

ADVISORY COMMISSION ON COASTAL WATERS TOWN OF DARIEN

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



Green's Ledge Light

Minutes of the April 4, 2012 Meeting

Present: Chairman McDonald, Vice Chairman Jewett, Commissioners Cavers, Huffard, Monro, Kemp, and Raleigh.

Absent: Commissioners Schoudel, Sparkman, Wallace, and Harbor Master Bell.

The meeting was called to order at 7:34pm by Chairman McDonald, who announced that the meeting was being taped for later presentation on Channel 79.

The minutes for the meeting of February 1, 2012 were reviewed and approved.

Chairman's Report

Chairman McDonald noted that the March 21 Connecticut Boating Advisory Council was held by conference call in lieu of meeting in Old Lyme. The major topic was the Northeast Regional Ocean Council and the boating survey program that will be its focus in this boating season. This survey will establish some base-line data concerning the locations of recreational boating use and the related economic benefits.

Commissioner Raleigh reported on a meeting of the CT Advisory Committee of the Long Island Sound Study, which is preparing to issue a book titled: "Long Island Sound, Prospects for an Urban Sea."

Chairman McDonald distributed a draft letter, prepared by Commissioner Cavers, outlining the problems with the boat ramp at Pear Tree Point. The letter, addressed to Susan Swiatek, Director of the Darien Parks and Recreation Department, outlines the issues with the ramp's design and slope, and requests that the issue be studied with a view to correcting the situation. The Commission voted unanimously to send the letter, with minor revisions, with a copy to the Board of Selectmen.

Harbor Master Report

Harbor Master Bell was unable to attend the meeting, however Chairman McDonald noted that the harbor was open for the season, as the High School Sailing Team was now practicing on a daily basis, out of the Noroton Yacht Club.

Shellfish Report

Commissioner Raleigh reported that the operator responsible for stocking our recreational clam beds will relay clams, from a bed leased to him by the Town of Darien, to the Contentment Island Bed after the water warms to 50° in May.

Health Department Director David Knauf has advised Commissioner Raleigh that Darien has joined with Westport and East Haven on a grant proposal aimed at using genetic markers from fecal bacteria in water to identify its biological source--human, animal, etc.. A similar study was proposed last year, but was unfunded. The Darien area studied would be the Goodwives River, which the Health Department audited for pollutants last year. When Raleigh asked Mr. Knauf whether a test site in Scott Cove might be made a part of the study, Mr. Knauf suggested that he had plans to do some water testing in Scott Cove with an intern this year.

Darien joined five other CT coastal towns in an appeal to the CT Commissioner of Agriculture, for more personnel and laboratory resources for the CT Bureau of Aquaculture to expedite reopening of the state's shellfish growing areas following significant storm events, such as last year's hurricane. Darien is particularly affected by an ongoing shortage of laboratory facilities, as the need to reopen commercial beds for the sake of the oyster industry reduces the opportunity to test clam meat samples from closed recreational clam beds, and thus delays their reopening. Other towns supporting the effort are Madison, Fairfield, Westport, Clinton, Guilford and Norwalk.

Health Department Director, David Knauf, along with the Norwalk Health Department Director, met with CT Bureau of Aquaculture in Milford to explore opportunity for a third sanctioned shellfish laboratory in Norwalk. If approved, such a facility could help Darien test clam meat samples from open recreational beds, as well as meats from currently closed beds.

CT Bureau of Aquaculture has advised Commissioner Raleigh that if coliform counts at the state's water testing sites near Darien's recreational beds don't improve this year, it may be forced to close those beds to clamming during the fall and winter months--months when coliform counts have been highest.

Mooring Specifications

Commissioner Huffard offered to apply a correction to the recently approved mooring specifications, to include the insertion of a swivel at the last link of the chain and the shackle (identified as being between points 2 and 4 on the diagram). The diagram and the text of the material will be updated, and submitted to Harbormaster Bell.

Harbor Channel Survey

Chairman McDonald noted that the harbor survey was conducted by representatives of Coastline Consulting & Development, LLC on February 14, 2012 and that the report and detailed charts were received on March 2, 2012. The invoice for the survey, \$3,403, has been approved and submitted to the Town for payment.

The results of the survey are presented in a detailed chart with soundings indicated for each location visited. The survey is summarized in a calculation of the volume of cubic yards of material required to restore the channel to the depth that was dredged in the winter of 2000/2001. The report notes that 4,091 cubic yards of material would need to be extracted to restore the channel to a depth of 8' (as "permitted by the DEEP).

The Commission discussed the issues that would need to be addressed prior to making a decision as to how to proceed. This will include a review of survey by the Noroton Yacht Club, as they participated on an independent basis in this survey, and may be expected to participate in a similar fashion in the "permitting" and the "dredging" phases of the project as well. The scope of the Noroton Yacht Club dredging project is roughly equivalent to the Town of Darien's efforts, since approximately the same amount of material was dredged from their dock area as was removed from the Town channel.

Additional factors that will be researched prior to the next Commission meeting will be: an understanding of the time-frame in which renewal of the dredging permit ceases to be “maintenance” and becomes “new” again, the cost and “shelf-life” of a dredging permit once it has been issued, and the procedures for reserving Town funds for such a major capital expenditure over a number of years.

Other Business

Commissioner Kemp noted that the Darien Sail and Power Squadron was preparing to present the “Basic Coastal Boating Course” at Noroton Yacht Club, beginning on Monday April 30. This will be the final course of the year, until next January’s course at Middlesex Middle School. The Squadron is emphasizing that this is a “course,” since multiple meetings permit it to convey much more than a “class.” Graduates of this course will be awarded the Coastal Boater Endorsement, to be displayed on the CT Boating Certificate card.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:30pm.

The next meeting of the Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, May 2, 2012, at 7:40pm in Room 213, Town Hall.

Respectfully submitted,

Frank B. Kemp, Clerk