

HARBOR COMMISSION
MINUTES
December 8, 2004

I. Roll Call

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

Also present: City Attorney Jim Ramer and City Manager Fred Geuder.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Bartlett at 4:00 p.m. Jim welcomed Tom Graham, Jr., who was appointed to fill the term of his late father.

II. Minutes

Motion by Schiller, seconded by Dika, to approve the minutes of November 10, 2004, 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. Revised Rules for Smoking and Fuel Cans on the Docks

The City Manager noted the proposed wording that he had reviewed with the City Attorney (copy attached). The language appears to meet the concerns of the Commission, and will be in the appropriate place in the rules. The Manager recommended that the Commission make a recommendation to City Council to approve the language.

Motion by Dika, seconded by DeWindt, to recommend City Council approval of the two new Waterfront Rules, as presented. Motion carried.

B. Consideration of Walstrom Marine Proposed Dock Expansion

Bartlett asked Fred Walstrom to review his revised proposal.

Bartlett also noted three letters that have been received on the proposed dock expansion project:

1. Wequetonsing Landowners Association—Roger Bookwalter, President
2. Stephen Banks, owner of 3 Beach Drive
3. Bill Holmes, owner of 565 East Bay Street

Walstrom reviewed the revised dock layout plan. Walstrom noted that he had scrapped the shared dock idea on the east side, and also moved the east wall 50' to the west, so that there are only 50' finger piers on that side. He also revised the layout so that the bigger boats were against the existing breakwall, and the shorter slips were by the water. He also changed the design so that there would be no pilings or uprights, making the floating dock to be only about 3' above the water except at the connection points.

Sam DeCamp, acting as an agent for the Wequetonsing Landowners Association (23 members have property in the City limits), noted their concerns with increased density of boats in the harbor and therefore the number of dock slips being proposed.

Bartlett noted and read the correspondence.

Kenyon Stebbins opposed the plan for the following reasons:

- A. Users of the Zoll Street Beach will be affected, particularly their view.
- B. The proposed dock would have a negative impact on swimmers and kayakers.
- C. There would be increased noise.
- D. He also noted a concern about the water quality because of the additional boats.

John Cowing noted concerns with parking, particularly with marina users who park on Zoll Street. He also concerned about the view.

Linda Rachwitz noted her concerns with the impact on Zoll Street users, but said she had not fully reviewed the revised plan. She complimented the Commission for proceeding cautiously.

Jeff Graham asked where the barges would be parked. Walstrom said it would be about right where they are now.

Bartlett reviewed the historical basis of the Harbor Plan, which was first looked at in the 1970's as a non-binding guiding document. The Commission reviewed and updated the plan in 2003. Bartlett noted that the plan has always had a Marina limit line since the plan's inception, and the general feeling was that the east end was where expansion would likely occur.

The Harbor Plan deals with many of the issues that have been mentioned, including water/ecological concerns; views, etc. He also noted that parking was a landside concern of the Planning Commission.

Bartlett said that the Plan was a master guide to the Commission as they act in their advisory role to the City Council.

John Cowing suggested that something be included would restrict parking by Marina users of the Zoll Street area, such as locking the gate. He also suggested that Walstrom's encourage Marina users to park at the Marina.

The City Manager suggested that the City might be able to set conditions as part of any approval.

Kenyon Stebbins suggested that the 10 slips on the east side be eliminated, which would both improve the view and perhaps not impact the parking any worse than currently.

John Flemming noted that the State DNR will have the final say.

Bartlett noted that the Marina Limit Line does not confer an absolute right, but noted that it has been the outside limit of other expansions. Bartlett then asked for Commission reactions.

Al Dika thanked Walstrom for placing the milk jugs to help visualize the size of the expansion. He also noted that there would be a visual impact on Ford Park views. Sharing points he had heard from people, Dika suggested making the fairway width 90', instead of 100'; and he suggested having no slips on the east side.

Bill McCullough said while his initial reaction was negative, he had not yet made up his mind. He suggested that Commissioners think about the long-term impact of this proposal.

Walstrom commented that views are important; but he noted the barges will still be there. He also noted that people who are users of marinas often do NOT own waterfront property, so this is their access. Walstrom also noted the growth in boating, and he said that the Harbor Plan had addressed that issue. He also noted that the state may impose additional conditions.

Dick Schiller noted that one comment in the Harbor Plan was to encourage private boat slip development. He does have some concerns, but felt that at some level Walstrom's proposal would fit the Harbor Plan.

Jane Ramer felt that Walstrom has a right to expand, but that additional tweaking of the plan needs to be done.

John Flemming asked whether the Commission was serious when the limit line was set, because there would always be pros and cons to any plan.

Fred Rachwitz said he had heard a fair number of negative comments. He felt the parking issue on Zoll Street should be addressed, and he said he agreed with Flemming.

Tom Graham said that Walstrom's currently does not go beyond the original shoreline as far as the other marinas have. He is not sure about the current plan, but feels something can be done.

George Kilborn noted the limit line, but it's how you do it within that limit. He also asked what the additional boating impact will be on the recreation area of the harbor.

Yvonne DeWindt said Walstrom should have right to do something, but that the plan still needs tweaking, perhaps on the east end.

Jim Bartlett said he was involved with both the original Harbor Plan and the revision, and in both cases it was felt that something would occur here, but approval is not unlimited. He noted concerns with the east side, and maybe the size of the slips on the outside also, which could possibly be 40' instead of 50'.

Walstrom said that not all 50' slips have 50' boats; but he felt he needs to have a mix of slip sizes available.

Bartlett said small boats on the south side would help preserve views.

John Cowing noted that both 38' or 50' boats would block views.

Bartlett was also concerned as to the use of the outside for docking longer boats, including 100' ones. Rachwitz wondered whether water depths would accommodate the bigger boats.

Walstrom said that the plan is generally not for transient boats, but there may be a need on the Fourth of July.

Stebbins asked whether you could dock on the east and west sides also. Walstrom noted that you would not want to do it on the east side because of the Zoll Street Beach. Bartlett noted that other marinas have done this.

Pringle Pfeifer said that the mass of the dock is hard to visualize, and requested that Walstrom somehow find a way to show that on the water. (It was suggested that computer imaging might be a way to accomplish this.)

Bartlett closed discussion on this plan until the January meeting.

C. 2004 Harbormaster Report

The City Manager distributed copies of the report from the Harbormaster. Bartlett said it would be reviewed in January.

D. 2005 Capital Projects

The City Manager noted that he had included both the Two-Hour Dock upgrade and the Electric upgrade into the budget. The redecking of the west dock was on-going. Bartlett noted that the Trex that is down looks great.

V. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Harbor Commission will be scheduled for Wednesday, January 12, 2005, at 4:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager

Proposal to add new Sections B 24 and B 25 to the Restated Harbor, Waterfront and Marina Rules and Regulations, to read as follows:

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24. Storage of Fuel Cans. No fuel cans shall be placed, stored or located in the City Marina, including but not limited to the City Docks, the Ford Park Launch Ramp, Ford Park proper, the Two Hour Dock and any other courtesy dock, or other City property, except within a watercraft. No fuel cans shall be stored or placed on any dock system in the City Marina or at Ford Park.

25. Smoking Prohibited. Smoking is prohibited on the City Docks, including but not limited to the Harbor Springs Main Pier, the finger piers and the 2 hour courtesy dock. Smoking is also prohibited on the City Beach at Zorn Park (sandy area) and within any City-owned waterfront buildings and restrooms.