

Minutes
Harbor Management Commission
February 1, 2017

The West Haven Harbor Management Commission held a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, February 1, 2017 in the Harriet North Room, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 355 Main Street, West Haven, CT at 6:30P.M.

PRESENT: Commissioners Pacapelli, Flynn, McKeon, Potter, and Pimer, Assistant City Planner Killeen, Public Works Liaison Mark Paine and Consultant Geoff Steadman.

Meeting was called to order at 6:31 PM by Chairman Pacapelli.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: January 4, 2017 Meeting – Commissioner Flynn made a motion to approve the meeting minutes of January 4, 2017, seconded by Commissioner Pimer and passed 5-0.

Regular Meeting

1. Report on Coordination with State DEEP on review process for Harbor Management Plan Draft

Mr. Steadman reported on the meeting that was held on January 31 in Hartford, which included David Blatt, Karen Michaels, and Scott Graham of the CT DEEP, Harbor Management Commission Chair Gene Pacapelli, and Assistant City Planner Dave Killeen from the City, and Consultant Geoff Steadman. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the draft Harbor Management Plan to start the DEEP's informal review of the draft Plan and to discuss the potential for incorporating an existing State property along the West River into a feasibility study for a potential new public boat launching ramp at that location (to the south of I-95).

The meeting was productive. Ms. Michaels, who will review the City's proposed Harbor Management Plan, was given a copy of the draft sections of the Plan that include goals, policies and strategies, the core of the Plan. She agreed to review these preliminary chapters and provide initial comments by the next meeting of the Commission on March 1. Mr. Steadman suggested, at that point, that the Commission could make appropriate modifications to the draft and place the document out for public review, such as being posted to the City's website and/or having copies for public review at City Hall, the library, etc. Then, the Commission could hold a public information meeting at their April meeting (April 5), during which the public could provide comments for the Commission's consideration before the Plan is finalized for formal submission to the CT DEEP. It is more likely that a Harbor Management Commission public hearing would occur on the proposed Harbor Management Plan around June, to allow sufficient referral time to the State.

2. Update/Discussion re: Ownership of Property to the South of I-95

Mr. Steadman explained that, during the same meeting with the CT DEEP on January 31, Scott Graham outlined the process the City would go through to request consideration of this State property for the location of the proposed launching ramp as part of the feasibility study for which the City is seeking grant funds. He provided the paperwork to the West Haven representatives, and Assistant City Planner Killeen completed the paperwork in draft form. He circulated copies of that paperwork to the members of the Commission for their review. He asked the Commissioners to let him know as soon as possible of any changes they would like to see in this request to DEEP. He plans to submit these papers by the beginning of next week. According to Mr. Graham, the Committee that considers these requests would meet again in mid-March 2017.

3. REPORTS OF STAFF AND COMMISSIONERS

a. Status of State Port Authority Grant Program

Mr. Steadman reported that he had a recent conversation with the Director of the State Port Authority, and he was told that the Port Authority's Small Harbor Grant Program would probably be announced formally by the end of February or beginning of March. The City plans to submit an application for funding of the feasibility study for the boat launching ramp. Commissioners agreed that this should be good timing with the City's request to use the State property as part of this feasibility study hopefully being considered in mid-March. Mr. Steadman clarified that the Study would evaluate the City's compost site and the State property to the south of I-95.

b. Discussion of Proposed Dredging of New Haven Harbor

Mr. Steadman reported that he had learned the Army Corps of Engineers was beginning to plan for the dredging of New Haven Harbor. He suggested that the Commission support that dredging effort and encourage the Corps of Engineers to extend the proposed dredging to the channel serving the West River.

After some discussion, Motion was made by Chairman Pacapelli to have the Harbor Management Commission prepare a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to support the proposed dredging of New Haven Harbor and to encourage them to incorporate into the scope of services the dredging of the West River segment of the channel up to I-95, seconded by Commissioner McKeon, and passed 5-0.

c. Discussion of Upcoming Appointment of Harbor Master

Chairman Pacapelli reported that the position of Harbor Master would come up for reappointment again this year in June 2017. He was informed that the Mayor of the municipality was required to nominate three individuals for the position, with the actual appointment to be made by the Governor of the State. Mr. Steadman commented that, for communities with approved Harbor Management Plans, it is up to the Harbor Management Commission to make these nominations. Since the Harbor Management Plan has not yet been adopted, it would be up to the Mayor to make those nominations. Meanwhile, the Commission decided they would like to encourage the Mayor to nominate current Harbor Master Robert Pimer for consideration.

Motion was made by Commissioner Flynn to request that the Mayor consider reappointment of the current Harbor Master Robert Pimer and also to offer the Commission's assistance if the Mayor needed help in identifying additional nominations, seconded by Commissioner McKeon and passed 5-0.

The Commission then discussed the fact that the State no longer provides a stipend for Harbor Masters. Mr. Paine stated that if the Commission desired, he could include a request for a stipend for the Harbor Master in the upcoming budget for the Public Works Department.

After some discussion, motion was made by Commissioner Flynn to ask Mr. Paine to include in his proposed FY 2017-18 operating budget for the Public Works Department a line item for "Harbor Master Operating Expenses" in the amount of \$1,000. Motion was seconded by Commissioner McKeon and passed 5-0.

d. Other Business

Mr. Paine reported on some of the improvements that were being made to the Sandy Point Nature Center parking lot. He reported that new planter boxes were installed to help define traffic flow in the parking lot, the walkway has been extended, and "no parking" signs have been posted along the railing next to the marsh. He also reported that the Audubon Society would be funding some new "wildlife guards" to be working at the Center on a part-time basis during the summer (assisting with the protection of sensitive nesting areas, aiding with the maintenance of planting areas, providing information to the public, etc.). He thought their schedules might run weekly from Tuesday to Saturday.

4. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:29 PM.