

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

FLIP HUFFARD, CHAIRMAN
WILLIAM CAVERS, VICE CHAIRMAN
STEVEN SPIVEY, VICE CHAIRMAN SHELLFISH
ROBERT VILTER, CLERK
HUGH BALLOCH
C. LINCOLN JEWETT
FRANK KEMP
ROBERT MONRO
JON SCHOUDEL
PALMER SPARKMAN
AUDREY WEIL



Green's Ledge Light

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:
MARY FLYNN, PARKS & REC COMM.
TOM BELL, HARBOR MASTER,
CAP. GARY PAVIA, POLICE

Minutes of September 16, 2015 Meeting

The meeting, in Room 213, Town Hall, was called to order at 7:35pm by Chairman Huffard.

Present were: Commissioners Huffard, Cavers, Vilter, Balloch, Kemp, Jewett and Weil. Also present were David Dever, Mark Ioli (from the Parks & Recreation Commission) and Nikki Cantatore, Lab Director with Harbor Watch.

Absent were: Commissioners Spivey, Monro, Schoudel and Sparkman, Harbor Master Bell and Captain Gary Pavia.

The minutes of the July 1, 2015 meeting were approved.

Presentation from Harbor Watch Regarding Water Quality Sampling

Nikki Cantatore, Lab Director with Harbor Watch, a not for profit entity associated with Earthplace, gave a presentation on conducting water testing in Darien coastal waters. Apart from providing water quality testing, Harbor Watch includes data collection, education and research as part of its mission.

The Commission extended an invitation to Harbor Watch to speak about testing for bacteria and nutrient levels. Ms. Cantatore first gave a general presentation and then answered questions from the Commission.

Harbor Watch would be interested to be engaged to conduct water sampling in Darien Coastal Waters. Harbor Watch currently performs testing for other local communities, including Norwalk (for twenty-nine years) and New Canaan. Harbor Watches contacts in Norwalk include the Conservation Director, the Health Director and the Norwalk River Watershed.

The immediate “next step” to allow the Town of Darien to consider engaging Harbor Watch would be for Harbor Watch to prepare a written proposal which, if it received favorable reviews by the Commission, would be submitted by the Commission to the Town of Darien for its consideration.

Chairman Huffard noted that in addition to the Town having to consider applying budgetary resources to conduct testing, that it would be worth exploring whether any grants might be available, and whether the adjacent communities of Stamford and Norwalk would be interested to combine resources as Darien shares coastal waters with these communities.

Ms. Cantatore further commented on certain key points for the Town to evaluate when considering whether to undertake water testing:

- What is the ultimate goal of testing? Education, research, improve water quality, open up more waters for shellfishing, are examples.
- Where to conduct testing – in harbors, in rivers?
- What to test for – bacteria, nutrient levels (including nitrogen)?
- Sources of funding
- Long term and short term objectives; establishment of base line data for future use.

Harbor Watch can provide guidance to Darien in developing a water testing plan with identified objectives.

Commissioner Huffard requested that Harbor Watch prepare a written proposal for consideration by the Town of Darien. The scope of the proposal is likely to be limited to performing salt-water testing in order to identify which water sheds (Noroton River, Goodwives River, Tokeneke Brook, 5 Mile River) are a source of bacteria and nutrients.

Chairman's Report

1. Commissioner Status. Chairman Huffard reported that several Commissioners have indicated that they are considering whether they will renew their terms in 2016. The Commission will undertake efforts to identify potential candidates to replace Commissioners who will not renew their terms. Vice Chairman Cavers indicated that in such event he would reach out to persons who have recently requested shell fish permits to inquire about interest in joining the Commission. Lastly, Chairman Huffard noted that Audrey Weil is now a member of the Commission.

2. Long Island Sound Study. Chairman Huffard reported that he would be attending an upcoming meeting of the Citizens Advisory Committee (on which he has a seat) of the Long Island Sound Study, and with respect to which he would provide a report to the Commission.

Shellfish Chairman's Report

No shellfish report was given at the meeting.

Harbor Master's Report

No Harbor Master's Report was given.

Update on Darien Boat Club Expansion, Dave Dever

Mr. Dever reported on the following items:

1. The Boat Club is still working with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to schedule a time for DEEP to perform a site visit in connection with the proposed expansion.
2. The Boat Club is seeking DEEP's permission to keep its gas tank in its current location.
3. The Boat Club will continue to keep the Commission informed on developments concerning

its proposed expansion. While the Commission does not have any jurisdictional authority over matters concerning the expansion the Commission believes it is important that the Commission be made aware of developments and status of the proposed expansion.

Commission Budget Discussion

The Commission discussed whether it would be advisable to request the Town of Darien to consider requesting for the 2016-2017 budget funds for (i) water quality testing, (ii) harbor channel survey, (iii) new buoys and (iv) boat ramp project.

Taks Forces

Rock Hazard Task Force - Vice Chairman Cavers presented to the Commission a template form of plastic coated, water-proof, double-sided map, approximately 8 ½ by 11 inches, showing rock hazards in Darien Coastal Waters. The Commission discussed whether it would be advisable to commit resources to producing a limited number of such maps for distribution to the community.

Long-Term Plan of Conservation and Development Task Force – The Commission’s comments on the Long-Term Plan have been delivered to the Town, and the Commission awaits further action by the Town.

Proposed: Water Quality Task Force – Chairman Huffard requested that Commissioners consider whether they would like to be named at the October 7th meeting to this newly created task force.

Writings to Local News Sources – Vice Chairman Cavers made several suggestions as to how members of the Commission could, by submitting articles of interest to local newspapers and other media sources, create community awareness and interest with respect to matters concerning Darien Coastal Waters. Vice Chairman Cavers would discuss this further with certain Town Officials.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:15 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 7, 2015 at 7:30 pm, Room 119, Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Vilter
Clerk