

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

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

Green's Ledge Light

Minutes of the December 7, 2011 Meeting

Present: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, Kemp, Monro, Schoudel, Sparkman and Wallace, and Harbor Master Bell.

Absent: Commissioner Raleigh.

Guests included David Knauf (Director of Health – Town of Darien), Randy Tankoos (Commodore – Noroton Yacht Club), David Dever (Commodore – Darien Boat Club).

The meeting was called to order at 7:30pm by Chairman McDonald.

The minutes of the meeting of November 2, 2011 were distributed for review. They will be taken up for review and approval at the next meeting – February 1, 2012.

Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald noted that the Commission's meeting schedule for 2012 had been distributed, and that it continued to be the first Wednesday of every month, excepting January, July and August. All meetings will be at 7:30pm in Room 213 Darien Town Hall.

Meetings outside of Darien within the last month have included: the Connecticut Boating Advisory Council (Nov. 9 in Old Lyme – McDonald attending) and the Connecticut Harbor Management Association (December 6 in Branford – McDonald and Cavers attending).

The Chairman has been meeting with Town Administrator Karl Kilduff, concerning the dredging survey.

Chairman McDonald noted that there would be two meetings in the next month that Commissioners were invited to attend:

- Citizens Advisory Council of the Long Island Study –December 8 in Stamford. The topic of this meeting is a letter to Congress supporting the funds to be allocated the Long Island Study for conservation.

- Connecticut Boating Advisory Council – January 11, 2012 at the Norwalk Maritime Center.

Harbor Master Report

Harbor Master Bell reported that that there were no new developments at this point.

Shellfish Report

Although Commissioner Raleigh was absent, due to a delayed return from a trip, he had invited David Knopf, Director of Health, Town of Darien, to join the meeting for an update.

Director Knopf briefly recapped the issue of the closed shellfishing area in Scott Cove. In the fall of 2008 the Dept. of Aquaculture advised his office that Scott Cove would be closed due to the deterioration of water quality, and the lack of access to private property to inspect the functioning of local septic fields. In the interim the Town has conducted a survey of the properties in the area, finding no septic system in violation.

During the same period the Department has conducted regular testing of waters at the Town's beaches, finding no systematic violations, except for a brief period after major storms. DNA testing has been conducted to determine the difference between human and waterfowl waste, and the presence of human waste was not detected.

He noted that a program for inspecting septic systems is difficult to administer, however permits and inspections are tied to the issue of building permits for construction or major renovations.

The State has been reluctant to accept the results of the Town's testing as the basis of reopening the Scott Cove beds, and the State has not scheduled re-testing of the area.

The Commission requested that the Town's Department of Health prepare a request to the State Department of Aquaculture to 1) approve the Town's procedures for testing the water quality in an effort to re-open the Scott Cove shellfish beds, and 2) failing this effort, the Department of Health will request that the State return to test the Scott Cove area, with a view to having it reopened for recreational shellfishing. A copy of this correspondence will be provided to the Chair of this Commission.

The Commission expressed its appreciation to Director Knopf, noting that this update was especially valuable and informative.

Report of FEMA meeting on Darien flood zones

Commissioner Jewett reported on the meeting which outlined FEMA's Flood Risk Products: a Flood Risk Report, a Flood Risk Map and a Flood Risk Database. The Flood Risk Report provides stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of flood hazard and risk exposure within their community, watershed, or other geographic area. The report parallels the Flood Insurance Study report by providing a narrative of the food risk assessment methodology and results.

Flood Insurance Rate Maps are used by insurance agents to determine where flood insurance must be purchased and how much that insurance will cost.

Mooring Specifications

Commissioner Huffard reported on his review of the latest mooring specification's draft. He distributed a chart describing ten issues to be considered in the revision of the mooring specifications. Each of these issues was reviewed with the Commission, however there are still several issues to be researched. For advice on several of these issues he has consulted with Captain Jeff Eng, who maintains the majority of moorings in the harbor, and who has extensive experience in this matter.

Commissioner Huffard volunteered to prepare a new draft of the proposed standards by the end of the month for review by the Commission. Commissioners are requested to review this material in advance of the February 1, 2012 meeting, and return any suggestions for further revisions well prior to the meeting, so that another draft may be prepared if necessary.

Dredging Project

Chairman McDonald reported that he had been meeting with Town Administrator Kilduff, and that any outstanding issues may be quickly resolved so that the survey may be conducted as early as February.

Commodore Tankoos noted that the Noroton Yacht Club is contemplating a dredging effort for its area of the harbor, and that it would attempt to coordinate any survey work prior to the dredging with the Commission.

Other Business - Pear Tree Point Boat Ramp

Commissioner Cavers reported on his research regarding the slope of the Pear Tree Boat Ramp. He has confirmed by observation and measurement that the slope is approximately 9.9% for 75' and then for the final 25', 8.9%. This is well under the desirable slope of 12.5% - and the practical cut-off for functionality cited by the CT DEEP of 10% as the threshold for complaints. (Note – if the slope is too small (low) the towing vehicle's axles and body are likely to be immersed in salt water prior to the trailer being deep enough in the water to launch a boat.

Commissioner Cavers was asked to review the matter with Park & Rec and secure their estimate as to the cost of remedying the situation.

Other Business Darien Boat Club renovations and repairs

Commodore Dever reported on the Boat Club's renovation project, and the repairs due to storm damage. The new sewer line has been run from the club to the hook-up at the road, and the former septic field has been deactivated. Conduit has been prepared to hold the new water line, phone lines and cable. A stand-pipe has been installed for use by the Fire Department, with a hydrant installed at the gangway so that water may be available in event of a boat-fire. Asphalt is being put down in the parking lot at this time. Power will be available at the club within the week.

The new pump-out facility will be open to the public, with gasoline supplies only available to club members, as is currently the case. A new fuel system has been installed, with 24/7 monitoring and alert services. Fuel delivery is provided from the 10,000 gallon underground fuel tank.

The Darien Boat Club is expected to be open for its members in late April, 2012.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:22pm.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, February 1, 2012.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank B. Kemp, Clerk