Minutes of Meeting – Monday, February 26, 2018
Town Hall, Room 119

Meeting called to order at 19:30 by Chairman Huffard

Present: Flip Huffard, Bill Cavers, Dave Dever, David Kahn, Tom Lochtefeld, Robert Vilter, Audrey Weil, Harbormaster Tom Bell, Parks & Rec Commissioner Mary Flynn, Prospective Commissioner Grant Tankoos

Absent: Eric Barret, Link Jewett, Frank Kemp

Chairman’s Report:

Chairman Huffard announced that Commissioner Jewett would be resigning in the near future. A search to fill his Republican seat would begin immediately.

Chairman Huffard introduced Grant Tankoos, Noroton Yacht Club’s designated prospective commissioner.

The Darien Land Trust and Save the Sound have started construction on the Noroton River Fishway. When completed, the fishway will allow fish to swim upstream and lay eggs in the river for the first time in 50 years.

Commissioner Cavers gave a brief update on the Stamford Harbor Commission’s objection to the CT DOT’s run-off solution for the rebuilding of the Route 1 bridge at the Stamford-Darien border.

Harbor Master’s Report

Harbor Master Tom Bell reported that he had assigned existing moorings to three new boaters in
Darien Harbor and that he was waiting for approximately 60-70 boat owners to complete their 2018 mooring applications and payments. He reported that the online mooring system was functioning well.

Shellfish Report:

Shellfish Commissioner David Kahn reported back on the Gathering of the Shellfish Commissions conference that he and Commissioner Lochtefeld attended in February. Commissioner Kahn noted that Darien’s small shellfish activity had little in common with most attendee’s larger size operations/acreage and that several commissions were very concerned with floating oyster cages in their waters.

Task Forces

Water Quality

Audrey Weil noted that Harbor Watch has been in the “track down” phase of its water sampling work in the Goodwives River since July of last year. Of the two pollution sources discovered, only one remains unidentified. It emits effluent near Ring’s End Bridge. Darien’s Dep’t of Public Works will continue to investigate. To date, the sampling project is under budget and predicted to remain so.

Bill Cavers noted that four individuals including him had been identified to form a permanent sampling staff for Darien’s 2018 involvement in Save the Sound’s Unified Water Study. Darien High School volunteers will be solicited in the spring to work under the direction of this group.

Potential New Projects

The following projects were put forth for the Commission to consider as new Task Forces for the 2018 season:

Noroton Bay Moorings – As a way to reduce the 102-boat waiting list for Darien Harbor moorings, the Commission discussed placing additional moorings in Noroton Bay. Harbor Master Bell agreed to survey boaters on his Darien Harbor and Noroton Bay waiting lists to see if they would be interested in such an option. If there are sufficient positive responses, the Commissioners agreed to revert back to Darien Parks & Recreation for guidance on accommodating boat owner dinghies at Weed Beach by means of a rack, rail or chain.

Swimming Rafts – The placement of swimming rafts off Darien’s town beaches was discussed. Parks & Rec Commissioner Mary Flynn stated that she didn’t believe insurance was available for rafts and that rafts were not a priority for her department due to safety concerns. Nonetheless, she said she would follow up with Pam Gery to assess whether there were any areas that the Coastal Commission could help explore, e.g. the use of safer inflatable or plastic raft technology.

Darien Coastal Video – The value of making a video on the beauty and recreational resources of Darien’s coast was discussed. The purpose would be to create a PR tool that would be useful for town officials. Chairman Huffard said he would first reach out to First Selectman Stevenson to gauge her interest. Commissioner Dever volunteered to solicit Darien high school students to help with any
project. Parks & Rec Commissioner Flynn suggested the Commission view any videos undertaken by local realtors and/or other pre-existing videos on YouTube. Commissioner Lochtefeld put forward the idea of creating a contest in town for best video.

Liaison with Darien Parks & Recreation on the Pear Tree Point Refurbishment Project – Chairman Huffard suggested that the Coastal Commission closely follow and lend guidance on the Pear Tree Point refurbishment project. Of concern is the correct rebuilding of the boat launch ramp and, should it be built, a useful and well-designed fishing pier. Parks & Rec Commissioner Flynn noted some of the project timelines and the future formation of a Building Committee. She agreed to give thought as to how the Coastal Commission might best liaise with Parks & Rec as the project progresses.

Possibility of Remediating Light Pollution in Darien Harbor – The possibility of light pollution in Darien’s harbors was briefly discussed. It was noted that Dave Winston of Cove Island Wildlife Sanctuary believes Stamford’s recently installed “full cutoff lights” had noticeably improved Stamford’s waterfront environment. As there was not an agreement amongst the commissioners that light pollution constituted a notable problem in Darien’s harbors, Chairman Huffard suggested that individual commissioners undertake their own due diligence and report back.

Other Business:
Commissioner Weil noted that the individuals in Rowayton who recently purchased Greens Ledge Light are raising funds for its refurbishment. Chairman Huffard suggested we invite the group to talk at our next meeting and Commissioner Weil agreed to reach out to the group.

The meeting was adjourned at 20:35 PM.

Sincerely,

Bill Cavers

Acting Clerk