Minutes of Meeting – Monday, October 15, 2018
Town Hall, Room 119

Meeting called to order at 7:33 PM by Vice Chairman Cavers

Present: William Cavers, Dave Dever, David Kahn, Eric Barrett, Tom Lochtefeld, Audrey Weil and Harbor Master Tom Bell

Absent: Flip Huffard, Robert Vilter, Frank Kemp, and Grant Tankoos

The Minutes from the meeting in September 2018 were read and approved.

Agenda and Membership

Vice Chairman Cavers stated that we moved the presentation by Holly Drinkuth, Director, Outreach and Watershed Programs at The Nature Conservancy on Water Quality from tonight’s meeting to the November 19th meeting, in order to have more members of the Commission present and to allow Dr. Sarah Crosby of Harbor Watch to attend as well.

He introduced Rob Shuhy, who sat in to observe the meeting and is considering joining the Commission. Rob lives off Five Mile River Road, enjoys fishing and has been in Darien for 3 years. VC Cavers also noted that Audrey Weil is leaving the Commission at the end of the calendar year and we would like to fill her position, ideally with someone similarly associated with the Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk. Audrey suggested talking to Earl Mix, and David Kahn said he had met Earl, so Audrey, David and Flip will follow up.

Chairman’s Report

Vice Chairman Cavers reported that the Connecticut Port Authority has a Small Harbor Improvements Project Program (SHIPP) that awarded $4 million to towns across Connecticut in 2017. Harbor Master Bell reported that this program is unlikely to fund Darien projects, as it is generally awarding funds to larger towns and the required response time to their request for proposals was too brief.
**Harbor Master’s Report**

Harbor Master Bell said that he has been appointed to the Peartree Point Building Committee. His priorities are getting the boat ramp fixed and ensuring that a new jetty/pier is not constructed due to cost, silting and aesthetic issues. Members of the Commission asked for updates as the committee work progresses.

HM Bell said that Coastal Consulting and Development is behind on the harbor depth survey, and it will now be completed in November. Commissioners are welcome to go out with the surveyors and see it done, very interesting.

**Shellfish Report**

Commissioner Kahn reported that Mr. Roger Frate completed the use of his permits to dredge in Scotts Cove, and then requested another permit. Kahn recommended to First Selectman Jayme Stephenson that the permit be denied due to concern about depleting the shellfish stock in Scotts Cove. This concern was echoed by the CT Department of Aquaculture and the concerns were relayed to the Frates. Commissioner Kahn believes the town should continue to deny a new permit until Spring of 2020 for dredging in Scotts Cove.

Commissioner Kahn described the process of using water jets in the fishing process of commercial clammers.

**Task Forces**

**Water Quality**

Vice Chairman Cavers presented data from the Long Island Sound Report Card for 2018. This data covers 2017. Darien sits between the Eastern Narrows and the Western Basin designations for LIS. Eastern Narrows rated a B- and Western Basin rated an A-. Vice Chairman Cavers noted that LIS water quality in these areas has seen significant improvement over the past ten years.

Vice Chairman Cavers then shared some preliminary data from the Unified Water Study conducted this summer at many sites around LIS including Cove Harbor and Darien Harbor. Each site had four sampling points and was sampled twelve times from May to October 2018. Metrics included temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll-a, and turbidity. This work is conducted by volunteers and interns. Since the data needs to be normalized for weather, tides and other issues, Vice Chairman Cavers cautioned against drawing any conclusions. Commissioner Weil asked that we have the findings presented at a future meeting when they are ready, and HM Bell asked for more context to understand the results. Vice Chairman Cavers said he would work with other interested organizations like the Nature Center to arrange for a broader joint presentation.

Vice Chairman Cavers said that for 2019 we want to expand to this work to include the area including Ziegler’s Cove, Scotts Cove and the Fish Islands area. This will require two more volunteers, and he asked the commissioners to consider helping out.

**Other Business**

Vice Chairman Cavers asked for ideas of speakers to address the commission for the 2019 agenda. Please share suggestions directly with him.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:31 PM.