

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

JOHN McDONALD, CHAIRMAN
C. LINCOLN JEWETT, VICE CHAIRMAN
WALTER RALEIGH, VICE CHAIR-SHELLFISH
FRANK KEMP, CLERK
WILLIAM CAVERS
FLIP HUFFARD
ROB MONRO
JON SCHOUDEL
PALMER SPARKMAN
STEVEN SPIVEY
ROBERT VILTER



Green's Ledge Light

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS
JANE BRANIGAN, PARK & REC COMM.
TOM BELL, HARBOR MASTER
CAPT. GARY PAVIA, POLICE DEPT.

Minutes of May 7, 2014 Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm in Room 119 by Chairman McDonald

Present were: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Vice Chairman Raleigh, Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, Munro, Spivey and Sparkman.

Absent were: Commissioners Kemp, Schoudel, Vilter, and Harbor Master Tom Bell

The minutes of the last meeting on November 6, 2013 were approved.

Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald introduced the Commission's newest official member, Steven Spivey, and added another permit application, the installation of another pier in Scott's Cove, to the agenda.

Chairman McDonald informed the Commission of two recent events. The CT Boating Advisory Council released its 2013 boating safety report, complete with informative statistics on boating safety. The Citizens Advisory Committee of the LIS Study also met on March 13th in New York City. An update of the Sound Vision Project was presented and discussed.

Chairman McDonald noted the ongoing efforts of the Darien Sailing Program to re-establish itself at Weed Beach post Super-Storm Sandy and urged commissioners who were interested to think of ways to support the program.

Chairman McDonald alerted the commissioners to an on-line Paddle Sports Safety course ("The Free Paddle Sports Safety Course"), available via a link on the U.S. Coast Guard's website. He invited members to think of how the Commission might undertake a safety course in Darien's waters, which have a large and increasing number of paddle-boarders and kayakers. Commissioner Vilter, an avid kayaker, was noted as a person who might like to lead such an effort. Commissioner Cavers voiced support for the idea and volunteered to help. Chairman McDonald suggested the two commissioners work on developing a plan and report back next meeting.

The work undertaken by Friends of Gorham Pond was discussed. As the sediment and flotsam of Gorham Pond quite readily flow into Darien Harbor when the pond drainage gates are opened, the Commission expressed an interest in knowing more about the group's plans and current undertakings. John Lundeen, head of the Friends of Gorham Pond, will be invited to the next Commission meeting on June 6th to give the Commission an overview.

The Chairman noted that the CT DEEP is starting a Life Jack Promotions campaign in conjunction with the National Safe Boating Week starting May 16 and 17. As part of its plan, the CT DEEP is encouraging the posting of pictures of people wearing life jackets on the CT DEEP website.

Harbor Master's Report

There was no Harbor Master's report as Harbor Master Bell was not in attendance.

Vice Chairman - Shellfish Report

Vice Chairman Raleigh delivered the shellfish report. The local shellfish beds are temporarily closed due to heavy rain in the previous week. A request from Roger Frate was received by the town to again gain access to Scott's Cove. Frate said he had not taken advantage of his earlier permission to harvest in April. The Selectman granted Frate access until May 15th, before boats start appearing on moorings. Frate was asked to get current on his accounting of his catch in the cove. Finally, a request for town records regarding old oyster leases was discussed. The Nash family in Darien believes there are Darien oyster beds belonging to them dating back over 100 years (a 1911 map of unknown validity provided a rough geographic outline of the purported beds). There is no exact record of any deed - which is fairly common on such matters - and the Nash's inquiry seeks to rectify the matter. A discussion amongst the commissioners didn't provide any additional clarity or sources of information. Finally, on a matter unrelated to the Nash inquiry, a person at Wells Fargo Bank was interested in understanding how oyster beds are currently appraised/valued. Steve Spivey volunteered to provide the Commission with advice from his industry sources.

Boat Launch Ramp Project

The Commission consulted on the status of the recent letter to First Selectman Jayme Stevenson regarding the Pear Tree Point boat launch ramp project. It was decided that Chairman McDonald and Commissioner Cavers would follow up with First Selectman Stevenson on the matter. The immediate goal is to secure approximately \$4,000 in funds from the town to initiate work by Ocean and Coastal Consultants to better define the project's costs.

Flare-Up Day Report

Chairman McDonald reported that the Flare-Up Day event held on Saturday, May 3rd at Weed Beach was highly successful. Approximately 160 attendees went through the safety briefing and practice pyrotechnic procedures, in addition to practice using a fire extinguisher. Approximately 30 people were trained and organized as support staff by the Darien Sail & Power Squadron for the event, all at the direction of Commissioner and DSPS member, Frank Kemp.

Status of "Sandy" Repairs and Proposed Darien Boat Club Expansion Project

Vice Chairman Link Jewett apprised the Commission on the status of the repairs recently completed and in-process at the Darien Boat Club in response to Super-Storm Sandy. The facility is generally open now, with boats being fully allowed to occupy all slips. The new deck sits on the previous deck's footprint, but is more robust, sitting atop some 40 driven piles that will protect it from future storms. The clubhouse itself is also complete, with a new desk for Darien's Marine Police. The fuel dock is not yet in working order, but should be so within several weeks. The pump-out station is still a work-in-progress and the kayak racks cannot yet be occupied until the fuel line under the racks is operational.

The club's proposed expansion plans were discussed. The plans are still in their first phase involving the submittal of detailed plans to the Army Corp of Engineers. The Corp asked for clarifications and the Boat Club complied. The Corp is now reviewing those clarifications. Steps beyond the Army Corp of Engineers approval would include approval by the CT DEEP, the USCG and the Town of Darien. Several members of the Commission expressed the desire that the Boat Club keep the Commission better informed on the progress of the proposal.

ID of Hazardous Rock Projects

The status of the Hazardous Rock Project was discussed. Commissioner Huffard, with the assistance of Commissioner Cavers, will submit a list of suggested submerged rock hazards to the Commission by the June meeting. The process required to mark the objects with hazard buoys was discussed. It was pointed out that approvals by governmental bodies (e.g. CT DEEP, USCG) would be required. Other considerations include securing resources to cover the cost and yearly maintenance of the buoys. Precedent exists with Darien's two existing hazard buoys.

Repositioning of one or both of the No Wake buoys at the edge of Darien Harbor was also discussed. Commissioner Huffard expressed the view that the buoys would be more visible and therefore effective if one were better centered in the channel. Commissioner Huffard will confer with Harbor Master Bell on the matter.

Bridge/Pier Permits

Two construction permits were reviewed by the Commission: a proposal to build a replacement bridge from Long Neck Point to Neds Island near Hay Island, and a new pier and associated removal of miscellaneous riprap in Scott's Cove. The Commissioners did not have any objections to the plans as proposed and approved by the CT DEEP. The new bridge to Neds Island will replace an old bridge in complete disrepair and the work in Scott's Cove appeared to conform to all siting standards.

Suggestion for Commission Projects

Chairman McDonald encouraged commissioners to think of additional projects for the Commission to work on.

Other Business

Commissioner Spivey informed the Commission that the CT DEEP 2014 Trawl Survey is currently being undertaken. The CT DEEP utilizes the John Dempsey, a 46 foot survey boat, to measure temperature, salinity, water depth and netted species. The Trawl Survey results are broadly used to support both local and coast-wide fishery management and increasingly to gauge the ecological health of the Sound. Frequent users include the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, Mid-Atlantic and New England Fishery Management Councils, National Marine Fisheries Service, Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, State of New York, numerous university researchers, environmental groups and environmental consulting companies.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, June 4th, 2014 in Room 119.

Respectfully submitted,

William Cavers, Acting Clerk