Minutes of Meeting – Monday, September 17, 2018

Town Hall, Room 119

Meeting called to order at 7:30 PM by Chairman Huffard

Present: Flip Huffard, William Cavers, Dave Dever, David Kahn, Frank Kemp, Tom Lochtefeld, Robert Vilter, Audrey Weil and Harbor Master Tom Bell

Absent: Eric Barrett and Grant Tankoos

The Minutes from the meeting on July 16, 2018 were read and approved

Chairman’s Report

2019 Agenda and Schedule Discussion:

Chairman Huffard opened the floor for discussion of developing agenda items for future meetings. The Committee agreed that it would be a positive development to invite more speakers to attend Committee Meetings. Committee members resolved to develop lists of proposed speakers for future discussion.

Further, the Committee discussed the possibility of reducing the number of scheduled meetings from eight (8) to six (6). The Committee agreed going forward to schedule eight (8) meetings on an annual basis, but with a view to cancelling a scheduled meeting if the agenda for such meeting was light. It was discussed that meetings would not be held during the months of December and February, as there is little activity at this time of the year. It was further agreed to schedule meetings for the third Monday of the applicable month.

Commissioner Status:

Chairman Huffard announced that he would be stepping down from his position as Chairman, having served in this position for four (4) years, but that he would continue as a commissioner. Chairman
Huffard noted that Vice Chairman Cavers would be an excellent candidate for consideration as Chairman, having serviced as Vice Chairman for four (4) years, and on several occasions, having undertaken the responsibility of Chairman in Chairman Huffard’s absence. Chairman Huffard further noted that a vote would be held at the next meeting to vote for Chairman, and that Vice Chairman Cavers would be a formal candidate for the position, and that any other Member could self-nominate for the position.

Lastly, Chairman Huffard noted that the Connecticut Audubon Society has obtained a new skiff and that the Darien Parks and Recreation Department will allow the society to use the boat launch ramp at Pear Tree Point for access to Long Island Sound.

**Harbor Master’s Report**

Harbor Master Bell spoke to his continuing concern with the excessive speed of some boaters in Darien waters – and this in spite of the new “no wake zone buoys” recently installed.

The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to invite Darien Police Officer Derek Mulcahy, an Ex-Officio Member of the Committee, to speak at an upcoming meeting to provide a year-end “wrap-up” of the prior boating season.

Harbor Master Bell also discussed the results of his survey of occupied moorings, and noted that approximately fifteen (15) boats were not located at their proper moorings.

**Shellfish Report**

Commissioner Kahn reported that the 2018 season was a good clamming season. He reported that the beds are well stocked and the clams are easy to find.

Lastly, Commissioner Kahn reported that a lease for the co-management of the beds will soon expire and that he will be tending to this matter.

**Task Forces**

**Water Quality Update – Potential TNC Presentation and Update on EPC Conversation**

Commissioner Weil reported on a conclusion of the Harbor Watch study, that one home along the Good Wives River had a leaky septic which was resulting in certain contaminants leaching into the river. This has been resolved.

It was further noted that perhaps a more significant concern rests with homeowner’s lawns that abut coastal waters. Fertilizers use on lawns can give rise to higher than normal amounts of nitrogen in the water. The Committee opened the floor up for discussion on whether there may be a way to mitigate this issue by creating some sort of a “buffer zone” between a home owner’s lawn and the water course. Perhaps, for example, a buffer zone could be created by a line of heavy vegetation such as shrubbery. Commissioner Huffard noted that he has had a preliminary discussion with the Environmental Protection Commission on this matter. The Commissioners acknowledged that this is a topic worthy of further education, identification of experts, understanding and development.

Commissioner Weil announced that she will be speaking with Dr. Sarah Crosby at Harbor Watch about extending an invitation to Holly Drinkuth, Director, Outreach and Watershed Programs at The Nature Conservancy, to speak at a future commission meeting on this topic.
It was also mentioned that it is the Committee’s understanding that the Darien and Stamford public works departments and SoundWaters are in discussion about pollution trap works above Holly Pond on the Noroton River. The Committee will stay abreast of these discussions as they occur.

In addition, Commissioner Kemp noted that he will reach out to Leigh Shemitz, President of SoundWaters, to speaking about SoundWater’s perspective of water quality in Darien waters and the nature of their current activities.

**Other Business**

Lastly, it was noted that a local advocacy group known as Bring Your Own (BYO) Darien is getting more attention. BYO efforts are focused on the promoting the use of reusable shopping bangs instead of single-use plastic bags at stores in town. It was discussed to have a representative from BYO speak at an upcoming meeting.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:40 PM.