

# 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 SCHOUEDEL  
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 June 4, 2014 Meeting

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

Present: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Vice Chairman Raleigh, Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, Munro, Spivey and Harbor Master Tom Bell

Absent: Commissioners Kemp, Schoudel, Sparkman and Vilter

The minutes of the last meeting on May 7, 2014 were approved with several corrections noted by Vice Chairman Jewett regarding the Status of "Sandy" Repairs and the Proposed Darien Boat Club Expansion.

### Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald informed the Commission that the Fish Island oyster beds were for sale, part of a land package that includes the Fish Islands and the shorefront property just north of the islands. The Felder estate has the entire package listed for \$20 MM. The Fish Islands are now being policed by the Darien Marine Police Unit to insure that boaters and swimmers keep off the island as it is private property and the estate had recently asked for such enforcement. Some residents have complained to Harbor Master Bell about this because the prior owner always granted access. The Commissioners discussed the matter and Harbor Master Bell planned to talk to Planning and Zoning and report back to the Commission regarding laws and regulations delineating boaters and property owner's rights.

Chairman McDonald informed the Commission of outside meetings and events and noted some of the group associations valuable to the Commission:

- The CT DEEP recently held a boat titling meeting regarding a recently passed CT bill requiring boats to the titled after 2015. The implication for CT boaters is not yet clear.
- The 2014 Connecticut Boaters Guide has been published by the CT DEEP. Copies were handed out.
- The US Coast Guard 2013 Recreational Boating Statistics Report has been released. Chairman McDonald distributed copies and suggested that Commissioners examine the report's findings.
- The Fairfield County Commodores Association has formed a task force looking into the affects that high-speed ferries will have on boating safety in Long Island Sound. Chairman McDonald serves as Secretary of the group.
- Chairman McDonald made reference to the CT Harbor Management Association and the fact that Darien has a seat on the commission. The mission of the Connecticut Harbor Management Association is "...to assist and support Connecticut Harbor Management Commissions by facilitating the exchange

of information and ideas among commissions and by providing liaison between commissions and local, state and federal agencies involved in the management of Connecticut's marine and harbor resources.”

- Chairman McDonald also noted that the Commission has a seat on the Citizens Action Commission of the Long Island Sound Study. This group advises the federally funded Long Island Sound Study, an environmentally-focused partnership between the EPA, State of New York and State of Connecticut. The Commission has membership by virtue of a seat granted to the First Selectman of Darien.

### **Harbor Master's Report**

Harbor Master Tom Bell reported the following matters to the Commission:

- Darien residents are very slow this season in getting their boats onto their harbor moorings and into their slips at the Darien Boat Club. As a result, the usual June 15th check to insure that the appropriate boats are on the appropriate moorings will be delayed until early July.
- Four new moorings were anchored in the outer harbor and approximately 8 mooring exchanges have also taken place.
- There is an illegal mooring near the entrance to Zeigler's Cove. It will be pulled shortly.
- The harbor continues to experience boats speeding in the No Wake Zone. The commissioners discussed the appropriate placement of the No Wake Buoys in the harbor. Commissioner Huffard reiterated his suggestion that the buoys be moved closer together, more central to the channel, so that boaters will take more notice of the regulations. Harbor Master Bell noted that the Darien Marine Police set the buoys and that he would further investigate the issue.
- The harbor's two mid-channel buoys are still being repaired, but would soon be fixed and deployed.
- Chairman Huffard noted that the rock hazard buoy off Long Neck Point appeared eastward of its usual location. Harbor Master Bell agreed to ask Jeffrey Eng of Noroton Yacht Club to make sure the buoy was on position.
- The last 3 moorings in The Gut's east-west mooring line have been fixed and will be reset June 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Vice Chairman - Shellfish Report**

Vice Chairman Bud Raleigh reported the following matters to the Commission:

- The clam population is robust this season due to last October's stocking.
- Water quality readings were recently undertaken by the CT DEEP in the oyster reef area of the Goodwives River. The samples were excellent - less than 4 coliform units less in the river, less than 2 across from the Darien Boat Club - and a strong improvement over prior samples. Periodic testing by the CT DEEP will continue.
- To date, 26 shellfish permits have been issued in Darien this season: 14 to Stamford residents, 4 to Darien residents, and the remainder to residents of other towns.
- There are two new oystering rules being implemented in Long Island Sound: all harvested oysters must be iced within 20 minutes, and all harvested oysters must have 3-inch shells.

### **Gorham's Pond Project – Presentation, Description and Status**

Chairman McDonald talked to John Lundeen, the head of the Friends of Gorham's Pond. Mr. Lundeen wasn't available to speak directly to the Commission tonight, but he gave Chairman McDonald an update on his group's project to restore Gorham's Pond. Current efforts are focused on the Upper Pond. The dam in the

Upper Pond is dysfunctional and as a result, pollution and Rt. 95 sand runoff is flowing directly into Gorham's Pond. The group has requested a permit from the CT Attorney General's office to rebuild the dam in order to control the flow of detritus, as well as to install a fish ladder. Permitting on dams is challenging in CT, but the group is hopeful for a favorable decision within the next few weeks as the matter impacts what flows into Darien's harbors. The Friends of Gorham's Pond are hoping to dredge the Upper Pond in the late summer/early fall, and follow up with dredging the Lower Pond later on. The group received \$400,000 in a Small Town Economic Assistance (STEAP) grant from the State of Connecticut. This provides considerable funding for the project. The group believes that to the extent dredging efforts can utilize a technology called "Total Clean System" that effectively cleans and separates sand from dredged material (and allows the sale of the sand back to the town, generating funds and avoiding costly inland disposal of dredged material), the STEAP grant may be sufficient to complete the entire restoration of the Upper as well as Lower Ponds. A newsletter, Watershed Watch, is published by the Friends of Gorham's Pond to keep local residents up to date on these efforts.

### **Paddle Sports Safety Education Effort - Status**

Commissioner Cavers gave a status report on the effort by the Commission to help establish a safety program for kayakers, stand-up paddle boarders and canoeists in Darien's local waters. Commissioner Cavers and Vice Chairman Jewett reported on a meeting with the Darien Boat Club's Commodore Glen Osberg and Dinghy and Kayak Racks person, Rob Komminsk, on the possibility of DBC and the Commission co-hosting a safety program on the beaches of the Boat Club. DBC appeared highly interested and agreed to work with the Commission on the project. The parties agreed to establish several initial goals: (i) select a competent instruction firm; (ii) establish the content of a 2-3 hour safety class; and (iii) work through the logistics and legal requirements of holding classes at the Darien Boat Club. In discussion at the Commission meeting, it was noted that other venues and town organizations could participate and help establish a program. Chairman McDonald suggested talking with Dot Kelly, the Kayak Captain at the Noroton Yacht Club. Darien's Department of Parks and Recreation will also be consulted. Commissioner Cavers will report back on progress at the next meeting.

### **Election of Officers**

Chairman McDonald opened the floor to changing the leadership of the Commission by reading the following statement:

To: The Advisory Commission on Coastal Waters:

June 4, 2014

After 18 years as chairman of the Commission, I have decided to step down from this job. It is time for the responsibility for Darien's valuable coastal waters to have new leadership. In addition, Vice Chairman Link Jewett will also retire from his position after a similar long period of service. We will both plan to continue to serve on the Commission as members.

I have enjoyed being on this commission since it was formed by the Board of Selectmen 22 years ago, on January 30, 1992, concentrating on Darien and Long Island Sound coastal water issues which continue to be important, interesting, and fun to be involved with. We feel it is very appropriate at this time to pass the torch to some new hands who will be able to spend the time leading us on the issues affecting Darien's coastal waters.

I greatly appreciate the support you have given the Commission and me.

At the elections planned for our June 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, Vice Chairman Bud Raleigh proposed new officers as follows for your consideration:

Chairman	Flip Huffard
Vice Chairman	Bill Cavers

Warmest regards and happy sailing this summer,

Sandy McDonald

Chairman McDonald then opened the floor to any alternative slates for the Commission's new officers. There were none. As such, Vice Chairman Raleigh proposed voting on the new leadership slate. Commissioner Huffard's and Commissioner Cavers' nominations were seconded and the Commission voted to approve the candidates as the new officers of the Commission. Original charter documents from the Commission's formation 22 years ago were handed to newly elected Chairman Huffard. Chairman Huffard thanked Chairman McDonald and Vice Chairman Jewett for their long years of invaluable service with the Commission, as well as for their pledge of ongoing Commission work.

#### **ID of Hazardous Rock Projects**

Newly elected Chairman Huffard handed out a chart of Darien's coastal waters complete with circled rock hazards that are candidates for marking with hazard buoys. The Commission agreed to consider the suggested locations. A general discussion ensued regarding the process steps that would need to be undertaken to install buoys. Harbor Master Bell noted that all the buoys are within Darien's coastal water boundaries and therefore within his authority. Commissioner McDonald volunteered to talk with CT DEEP on buoy installation and required permitting. Commissioner Spivey agreed to help.

#### **Status of Sandy Repairs and Proposed Darien Boat Club Expansion Project**

Commissioner Link Jewett gave a brief update on activities at the Darien Boat Club. He noted that the gas pump and the head pump-out station were both fully repaired and operational. With regard to the club's expansion project, he stated that the Boat Club was still waiting for the Army Corp of Engineers to approve the club's submissions.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 PM. The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, July 6th, 2014 in Room 119.

Respectfully submitted,

William Cavers, Acting Clerk