



Stonington Harbor Management Commission

February 13, 2023

Minutes by Katrina Bercaw, Recording Secretary



1. **Call to Order:** Chairman Spalding called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Attending: Chairman Jay Spalding, Secretary Melanie Degler, Treasurer Sherm Crites, Vice Chairman Jesse Diggs (via teleconference), Commissioners Tori Gimple, Bruce MacKinnon, Edward Smith, and Caleb Rose, and Harbormaster Eric Donch, and Recording Secretary Katrina Bercaw

Not in Attendance: Commissioners Joseph Williams and Stathis Manousos

Guests: Keith Neilson, Docko, Inc.

2. **Minutes:**

The Minutes of the January 9, 2023, meeting were reviewed. Treasurer Crites made a motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner MacKinnon seconded the motion. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion approved.

ACTION ITEM #1: Harbormaster Donch will contact DEEP to discuss potential future commercial moorings from Wequetequock Cove to Barn Island to Pawcatuck Point and what action the Commission should be proactively taking on a possible expansion including any environmental impact.

ACTION ITEM #2: Secretary Degler to amend the new agenda and other Commission documents to include the borough logo.

3. **Public Comment:**

Joseph Larkin - \$100 renewal email received last week. Believes it was required to have a notice posted regarding new fees addressed by September 1, but only did so in November 2022 minutes. Commercial fees went up less than private fees. Does not wish to pay more than \$50 for his mooring this year.

Response: Chairman Spalding stated there was a procedural error per the SHMC Plan. The Commission increased private fees by \$50. As stated in the renewal emails sent to current mooring holders, this increase was needed for funds to support the harbor commission's work. The last mooring fee increase was 12 years ago. Secretary Degler noted that approximately one-half of the mooring owners (106) have renewed at the new rate, and she has received positive comments from many current mooring holders.

Commission members discussed in length how to address this concern and chose to move the discussion to the New Business section of the agenda to allow agenda business to continue.

Steve Larkin: Your mooring fees are round numbers - why?

Response: Treasurer Crites noted that the budget is a plan based on experience, with no precise information on future expenses available.

Keith Neilson of Docko, Inc., presented “New Commercial Moorings” for Tom Lockwood: Wequetequock Cove, town of Stonington. Discussed the need for more moorings and whether these would interfere with boat traffic or shellfish beds.

Tim Strmiska of Walker’s Marina asked about possible effects on other marinas and on boat traffic. Tabled awaiting further information from Shellfish Commission.

ACTION ITEM #3: Chairman Spalding will contact Don Murphy with the Shellfish Commission to discuss this project and how it affects both Commissions.

4. Correspondence: CT Harbor Management Association email regarding Proposed Bill#5615, a bill to address the effect of two court decisions. The proposed legislation is an effort to address problems with the original statute that gave the courts the way to remove management oversight away from Harbor Commissions. Information only, no action required.

ACTION ITEM #4: Chairman Spalding will contact John Pinto, named in the correspondence, then contact Selectmen’s office and Boro Warden, Jeff Callahan to see how they want to proceed with a response.

5. Treasurer’s Report:

The Financial Report for February 2023 was reviewed and attached to these minutes. Commissioner McKinnon made a motion to approve the report as presented. Commissioner Rose seconded the motion. No further discussion occurred, all in favor, motion was approved.

Budget planning - draft 2023 budget:

The Commissioners reviewed the draft budget. It was noted that if the fees are not increased, the ability to absorb the effects of a major storm or incident with the Harbormaster boat would be limited. Chairman Spalding thanked Treasurer Crites for his work in compiling the proposed budget.

6. Harbormaster’s Report:

The Harbormaster’s Report for February 2023 was reviewed and attached to these minutes. It was suggested that the Sandy Point Channel discussion be moved to New Business.

As a result of Harbormaster Donch’s attendance at the CT Harbormasters Council, he will be copying Chairman Spalding and the new Commission email account: Stnharbor2023@gmail.com when documenting any abandoned vessels, including date-stamped photos and other pertinent data.

Treasurer Crites made a motion to approve the Harbormaster’s Report as presented. Commissioner MacKinnon seconded the motion. No further discussion, all in favor, motion was approved.

7. Online Mooring Update – Secretary Degler

- The mooring waiting list is now at 95, first time under 100.
- The wait time is now approximately six years, down from ten.

- Secretary Degler and Harbormaster Donch will be issuing (28) new moorings from the Waitlist applicants in March and Secretary Degler will contact these applicants with their new assignments.
- Four moorings were given up (two revoked by HM and two due to no longer using mooring).
- There will no longer be mass assignments from the Waitlist now that the Harbor is close to capacity. Applicants will only move from the Waitlist when a mooring is given up – moorings will be assigned to an applicable vessel for the open mooring, not necessarily the next applicant on the Waitlist.
- Received one new Waitlist application in January, none to date in February.
- Mooring Renewals are overdue as of 4/1/23.
- Will place a reminder in the newsletter that mooring holders do not have to wait until their new DMV registration is received to renew their mooring.
- OLM receives an annual registered vessel download from DMV each May 1; this will update expirations automatically in the system to the next year. Secretary Degler and HM Donch have access to the DMV download to check registrations for compliance.
- Ran overdue inspection report for vendor use.
- Noted all Harbor mooring service vendors are now using only pyramid moorings, which are deemed safer for our Harbor use.
- Dodson Boatyard's data, including Steve Kingsland's inspections of private moorings, will be entered into OLM by Dodson staff, after Secretary Degler's completes their training of the system next week.
- A new category has been added to OLM for private moorings off Dubois Beach to incorporate these littoral homes having moorings not on the current Harbor grid or in the OLM system.

8. Old Business:

A. Deputy Harbormaster Search Update - Harbormaster Donch gave the job posting to the Town for posting on the website and Town social media accounts.

ACTION ITEM #5: Harbormaster Donch will send the job posting to the Borough Warden for posting and circulating in his region.

B. SHM Plan Update – no update at this time.

ACTION ITEM#6: Chairman Spalding will contact DEEP for an update and approval of the Plan.

C. Sandy Point Channel Dredging Update - Harbormaster Donch spoke with Coast Guard Waterways Division Chief Natasha Hope regarding possible funding for emergency dredging. Awaiting news.

D. East Side Inner Breakwater Project Update - Commissioner Gimple

Commissioner Gimple is compiling information. She will meet with former Commissioner Paul O'Neill and speak with the Town Engineer to relay that the Commission is working on this project again. She will review plans and permits previously obtained (may need to renew the 5-yr permit). Will then be looking for funds to repair the breakwater, possibly from the federal infrastructures bill.

8. New Business:

A. Newsletter Tasks - Secretary Degler distributed assignments. Articles due to her by 3/31/23, for planned newsletter distribution at the May 2023 meeting.

B. Mooring Fee Discussion continued at length. No decision was made. A workgroup will be formed to address the concerns brought forward during the Public Comment section of the meeting.

ACTION ITEM #7: The workgroup will consist of Secretary Degler, Treasurer Crites and Harbormaster Donch to devise a plan forward regarding the mooring fee charges.

9. Adjournment: Chairman Spalding adjourned the meeting at 9:58 p.m.

Approved: Jay Spalding

Date: March 13, 2023

Attachments:

- Treasurer's Report
- Harbormaster's Report

Treasurers Report

| <i>Report Date 2/13/2023</i> | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Plan</i> | <i>Jan</i> | <i>Feb</i> | <i>Mar</i> | <i>YTD</i> | <i>Probable</i> |
| <u>Funds Generated:</u> | | | | | | |
| Balance Brought Forward: | 32,022 | 32,022.38 | | | 32,022.38 | 32,022.38 |
| Paid Moorings: Com/Pvt/Pub: | | | | | | |
| Mooring Fees: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Wait List Fees | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Miscellaneous Income: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Total Generated Funds: | 32,022 | 32,022.38 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 32,022.38 | 32,022.38 |
| <u>Operating Expense:</u> | | | | | | |
| Mooring Admin: | | | | | | |
| Mailings: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Telephone: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Online Mooring | | 31.78 | | | 31.78 | |
| Miscellaneous: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Sub-Total: | 0 | 31.78 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 31.78 | 0.00 |
| Boat: | | | | | | |
| Fuel & Oil: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Commissioning: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Storage: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Maintenance/Repairs: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Equipment: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Sub-Total: | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Harbor Maintenance: | | | | | | |
| Buoy: Commission/Haul/Store: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Misc Service/Locker Storage: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Adjust Grid Allignment | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Signage: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Sub-Total: | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Dock/Pumpout: | | | | | | |
| Dock Eqpt./Maintenance: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Pumpout Eqpt./Maintenance: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Miscellaneous | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Sub-Total: | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Administrative: | | | | | | |
| Supplies: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Newsletter: | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Professional Services: | | 125.00 | | | 125.00 | |
| Sub-Total: | 0 | 125.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 125.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Operating Expense: | 0 | 156.78 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 156.78 | 0.00 |
| <u>Approved Projects/Capital</u> | | | | | | |
| Replacement HM Boat | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Public Access Improvement | | | | | 0.00 | |
| Approved Projects/Capital | 0 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Total Designated Funds | 0 | 156.78 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 156.78 | 0.00 |
| <u>Undesignated Funds:</u> | 32,022 | 31,865.60 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 31,865.60 | 32,022.38 |
| <u>Notes:</u> | | | | | | |
| Petty Cash Advance | 300 | | | | | |

Harbormasters Report

Harbormaster Report

February 13, 2023

New Mooring permits issued: 0 Moorings given up (2023): 1
New Mooring assignments in the works: 0
Deposits to SHMC account since last report: \$300 2023 YTD=\$300

Sandy Point channel being covered under a separate meeting agenda item.

Had a meeting with CT DEEP to evaluate a new training course coming to Harbormasters regarding how to handle abandoned vessels, and other problems facing harbormasters with moored vessels. Ultimate outcome was to document situations early.

Met with most of the other Harbormasters in Stonington. Common issues are abandoned vessels and mooring renewal problems.

Deputy Harbormaster job posting submitted to Town Hall for posting.

I have had multiple conversations with Docko regarding commercial mooring field in Wequetequock Cove. 14 moorings proposed north-east of Goat Island.

Robert G

Robert G was hauled 01/01/2023. Boat is stored at Don's Dock with upper house shrink wrapped to protect electronics on overhead.

New boat update:

Once the boat arrives:

- 1) Engine swap at PMW Marine
- 2) Lettering at Amie's Signs in Ashaway
- 3) Electronics swap by Harbormaster, location TBD

New Gear predicted:

- 1) Dock "Whips" to hold boat off dock
- 2) Deck Flood lights
- 3) Remote controlled, LED spotlight
- 4) Anchor and deck anchor holder/mount
- 5) Additional Handrails TBD

Respectfully Submitted,

Eric Donch
Stonington Harbormaster