

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

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Green's Ledge Light

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS:
LORENE BORA, PARKS & REC COMM.
JOHN KEENA, HARBOR MASTER
OFFICER JAMES PALMIERI, POLICE

Minutes of Meeting Monday, September 11, 2023, 7:30 PM Darien Town Hall, Room 119

- Call to order: 7:30pm
- In attendance: Cavers, Bridges, Furlong, Huffard, Khan, Jones, Marks, Roberto, Tankoos, Wright. Absent: Dever. Also joining: Bora and Keena

Update on Great Island by Selectman Jon Zagrodzky

- Selectman Zagrodzky was in attendance for the start of the meeting and shared an update on the Great Island Project.
 - The recently formed Great Island Advisory Committee is in the process of developing plans for allowing limited access to Great Island for Darien residents prior to the completion of the various upgrades necessary to fulfill the long-term vision for the island. The plan for short-term access may be made available as early as November 2023.
 - Several issues remain to be settled which can have an impact on how the island will eventually be developed for public use. Included is the need to remediate elevated levels of arsenic found in the soil in certain locations, stemming from fertilizer application from previous years, as well as access road improvements required for safe public access.

Chairman's Report

- Chairman Cavers requested, and received, Commission approval of the April 17, May 15, and July 10 meeting minutes.
- Based on the results of the 2023 Harbor Channel Depth survey, provided by Coastline Consultants, it is evident that the channel is shoaling in several locations and may well require dredging in the near future. The Commission believes that the town should proceed with an application for a harbor dredging permit as soon as possible. The permit application will cost approximately \$16,000. It is estimated that DEEP will require two years from the application date to grant the permit. Once the permit is granted, it remains valid for five years from the grant date. Assuming an application can be submitted in late 2023, it can be granted in late 2025, and dredging can be scheduled anytime from late 2025 through late 2030. Chairman Cavers has recommended to the First Selectman that the town start the application for a harbor dredging permit with DEEP as soon as possible.

- In late August, the Connecticut Department of Aquaculture confirmed the three Connecticut people who were infected from Vibrio bacteria were not infected due to issues associated with consuming shellfish from Long Island Sound waters. Two of the infections were wound related and one was related to a Connecticut resident who had consumed shellfish from outside Long Island Sound. The Department of Aquaculture confirmed that no extraordinary risk exists at present related to Vibrio bacteria present in Long Island Sound shellfish.

Harbormaster's Report

- Harbormaster Keena has developed a proposed ordinance change to address several issues including mooring tackle rules and wait lists, and to document the location of 5 MPH speed zones and hazard marks in Darien waters. He had the opportunity to review his proposal with several Harbormasters from nearby harbors including Westport, Greenwich, and Norwalk, and they all indicated his proposed ordinance changes were similar to ordinances in their respective harbors.
- 5 MPH speed zone and hazard mark changes are particularly needed in the vicinity of Great Island which will likely be subject to increased levels of boat traffic in the coming years.
- The Commission has formed a mooring subcommittee to assist Harbormaster Keena with ordinance changes related to mooring tackle rules and wait lists. Commissioner Marks will chair the effort.
- The specific process to follow in order to obtain an official ordinance change is not fully understood yet by Harbormaster Keena. It is likely that some level of State approval will be necessary. Selectman Zagrodzky offered to assist Commissioner Keena in this regard.

Open Discussion/Updates

- Raised docks are becoming more commonplace in CT waters, including in Darien and Greenwich. A recent court battle in Greenwich focused on the aesthetic impact of raised docks. DEEP does not seem to be opposing raised docks from an aesthetic viewpoint.
- Commissioner Jones provided an update on water quality sampling. Thanks to commission support, the program continues to generate data sampling results on a regular basis. Recent samples have indicated low dissolved oxygen readings which is concerning but not unexpected considering the warm water temperatures that Darien typically experiences in late summer.

Adjournment

- Chairman Cavers adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.