

Five Mile River Commission Minutes
October 3, 2013
The Boardroom, Rowayton Community Center
33 Rowayton Ave., Rowayton, CT 06853

Commission members in attendance:

Matthew Marion, Chairman
William Jessup, Commissioner
Dirk Leasure, Commissioner
Ray Meurer, Harbor Superintendent
David Snyder, Assistant Harbor Superintendent

Guests:

Clute Ely, The Boatworks
Grove Ely, The Boatworks
Steve Bartush, Norwalk resident who berths his boat at a dock at 71 Rowayton Ave.

Chairman Marion took the chair at 7:42 p.m. and invited Clute and Grove Ely (“the Owners”) to present their plans for the construction of an eight unit residential building to replace an existing two story office building at 71 Rowayton Ave. and for the modification of the existing boatyard at 77 Rowayton Ave.

As background, the Owners explained that the existing two story office building at 77 Rowayton Avenue was severely damaged by T/S Sandy, requiring it to be either raised and substantially renovated or demolished. This led to the development of the property as an eight unit residence and a renovated working boatyard. New bulk heading for the property was installed seven years ago.

Using a large photo of the proposed building and a one page layout showing the proposed building and the boatyard, the Owners reviewed the proposed development and confirmed that all the water related activities currently associated with the property will remain the same. Specifically, they stated that: (i) no moorings or slips would be lost due to the project, (ii) new bathroom facilities would be provided for all mooring and slip holders; (iii) additional parking would be added for slip and mooring holders; and (iv) the marina would continue to service ground tackle and provide other ancillary services for its mooring holders tackle, etc.

Existing boat slips in the immediate area and the dingy storage space used to access boats on moorings will be retained. The plans also include a new maintenance workshop with attached bathroom facilities. The owners noted that they would like to utilize a new hydraulic crane to haul their customers’ boats. However, the application for a crane permit has been deferred.

The Commissioners acknowledged the Owner’s decision to preserve the working boatyard and ensure that the existing boat slips and access to mooring in the river remain unchanged. The Commissioners also noted the 15 foot wide public access walkway bordering the property that

will provide public access to the waterfront and the abutting seven car parking area with a fenced off area for refuse containers. Parking for 16 cars will be provided underneath the residential structure. The existing black topped area abutting the residences will accommodate an additional 23 cars during the boating season and will be used for boat storage during the winter.

Chairman Marion thanked Clute and Grove Ely for their presentation and they both left the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Steve Bartush, who keeps his boat in a slip at 71 Rowayton Ave., commented that it is important that tenants know they will have a working boatyard as a neighbor. Chairman Marion commented that the Owners' plans confirm their commitment to preserving the existing boatyard. In addition, Mr. Bartush stated that tenants should be made aware that they will be close to all the activity associated with boats leaving and returning to the boat slips that surround the southerly and westerly sides of the property. The Commissioners noted that, according to the Owners, the boatyard and marina will be separately owned, and that the tenants will have no direct control over the yard or marina operations.

The Commission reviewed a DEEP application covering the proposed bulk head replacement at 79 Rowayton Ave., Rowayton, Conn. The Commissioners were of the opinion that the project did not impact the River and, therefore, that no formal comment was required.

At the request from the Town of Darien, Planning and Zoning Commission, for comments regarding the impact on Five Mile River of the construction of a new home at 66 Five Mile River Road, Darien, Conn., the Commissioners visited the site and discussed the project with the property owner and their consultants, Roberge Associates. The Commissioners agreed that the dock and boat lift, as proposed, will have no negative impact on the safe navigation or ecology of the river.

Chairman Marion requested that the Commissioners provide articles for an issue of **Currents** to be emailed to boat owners this fall. Steve Bartush, a biologist, volunteered to write an article about the "green stuff" growing in the mud flats that he identified as benthic algae. According to Mr. Bartush, its rapid growth is the result of greater water clarity (due to less suspended particulate) which has increased the direct sunlight and thereby accelerated algae growth on the river bottom.

Tammy Papp, administrative assistant, 2013 year-to-date reports showed:

- Expenses \$7,712.23. YTD 2012 was \$6,562.92. A difference of plus \$1,149.31.
- Income from moorings \$14,400. YTD 2012 was \$15,750. A difference of minus \$1,350.
- Income from dockage \$28,000. YTD 2012 was \$127,250. A difference of plus \$750.

Harbor Superintendent Report:

No tickets were issued since the last meeting.

Regarding the Commission's interest in a website, the Town of Darien agreed to host a website for the Commission and Cecil Wade, who created a website for the Darien Senior Men's Association, volunteered to build the website at no charge. A decision to move forward would be based on whether or not the Commissioners feel a website would be helpful to boaters using the river and the activities of the FMRC.

Dirk Leasure asked that the master list of dock owners be circulated to all the Commissioners so they can review the names of boat owners who have not paid the 2013 harbor use fee.

The new harbor use fees become effective January 1, 2014. The dock and mooring applications will be revised to reflect the changes. The \$50 fee was increased to \$100. The \$100 fee was increased to \$150. The \$200 fee remains unchanged since it is at the maximum allowed by Connecticut state law.

Also new this year, the applications will be one page instead of a three part form. In addition, the mooring permit renewals will be sent out via email, helping to reduce printing and postage costs.

Chairman Marion declared an executive session at 8:53 p.m.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

The remaining meeting date for 2013 is November 7.

Respectfully submitted,
Ray Meurer
Harbor Superintendent