

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

JOHN McDONALD, CHAIRMAN
C. LINCOLN JEWETT, VICE CHAIRMAN
WALTER RALEIGH, SHELLFISH
FRANK KEMP, CLERK
WILLIAM CAVERS
FLIP HUFFARD
ROBERT MONRO
JON SCHOUDEL
J. PALMER SPARKMAN
MICHAEL WALLACE

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



Green's Ledge Light

Minutes of May 4, 2011 Meeting

Chairman McDonald called the meeting to order at 7:33 pm in Room 213, Town Hall.

Present were: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Commissioners Raleigh, Kemp, Monro, Schoudel, Sparkman, and Wallace.

Absent were: Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, and Harbor Commissioner Bell.

It was noted that the meeting was being recorded by Channel 79 for possible future broadcast.

The minutes of the April 6, 2011 meeting were reviewed and approved.

Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald noted that appointments have been made to Darien's Selectmen's Emergency Management Committee: Harbor Master Bell, Manager of Darien Boat Club Jim Baker, and the Chair of this Commission, Sandy McDonald.

He noted that there is a pending permit for repair of existing sea wall with some filling at 3 Purdy Road. It was circulated for review, and received no comments from the Commission.

He reported that he had prepared a letter to the First Selectman and State Representative Wood, expressing reservations about the proposed State legislation that would raise taxes and lower exemptions on boats and boating activities. It is believed that this could be injurious to recreational boaters and the maritime trades. Senator Wood has replied, supporting the Commission's position, and encouraging citizen's comments to be directed to the Legislature and the Governor.

The finding for the initial survey stage of a harbor dredging project, included in the approved town budget for 2011-2012, will be acted upon by the Representative Town Meeting on Monday, May 9. The amount, \$ 5,300 will be expended in the Fall of 2011 for the exploration of the current depths of the harbor, in an effort to determine if and when a dredging project is warranted.

Harbor Master's Report

Since Harbor Master Bell was unable to attend the meeting, Chairman McDonald read his report, which is included as an Attachment.

Shellfish Report

Commissioner Raleigh presented a report, which is included as an Attachment.

Flare/Up!/2011

Commissioner Kemp reviewed the plans for the Flare/Up! event and invited Commissioners to attend a preliminary safety briefing on Wednesday May 11, and the event on May 14 at Weed Beach, 9:30am to 11:30am. He will forward further information to the Commission by e-mail this week.

Mooring Specifications

Commissioner Monro distributed draft updates to the mooring standards, which would specify the use of bottom chain, scope of mooring, the weight of moorings on boats over 30 feet, and the size of chain. Commissioners' comments should be forwarded to the Chairman and Commissioner Monro. A vote on these matters is anticipated at the next meeting, in June.

Other Business

Vice Chairman Jewett reported The Darien Boat Club is scheduled to start its first launch service by the end of May. A sewer pipeline, eliminating the septic tank, is to be installed connecting to the Town's main line in Pear Tree Point Road. A pump out station will be installed at the Club's dock. Discussions are going on with the CT Department of Environment Protection on the issues of a conceivable expansion of the number of boat slips.

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 1, 2011 in Room 213, Town Hall, 7:30 pm

Respectfully submitted

Frank B. Kemp
Clerk

Attachments:

<u>Title</u>	<u>Author</u>
Harbor Master's Report 5/4/11	Tom Bell
Shellfish Report 5/4/11	Walter Raleigh

The Harbor Master was unable to attend the meeting, due to the requirements of business travel.

The following report was sent to the Chairman, who read it to the Commission:

Sandy:

Due to business travel, I will be unable to attend tonight's meeting.

Wanted to give the commission an update on the online mooring registration status:

- Currently have 300 users in the system.
- 192 have successfully completed the process.
- 43 Still need to renew their mooring by May 9th.
- We have 49 people on a waiting lists with 30 of those requesting new moorings (this is mainly due to the DBC's new launch service)
- We will begin clearing this list after June 15th when existing mooring holders should be on their moorings.
- Several of the new requests are for boats that will be placed in the "gut" where there is the most open space.
- 5 people have decided not to renew

All-in-all, the process is working well. Issues have been reported about the online payment system, and some not wishing to use it. We have worked with those folks and will continue to accept checks mailed to our PO Box.

I'm quit pleased with the process. We have also discovered about 10 undocumented mooring owners.

Starting mid-May Town of Darien Permit decals will be mailed to all registered and approved mooring holders.

Please let me know if there any questions from the committee members.

Thx.

Tom Bell

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Scott Cove water quality: Darien Health Department Director, Dave Knauf, has investigated the possibility of DNA testing to ascertain the source of possible pollution in Scott Cove. The cost was found to be prohibitive. Unfortunately, any results might not convince the CT Bureau of Aquaculture to open the Cove to recreational shellfishing. Aquaculture is concerned that the thin soil covering ledge in the area surrounding the Cove may be incapable of holding septic system effluent from polluting the water. The obvious answer is sewerage the area, which is happening, along with a high percentage of households connecting.

Contact with Norwalk shellfish companies: In an attempt to preserve Darien's existing shellfish resources, I attended Norwalk Shellfish Commission's April meeting and spoke with two Norwalk shellfish companies, encouraging them to apply to our First Selectman for a permit to work the restricted relay area in Scott Cove or other available area. (Since Darien has no separate shellfish commission, the Selectmen are the default commission, per CT State Statute.)

The concern is that if shellfish beds are not worked on a periodic basis, accumulations of silt can suffocate the shellfish. While one Darien commercial operator worked the restricted relay area in Scott Cove last year, the balance of Scott Cove, as well as other natural shellfish beds in town waters, have not been worked for several years.

As of this date, no commercial entity has requested a permit from Mr. Campbell. I am not able to attend the Norwalk shellfish commission's monthly meeting tomorrow evening, but I hope to follow up with the Norwalk people soon.

Oyster hatchery visits: David Knauf and I visited two oyster hatcheries in the past month. One is in South Norwalk. The other is reestablishing in Ziegler's Cove at the site of a hatchery formerly owned by the late William Ziegler. The Ziegler's Cove operation, which calls itself Ned's Island Oyster Co., will grow oysters in cages on the bottom, outside the Cove, as indicated in a recent permit the Commission received from the Army Corps of Engineers. The hatchery hopes to market oysters to local restaurants and on the Internet.

New MOU for Darien shellfishing grounds: First Selectman David Campbell and Health Department Director David Knauf signed off on a new Memorandum Of Understanding, issued by the CT Department of Agriculture and its Bureau of Aquaculture. A separate MOU for Darien is occasioned by the change in status for Scott and Ziegler's Coves from Approved in the case of both, to Prohibited and Conditionally Approved respectively. An MOU describes the shellfish growing areas and specifies the duties of various municipal and state agencies in the management of the areas, particularly with respect to closures due to rainfall events and other potentially polluting circumstances like sewage overflow. The previous MOU was signed in 2004.