Minutes of Meeting – Monday, June 17th 2019

Town Hall, Room 119

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

Present:  William Cavers, Flip Huffard, Tom Lochtefeld, Grant Tankoos, Rob Shuhy, Robert Vilter, Frank Kemp, Lorna Bora and Harbor Master Tom Bell

Absent: Dave Dever, David Kahn

Guest Presentations

Kelp Farming – Kendall Barbery of GreenWave, a CT based aquaculture incubator on the CT coast, presented an overview of kelp farming in our local waters. GreenWave is helping entrepreneurs start local aquaculture businesses, selecting promising applicants (existing shell fisherman, dedicated entrepreneurs) to mentor, provide technical assistance to during the extensive permitting process and first operating years, and assist in finding funding for new operations and helping develop markets for local product.

- Ms. Kendall diagramed out the basic mechanics and processes involved in local kelp farming, including the process for transferring the kelp sporophytes to spools of line, as developed by Charles Yarish at UConn, and then installing that line between on-site buoys. She indicated that most local kelp farms are 1-8 acres in size and operational mostly in non-boating months (October through April, sometimes up to June, depending on the location and permit). The farm buoyage can be significant, although the lines associated with the kelp strands are usually located 6 or more feet underwater.

- We briefly discussed local farms off Sheffield Island and SoundWaters soon-to-be-permitted farm off the Stamford breakwater. We discussed the available markets, the price per pound varying significantly depending on the market being boutique products (Farmer's Market, $16/lb.) or fertilizer (65 cents/lb.).

The Commission intends to keep abreast of local kelp farming efforts to understand their potential to impact Darien waters.
**Chairman’s Report**

The budget of the Long Island Sound Study budget has increased from $14.6 MM currently to $21 MM approved in 2020 and now with a 2022 ask of $39.2 MM. The increases are being used to support water quality efforts with CT DEEP, New York's Environmental Protection Agency, and Save the Sound's Unified Water Study. The current increases are significant and are creating substantial new focus on Long Island Sound water quality.

Chairman Cavers spoke of the LIS Study's trash media campaign that will run from August 8th through September 14th. He encouraged Commissioners to look out for the social media posts and to help spread the message.

Chairman Cavers briefly outlined what he had learned of SoundWaters kelp farm from Leigh Shemitz of SoundWaters. SoundWaters had received $200,000 in funding for the farm, was just weeks away from completing the onerous permitting process, and had relocated the farm from Greenwich waters to Stamford, just off the western most rock jetty outside the harbor. The farm's purpose is to draw the attention of students and the public to matters affecting Long Island Sound.

A memo by the water quality contractor, Harbor Watch, summarizing the town's effort to locate and fix a septic system leak in Goodwives River was distributed. The effort was initiated and led by the Commission's Water Quality Task Force, and in particular by former Chairman Huffard and Commissioners Kemp and Weil. The effort was a commendable team effort with a real and positive impact on the water quality of Darien Harbor.

**Harbor Master’s Report**

Harbor Master Bell indicated that the mooring field was filling up slowly, a reflection of a slow start to the boating season due to a rainy spring. He noted that Jeff Eng Marine Services was also a little behind in completing mooring field installations.

**Shellfish Report**

Chairman Cavers gave the Shellfish Commissioner's report, noting:

- Commissioners Kahn and Lochtefeld would be taking out new clammers to the Darien public clamming beds on Saturday to introduce people to clamming in Darien's shellfish beds. The boats would leave at 9:30 AM on Saturday morning from the Darien Boat Club docks.
- Commissioner Kahn installed a new CT DEEP shellfish sign at the northernmost corner of Great Island.
- CT DEEP has informed the Town of Darien that an area from Scott Cove to the Fish Islands will now be closed as a precautionary measure when local rains amount to 1.5: or greater during the months of June, July and August.

**CT Blue Plan Review**

Commissioner Frank Kemp and Chairman Cavers outlined the Commission's recent effort in reviewing the CT Blue Plan. The bulk of the effort involves correcting and
supplementing the Blue Plan's inventory of Ecologically Significant Areas (ESAs) and Significant Human Usage Areas (SHUAs) for Darien's coastal waters. The commissioners stated their intention to get a memo to CT DEEP outlining improvements to the CT Blue Plan by the end of the public comment period, Friday, June 21st.

**Possible New Projects**

Possible new Commission projects were discussed: osprey nests, trash pick-up, contributing to the town's sustainability effort, limited channel dredging, Navaids connected with local aquaculture farms. The difficulty of siting new osprey nests was discussed. The prospect of limited channel dredging for the shallow depths off Darien Boat Club's B dock was discussed in association with the upcoming renovation of the town's Pear Tree Point boat launch ramp. The discussion indicated the importance of pursuing this latter point with the Pear Tree Point renovation committee.

**Other Business**

None

**Adjournment**

Chairman Cavers adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:30 PM.