

CITY OF PORT WASHINGTON  
HARBOR COMMISSION MEETING  
Monday September 12, 2016, 7:30 P.M.  
City Hall, Lower Level Conference Room

Members Present

Jerry Baganz, Jerry Gruen, Sue Knauer, Bill Driscoll, Dan Herlache, and Jordan Schwanz

Others Present

City Administrator Mark Grams

Harbor Master Dennis Cherny

Assistant Harbormaster Lisa Rathke (Secretary)

Main Street Design Review Committee

1. **Roll Call: (Absent: Dave Larson)**

2. **Approve Minutes Of Previous Meeting**

**Jerry Baganz made a motion to approve the minutes as written and Dan Herlache seconded. Motion Carried.**

3. **Monthly Financial Report**

City Administrator Grams said that the numbers are a lot better this year compared to the last two years. We are looking much better on the revenue side with all the launches and the transients. We have hit the revenue peak for the season said City Administrator Grams. Overall things are really on the upside. It's amazing what good weather and fishing can do.

Member Baganz mentioned that the North Slip rentals have been down the last several years and the marina may want to market that North Slip area a little more effectively as he doesn't foresee there being a demand for charter slips. Harbormaster Cherny mentioned the possibility of those boating clubs that own several boats and people buy into them like a time share. That is the direction the industry seems to be going in.

4. **Review Redesigned Marina District Plan**

The Main Street Design Review Committee presented their Marina District Plan to the Harbor Commission. Adam Brown presented the plan to the commission. Adam mentioned that their goal was to create a pedestrian friendly connection between the downtown and the marina. They would like to see pedestrian crossing areas possibly marked by pavers to make pedestrians feel safer as they maneuver their way through the marina parking lots. Adam mentioned that they did take previous suggestions into consideration and made E. Washington Street a one way street and made a wider turning radius for vehicles with trailers, making it easier to turn south off of Washington onto Lake Street. They plan on having some kind of iconic symbol marking the entrance into the Marina District. They also turned some of the marina parking into convertible stalls allowing for either cars or vehicles with trailers to park based on demand. Adam mentioned that they added 4 stalls to be designated as a loading zone for tenants along the North Building. Harbormaster Cherny and member Bill Driscoll agreed that there needs to be parking available by the fish cleaning station for vehicles with trailers. Harbormaster Cherny suggested taking away the tenant loading zone parking spaces along the North Building and keeping that parking as it is right now so the vehicles with trailers may still park along that area and go to the fish cleaning station. It was also suggested by Harbormaster Cherny that they not put a pedestrian walkway through the launch ramp area. That is an unsafe area for pedestrians to be walking as vehicles with trailers are backing up there. He suggested that the pedestrian walkway would be better placed from the Marina Control Building heading west to the stair case heading to the North Slip walkway. Harbormaster Cherny said that he likes that they put angle parking in the trailer lot on the east and west sides and suggested that they make the middle angle parking as well. The vehicles and trailers keep getting longer according to Harbormaster Cherny, and the angle parking would make it easier for those parking trailers.

The Harbor Commission thanked the Main Street Design Review Committee for sharing their Marina District Plan, taking suggestions into consideration, and all their hard work.

5. **Update On Slip Rentals, Boat Launches, And Transient Boaters**

Harbormaster Cherny mentioned that at the start of the year, there were 14 slips open on Pier 4 and to date they have all been filled for the season! There are only a couple 30 and 36' slips open in the Main marina and 11 slips open in the North Slip. As of now, we are approximately 96% full. Next year we already have waiting list applications for 6-30' slips, 2-36' slips, and 1-40' slip. Boat launches last year were at 2000 and this year we have over 3500 launches. Last year we sold 209 season passes and this year we sold 223. Transient revenue is also up considerably this year.

6. **Preparation Of 2017 Marina Budget**

City Administrator Grams said that the commission will get the preliminary budget at next month's meeting. However, Harbormaster Cherny did want to discuss some of the items on the budget. He asked the commission how they felt about possibly increasing slip fees this year. Not much, just a little every year is what he is learning at all the meetings he attends. Member Gruen said that we have been keeping our rates down hoping for the boating economy to turn around, and now it appears that it has. He said that he would not be against a slight increase. Harbormaster Cherny said that he is looking at a half percent to a one percent increase. We have not increased rates since 2009, and he sees the need to do something. Member Driscoll doesn't believe that we have a choice, as we lost money the last two years. Member Driscoll feels that while we have a waiting list and while people are excited about fishing and boating, it is our time to recover some of the money that we lost the last two years. Member Baganz pointed out that other marinas' slip fees are similar to ours except for 30' slips. They are more expensive than ours and those marinas must charge where the demand is. Maybe that is something that we should look into he thought. Harbormaster Cherny said that putting the largest increase on our 30' slips may scare some away as many of them are on a very tight budget.

Member Knauer said that if we are 96% full and have a waiting list, she feels that we should stay where we are at. Member Herlache said that we should consider what the marketing experts are telling Harbormaster Cherny. We should consider raising slip fees, that way when we do have a bad year, the hike is not so large resulting in a large drop out of existing customers.

Member Baganz wanted to rescind what he had mentioned earlier. How do you explain to that 30' slip tenant why their slip fees went up considerably compared to other slip sizes? It doesn't sell well, so he takes that back.

Member Driscoll doesn't want to forget that we lost twenty five thousand dollars the last two years and the fact that the weather and the fishing could do that to us again. While people are excited about boating he thinks we should raise it enough to cover that twenty five thousand dollars while we are in a position where we can justify the raise. If that is too much, he would definitely like to see some sort of increase.

Harbormaster Cherny said that he will work with the numbers and discuss with the commission next month.

#### **7. Harbormaster's Report**

Harbormaster Cherny updated the commission on the swimming pool experiment. 25 people used the Holiday Inn pool this year. There may have been more that used it, but the weather was so hot that people preferred the outdoor pool, so we gave out far more outdoor pool passes than we have in years. Tenants and guests get these passes for free. It is a perk that we are offering and people are using it.

After discussing the Wi-Fi with members of the Wisconsin Marine Association, Harbormaster Cherny mentioned that we are not alone in our struggles. Everyone is having issues with their Wi-Fi. It is very expensive to expand. It will cost \$25,000 or more to get far better reception. The other option is to make it a closed system with a password. That will regulate the Wi-Fi to up to 100 users at a time. We will look into this further over the winter.

Harbormaster Cherny informed the commission that a boat sunk on pier two because the boat's bilge pump wasn't working. Thanks to the marina personnel and help from Diver's Delight, the boat was raised and pumped out and taken out of the water.

Water levels are pretty much the same as of right now mentioned Harbormaster Cherny.

The patio around the North Building will be finished this fall Harbormaster Cherny said.

#### **8. Marina Tenants' Comments**

Marina Tenant Representative Paul Markworth wanted to personally thank Harbormaster Cherny for enforcing the "No Wake" policy in the marina. He said that the number of boaters that speed through the marina has decreased considerably after a couple boaters were given warnings from the Police Department. The tenants greatly appreciate his efforts.

#### **9. Any Other Business That May Come Properly Before The Commission**

No comments.

#### **10. Adjournment**

**Bill Driscoll made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 9:03 pm and Sue Knauer seconded. Motion Carried.**