
SITKA PORT AND HARBORS COMMISSION
Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
March 14th, 2007
Harrigan Centennial Hall

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

II. ROLL CALL

Members Present:	Grant Miller	Ken Creamer
	Chuck Woods	Keith Nyitray
	Mike Slifer	Rich McIntyre

Absent and excused: Marc Moats

Others Present: Stan Eliason

Member from the public: David Tjomsland

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 14TH, 2007 MONTHLY MEETING

MOTION: M/S Nyitray/McIntyre moved to approve the minutes from the Feb. 14th, 2007 meeting.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 6-0** on a voice vote.

III. CHANGES TO AGENDA

Mr. Woods suggested including a discussion about requesting the Assembly to assign a parking officer to monitor the harbor parking lots. He explained that last summer then-temporary Traffic Officer Charles Estes did a good job in clearing up the harbor parking lots of illegally parked vehicles but since Mr. Estes has been hired as police officer, nobody has taken over his task.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE - NONE

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

1. David Tjomsland

Mr. Tjomsland raised three issues before the Commission:

- (1) Is the new fuel dock is a done deal?
- (2) Why the City bought the harbor cameras when the Harbor Fund is supposed to be an enterprise fund?
- (3) His boat utility bill is higher than his residential bill based on calculations he made.

On the fuel dock, the Chair said that Mike Litman of the Sitka Maritime Heritage Society was supposed to come in to make a presentation to the Commission but he hasn't showed up. He explained that the project was on the Assembly agenda because the City has to make a determination that the Society is

“financially self-sufficient” which is a requirement before the Society can sublease the City property to Delta Western for a new marine fuel facility.

On the harbor security cameras, Mr. Eliason said that the money for the cameras comes out of the Harbor fund but since it costs over \$5,000, they have to seek Assembly approval.

Mr. Tjomsland’s comments were discussed later under unfinished business item no. 4.

VI. REPORTS

1. Deputy Harbormaster

Mr. Eliason spoke about the substantial completion of the Thomsen Harbor rebuild. He also told the Commission that they have started getting advance moorage reservations with the month of June almost fully booked. They are looking at earning \$80,000 this summer, a substantial increase from last year’s \$55,000.

2. Assembly Liaison - None

3. City Staff - None

4. Chair - None

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Lowering the Residential User Fee for Harbor Liveaboards

The Chair said that according to Mr. Majeski, the only thing that the Commission can do is reduce fee for trash pick up. There’s no other portion that can be reduced. He added that the amount of transient fee collected in summer is more than enough to cover the costs of the second trash pick up. He expressed reservation however if there is enough dissatisfaction in the community to warrant a recommendation from the Commission to the Assembly.

Mr. Nyitray insisted that the water fee should be part of the discussion, raising the question why liveaboards have to pay water when access to water comes with the moorage fee for every slip.

Mr. McIntyre thought that it might just be a matter of billing issue.

MOTION: **M/S Nyitray/Woods** moved to recommend to the Assembly that fees for water be eliminated for liveaboards out of fairness and equity, and garbage rates be reduced to the lowest possible level.

DISCUSSION: Mr. McIntyre expressed hesitation in voting for the motion and wanted to know if there is somebody from the City who can shed more light on the water fees. He also wanted to know if liveaboards also pay sewage fees.

MOTION: **M/S Creamer/McIntyre** moved to table the motion until they get more information.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 6-0** on a voice vote.

This item will be back in next month’s agenda.

2. Launch Fees for Companies with Multiple Vessels

The Chair said that according to the Harbormaster, the State has no policy on companies with multiple vessels using its launch ramp while other communities impose higher fees for commercial users. In addition, he also learned that the State did not want to honor the City stickers. He noted that the Harbors Department has set up the stickers to be placed on the trailers instead of the vessels which would provide greater opportunity for enforcement by the Harbors Department.

Mr. McIntyre, a member of the State Parks Board, told the Commission that the Acting Director said “no” for the main reason that State might lose revenues.

On the Chair’s suggestion that they consider different levels of rates depending on the number of boats, Mr. Slifer expressed reservation, raising the question why they have to give discounts to charter vessels. He added it should also depend on types of vessels. He strongly recommended that commercial vessels should be required to get stickers at the beginning of the season and that each vessel owner should be given a sticker for the boat and trailer. He explained that multiple boat owners may have more boats than trailers.

Mr. Delong noted that the kayak launch site identified by the Harbormaster works for them but only half of their customers will be using it. He said that they made slight changes in their business operations and some of their clients would be launching from other areas. He suggested that the City impose a flat fee.

Mr. Nyitray noted that commercial vessels not only cause a wear and tear on the ramps but they also add a constraint on the number of boats that can use the ramps at a given time.

MOTION: **M/S Creamer** moved to charge commercial non-motorized vessels a flat annual fee of \$300.

REVISED MOTION: **M/S Creamer** moved to charge commercial non-motorized vessels a flat annual fee of \$10/vessel up to (to be determined) number.

ACTION: Motion **FAILED** for lack of second.

Mr. Slifer remarked that the ordinance will be confusing and unenforceable. He felt that the City will be losing 75% of the potential income it can collect from the launch ramp fees. He offered to work on the details of the proposed ordinance on launch ramp fees for commercial companies with multiple vessels.

Mr. Woods offered to help Mr. Slifer refine further their proposal.

Mr. McIntyre suggested to leave the existing ordinance for now and let it ride for a year. They just need to figure out the fees for kayaks.

3. Establishing a Fairway No-Anchor Zone off the Northwest End of Eliason Harbor

The Chair relayed the information he got from Mr. Majeski who told him that the Coast Guard advised them not to put buoys or markers. He added that the Harbors Department is capable of keeping the area clear.

Mr. Creamer stressed that he is not proposing to put up buoys. He is proposing to put a line on the nautical chart or identify the coordinates delineating the no-anchor zone.

Mr. Nyitray agreed that they need to establish the no-anchor zone in Title XIII of the Sitka General Code which would then be reflected on the Harbor Map given to harbor users. He added that eventually it will be in the nautical charts.

The Chair offered to work with Mr. Creamer in drawing out the coordinates on the chart. They will bring back the chart in the next meeting.

4. Electrical Rates for Harbors

Mr. Creamer said that he made calculations on both his boat power and residential bills and found out that he pays a higher rate for his boat power usage than residential usage.

Mr. Tjomsland expressed a similar observation.

MOTION: M/S **Nyitray/Woods** moved to recommend to the Assembly that electrical rates for harbor users should mirror residential rates.

DISCUSSION: Mr. Nyitray said that they should stressed to the Assembly that harbor users, not the City, provide the infrastructure (wiring system) and maintenance to connect to the utility facilities.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 6-0** on a voice vote.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Boat Tax Revenues

MOTION: M/S **Creamer/Nyitray** moved to recommend to the Assembly that all boat tax revenues be transferred directly to the Harbor Fund.

DISCUSSION: Regarding Mr. McIntyre's query on how much the boat tax revenues amount to, the Chair said that it is over \$100,000.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 6-0** on a voice vote.

The Chair said that he will draft a letter to the Assembly about the Commission's recommendation.

IX. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Parking Officer for Harbor Parking Lots

Mr. Woods reiterated his comment at the beginning of the meeting regarding the need for a parking officer to monitor the harbor parking lots. He thought that the Assembly would need to authorize funding for that position.

Mr. Creamer noted that parking in the harbors parking lot is getting out of hand and thought there is indeed a need for parking enforcement.

MOTION: M/S **Creamer/Nyitray** moved to write a letter to the Police Chief with a copy furnished to the City Administrator recommending the need for parking enforcement in the harbor parking lots with emphasis on how well it worked last year.

ACTION: Motion **PASSED 6-0** on a voice vote.

Revisiting Old Recommendations

The Chair felt that they need to bring back to the table the old recommendations the Commission has made to the Assembly and decide what to do with them.

Mr. Creamer concurred and remarked that it would be worthwhile to see what has been passed.

Snow Removal

Mr. Woods expressed appreciation to the Harbors Department for their continuous efforts to clear the harbors of snow.

X. CLOSING

A. AGENDA

Under unfinished business:

1. Lowering of residential user fees for the harbors
2. Launch Fees for kayaks and other non-motorized vessels
3. Establishing a fairway no-anchor zone off the northwest end of Eliason Harbor

Under new business (proposed by Mr. Creamer):

1. Revisit old recommendations
2. Work float fee for commercial enterprises
3. Liveaboards at Crescent Harbor

- B. NEXT MEETING DATE HARRIGAN CENTENNIAL BUILDING** – April 11th, 2007 (subject to change)

C. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

Prepared by: **MARIA FINKENBINDER**
Contract Secretary