

**CITY OF NORWALK
HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
DECEMBER 11, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Romano, Chair; John Crespo; William Gardella; Alan Kibbe; Christopher MacDonnell; Jeffrey Mangels; Anthony Mobilia; John Pinto; Dennis Santella

OTHERS: Sgt. Gregg Scully, Harbor Master; Bruce Lovallo, Deputy Harbor Master; Steve Bartush, Shellfish Commission; Wes Oliver, Norwalk Yacht Club; Geoff Steadman, Consultant

1. Call to Order/Pledge

Mr. Romano called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m. and Mr. Crespo led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Roll Call

Those in attendance are reflected above.

3. Chairman's Report

Mr. Romano discussed safety issues with the relocation of the Seaport Association and Maritime Aquarium vessels. Based on various factors, a 150 ft. buffer is needed. He said Sgt. Scully suggested putting in a ramp south of the City dock. This would add additional public docking for the City. Mr. Romano said that if the two docks move, they will have the appropriate amount of space for both vessels.

A discussion took place about dredging the location and options for using the location. Dr. Pinto asked if the surface area is important or is it the quality of what is there already. Mr. Bartush said they are natural active beds and this one is particularly important. Mr. Schnierlein noted the algae that grows on top of the mud provides oxygen to the water. A discussion took place about an environmental impact study. Mr. Schnierlein said that to the best of his knowledge, one has not been done.

4. Staff Reports:

a. Harbor Master - Scully

Sgt. Scully reviewed his report as follows:

Norwalk State of the Harbor Report 2019

The beginning of the year started off with a lot of compliancy with the mooring system.

We pulled all of the moorings out of Peach Island area and they were not replaced until the customers had all of the necessary paperwork and payments submitted.

The majority of the customers throughout the Harbor were on time with their applications.

3 new speed buoys were added in the channel this season, and seemed to make a difference in speeding vessels in the Harbor, which is a big plus for safety issues.

Work was completed on the Strofalino Bridge in late November, and there were no major issues in the Harbor as a result of the work being done.

I completed a revalidation of the Norwalk Visitors Dock for compliance with the Maritime Transportation Act of 2002 with the Coast Guard this past fall.

We are planning on doing some reorganization of the buoys in the East side of the channel the beginning of the year.

There have not been any major issues with safety, and traffic so far with the work that has been done regarding the walk Bridge.

I and deputy Harbor master Bruce Lovallo conducted a scenario with the future barge placements and the Maritime Vessel. Concerns came to regarding maneuverability and safety of the Vessel once the barges were set in place. A drone was flown above during the scenario, and it was found that the vessel would not be able to safely dock with the barges in place, nor would it make a difference if the Vessel was relocated further ahead of the existing docks. Relocation is still in discussion at this time.

b. Consultant - Steadman

Mr. Steadman reported that there was a discussion about the Blue Plan. He described the Blue Plan and said the Harbor Management Commission should make a presentation to the State.

6. Shellfish Commission - Johnson, Bartush

Mr. Bartush reported they had a brief meeting to discuss their monthly finances.

7. Committee Reports:

a. Application Review- Pinto

Dr. Pinto reviewed the application. He said the full application has not been submitted. Mr. Bartush said a site visit will be scheduled soon and remarks will be postponed to the January meeting.

**** DR. PINTO MOVED TO APPROVE THE COMMENTS AS DISCUSSED
AT THE COMMITTEE MEETING**

69 Bluff Avenue. Pre-application by Barbara Johnson (Applicant). The applicant proposes to construct a piling-supported 4' by 26' pier, 3.5' by 35' ramp and 8' by 20' pile-anchored floating dock for private recreational boating.

**** MR. GARDELLA SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Dr. Pinto reviewed the following application.

Zoning Change in AAA Residence Areas that affect Norwalk Harbor. The text would amend the Special Permit uses that affect all AAA Residence zone properties in the City. It specifically would allow the new use only within existing accessory structures located on the premises of a place of worship so would not involve any new construction

**** MR. SANTELLA MOVED TO APPROVE USING THE LANGUAGE IN
THE POCD THAT IS APPLICABLE TO THIS APPLICATION
** MR. GARDELLA SECONDED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

Dr. Pinto said the Commission needs to submit a letter to the DOT stating their position in opposition to the location of the vessels and that an alternate location needs to be proposed. He said the DOT is meeting with representatives from The Maritime Aquarium and the Seaport Association to discuss this issue.

Mr. Romano said they need a letter from Sgt. Scully and the Commission stating that the United States Coast Guard will follow the lead of the Harbor Master regarding the re-location of the two vessels. Mr. Steadman said the permit application by the DOT has been submitted. There is an element of the application that increases the new docks and proposes dredging north of the Stroffolino Bridge.

b. Mooring and Harbor Safety - Santella

Mr. Santella said he would make his presentation at the State of the Harbor meeting.

c. Finance - Mobilia

Mr. Mobilia reported that they met with the Director of Finance and he reviewed the budget request for \$20,000. There will be a follow up meeting. Mr. Romano noted that for several years, their budget request was \$9,000. He said they brought the Director of Finance up to speed about the Harbor Commission.

d. Plans and Recommendations - Mangels

Mr. Mangels reported that there are open discussions to share data and the costs of what it takes to run the Norwalk Harbor. It is a work in progress and they meet every Thursday at 10:00 a.m.

e. Newsletter / Web site - Alan Kibbe

Mr. Kibbe said he has the ability to post to the Harbor Management's Facebook page. Mr. Romano asked if it interfaces with the City's website. He added that Mr. Mobilia requested they add Coastal Vision on the website. Mr. Steadman will send a copy to Mr. Kibbe to post on the website.

f. Water Quality - Crespo / Schnierlein

There was no report because the committee did not meet.

g. Bridges - Mobilia

There was no report presented this evening.

8. Approval of Minutes

**** MR. MANGELS MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS AMENDED**
**** MR. CRESPO SECONDED**
**** MOTION PASSED WITH TWO (2) ABSTENTIONS (MR. MOBILIA AND MR. SANTELLA)**

9. New Business / Old Business

There was no new business or old business discussed this evening.

10. **Adjournment**

**** DR. PINTO MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services

**CITY OF NORWALK
HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION
STATE OF THE HARBOR
DECEMBER 11, 2019**

ATTENDANCE: John Romano, Chair; John Crespo; William Gardella; Alan Kibbe; Christopher MacDonnell; Jeffrey Mangels; Anthony Mobilia; John Pinto; Dennis Santella

OTHERS: Mayor Harry Rilling; Sgt. Gregg Scully, Harbor Master; Bruce Lovallo, Deputy Harbor Master; Steve Bartush, Shellfish Commission; Wes Oliver, Norwalk Yacht Club; Geoff Steadman, Consultant; Sgt. Peter LaPak; Officer Mike Silva; Tony D'Andrea

1. **WELCOME** (Chairman John Romano)

Mr. Romano called the meeting to order at 7:34 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mrs. Rilling led the Assembly in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. D'Andrea offered a blessing to our Troops.

Mr. Romano introduced the new members of the Commission and announced the retirement of Mr. Gardella from the Commission.

2. **MAYOR'S HARBOR ADDRESS** (Mayor Harry Rilling)

City's Overview of Walk Bridge Projects, Norwalk's Responsibilities.

Mayor Rilling reviewed the various projects as follows:

HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

STATE OF THE HARBOR MEETING

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On-going projects:

Danbury Branch Dockyard Project (estimated to be completed by Winter 2020)

Project milestones:

- Ann St Bridge Replacement completed
- New Tracks & Catenary Structures Erected on the Danbury Branch

CP 243 Interlocking Project progress (estimated to be completed early 2022)

Project milestones:

- Track 4 Back in service - flipped to track 3 in November 2019
- 2 New Signal Houses Installed (on tracks - one behind the police headquarter and the other near Washington St)
- New ballasts and Railroad tracks

Under Design projects:

Walk Bridge Replacement Project (estimated construction to start late 2020* - about 5 yrs construction)

- 90% Design Submission November 2019
- DEEP Permit submitted on September 2019
- in-River Pile Investigation Completed November 2019

* Pending permit approval

Advance Utilities (estimated construction to start Summer 2020 - about 2.5-3 yrs construction)

Locations:

- N Water St (between Washington St & Marshall St)
- Osborne St (between Rowan & Fort Point St)

- East Avenue between Winfield and Olmstead*
The stretch from Fort Point to Olmstead is part of the City of Norwalk underground utilities portion, which will be included as part of this contract.

Eversource Status

- CT Citing Council petition to be submitted 1st quarter 2020

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Norwalk Harbor Management Commission

State of the Harbor

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- Underground construction and some overhead – no river related activities – late 1st quarter 2020
- HDD option supported by DOT

Mayor Rilling said his staff meets regularly with the Connecticut Department of Transportation. Mr. Romano said they are being very cooperative with the Shellfish Commission. Mayor Rilling said there is no final decision yet between the City and Eversource, but they are leaning toward coming up by the City's public docks. He said DEET needs input from the Harbor Management Commission.

Mayor Rilling thanked the Commission for all they do.

3. **Year in Review Summary of Initiatives and Accomplishments** (Chairman John Romano)

Mr. Romano asked for a moment of silence in memory of Frank Strauch.

Mr. Romano said he was happy that the Mayor will help set up a meeting with Eversource.

Mr. Steadman reviewed the major projects, including input on the POCD and the WALK Bridge. He said they can all be proud that the DOT modified their plans for the Yankee Doodle Bridge. Mr. Romano added that they received \$900,000 from the State Port Authority to help finish the visitor docks.

Mr. Steadman said they will formalize the end of the year report in January. It will be available on line.

Committee Reports

- Application Review (John Pinto)

Dr. Pinto gave an overview of the responsibilities of the committee. This year they reviewed 13 CAM application and 19 regular applications.

- Moorings (Dennis Santella)

Mr. Santella's report is as follows:

Good evening. Moorings: The Online Mooring System continues to show improvement and compliance, by most of the mooring applicants, for the 2019 Mooring Season.

The Committee continues to address issues and make improvements as required.

There are 99 mooring permits for the 2019 season. The mooring areas are in Norwalk Harbor, East Basin, South Anchorage, Peach Island, Belle Island, Ram Island Bay, Sheffield Harbor, Betts Bay and Copps Island Bay.

The Managed Fields consist of:

- Norwalk Yacht Club with 86 moorings
- Sprite Island Yacht Club with 49 moorings
- Rowayton Yacht Club with 91 moorings

Total of 226 moorings for Managed Fields

Grand total of 325 moorings for the System

For the 2019 Mooring Season,

- The Harbor Master will continue to monitor all mooring locations, address specific mooring areas, by removing unused or abandoned moorings and reposition and realign the placement of moorings as required.
- The Mooring Committee will continue to improve areas within the Online Mooring System where needed.

If mooring applicants have questions, suggestions or need the help of the Mooring Committee, please email us at nhmcmoorings@gmail.com

Harbor Safety:

The Mooring and Harbor Safety Committee, along with the Harbor Master, will continue to monitor the activity and safety of the harbor and especially during the 5-year Walk Bridge project, with a tentative scheduled to start in the fall of 2020.

The Mooring and Harbor Safety Committee would like to recognize, the ongoing work of, the Harbor Master, Deputy Harbor Master, Marine Police and Fire Department, for their continual awareness and efforts, of providing a safe harbor for the navigation of all recreational and commercial vessels.

Thank you.

- Harbor Safety – Harbor Master (Sgt. Gregg Scully)

Sgt. Scully's report is as follows:

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- Harbor Safety - Marine Police (Sgt. Peter LaPak and Officer Mike Silva)

Sgt. LaPak reported that the Norwalk Marine Police saw a dramatic upswing in calls for service. In 2018 they had 240, but they are now up to 340 so far this year. One of the biggest problems is with homemade vessels. They saw an improvement in vessel and operator safety. The idea to relocate the Aquarium and Seaport vessels of an area of great concern.

Officer Silva said they expect to be busier next year. They were able to do more enforcement this year because they added a person.

- Shellfish Management (Steve Bartush)

Mr. Bartush gave an overview of the charge of the committee. They meet on the first Thursday of the month at the Health Department.

- Water Quality (Joseph Schnierlein)

Mr. Schnierlein reported that the committee started meeting a year ago. They had an issue with the DOT report. They were not going to do any environmental remediation, but that changed. He said he hoped they would provide a reasonable environmental impact statement that is relevant to this Harbor.

Mr. Schnierlein reported there were two man made chemicals found in the First District's water supply. They already took two wells off line.

4. **David S. Dunavan Stewardship Award Presentation** (John Pinto)

Dr. Pinto explained that each year the Harbor Management Commission announces the David S. Dunavan Stewardship Award. He said that Mr. Dunavan was one of the first members of the Harbor Management Commission.

Mr. Henry S. Palu a former member of the Harbor Management Commission was awarded the 2019 award. His son, Mark Palu accepted the award posthumously on behalf of his father. Dr. Pinto highlighted his many accomplishments including his Military career as a JAG officer.

Mark Palu said he was honored to accept the award on behalf of his father. He said he would be very humbled if he were here.

Mr. Steadman recalled when Mr. Palu, Mr. Callahan and Ms. Clark joined the Harbor Management Commission. He said Mr. Palu had the highest integrity and worked in the public interest to come up with thoughtful solutions.

5. **Presentation: Norwalk Harbor: The Jewel of Long Island Sound**
(Geoff Steadman, NHMC Consultant and John Pinto, NHMC)

Mr. Steadman gave a slide presentation and reviewed the Harbor Management initiatives for 2019, including the Plan of Conservation and Development Plan, and the Harbor Management Plan. He reviewed the Yankee Doodle and I-95 bridge projects. He also reviewed the priorities for 2020.

Mr. Steadman reported that the Connecticut Department of Transportation is testing turbidity to determine the baseline water quality conditions. He reviewed the Eversource transmission line project.

Mr. Romano said they are discussing putting in Harbor usage fees. He noted that the Five Mile River has had user fees for some time. It is a user fee and only people who use the Harbor will pay a fee. Mr. Romano said they hope to have a 2021 roll out.

Mr. Romano said the money they got in the past will not be forthcoming for dredging. Norwalk is a premier harbor and they need to generate fees to help protect it.

6. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION; QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Ms. Debora Goldstein asked about public access to the water. Mr. Romano said public access is a requirement; however, most of the lands are private lands. He said two places come to mind, Manressa and a former marina that was condemned. He said the former Neptune Boat Club is a valuable piece of property and is an access that is not replaceable.

Ms. Diane Lauricella said that each site has to provide some access, but in the past, Planning and Zoning said they needed a path; however, she said could end up destroying a habitat. She said she believed there was an opportunity to weigh in and be sure that some public access is needed, but it does not need to ring the entire Harbor.

Mr. Tony D'Andrea and the Harbor Plan needs to be dusted off. He suggested looking at what Stamford does about their revenue stream for user fees for barge traffic. Mr. Romano said the Harbor Master wants to put in moorings, but there is a cost to do so.

Ms. Goldstein said she heard that the inventory of existing easements to the water are being obscured by property owners. She suggested that Planning and Zoning could approve funding for a study. Mr. Steadman said Planning and Zoning should be able to provide information on public access. Ms. Goldstein said there are fences along the public right of way along the water. Mr. Steadman said he would talk to Planning and Zoning. Mr. Romano said it was worth looking into.

Ms. Lauricella suggested using green infrastructure. She said she would love this body to consider if an applicant is incorporating green infrastructure. Mr. Steadman said that if the Harbor Management Commission had been given a chance to review the site plans for the new mall, it would have recommended green roofs.

7. ADJOURNMENT

In honor of Mr. Palu's memory, his son was asked to make the motion to adjourn

**** MR. MARK PALU MOVED TO ADJOURN**
**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services