

**Five Mile River Commission
Minutes
September 14, 2011**

Commission members in attendance:

Matthew Marion, chairman
John deRegt
William Jessup
Dirk Leasure
Ray Meurer, harbor superintendent
David Snyder, assistant harbor superintendent

Members of the public in attendance:

Mats Josefsson, mooring permit holder, Norwalk, CT
Kim Beaumont, owner, Down Under Kayaking
Robert Griffith, mooring permit holder, Norwalk, CT

Matthew Marion took the chair at 7:34 p.m. Chairman Marion noted that storm preparedness, winter storage of boats on mooring and the safe use of kayaks and paddle boards were key issues to be discussed at tonight's meeting.

He stressed the need to set up a way to communicate quickly with mooring permit holders, dock customers, boatyards and marinas using the internet and existing websites in Darien and Rowayton.

Attendee Mats Josefsson was invited to comment on his request to winter store his boat on his mooring. Mr. Josefsson noted he had insurance to cover his boat in the event of a mishap, although it was unclear whether the coverage extended through the winter season. Chairman Marion asked Mats for a copy of his insurance. He said The Boatworks had agreed to take care of his boat during the winter month should assistance be required. The Boatworks keeps a work boat in the river year round.

A general discussion followed on the winter storage of boats on moorings. Mats noted that his boat has styrofoam floatation and cannot sink. Dirk Leasure said fuel tanks and the outboard motor should be removed. Wim Jessup expressed concerns about the buildup of ice in the river impacting the boat. Chairman Marion noted ice floes can form and carry away objects floating in the river.

Chairman Marion thanked Mats for attending and Mats left the meeting.

A discussion of storm preparedness ensued. Chairman Marion asked John deRegt to take the lead in preparing a short, best practices memo, drawing on information normally provided by organizations such as Norwalk Cove Marina, Norwalk Yacht Club, the Rowayton website and the Darien website.

David Snyder said he could set up an email list to send out notices quickly, but would need an Excel file containing email addresses of mooring permit holders, boat yards, marinas and other interested parties.

Concerns about kayaks and paddle boards using the main boat channel were also discussed. Chairman Marion urged all parties to work together to ensure safe navigation in the river. Launching sites for kayaks and paddle boards include private docks, the Rowayton Beach Association boat house, the Community Dock and Down Under Kayaking.

Kim Beaumont, owner, Down Under Kayaking, said her employees are instructed to educate renters about the need to stay out of the main boat channel. Ms. Beaumont said she supports the use of signs and buoys to help remind renters of the need to stay clear of the main boat channel, except when crossing. She noted most renters are new to kayaking and are, therefore, so wrapped up in the experience that what they are told prior to launching is forgotten once they are out on the water.

Chairman Marion and Wim Jessup said they have observed activity at the Down Under docks. It appeared to them that kayakers were not receiving much in the way of instructions about keeping out of the main boat channel. Wim Jessup suggested that kayakers from Down Under be instructed to go around the stern of the red lobster boat "Tony C" when departing and returning. To make kayaks more visible, Wim suggested kayaks be equipped with a brightly colored pennant on a flexible flag staff.

Robert Griffith suggested that the flag staff would make it difficult for kayaks to right themselves after they have turned over. He also noted that larger boats, restricted to navigating in the main boat channel, have the right of way.

The harbor superintendent reported that four buoys marked with the words "Kayaks" and "Paddle Boards" had been placed in the river as a guide to kayakers to stay close to the western shore. Three additional buoys have been ordered to complete the "Kayak Trail."

Signs reminding kayakers and paddle boarders to stay out of the main boat channel will be placed at the Rowayton Beach Association boat house, the Community Dock and Down Under Kayaking. David Snyder has agreed to design and produce the signs.

Regarding winter storage of boats on mooring during the months of December January and February, it was agreed after extensive discussion that beginning this year it will no longer be permitted to store boats on mooring during those three months. The two prime reasons for reaching the decision were safety and environmental concerns. Chairman Marion directed the harbor superintendent to inform mooring permit holders who have winter stored in the past about the decision.

A report submitted by Tammy Papp, administrative assistant, showed expenses of \$6,761 YTD September, 2011. Expenses for the same period last year were \$11,691.

Income YTD September, 2011 was \$43,000. Income for the same period last year was \$40,500.

The increased income was the direct result of David Snyder's walking the docks this summer and placing "Notice of Violation of the Ordinances" on boats not displaying the FMR'11 decal, indicating the boat owner had not paid 2011 harbor use fee. .

Chairman Marion declared an executive session at 8:56 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

The last 2011 meeting of the commission is December 7.

All meetings are held in the Boardroom of the Rowayton Community Center, 33 Highland Ave., Rowayton, CT beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ray Meurer
Harbor Superintendent