

**CITY OF NORWALK
NORWALK SHELLFISH COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
NOVEMBER 6, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Steve Bartush (Chair), Mark Hiller, Jonathan Pageler, Pete Johnson.

STAFF: Bill Mooney, Assistant Director of Health.

OTHERS: Alan Kibbe, Norwalk Harbor Management; John Pinto, Norwalk Harbor Management; Geoff Steadman, Consultant; Sgt. Justin Bisceglie; Matthew Shuler - 108 Water Street.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bartush called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm. A quorum was present.

II. ROLL CALL

A roll call of those present was performed.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

A. REGULAR MEETING: AUGUST 7, 2025

****MR. JOHNSON MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.
**MR. HILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

B. REGULAR MEETING: SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

****MR. PAGELER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES.
**MR. HILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no Public Participation at this time.

V. REPORTS

A. TREASURER

Mr. Mooney reported that the current balance is \$28,650. He noted that there were expenditures dating back to March that were not recorded until September. The first expenditure was \$537 to Silvermine for permits, and an additional \$105 for three permits related to the Shellfish Conference held a few months prior. The total of \$642 in expenditures results in a current balance of \$28,650.

B. SECRETARY

Mr. Bartush thanked the Harbor Management Commission for approving a letter to the Mayor, signed by Dr. Pinto, supporting the naming of the East Basin Marina after Mr. Tony Mobilia in recognition of his decades of service to the community and as a veteran. He also thanked Dr. Pinto for providing the Coastal Site Plan Review documents for 119 Gregory, which have been filed.

C. HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Mr. Mooney reported that September rainfall totaled 2.19 inches, with no bypasses and brief closures at Cook's Ground on September 6 and 7 due to heavy rain. October rainfall was 3.95 inches, with one 30 minute bypass on Lexington Avenue caused by a clogged sewer line and a full closure on October 31 from excessive rainfall. Reopening was scheduled for sunrise the following day.

D. WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

There was no report at this time.

E. PERMITS

Mr. Mooney reported no new updates on permits but said preparations for next year's permits would begin soon to have them ready shortly after the new year. Mr. Bartush noted no new maps were needed, and Mr. Mooney agreed, adding they would revisit the need in 2027.

F. POLICE

Sgt. Bisceglie reported that a barge temporarily blocked the Norwalk River in October but did not affect shellfish operations. He noted a complaint against a commercial fisherman operating in recreational grounds, resulting in an infraction and a subsequent ongoing criminal investigation. Mr. Pageler inquired about the boat name, but Sgt. Bisceglie declined to share details due to the active case.

G. ADVISORY

Sgt. Bisceglie reported that the water temperature is around 53 degrees.

H. HARBOR MANAGEMENT

Mr. Kibbe highlighted the grounded barge incident in the upper Norwalk River, commending the efficient coordination among all parties involved. He reported a successful season, noting an Eagle Scout project that restored campsites on a recreational island and emphasized the need for better access and oversight by Recreation and Parks. He added that the transship mooring program saw strong use and positive online reviews and expressed satisfaction with progress on the Manresa projects. Mr. Pageler praised the quality and usage of the new public moorings, and Mr. Kibbe credited Mr. Mangles for leading that effort.

Mr. Steadman discussed the Norwalk River Watershed Initiative and recent public meeting at the South Norwalk Library, noting displays on Norwalk Harbor's oyster history and recommendations to strengthen water quality management and balance development with environmental protection. He also addressed concerns about increased stormwater from the Route 7 and Merritt Parkway project. He reviewed the Seaview Avenue and East Norwalk Boat and Yacht Club project, explaining that new state legislation now limits automatic evidentiary hearings, and noted similar cases in Greenwich. On the Manresa Island project, he said the Harbor Commission supports the stewardship permit provided it includes remediation of both upland and marine sediment contamination, with future opportunities for commission and public review.

Mr. Steadman added that Dr. Pinto is leading a multi-municipal effort to amend harbor management legislation to strengthen municipal authority and mentioned the East Norwalk Marina groundbreaking and upcoming SHIP grant funding. He expressed concern over the Connecticut Siting Council's recent denial of a project without explanation, emphasizing the importance of transparency in commission decisions.

****MR. JOHNSON MOVED TO ACCEPT THE COMMITTEE REPORTS.**

****MR. HILLER SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Concerns around commercial dredging vessel

Mr. Bartush noted a complaint received regarding a commercial dredging vessel in Wilson Cove, primarily concerning sediment disturbance and downstream impacts related to fin fishing.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. 108 Water Street

Mr. Shuler explained that the project involves redevelopment of 108 Water Street into commercial, office, and residential space, including construction of a new bulkhead, removal of debris and deteriorated structures, the installation of a 14-slip marina with transient access, and creation of a public boardwalk and park. He stated that both the Bureau of Aquaculture and Fisheries approved

the project, citing no impact to marine species, and that it would improve current environmental conditions by reducing runoff and debris.

Mr. Shuler clarified that the existing outfall is inactive, the new bulkhead will be built landward of the current one, and all construction areas will be contained with turbidity curtains. He said safety measures such as guardrails will be included, and design elevations are still being refined. Regarding a potential shellfish hatchery, Mr. Shuler said a dedicated water dependent use area has been reserved, but details about water intake and discharge are not yet determined.

Mr. Johnson expressed concern that redevelopment would eliminate local boatyards and harm Norwalk's boating and shellfish industries, questioning how they would be protected. Mr. Shuler responded that the project will increase access for recreational boaters through the new marina and transient docks, noting that the site is currently a private contractor's yard. He acknowledged that some boats stored there belong to non-residents and said owners would need to find alternative winter storage.

Mr. Johnson stated that most boats stored in Norwalk come from out of town. Mr. Shuler acknowledged the concern, reiterating that the project aims to enhance Norwalk Harbor by adding public access and marina space, though current boat storage would be displaced. He questioned the benefit of more apartments versus condos, citing concerns over tax incentives and long-term affordability. Mr. Shuler confirmed the plan includes apartments along with retail and office space but said he could not comment on the real estate aspects.

Mr. Kibbe noted the broader conflict between preserving marine commercial activity and economic pressures favoring residential development but said improved upkeep could make boatyards more viable. Mr. Pageler agreed that the commissions should focus on their jurisdictional role.

Mr. Steadman asked about coastal site plan requirements. Mr. Shuler said local approval preceded state permitting and that further review would occur in December. They also discussed differing views on whether boat storage is a water dependent use. In response to flooding concerns, Mr. Shuler explained the project's design includes elevated first floors and infrastructure adaptable to future road elevations and rising sea levels.

****MR. PAGELER MOVED TO INCLUDE A SITE INSPECTION FOR THIS SEGMENT OF THE PROJECT.**

****MR. JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION.**

****THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

VIII. DISCUSSION

There was no further discussion.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

****MR. HILLER MOVED TO ADJOURN.
**MR. JOHNSON SECONDED THE MOTION.
THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 pm.