
SITKA PORT AND HARBORS COMMISSION
DRAFT Regular Commission Meeting Minutes
December 14th, 2006
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 Rich McIntyre
 Keith Nyitray Marc Moats

Absent and excused: Mike Slifer

Others Present: Ray Majeski John Stein

Member from the public: Ken Buxton

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 9TH, 2006 MONTHLY MEETING

MOTION: M/S Creamer/Moats moved to approve the minutes from the Nov. 9th, 2006 meeting.

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

III. CHANGES TO AGENDA

At a later part of the meeting, Mr. Moats requested the Commission to discuss the possibility of a drive down ramp to the work float. The Chair ruled to hold the discussion under item IX, general discussion.

IV. CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. Majeski told the members about an anonymous letter he received regarding a boat at Crescent Harbor which was reportedly in danger of sinking. The US Coast Guard assessed the boat to be in bad shape and issued an order for the fuel to be removed off the vessel. The Harbor Department had the boat surveyed and coordinated with the family to deal with the vessel and the owner.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Mr. Buxton brought to the Commission's attention the problem of sea lions getting out of control in the harbors. Mr. Majeski said that they contacted the National Marine Fisheries Service which granted the Harbor Department to use non-lethal harassment to deter the animals that pose a threat to public health and welfare.

VI. REPORTS

1. *Harbormaster*

Mr. Majeski updated the Commission on the Harbor Department's efforts to deal with people feeding sea

lions in the harbors and on the progress of the Thomsen Harbor reconstruction. He said phase I is almost finished and they will start driving the pilings in after New Year. They are still optimistic that the project will be completed by March 15, 2007.

Mr. Creamer remarked that putting up signs at the docks is a big step in addressing the sea lions situation. He also said that he walked down the dock with the project foreman and noted that the new Thomsen Harbor is going to be a good facility.

On Mr. Woods' query about a provision for a dock ladders, Mr. Majeski cited the costs of installing these ladders and suggested that they look into less expensive and more practical options.

2. Assembly Liaison - None

3. City Staff

Mr. Stein told the Commission that Search and Rescue (SAR) is looking for a storage space for their equipment and might bring forth a proposal. On Mr. Nyitray's question if the City is actively doing something to get the State Marine Fuel Tax legislation funded, Mr. Stein said that it's in the list of the City's legislative priorities.

4. Chair - None

5. P&H Subcommittee Report

Mr. Nyitray said that the subcommittee was trying to look into fees for commercial uses of the docks or businesses conducted in the harbors but the exercise has fallen on the wayside for lack of participation. He expressed interest in reenergizing the subcommittee to continue the work. Aside from Mr. Nyitray, the following volunteered to join the subcommittee and schedule a meeting: Mr. Moats, Mr. Creamer, and Mr. Woods.

VII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Liveaboard Fee

Mr. Majeski raised the issue of water leaks in the harbor system which the Finance Department has estimated, is costing the City \$10,000/month. He said that based on the water meter installed at Sealing Cove Harbor, the system is losing 100 gallons/minute. He spoke with Finance Director Dave Wolff who told him of the possibility of removing the residential user fee for the harbors and installing water meters instead. He stressed the need to start a program to educate the harbor users about water leaks and to turn water hoses off when not in use.

The members exchanged ideas on the impact of metering the harbors. Mr. Nyitray said that they should take a stance against it. Mr. Creamer thought that there is more water leakage from residential users than harbor users. He also raised the problems that may arise from turning the hoses off during a cold snap and its impact on the harbor's firefighting capability. Mr. Woods pointed out that harbor users use less water than residential users and as such, shouldn't be paying more than the residential user rates.

The Chair suggested that they recommend to put in place a public education process and emphasize to users that water is expensive. He also said that they could pass on the Assembly the Commission's concerns regarding double charging and being targeted for water metering.

Mr. Majeski offered to get the break down of the utility rates and bring it back to the next meeting for further discussion. He reiterated the need to plug the water leaks in the harbor system and to initiate a public education program to avoid getting charged \$10,000/month for all the harbors.

Discussion on this agenda item will continue in the next meeting.

2. Takeover of State Dock at Baranof Warm Springs

Mr. Majeski explained that the State is prepared to offer \$1.3 million to the City and Borough of Sitka contingent on acceptance of ownership of the existing facility. According to him, Mr. Wolff has estimated that it will cost the City \$81,333/year to maintain the dock including depreciation over a 40 year period. He said that he does have any estimates on the potential revenues of the dock since they do not have any idea on how many vessels actually use the dock. He thought that it would be expensive to begin with.

Mr. Stein pointed out that they don't have to do it this year and bring back the proposal next year possibly with more information to work with.

The Chair suggested contracting out the maintenance of the dock or coming up with a plan that is less expensive. He added that they could send out requests for bid proposal to determine the costs.

The members briefly discussed the advantages and disadvantages of taking over the dock. Mr. Moats and Mr. Nyitray shared their reservations about the proposal. Mr. Creamer said that they should look into the potential usage and revenues of the dock.

By consensus, the Commission agreed that they write a letter to the City Administrator recommending a study be conducted to look into the revenue potential and usage of the Baranof Warm Springs dock. Mr. Stein acknowledged the recommendation and said that letter is not necessary.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS

1. LAUNCH FEES FOR COMPANIES WITH MULTIPLE VESSELS

Mr. Majeski explained that the current launch ramp fee per vessel is \$5.00 per day or \$75 per year for an annual permit. There are business outfits such as the DeLong's who owns several kayaks and launch these everyday in summer. He posed the question to the members, how much are they going to charge these companies? He pointed out that the State has no fee for multiple vessels.

Mr. McIntyre proposed that they charge two kinds of fees: one for motorized vessels and another for non-motorized vessels. He explained that a kayak doesn't have a lot of wear and tear compared to a boat. It does not diminish the condition of the ramp.

Mr. Nyitray pointed out that these businesses should be charged per vessel since they cause queue lines at the harbors. He said that businesses are paying for the extra time they cause on other harbor users.

The Chair said that they need to contact those businesses with multiple vessels and get their input. He highlighted the need to publicize this issue as an agenda item.

On the enforcement issue, Mr. Majeski told the Commission that the State has agreed to accept the City stickers for the use of their ramp and the City will also honor the State's stickers.

This agenda item will come back in the January meeting for further discussion. The Harbormaster will contact charter and kayaking business owners.

IX. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Drive down ramp to workfloat

Mr. Moats shared with the members his anecdotal experience with welders working at the loading and unloading dock of Eliason Harbor and raised the possibility of putting in another float. He also

recommended that they ask the Public Works Director to look into the possibility of putting in a drive down ramp to the work float.

Mr. Creamer pointed out that the whole problem brought up by Mr. Moats falls back in enforcing time limits. He said if the time limits set out in the Code can't be enforced, they might as well get rid of it. Mr. Nyitray remarked that the ordinance needs more "teeth".

Snow plowing

Mr. Nyitray brought forth comments from some harbor users asking why City workers plow the snow in front of their cars. Mr. Majeski said that the City is not doing it but he will speak with the contractor about the comments.

Mr. Creamer told Mr. Majeski that several people have expressed appreciation on how much the Harbor Department has done to keep the snow off the docks.

Mr. Eliason's Reward

Mr. Majeski also informed the members that Mr. Stan Eliason's reward for his work last summer on reserved moorage for yachts or large pleasure boats will be on the January 9th Assembly agenda.

X. CLOSING

A. AGENDA

Under unfinished business:

1. Liveaboard Fee
2. Launch Fees for companies with multiple vessels

Under new business:

1. Establishing a fairway no-anchor zone off the northwest end of Eliason Harbor

B. NEXT MEETING DATE HARRIGAN CENTENNIAL BUILDING – January 10th, 2007

Mr. Nyitray informed the Commission that he will not be in town on Jan. 10th while Mr. Creamer said he will be gone from January 10-16th.

Mr. Majeski also mentioned that he will be on KIFW on Monday, Dec. 18th and on Raven Radio on Tuesday, Dec. 19th.

C. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

Prepared by: **MARIA FINKENBINDER**
Contract Secretary