unfamiliar with the recent changes in the DEEP's permitting process, it has been broken into two parts to have many requirements of the review process completed in the early stages. Once our pre-permitting application is filed, we will be continuing to meet with all affected and interested parties. This includes a more formal meeting with the Stonington Harbor Commission where we expect that all interested parties can provide comment on our specific project.

At some point in the process, when more definitive designs are developed and we have had the opportunity to discuss our plans with local and state officials and the Stonington community, we will submit plans to the Army Corp of Engineers for their required permit.

Therefore the permitting process provides for several opportunities for all to have their say in an orderly process that will take many months to complete. We look forward to listening to and working with all concerned parties as part of the guidelines CT DEEP has established for all of us to follow. We expect to be back before the Stonington Harbor Management Commission before the end of this year.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Stonington Harbor Management Plan/Ordinance Update Plan. Please advise any way we can help the Commission in bringing this updated plan to an enacted ordinance.

Regards,
New England Science and Sailing Foundation

Daniel C. Verdier
"The Dock Guy"

Attachment D

Stonington Harbor Management Commission

Ness Dock Expansion Proposal

I am here to speak for a group of very concerned Stonington citizens in regard to a draft proposed dock expansion, Draft 11-4-II, by Docko Incorporated, prepared for New England Sailing and Science and presented to the Stonington Harbor Management Commission at your last meeting. Our group would first like to say that we support New England Sailing and Science's (NESS's) mission of bringing youth to sailing and the sea.

Concerns of our group:

- Scale is a great concern: The Stonington Harbor Management Commission has been asked to review a draft plan for over 10,000 square feet of new floating docks seaward of the NESS property. 3,488 square feet of this new dockage is for proposed transient dockage, which we are told there is a federal grant to support once approved, and the remaining 7,068 square feet of this new dockage is for NESS's facility. Our group feels the 10,756 of new floating dockage and ramps (the equivalent square footage of five 2000 square feet single family homes, or a mega-mansion) steps far beyond what is environmentally and aesthetically appropriate for Stonington Harbor. This expansion will put more pressure on Stonington Harbor with a greater intensity of use and all its environmental impacts: more bottom paint, more burning of fossil fuels, more transients, lost mooring space, and many other concerns such as Fishing Reet access.
- Another grave concern is the proposed location of over 10,000 square feet of additional floating docks in a coastal velocity zone as determined by the FEMA flood zone maps. Harbor Edge Dockominiums was constructed in 1983 out of concrete floating docks, behind a wave attenuator. In 1985 Gloria came ashore in Stonington as a Category I hurricane and demolished the concrete dockage and some boats there attached. Harbor Edge rebuilt with pilings and fixed dockage. The proposed NESS project would be more exposed than the Harbor Edge project without the existence of a wave attenuator. In this time of reported more severe weather this proposal does not seem prudent. If 10,000 square feet of any type of floating docks gets loose with the force of waves behind them nothing in the harbor will be safe.
- Another concern is the proposal for transient dockage adjacent to facilities that are dedicated to the instruction of young mariners, as well as "adventure rentals" to the general public. Given the current flurry of small craft- paddleboards, kayaks, windsurfers, optis, 420s, etc. -being used by children and adults of all varieties of experience, how compatible is this public recreational and educational use with the maneuverings of large craft unfamiliar with the area and seeking transient dockage? What seems to be driving this is the need for federal and state funding for the transient dock marina. We feel the two uses are not compatible.
- Our group asks that before any formal recommendations are made by the Stonington Harbor Management Commission in regard to NESS proposal for dock expansion the public being given an open hearing before your committee.

Thank you for consideration in this matter.

Dennis E. Neumann

96 Water Street & 1 Harmony Street,

Stonington, Connecticut 06378