

HARBOR COMMISSION  
MINUTES  
October 15, 2008

I. Roll Call

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

Also present: Harbormaster Mike Johnson and City Manager Fred Geuder.

Vice-Chairman Bill McCullough called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. Minutes

Motion by Schiller, seconded by Graham, to approve the minutes of August 13, 2008, as presented. Motion carried.

III. Public Comment and Correspondence

None.

IV. New and Old Business

A. Proposed 2009 Seasonal Rate Recommendation

McCullough noted that the City Manager had provided current rates, a rate history, and calculations showing potential increases of 1%, 3% or 5%.

McCullough also noted that Chairman Jim Bartlett had told him that he had called the local marinas, and those marinas had said they were not contemplating an increase for 2009. McCullough said that although the City had generally tried to stay to inflation as a minimum increase, this might be the year to not increase rates.

Schiller asked what shape the Waterfront Fund was in financially.

The City Manager said he did not have the exact cash balance available, but that the fund was still in excellent shape. He further noted that from a cash flow perspective, 2009 would be improved by about \$40,000 because the City had made its final bond payment for the floating dock in September of 2008.

Enter Dika.

Dika also noted that the marinas were not contemplating an increase in 2009, and that he did not object to having a year with no increase.

Following further discussion, a motion was made by Rachwitz, and supported by Dika, to recommend that City Council set all 2009 seasonal and other rates at the same level as 2008 rates. Motion carried, with no objections.

Exit Schiller.

## B. Harbormaster Update

Harbormaster Mike Johnson thanked the Commission for their support and that all things considered, the summer had been successful.

Mike noted that he had kept staffing level to one less than in previous years, and it seemed to have worked out. In 2009, he will be losing Peter Glahn, who had been the assistant, but noted that Caitlin Donnelly will be back for her 4<sup>th</sup> year, and will be named assistant.

Johnson also noted that the City Marina will jointly participating in weed treatment with Walstrom Marine under the same permit, so costs will be kept at a minimum. They are anticipating three treatments in 2009, which should mean that the problem will be cured for about 3-4 years.

The bright spots of 2008 included the annual LTYC Regatta, which looks to be good again in 2009, and the Tiara Rendezvous was also a great event.

Mike noted that transient dock revenues for 2008 were approximately \$160,000, which was down from 2007 by about \$20,000. He noted that weather in June, combined with economy were probably the driving forces.

Johnson noted that in talking to other Harbormasters, Charlevoix came out the best, likely fueled by their new marina. But other marinas including Petoskey, all reported decreases greater than what Harbor Springs experienced. Marinas on the Lake Huron side had greatest decreases. Mike noted that while Petoskey was down, they did have longer stays from boats that came, but they have a limit of 14 days for transient boats.

Mike felt that the interpretation to allow longer stays in Harbor (when there was no waiting list) had helped in retaining boats, and the waiting list was almost non-existent for most of the year.

Johnson did report that transient mooring sales of about \$9,000 were up from 2007 by about 25%.

Johnson was asked about the Star Class regatta in September.

Johnson noted that 34 boats were entered, which was less than anticipated, so all boats ended up staying at Irish. So while the City Marina did not receive direct benefits, the event was very

Harbor Commission Minutes  
October 15, 2008

successful and was very positive for the local economy, and from all reports, the visitors had a great experience.

C. City Manager Report

The City Manager again noted that the final bond payment on the floating dock improvements had been made. When the dock was originally added, it was felt that the additional 19 seasonal slips would fund the repayment of the bonds, and this had proven to be a very successful venture.

The City Manager also reported that the City Council had approved the purchase of the Police Boat motor as recommended by the Harbor Commission.

D. 2009 Capital Improvement Recommendations

McCullough noted that the Ad Hoc Committee had met and basically recommended looked at lowering four of the 30' docks to make boat access easier.

The two 30' slips on the bulkhead (in front of the tennis courts) were designed such that this would be fairly simple. The slip which faces east in front of the Harbormaster building will need to have two pilings added up next to the wall but also should not be difficult.

There is one 30' slip coming off the west State Dock which will need some study by Fred Walstrom to see how it can be accomplished.

The overall idea is that by lowering the docks, and then building a couple of steps down to those docks, it will be far easier for boaters to access their boats. Then when the water level comes up enough, the docks can be raised if needed.

It was suggested that about \$20,000 be budgeted for this project, but the likely cost should be far less.

Mike Johnson said that he had been working on ideas for remodeling/updating both the boater and public restrooms. The building is about 25 years old, and the tile floors and shower stalls are hard to clean or keep clean. The public restrooms get substantial and hard use, and the boater restrooms are really part of competing with other marinas. Both Charlevoix and Mackinac Island have had major updates, and Petoskey is apparently getting new restrooms.

Johnson said he was very roughly estimating a cost of around \$70,000. When tile is taken down from the showers, for example, it is likely that new drywall will be needed.

The Commission suggested that one way to accomplish this project is to have someone who does commercial design spec out a project, and then have contractors bid.

The City Manager suggested that the first step would be to get budget authority to proceed with a project. He also suggested that a potential schedule might be to begin the project in October of 2009, with the boater restrooms being started immediately after the marina closes. Then, following the Christmas season, the public restrooms would be completed in 2010. So essentially the costs would be spread over two budget cycles.

Harbor Commission Minutes  
October 15, 2008

The Commission asked whether the project could be staged and partially completed by next summer.

The City Manager noted that work could not begin in planning until the project was approved in the budget, and then planning would take some time. It was the City Manager's opinion, that it would work best to plan thoroughly and be ready to start as soon as the Marina closed in 2009, with a 2010 completion.

As a third item, the City Manager estimated it would cost about \$3,000 for marking the easterly channel entrance through the mooring field, assuming that Walstrom's would assist in the installation.

Rachwitz asked why the channel appeared to be wider at this location than at Ford Park, and was it really a navigation channel.

Dika suggested that the channel was wider there, because Walstrom's had always had barges navigating through that area. The City Manager noted the mooring lease area is one piece, so any openings as a channel were simply passages through the mooring field.

It was also suggested that there could be more moorings. McCullough thought that might be possible, but that history suggests that the actual number of moorings was thought to be optimal many years ago.

Motion by Graham, seconded by DeWindt, to recommend inclusion of the following projects in the 2009 Waterfront Fund budget:

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| 1. | Lowering four (4) thirty-foot docks.   | \$20,000 |
| 2. | Restroom Upgrades                      | \$75,000 |
| 3. | Lighting East Channel through Moorings | \$ 3,000 |

Motion carried, with no objections.

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 at 5:15 p.m.

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Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager