

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

WILLIAM CAVERS, INTERIM CHAIRMAN
JIM FURLONG, INTERIM VICE CHAIRMAN
SAM BRIDGES
DAVE DEVER
FLIP HUFFARD
JULIE JONES
DAVID KAHN
KEVIN MARKS
ROB ROBERTO
GRANT TANKOOS
WILLIAM WRIGHT



Green's Ledge Light

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

Minutes of Meeting October 24, 2023, 7:30 PM Darien Town Hall, Room 119

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

Update on Great Island and other Items 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 (probably limited to pedestrian and bike 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 that could impact 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 from prior fertilization practices, as well as access road improvements required for safe public access.
 - One or two commissioners are welcome to attend the ongoing meetings of Great Island Advisory Committee. Selectman Zagrodzky welcomes our input on issues the commission has already highlighted and on matters coming up.
- Selectman Zagrodzky reviewed progress on the proposed ordinance changes with Harbor Master John Keena and members of the Mooring Policy Committee. He invited the parties to submit the documented proposals at the January Board of Selectman's meeting if possible. A discussion ensued about utilizing the town's counsel and the Selectman to determine appropriate approval authorities and procedures for any advocated changes.

Chairman's Report

- Chairman Cavers requested, and received, Commission approval of the September 11th meeting minutes.
- Chairman Cavers discussed the upcoming annual expiration of the Commissioners' terms and the renomination procedure. He encouraged Commission members to volunteer as officers for the 2024 ACCW.
- The Commission revisited the discussion regarding applying for a dredging permit for Darien Harbor channel which is shoaling in several locations. The Commission has yet to receive word from the First Selectman's Office that the town intends to engage a coastal engineering consultant to apply for a permit. The permit application process takes up to two years to complete and the Commission has previously advised the First Selectman's office and Selectman Zagrodzky to start the process as soon as possible. Once the permit is granted, it remains valid for five years from the grant date.
- Commissioner Huffard had previously inquired whether the dredging spoils from the proposed dredging of the Darien Harbor channel could be used as fill in Pear Tree Point parking lot repair project. Commissioner Bora reported that this inquiry had been forwarded on to Dan Biggs of Weston & Sampson, the professional hired to prepare and handle the CT DEEP approval for Darien. Mr. Biggs responded noting that the dredge material is (i) primarily fines/sands, which are not suitable to be used as fill for the parking area, and (ii) is required to be sent off site to an acceptable receiving facility per State/Federal requirements due to contamination levels.
- Commissioner Bora also reported that Mr. Biggs inquired on the Coastal Commission's behalf whether the proposed dredging permit for the Darien Harbor channel should be submitted to CT DEEP on its own or as an amendment to the approved C.O.P. that Parks & Rec had already received for the Pear Tree Project, as the permit issued for the Pear Tree Project covers some of the area to be dredged. CT DEEP advised that a new application needed to be submitted. The Pear Tree Point project dredging has minimal overlap with the area proposed to be dredged in the Darien Harbor channel. Trying to combine the two projects would also likely delay the Pear Tree Point project, which was started two years ago. Commissioner Bora reported that, while in theory the Pear Tree Point project could be delayed to allow the town to catch up and get the dredging permit, doing so would delay among other things the repair of the boat ramp which has been on the Commissions wish list for at least a decade.
- Commissioner Cavers informed the Commissioners of Long Island Sound Field Excursions and the Sustainable & Resilient Communities Workshops that will be taking place this fall. He encouraged the Commissioners to attend these workshops to understand what resources might be available to Darien.
- Commissioner Cavers informed the Commissioners of past grant money rounds under the CT Port Authorities Small Harbor Improvement Projects Program, a program that might provide possible grant funding for projects such as the Darien Harbor channel dredging. He encouraged the Commissioners to explore any remaining solicitations under the program and other recently increased federal and state funding sources.

Harbormaster's Report

- Harbormaster Keena gave a brief update on the mooring waitlist and the proposed removal of the powerboats moored north of the Boat Club. He also informed the Commission of the removal of a powerboat that had capsized and sank in Darien Harbor. No pollution was associated with this event.

Task Updates

- Following on the discussion of the changes to the Town ordinances related to mooring tackle rules and speed buoys, Commissioner Marks, the Chairman of the Mooring Policy Committee provided the Commission with an update of its progress and its proposed plans for moving the changes to finalization and approval. Commissioner Marks provided the full Commission with the current working draft of the various changes to the Town ordinances/regulations. The Commission agreed that it would be willing to hold a special meeting before the end of 2023 if necessary to expedite the process so that the changes would be in place for the spring of 2024. It was agreed that any final proposed changes should be approved by the Commission as a whole before being recommended to the Board of Selectman.
- Commissioner Jones provided an update on water quality sampling. The team wrapped up the sampling for the 2023 season, allowing Darien's embayments to be included in Save the Sounds the Long Island Sound Unified Water Study 2023 Report. Thanks were given to Commissioner Jones on her leadership of the effort through the season.

Adjournment

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