



**STONINGTON HARBOR
MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
Newsletter**

Harbor Happenings



Volume 5, Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2016

FROM THE CHAIRMAN: *Jay Spalding*

The Stonington Harbor Management Commission (SHMC) and our harbormasters worked hard this year on several projects to make Stonington Harbor a smooth operation. Major accomplishments this year are the completion of the mooring grid project and design and commissioning of a new municipal dock. More details on these projects are in the newsletter. It should be noted that the commission and the Harbormasters conduct business according to the Stonington Harbor Management Plan (SHMP) and Ordinance. The SHMP is meant to be a living document that has an annual review in August: please participate if you have any ideas.

In this newsletter we are reporting on many of the activities in the harbor as well as updates from our partners concerned with Stonington Harbor. The Harbor is a busy vibrant place with opportunities for everyone.

The SHMC meets on the second Monday every month at 7:00pm in the Stonington Police Station Public Meeting room. The public is always invited. The Harbor Management Plan, SHMC Agendas and Minutes are available on the Stonington Town web site. And please contact me directly with your concerns.

FROM THE HARBORMASTER: *Eric Donch*

Here I am, on a 50 degree day in February, wondering why I ever bothered to haul the boats this winter. It has been much milder than last winter and hopefully warm boating weather will be with us soon.

The 2015 season got off to a tough start with two boating accidents on Memorial Day weekend. Both involved sailboats hitting a rock that had ended up on the wrong side of the Green "7" can in the Sandy

Point channel. Both incidents resulted in injuries,



Harbormaster Donch in the Robert G

luckily neither of them were life threatening. The offending rock was immediately marked and within days the USCG moved the channel marker to the correct side of the rock. More about this and a photo in the dredging article in this newsletter.

The grid project in Stonington Harbor is complete. The mooring fields look good and feedback from the launch drivers is very positive. We have identified many new mooring locations and have worked our way deep into the waiting list to fill the vacancies. 20-25 new moorings are being issued this spring with more to follow later in the year and again next spring. All of the newly identified mooring locations will not be filled in the first year for safety sake. Newly established moorings need to be checked for swing room before populating adjacent locations. Also, it would not be in the best interest of the harbor to have too many freshly set moorings in the event of a big storm.

If you are a person on the waiting list PLEASE take the time to update me if any of your contact information has changed. You can find a "Contact Information Update" form on our website at www.stoningtonharbor.org

As always, I look forward to seeing you all on the water this summer. Please contact me if you have questions or ideas for our harbor. On the water I monitor VHF channels 9 and 72, my email: harbormaster@usa.com or call me at 860-303-5046.

DREDGING SANDY POINT CHANNEL

Starting the day after Thanksgiving and continuing for approximately three weeks the Army Corps of Engineers worked to remove rocks that could not be removed last year with the pump dredge. This time a clam shell dredge was used.



One of the more impressive rocks was the one that had caused damage Memorial Day weekend. It is pictured below on the deck of the dredge vessel SNELL. The rock was approximately 8 feet across, 4 foot high and weighed in at 22 tons.



The Army Corps of Engineers' dredge vessel SNELL and special purpose vessel CURRITUCK removed rock and sand from the navigation channel in Little Narragansett Bay near Sandy Point.

The dredge spoils were deposited in a defined area off of Misquamicut Beach. Multiple large rocks along the north edge of the channel between Green cans "5" and "9" were a large part of the operation.

RULES OF THE ROAD

Each year I like to take this opportunity to refresh our familiarity with some basic rules.

Keep a Proper Lookout – Failing to keep a sharp lookout is the most common cause of collisions. Every operator must keep a proper lookout, using both sight and hearing, at all times. Watch and listen for other vessels, radio communications, navigational hazards, and others involved in water activities.

Maintain a Safe Speed – Safe speed is the speed that ensures you will have ample time to avoid a collision. Safe speed will vary depending on conditions such as wind, water conditions, navigational hazards, visibility and the maneuverability of your vessel.

We have a very busy harbor with many kayaks, small sailboats, stand-up paddleboards and other small vessels. These are popular in the harbor as well as around Sandy Point. Keep a sharp lookout.

Remember, it is the responsibility of ALL vessel operators to avoid collisions.

SLOW, NO WAKE REMINDER

A few years ago, Stonington Harbor was designated Slow, No Wake (SNW) area. The areas are well marked by buoys or signs. Buoys mark the "cut" between Wamphassuc Point and the west breakwater and from the west breakwater to green can "7. From can "7" the line extends to the end of the east breakwater. There are signs the cove side of the railroad bridges. Also the channel past the tip of Sandy point is SNW because of its proximity to the beach. It also has a SNW sign. The Commission reminds all boaters that SNW has two components: "slow" and "no wake". One can appear to be going "slow" but create a large wake, or have no wake but be going too fast. In addition, it can be very dangerous to speed in a dinghy or skiff through the mooring areas, or from the north end of the harbor along the Wamphassuc shore. The Harbor Management Commission is dedicated to maintaining the safety of all who use our harbor and would like to thank the many boaters who respect the SNW areas.

MOORING USE SURVEYS

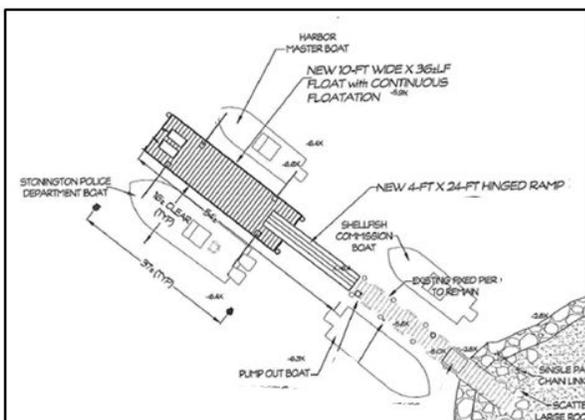
A significant portion of the Harbormaster's duties involve the maintenance of the mooring field. This includes ensuring that winter stakes are removed by June 1, that only approved moorings are placed, that they are on location, marked correctly, and that the proper boat is using the mooring. Note, if you plan to leave your mooring for an extended period, please notify the Harbormaster.

The SHMC Commissioners assists Harbormaster Donch by surveying pre-assigned areas at least three times during the boating season. You might see them as they circle your area in a small boat, taking notes and an occasional photo to assure mooring use compliance with the Plan.

NEW STONINGTON MUNICIPAL DOCK

The Stonington Harbor Master's (HM) boat has been kept at a small fixed dock that adjoins the Stonington Borough Water Treatment Facility. Built in 2007, this dock has limitations due to its short length, height off the water, and proximity to the seawall.

The Stonington Police Department (SPD) procured a new police boat that needs a mid-harbor location to make it readily accessible. This prompted the SHMC to obtain a DEEP permit to extend the existing fixed dock with a 24' ramp to a 10' x 36' floating platform dock that could now moor four (4) boats: 1) the HM boat, 2) the SPD boat, 3) the Shellfish Commission boat, and 4) the Pump Out boat (temporarily for discharging waste only), as shown here.



Note that this is **NOT** a public dock or landing area and its use is restricted to the aforementioned boats and users only.

SPECIAL PURPOSE MOORINGS

Special Purpose Moorings (SPM) are intended to provide access to the water for the general public. From January 1st to Feb 28th the SHMC has an open submission period in which eligible organizations may apply for an annual application. For the 2016 season, the Harbormaster identified 7 locations that would be appropriate for SPM and would not interfere with the offering of Private Moorings. In March 2016, the SHMC approved the following for the 2016 season:

1) Three (3) moorings for Stonington Harbor Yacht Club to support their Public Access Programs using their Ideal 18 keelboats and one (1) mooring for a floating platform for the Youth Sailing Program 420's. These programs are open to the public. Anyone interested in this program should contact the office at SHYC, (860) 535-0112, or via e-mail at office@shyc.us



2) Five (5) moorings for New England Science & Sailing (NESS). These moorings will hold a fleet of keelboats that are used in a variety of NESS instructional programs for the spring, summer, and fall seasons. These programs are open to the public. Anyone interested in accessing these boats should contact Mark Zagol at NESS, (860) 535-9362, or via e-mail at mzagol@nessf.org



OLD WHARF/ BREAKWATER PLANNING BEGINS

Although a joint Town, Borough and SHMC Harbor Management Commission Task Force has been working to cause the historic "inner" breakwater in our Harbor to be restored, and although a proposal and detailed engineering plan for reconstruction has been developed and approved by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the project has now been stuck in place for almost six months. Why? The hold-up has to do with ownership the existing old structure. When the US Army Corps

of Engineers received permission via an act of Congress in the middle of the twentieth century to abandon maintenance of the breakwater (which they built in Stonington Harbor in the late 1820's), ownership of the structure didn't change at the same time. The result: even if no one was now caring for it, the old breakwater was still the property of the Federal Government. If those who now want to see the structure renewed are to succeed, we'll need title to be transferred to a local governmental entity, and such a change in status can only be the result of an act of Congress. Although no one here or in Washington actually opposes a change of ownership, such a "change of title" is waiting to happen. Until it does, nothing in the way of physical reconstruction (or gathering the funds to pay for it) can begin. We remain confident and hopeful, if for the moment somewhat frustrated, by the slow pace of action in Washington. Nevertheless, the re-construction that is planned will be both practical and attractive. It will make our harbor a better protected and safer place for mariners and local residents, and will also restore a historic and once much-loved "landmark" feature of the Stonington waterfront to the community's use.

NEWS FROM OTHER HARBOR PARTNERS:

PLEASE USE THE PUMP-OUT BOATS

Town of Westerly pump-out boats offer a great service that keeps our harbor and surrounding waters clean. The SHMC has installed discharge services for the pump-out boat (only) so they no longer have to return to Westerly to discharge their loads and can spend more time attending boats. A pump-out boat can be called to your boat via VHF Ch 8 (preferred) or by calling 401-348-2572.

STONINGTON POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Stonington Police Marine Unit will again be on the water this summer. The primary goals set forth for the unit this summer will be to educate boaters regarding safe boating practices, provide a patrol presence during peak boating periods and respond to reports of criminal or suspicious activity on the water.

The Marine Unit has been increasingly utilized for a number of special events throughout the region. These include but are not limited to Law Enforcement Memorial Day at the Seaport, Sharkfest (Mystic River), 4th of July Firework events in the region, as well as tall ship festivals and schooner races in the Thames River. As part of the New London Port Security Marine Group we will also be participating in

a number of drills and exercises on the water throughout the region this summer.



The Stonington Police asks that everyone on the water this season make safety a priority. Before you leave the dock conduct your safety checks and ensure everyone has a PFD. In addition, encourage all those on board to wear the PFD while underway. Please watch your speed in both the harbor and at the west end of Sandy Point. Finally, if you are going to be operating a boat do not consume alcohol. No one wants a day on the water to end in tragedy. The members of the Marine Unit look forward to seeing everyone out there. Have a great summer!

CUSH

Founded in 2007, the mission of CUSH, Inc. (Clean Up Sound and Harbors) is to protect Fishers Island Sound and its coves, inlets, bays, rivers, and harbors, and thereby contribute to maintaining healthy water for future generations. We pursue our mission through sustained water-quality monitoring and by promoting good environmental stewardship through public education, demonstration projects, and coastal debris cleanups.

2015 was a very successful year and included the publication of the 2014 Water Quality Report. Our goals for 2016 include the following:

1. Increase the scope and range of water testing
2. Promote improved water quality
3. Increase public outreach and invite participation
4. Additional turf management projects and partners
5. Encourage individuals to lead coastal cleanup
6. Convene individuals and organizations in support of the POCD

CUSH is an all- volunteer organization and we invite you to join us in our work. <http://www.cushinc.org>

STONINGTON SHELLFISH COMMISSION

All Stonington Harbor and all Stonington waters in Little Narragansett Bay are closed to recreational shellfishing. The link below shows showing where recreational shellfishing is permitted:

http://www.stoningtonshellfishcommission.org/recreational/recreation_map.pdf

Stonington Shellfish permits are available at Don's Dock and Greenhaven Marina. For information about recreational shellfishing in Rhode Island waters, visit the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management web site at:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/shellfish/index.htm>

STONINGTON SMALL BOAT ASSOCIATION

Stonington Small Boat Association (SSBA) was organized about 1975 to provide boat storage and water access to Stonington Harbor on land leased from the Town near the playground by the Town Docks. There is a launching ramp for small sailboats and unpowered vessels. Racks are available for dinghies and kayaks. Ground on-site storage of boats up to a maximum 300 lbs requires owners to provide their own dollies. SSBA continues to make improvements including running water, improved storage racks, a concrete ramp and retaining wall.



SSBA is an organization of volunteers who are dedicated to maintaining and upgrading small boat access to the harbor. Storage space applications should be received by received by May 1st.

For information about joining, volunteering, and storage space for your boat send a note to: SSBA, P.O. Box 28, Stonington, CT 06378 or email ssba28@comcast.net.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT RACING IN THE HARBOR

Almost every summer on Wednesday night for the past 48 years, the **Stonington Dinghy Club** has sponsored small sailboat racing in the Harbor. The 2016 ten (10) week series starts on June 15th. It is open to any sailboat 20 ft or less, sailed by anyone, of any age. There are no registration fees or requirements other than to check in with the race committee (RC) on the water by 5:50pm for the first gun at 6:00pm. That's right...*totally free racing!*

The RC uses a small power boat anchored to the west of the channel, about in-line with the fishing memorial flag pole at the Town Docks. The RC organizes similar boats into several appropriate



classes and starts. Typical racers are Sunfish, Optimists, Cape Dories, Lasers, JY-15s, FJs, 420s, Ideal 18s, Highlanders, catamarans and any other boat racing under the Portsmouth Handicapping system. At times, there have been 55 or more sailboats out there in different starts and courses having great fun!



The RC assigns the course on the water which is always only one race, typically sailed in a triangle with 1 or 2 laps, and always within the picturesque Harbor.

After each race participants, friends, and family are welcomed to a buffet dinner, catered at a nominal cost, at the Wadawanuck Club at the head of the harbor, where that day's results are announced.



After the final event on August 17th, there will be the awards banquet. All who raced 7 of 10 events will qualify for an award, such as Youngest Sailor, Most Improved, Best Overall, etc., and the much prized McCagg Cup, for overall love of the sport.

SDC HOSPICE REGATTA 2016

Hospice provides a variety of caring functions to patients and family during stressful times. For over 25 years, sailors in southeast Connecticut have sponsored local regattas to raise funds and awareness for the Center for Hospice Care. Last year the Stonington Dinghy Club regatta raised \$5345 in donations and registration fees. This year, the Hospice Regatta in Stonington is on Wednesday night, July 13th 2016, using the same format as the Wed Night Racing. Register in advance and seek a sponsor for even more donations that last year! Then race in the Harbor and join the the awards ceremony that evening at the Wad Club. This is a fun and rewarding way to support a worthy cause. Follow this link for more information:

<http://hospiceregattas.kintera.org/faf/home/default.asp?ievent=1154882>

SPECIAL OLYMPICS REGATTA

Special Olympics Sailing Regatta will be held Sept 10-11, 2016 as Stonington Harbor again hosts the Special Olympics Connecticut (SOCT) Fall Festival sailing event. This is a unified team event involving Special Olympics athletes and their partners. Several teams from Darien, Saybrook, Groton and Stonington come to compete and have a great time. The regatta is a real team effort and has great local support. The Wad Club provides the shoreside venue, JY15's and motor boats. The Stonington

Harbor YC provides their fleet of Ideal 18 sailboats. Members of Greenhaven Sailing Club lend their Highlander sailboats to the competition. Volunteers come from all over, with Troops of Boy Scouts and many other youth lending a hand. Our Harbormaster has provided years of dedicated support and in fact was recognized by the SOCT last year for his efforts. The event begins with a parade for the athletes through Stonington Borough at 10am Saturday. The Olympians then sail Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning and concludes with lunch and an awards ceremony that day. SBFDF graciously lets the Firehouse be used for a dinner/dance Saturday night and is available all weekend to shelter for inclement weather.

STONINGTON HIGH SCHOOL SAILING

Deep into the fall you will find the Stonington High School sailing team in the harbor. They are practicing most weekdays as they get ready to compete in the New England Schools Sailing Association fall season of regattas. SHS has a fleet of six 420 sailboats. The Wadawanuck Club graciously hosts the team throughout the fall in its drysail area, and provides storage space in the off season. The SHS sailing team relies heavily on community support from the Wad Club, Dog Watch Café, and many other local businesses that contribute to fundraising efforts. Traditionally the team holds a Pancake breakfast in the fall to raise funds for the team.

SHMC FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2015

The Stonington Harbor Management Plan provides that the source of all funding for the implementation of the Plan shall be confined to the mooring fees collected annually by the Harbormaster. No general tax revenues from the Town or Borough can be used.

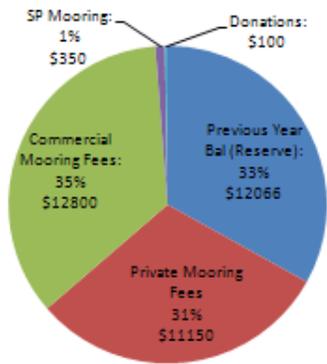
Early each year a budget is developed to be sure mooring permit fees and any funds carried over from the previous year are sufficient to cover Operating Expenses, and any Approved Projects/Capital items. Over the years examples of the latter include: a major portion of the cost of the pump-out boat discharge station; a total repower and refit of the Harbormaster's boat; new slow wake, anchorage and channel buoys, signage and related hardware throughout the harbor; a hydrographic survey of the harbor in conjunction with the mooring grid project; and the new municipal dock, a work in progress spanning two years.

At each monthly meeting, the Financial Report is reviewed relative to the budget. The Report is published along with the Minutes and is available on the Town web site.

INCOME

This chart shows the amount and sources of funds available to the Commission for 2015. Of the total \$36,256, roughly 1/3 was from commercial mooring fees, 1/3 from private and special mooring fees, and 1/3 carried over from 2014.

SHMC 2015 Income Sources

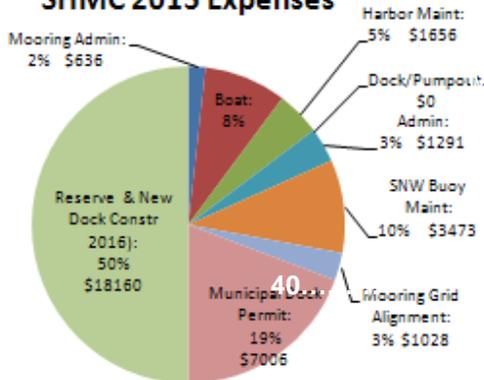


EXPENSES

This chart breaks out the 2015 year's major expense categories and projects. Routine operating expenses (boat, admin, etc.) of \$6,650 was pretty average for the year. Two project – new anchorage buoys and grid alignment – required another \$4,500, and a third project – the new municipal dock – another \$7,000 for permits. Finally, we carried over \$18,100 to 2016 where it will be used to help pay the balance due on the new municipal dock.

If all goes according to plan we will end 2016 with very little in the SHMC account to carry over, but a much improved, better utilized, and safer harbor for all boaters to use and enjoy!

SHMC 2015 Expenses



MOORING GRID PROJECT COMPLETE

Several years ago the entire harbor was gridding, re-numbered and moorings placed on the grid. The mooring rows are numbered 1-48 from south to north. The mooring columns are identified A-Z, from east to west. The image below shows the results. This number system is currently in use by all private and commercial mooring holders.



WAITING LIST IMPORTANT DATES

Anytime: Applications can be submitted and received
January 31st: Current Waiting List published on web site and at Town Hall
July 31st: Waiting List updated and published again
September 30th: Waiting List Renewal Applications sent to those on current Waiting List
November 30th: Waiting List Renewal Applications due to Harbormaster

MOORING HOLDER IMPORTANT DATES

January 31st: Current assigned Mooring Holder List published on web site and at Town Hall
January 31st: Mooring Permit Renewal Applications sent to current mooring holders
Feb 28th: Special Purpose Mooring Applications due to Harbormaster
March 31st: Mooring Permit Renewal Applications due to Harbormaster
June 30th: Winter Sticks must be replaced by approved Mooring Balls
July 31st: Assigned Mooring List updated and published
October 1st: Winter Stick may begin replacing Mooring Balls
December 31st: Required Mooring Inspection documentation due Harbormaster
December 31st: All Mooring Permits expire

Stonington Harbor Management Commission
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PO Box 135
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VHF channels 9 and 72, my
E-mail: harbormaster@usa.com
Mobile: 860-303-5046
Assistant Harbormaster: Charles Estabrook

Commissioners/term expiration:

Borough Representatives (5):

Sherman Crites, *Treasurer* 6/18
Jesse Diggs, *Vice Chairman* 6/18
Rodney Johnstone 6/17
Bruce MacKinnon 6/16
Edward Smith 6/17

Town Representatives (5):

Bruce Anderson 04/18
Paul O'Neill 04/19
Caleb Rose 04/19
Jay Spalding, *Chairman* 04/18
Vacancy -----

Web Site: <http://www.stonington-ct.gov/stonington-harbor-management-commission>

Stonington Harbor Management Commission
152 Elm Street
Stonington, CT 06378

