

HARBOR COMMISSION
MINUTES
February 16, 2005

I. Roll Call

Jim Bartlett	Present
Yvonne DeWindt	Absent
Al Dika	Present
John Flemming	Present
Tom Graham, Jr.	Present
Bill McCullough	Present
Fred Rachwitz	Present
Jane Ramer	Present
Dick Schiller	Present

There is one vacancy on the Commission.

Also present: Harbormaster Bob Bokram and City Manager Fred Geuder.

Chairman Jim Bartlett called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. Minutes

Motion by Schiller, seconded by Dika, to approve the minutes of January 19, 2005, as presented.
Motion carried.

III. Public Comment and Correspondence

None. (Note: Letters were received as a part of an agenda item.)

IV. New and Old Business

A. Consideration of Walstrom Marine Proposed Dock Expansion

Bartlett asked Fred Walstrom to review the changes in the current version of the plan.

Walstrom noted that the current plan has no space for docking on the east side of the opening (next to Zoll Street). The floating break wall has been redesigned to discourage any docking. The floating wall may not need to go all the way to the shore. It will be anchored, but moved in the winter. Walstrom also noted that the Southwest corner of the dock has been round, rather than designed on a 45 degree angle. He also noted that the connection to the land would be via a 20' bridge, so water circulation will continue. The plan now has 39 slips.

Bartlett asked Walstrom if the opening was wider. Walstrom said he had placed the floating break wall parallel to the lot line, so it was slightly wider at the opening. Walstrom said he added one slip along the south wall, to replace one of the four slips he eliminated on the Zoll Street side.

Bartlett asked for audience comments.

John Cowing asked how many parking spaces would be required with the now 39-slip proposal (20 spaces per the calculation), and noted his concern that the parking would be inadequate. Cowing also requested that the gate adjacent to the Zoll Street area be locked so all parking would occur on the Walstrom property.

Walstrom commented that the issue of the gate could be a Council issue. He also noted that the standard of one parking space per each two slips is pretty much a standard nationwide. Sometimes a boater may have multiple cars at the marina, but Walstrom noted that the marina usually deals with that issue if it becomes a problem.

Bartlett noted the following letters/correspondence that had been received by the Commission since the last meeting:

1. Beverly Osetek (1-18-05) opposed with concerns.
2. Sally Leyman (1-31-05) asking to defer decision until seasonal residents can weigh in.
3. David Cummings (1-31-05) opposed with concerns.
4. Joan Keller (2-1-05) opposed.
5. Stirling Johnson (2-6-05) support.
6. Eve Vaterlaus Sheridan (2-9-05) opposed.
7. Louisa Paige (2-9-05) opposed with concerns.
8. Anne Vaterlaus (2-10-05) opposed with concerns.
9. Eve Vaterlaus Sheridan (2-10-05) suggestion on entrance.
10. Yvonne DeWindt (2-11-05) support.
11. Win Stebbins (2-14-05) support/suggestions.
12. Win Stebbins (2-15-05) question.

(Note: letters are on file at the office of the City Manager.)

Bartlett asked for any additional audience comments.

Laura Kors, who is a member of the City Council, asked Bartlett what criteria were used by the Commission to make their decision.

Bartlett first noted that the Harbor Commission is a purely advisory body, both to the City Council and the City Manager. The Commissioners look at the Harbor Plan and Map, which goes back over 20 years and was recently updated. The Harbor Plan is like a Zoning Code; however while the Plan does not carry the same force of law, it does act as a guideline. Bartlett said the Harbor Commission, which has members from a variety of geographic (City and two adjoining Townships) and boating interests. The Commission then makes its recommendation by balancing the variety of opinions and interests.

Fred Rachwitz commented that he felt the proposed plan does fit the Harbor Plan, but the Commission members then look into deeper considerations.

Bill McCullough noted that the Harbor Plan contains multiple ideas, and the job of the Commission is to balance all the considerations to arrive at a decision.

Will Cwikiel, representing Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, commented that by viewing the footprint of the dock alone, the Commission would be unable to see all of the environmental considerations. But he also noted that the State of Michigan will look at these issues in their consideration of the plan, and that Tip of the Mitt could comment as needed in that process.

Bartlett noted that the Commission had had some comfort level on the environmental issues at an earlier meeting, because the proposed plan is similar to other plans in the harbor that have worked. He also noted that the State would take up those issues in their consideration of the plan.

Al Dika commented that the first level of decision-making asks, "Does the proposal fit the Harbor Plan?" After that the proposal is viewed on more of a personal level. Dika commented that from his perspective the community could use more boat slips; he also noted that others might disagree with this conclusion. Dika also noted that from his perspective Walstrom has addressed the concerns brought to the table by the Commissioners.

Dick Schiller, a member of the Harbor Commission and also the community's Fire Chief, asked Walstrom whether a fire suppression system would be included in the plan. Walstrom said a system would be considered.

Bartlett asked Walstrom about docking of boats on the South face of the dock.

Walstrom said that he would like the option of using that area on an intermittent basis, but the practicality of that occurring is limited by the exposure to east winds and the level of the water at that point. He recognized the issue as a tough issue, but didn't want to totally limit his ability to use the area.

Bartlett noted that this was the fourth month and fourth version of the plan that had been reviewed by the Commission, and asked whether a motion was forthcoming. He noted that a motion could include additional conditions.

Schiller suggested a motion to approve the plan, with a condition that docking on the south side be limited to boats no longer than the available slips in the marina, and that a fire suppression system be required that is approved by the Fire Department.

Bartlett suggested discussion occur before a second on the motion.

Discussion was held on whether or not docking should be permitted on the south face, with the concern being that taller boats would block views. One comment was that water depth might be a limitation in that area.

Walstrom said the current depth there was about 4-5'. He did not want to dredge any more in that area than needed, and also felt the State would likely place limits on the amount of dredging.

Bartlett also commented that the decision should be based on a long-term thought process, recognizing that Walstrom's may not always be the owner of the marina.

Walstrom noted that in order to use that area, a bottomlands lease from the State would be required. He noted that they had obtained a lease on the east side of their operation adjacent to the Pier Restaurant for this purpose.

Bartlett also noted that Walstrom's current lease on the west side of the proposed dock is for a work area for his barge and that operation, and would not be available for recreational docking.

Motion by Schiller, seconded by Dika, that after review of the proposed Walstrom Marina expansion plan, and with the conclusion that the proposal is in basic conformance with the Harbor Plan, the Harbor Commission does hereby approve the proposed Walstrom Marine plan dated February 1, 2005, with the following conditions: that docking be prohibited on the south face of the proposed new dock; and that a fire suppression system as approved by the Harbor Springs Fire Department be required as part of the proposal. The City Manager is also directed to notify the City Council of this action. Motion approved, 7-1, Rachwitz objecting.

Bartlett thanked Walstrom for his cooperation during the process.

The City Manager noted that should the City Council require further input from the Harbor Commission, the Commission will be asked.

Linda Rachwitz thanked the Commission members for their service and the openness of the process.

B. Consideration of a Request to Add Additional Kayak Storage Space

Bartlett noted that the Commission had received correspondence last month requesting that the Commission consider a recommendation to add additional kayak storage.

The City Manager noted that John and Judy Dawson had come to a City Council meeting and were referred to the Harbor Commission. The City Manager noted that he and the Harbormaster had looked at the Ford Park storage, and concluded that at least four racks of four kayaks each could be added without reaching the front of the Irish Boat Shop building. The City Manager

stated that the earlier concerns had been about whether kayak storage compounded parking problems.

Harbormaster Bob Bokram noted that it was his experience that the parking impact was minimal both because of the usual time of day of use (early morning) and the fact that not all users were ever there at one time.

The question was asked as to whether or not the Zorn Park Beach area had been considered.

Jane Ramer thought that the Commission had discussed that area and felt other areas were more appropriate.

John Cowing, who has life guarded at the beach, felt that swimming and kayak storage should not be mixed. He also said storage might be an issue on the west side because of the private use rights adjoining the beach. Cowing suggested perhaps looking at the east side of the Zorn Park, although where the users would come in could still be problematic.

After some discussion, the Commission consensus was that Ford Park was the best place for current expansion.

Motion by Flemming, seconded by Rachwitz, to recommend to City Council that four racks of kayak storage (16 kayaks) be added at Ford Park. Motion carried.

The City Manager will send this recommendation on to the City Council.

C. Other

Bartlett asked the City Manager what the City had heard concerning the 2-Hour Dock bottomlands lease application, and also suggested that Flotation Docking Systems be contacted. The City Manager said he had not yet received notice on the lease.

V. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Harbor Commission will be scheduled as needed.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager