

Harbor Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, August 19, 2014, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, South Haven City Hall



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order by Co-Chair Stephens at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Pyle, Reineck, Silverman, Strong, Stephens
Absent: Arnold, Sullivan

Also present: John Marple, Marina Manager

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Strong, second by Pyle to approve the August 19, 2014 regular meeting agenda.

All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes: June 17, 2014 Regular Meeting

Motion by ~~Sullivan~~ *Silverman*, second by Reineck to approve the June 17, 2014 regular meeting minutes as corrected.

All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Interested Citizens in the Audience Will be Heard on Items Not on the Agenda

None at this time.

5. Marina Reports

VandenBosch reviewed the Marina Reports through July 31, noting that is one month into the fiscal year. Pointed out the repairs and maintenance budget, some of which has already been spent. Responded to 's question regarding the budget, that it is an annual budget. Pointed out that the Maritime restroom upgrade expenses were wrongly placed on the supplies budget line, rather than repair and maintenance and commented that a current project is electric pedestal repair/replacement. This will be corrected for next month.

VandenBosch noted that seasonal revenues look very good for this season; revenues may break the record for all the years we have been tracking revenues.

Regarding the Black River Park Fund, VandenBosch noted that the fund balance of \$198,000 will likely be put toward some improvements at Black River Park. Revenues are down for this year, according to VandenBosch, but more revenue will be coming in the next three months. The board discussed the low revenue figures being at least partly attributed to the weather/cooler temperatures.

VandenBosch noted that the River Maintenance Fund budget has \$20,000 in Capital Outlay and a projected cash balance of \$73,486. After some discussion, VandenBosch noted that the fish grinder is out of service; staff is waiting for a part to repair it.

There have been problems with Fidelman bringing his rental units into Black River Park to launch, VandenBosch informed the commissioners, and Fidelman has been asked not to do that. Since that practice has continued VandenBosch has asked our city attorney what the city's next step is.

VandenBosch commented on problems with trailer parking in Black River Park; some seasonal boaters and others dropped their empty boat trailers off and left them in parking spaces, which on heavy use days such as festival weekends, is a problem. Trailer parking is something that needs to be worked on, either by policy, adding a fee, or indicating/providing an alternative location. Strong asked if seasonal renters can leave their trailers there to which VandenBosch responded, "No one should be parking (empty trailers) there." suggested that staff let seasonal boaters know in their contract and indicate somewhere they can park legally."

VandenBosch noted that he will not be here in October and unless there is a pressing issue the meeting will probably be canceled.

VandenBosch indicated lake levels are almost up to the average point.

6. Fireboat Discussion

Members and staff voiced their disappointment that Tony Marsala, the Fire Marshall, is not present.

Pyle has a lead on a boat lift for \$1,500 which would accommodate the boat and is a very good deal.

In response to a query by Stephens regarding what the board wants to do, suggested that VandenBosch send the Fire Marshall a letter noting the board's disappointment due to anticipation of his presence at this meeting, with a reminder of the information the board needs him to bring.

Motion by , second by Strong to table the fireboat discussion until the next meeting.

All in favor. Motion carried.

7. Capital Improvement List

VandenBosch enumerated several grants the City can apply for; noted the Fisheries Trust Grant is due in January with several others due in April. In January or February staff will start to budget for some of the larger projects. VandenBosch has been trying to organize and come up with a strategy and is asking this board for advice and discussion.

VandenBosch noted that projects under \$3,000 do not need to be bid out and pointed out that there is a lot more staff work, planning ahead and time involved and someone must be hired to put bid specifications together for bigger projects.

Regarding grant strategy, VandenBosch indicated that staff has identified a number of grants including the Michigan State Waterways grants, the main grant used at the city's marinas. There are four types of Waterways grants: 1.) Harbor infrastructure; 2.) Boating access site; 3.) Harbor preliminary engineering study and 4.) Preliminary engineering for boating access (includes the boat launch/marina). Waterways suggests that projects applied for be under \$300,000. VandenBosch noted that the city can apply for more than one of these grants and pointed out that the match for the North marina was 50%, but applications can have as low as 25% local match of the total project cost.

VandenBosch noted that Land and Water Conservation fund grants require a fifty percent (50%) match. This grant can be used in part for acquisition of property but also for recreational facilities, such as dinghy docks and kayak launches.

The Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund, according to VandenBosch, is the main grant that the city applies for every year. The North Beach has been the city's application for the past two (2) years. VandenBosch explained that there is also a small development project grant (\$50,000 and under) for which the city can apply for up to three (3) projects city-wide. VandenBosch noted staff definitely wants to take advantage of those, which require only a twenty-five percent (25%) match. In response to a question about what type of projects VandenBosch enumerated park projects such as landscaping, picnic area, benches and water front improvements such as the boat launch ramp improvements. VandenBosch noted his intention is to focus on these smaller grants for the boat launch and landscaping park-type improvements for Black River Park.

In response to Strong's question of what type of things are being considered for the North Beach VandenBosch listed concession stand upgrades; new playground equipment; benches, etc.

VandenBosch noted that the Recreation Passport Grant could be used for a pavilion/picnic area and up to three can be applied for in a year.

The Great Lakes Fisheries Trust grant is being targeted by staff for the fish cleaning station.

VandenBosch explained that due to budget limitations this year, there are not many short-term projects that staff can recommend other than fixing the electric pedestals. In the area of long term projects there are two (2) major areas of focus: 1.) Maritime Marina and 2.) South Side Marina. The Maritime Marina's docks, plumbing and electric are all not in great shape and/or outdated. The docks will have to be rebuilt within five (5) years which is a big project, which he guesses would be around \$200,000 to \$300,000. VandenBosch noted that regarding whether the pilings need to be replaced, he would want to get an engineering recommendation.

During discussion regarding changing of configuration of docks, VandenBosch noted we are seeing larger boats coming in and if there are going to be changes made, wider would be better. Further discussion ensued including having expansion plans looked at by an engineer and 's request for input from Marina Manager Marple.

Marple pointed out that the South Side Marina is somewhat outdated especially with the forty (40) to sixty (60) foot boats getting wider. These bigger, wider boats can be accommodated on the head dock but in the future we should look at reconfiguration on the South Side. At the Maritime Museum, which was designed for forty foot (40') boats, there doesn't seem to be a problem; a certain distance is needed between the finger piers. Today having forty foot (40') slips is a good thing; the buying public is going towards a larger boat. Marple noted the average boater is getting older and staying put more than touring." Marple observed that the economy and gas prices inhibit younger boaters. Long term, Marple would look at the South Side to move into the future, while at the Maritime, not so much. Marple noted that VandenBosch is right on target regarding upgrades at the Maritime Museum docks. Within the basin on the North side the mixture of docks is pretty good, except that there aren't enough thirty foot (30') docks. "We have plenty of forty (40), fifty (50) and sixty (60), with sixty (60) hardest to sell." Marple likes the sixties (60s) for transient boaters. Marple stated that sixty percent (60%) of the transients stayed on the Northside this season and people who can afford to travel have a forty-five (45) or larger boat. Marple noted that on the weekends the Northside is full. "Fifty percent (50%) of the boats in our harbor are there on Friday and Saturday nights," Marple stated, "Sunday through Thursday we have a real problem."

Marple emphasized that the city should be looking at the wave attenuation. In the future, not next year, enlarging the head dock on the South Side would be advantageous for big boats. Tour ships, the big boats, are moving; they are attractions. Accommodations are very limited right now so the city needs to maximize opportunities for larger boats; tour boats and one hundred thirty-five foot (135') boats, pointing out that the folks that walk off those boats spend a ton of money in the community, which is important as well.

Marple sees Black River Park as a fine blend, with the need to attend to the seasonal boater a little more.

noted that in terms of the future, the marine industry has some excellent statistics on the number of boats sold in every category, broken down by hull material; state and length. "You can see some trends looking at the trade magazines." Marple would like to figure out the transient issue during the off-season; his take so far is that boat buyers are older and/or wealthier. Marple noted that seasonal boating is coming back; the city has great facilities.

VandenBosch stressed the need for maintenance and repair at the Maritime Museum docks and work on the South Side clubhouse. South Side improvements would include the reroof of the building; exterior paint; varnish the arches under the roof and on the interior replace carpeting, blinds, walls, furniture and upgrade heating and ventilation. VandenBosch noted that the building is going to need a lot of attention. Despite talk about renovating the building, VandenBosch does not think a major addition or reconstruction is possible without doing the reroof and paint upgrades in the meantime, since a major addition could be a \$1M project.

In response to a question by Reineck, VandenBosch said a refurbishing of the South Side building could be a quarter of a million dollars; including the reroofing and interior. asked if we need to have an engineering firm tell us what we need for a grant to which VandenBosch commented that we can say we want to upgrade our facility. noted that a complete renovation of the South Side facility, which is an attractive building, would add brightness internally and externally. wondered how long it would take staff to put together a grant application, submit and get a response. VandenBosch said the deadline is April; staff could put a grant together by then.

asked who makes the decision to move forward. VandenBosch said the City Council is the ultimate one but the city manager has to get something started. ~~Sullivan~~ Silverman asked if a recommendation from this board is necessary, to which VandenBosch responded that it helps.

VandenBosch said prioritizing is helpful, but "we will have to recommend something." To explore a renovation at South Side marina as a priority, VandenBosch could get a letter of engagement from Abonmarche and look at what needs to be done.

Reineck asked if a rebuilding will attract enough more business, noting that maybe upgrading what is there would attract more business.

VandenBosch asked whether Marple has any recommendations for the South Side to attract transients. Marple responded, "Amenities. Natural gas grills; more shade. The building itself is in fine shape but the lack of a drain in the central hallway is a long term issue. It would have cost \$3,500 twenty (20) years ago but now it will cost \$50,000 to put in proper drainage. The interior office area and living /reception area needs to be upgraded with new carpet and furniture. The blinds are twenty-five (25) year old mauve mini blinds; white blinds would be better. A large scale renovation of the building? Not sure it will bring in more transient boaters."

Marple stated that the main issue is the surge issue, thinks the reputation is there, it's an important issue, "It is a good looking building, even compared with the one across the river." Regarding a large scale renovation, Marple thinks the city should go through a process of determining if the community needs a multi-use building pointing out parking is an issue down there. While Marple does not know if enlarging would improve transient boating, he knows the South Side marina building does need updating. "A steel roof will be a huge improvement." Marple stated that he likes five (5) year plans. "Financially the marinas are going to be fine." Marple thinks there needs to be consensus in place prior to going out for the grant. Marple stated, "I don't know of a better piece of real estate around. Maybe we need a yearlong study but in the meantime if we don't get a new roof on it. . ."

said there could be several studies done and noted three that are possibilities. Marple suggested that the shower area be looked at. "If drainage was installed in the center hall along with proper ventilation and heating, those boaters would be ecstatic." *Marple* strongly suggests the board go through the South Side facility, noting that the building is in good shape, but dated. VandenBosch noted that if staff put these maintenance items into a packet less than the \$300,000 it might be possible to pay less than 25% of the project cost to get it done.

Motion by , second by Strong, that the city undertake a study and related grant application for the renovation of the South Side marina facility building.

After a brief discussion Stephens called for the vote.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by that the city undertake a study and apply for a grant to renovate the South Side Marina docking facilities and amenities.

VandenBosch requested discussion regarding wave attenuation and electric amperage projects. Along the headwall there is demand for dual fifty (50) amp connections; there is a need to increase the size of the wiring to do that. Regarding wave attenuation, VandenBosch noted that we asked half a dozen vendors for quotes and proposals and none were willing to sell us their product and say it is going to work. VandenBosch feels we need to ask an engineer and find out if there is a way to solve the problem. VandenBosch recommends applying for a preliminary engineering study to extend the headwall and wave attenuation. After some discussion, VandenBosch noted that the Capital Improvement Plan is all about prioritization, not just identifying the projects.

Stephens asked whether staff is looking for a recommendation to City Council. VandenBosch informed that he is looking for discussion and prioritization.

Pyle asked about Black River Park and VandenBosch responded that is a separate grant. VandenBosch said there could be a conflict; he recommended a waterways boating access grant for the driveway reconfiguration; breaking those two up under \$300,000 projects.

There might be a prioritization question from Waterways if they do not have money for both. The City has no other projects for the Waterways Grant; only marinas and Black River Park are eligible for those grants.

After discussion regarding priorities, docks or building, withdrew his motion regarding the renovation of the South Side marina docks. VandenBosch estimated the grant for expanding the head docks and wave attenuation would probably be fifty to one hundred thousand dollars (\$50,000 to 100,000) and there would need to be public impact process. suggested the two projects be considered together, noting that the dock extension could possibly assist in the wave attenuation.

Stephens asked if the Michigan State Waterways grant is one grant or multiple grants to which VandenBosch responded that \$300,000 is per grant application. Discussion ensued regarding how the projects could work together.

said the South Side building and the renovation of the Maritime Museum marina docks seem to be competing for first place. VandenBosch noted that the museum dock project would include a complete rebuild of the docks including plumbing and electric. There are other amenities, a roof over the party deck, and other smaller things, that could be included. asked about a public area for seasonal boaters. VandenBosch pointed out that the city does not have a lot of real estate in that area but there might be room for a small enclosed building. wondered if it would be appropriate to consider a building that could be shared with the Maritime Museum; during boating season it would be used by seasonal boaters, but outside the season, the museum had access and could use it for a variety of purposes. VandenBosch said it would bump up the project amount by quite a bit but replacing cinderblock restrooms is probably a good idea. Sullivan Silverman asked if Marple can share the seasonal boaters' point of view.

Marple commented that if one were to ask the boaters at the Maritime Museum they would like the party deck fixed up. Staff did bring in a portable gas grill and added hot water for them as well as fixing up the bathrooms a little bit. Marple agreed with VandenBosch that the dockage must be addressed; it is getting rickety. While Marple is not sure of the extent of renovation being considered, the joists and headers underneath the head docks are not to code. Marple noted that while not unsafe, those docks were never built properly. There would need to be additional joists and the deck boards are getting quite old. Marple noted that the head dock is in better shape than the finger piers; the electrical is thirty (30) years old, the copper piping was stolen and the plastic is a constant maintenance problem and the head dock needs addressing. Marple said his idea would be to clad the existing building and enclose the patio area to make a boater's haven so that during the season during inclement weather they have somewhere to get out of the weather.

Pyle asked Marple, regarding the items he mentioned, if there could be a couple of smaller projects like gas grills. Marple reminded that we built a building and dredged a river. Marple indicated he would like to see more amenities because his job is to sell these facilities. Long term, studying the South Side building to see whether we want to enlarge it and he would

like to see all four facilities become somewhat consistent with a theme that is similar between all the facilities so wherever you are there is similarity. Marple stressed that he would like to see some grills. Marple noted that he understands the financial issues and agrees the maritime head docks must be addressed. Would like to clean up Black River Park for the seasonal boaters; attend to the launch docks; replace some partitions and counter tops in the bathroom facility. Marple noted that what VandenBosch is trying to do is get consensus from the commission on what we want to do.

VandenBosch noted that we have a master plan for Black River Park; but the total cost is more than the \$300,000 project the Waterways Commission likes to see; so if we split it up into phases and apply for a number of different grants, we can combine the grant projects to complete the full master plan improvements. If we do the driveways as a single project and try to do the fish cleaning station at the same time, it would be a major improvement. VandenBosch believes we can do that by applying for two different grants, noting that there is a \$200,000 fund balance so if we applied in April we would hear in November, giving time to build up the fund balance to meet that twenty-five percent (25%) match.

Regarding the paving of the Dunkley Street lot, VandenBosch has had discussions with the city manager and Downtown Development Authority (DDA), noting there is interest among downtown business owners in having more parking during summer weekends. We may be able to get the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to apply for a grant based on employment; by showing providing more parking would help downtown businesses increase employment. By partnering, VandenBosch feels it may be possible to get all parts of this project done; this is early stage thinking. VandenBosch noted that this application would be made for a rural business enhancement grant.

VandenBosch noted that he has smaller projects he would like to apply for grants for; the launch ramps are getting quite old and staff has had to bolt and weld them to fix them. VandenBosch would like to put together a grant application for new docks to replace the four (4) fairly old ones; add picnic tables and decorative rock landscaping along the marina. The Recreation Passport is not necessarily a marina grant but could possibly get park-like amenities paid for.

The other big project at Black River Park Marina is a new restroom and shower building near the launch and marina. That is the project we would be leaving for future years while we focus on the fish cleaning station, which is a priority of the Mayor. The City Council approves the expenditures, so the focus that staff is taking is putting the fish cleaning station first in line. Regarding the bathroom rehab, VandenBosch would like to look at a number of the smaller grants; forty-five to fifty thousand dollars (\$45,000 to \$50,000) could do a lot in the restrooms. These priorities VandenBosch has been talking about have been developed in the last couple of weeks; he wants to write something up in more detail and let the commission look at that.

requested that VandenBosch bring a recommendation to the commission.

VandenBosch noted that in River Maintenance, there is a twenty-five thousand (\$25,000) balance in the budget and he would like to try to do sedimentation dredging, particularly the one near the boat launch at Black River Park. VandenBosch has not done a sedimentation dredging yet; permits are in place and the soil is not contaminated. The other project that could be considered is the turning basin mound. VandenBosch would like to try to contract with the Army Corps of Engineers to have them do the work, because they are able to send the material out into Lake Michigan, which we are not able to do. That could be a big cost savings and presently, the city does not have a site to deposit such dredge spoils. asked if there is any possibility of the Army Corps doing the dredging in spring, due to the Queen's Cup. also recommended the city have the Corps look at the mouth of the harbor at the piers end, especially the north pier. VandenBosch said it is possible if they are underway perhaps they could just stop in for a couple of days and do in that time what it takes much longer for the smaller guys to do.

suggested asking our congressman for a little help. noted the sedimentation traps are always somewhat of a mystery; does it help or do they fill in within two days. We have a need in that turning basin to excavate that mound; we also know we have a need as we exit the harbor. feels the money is better spent there than on the sedimentation trap which we have no idea whether it helps or not.

VandenBosch will come back with shorter list and recap for next month. Noted that there is a strategic plan; the commissioners can look at that and offer new ideas. Probably we will just start that but having the capital portion is very helpful for him.

Stephens asked if city staff is considering applying for a grant for the wave attenuation. VandenBosch will put that together and may ask Abonmarche to provide a letter of engagement; we will have to look at it more closely. VandenBosch suggested Abonmarche may be willing to give us a cost estimate of what it would cost for the head dock with wave attenuation. Stephens asked if there are other grant resources to which VandenBosch responded, "Yes, typically the engineering study is done prior to applying for another grant for the project."

8. Wave Attenuation

VandenBosch again noted that none of the firms staff contacted would sell us their product; it was somewhat odd. VandenBosch feels that if we are going to do something, it will need to be studied in more depth and a preliminary engineering grant would be money well spent for the future.

Member and Staff Comments

Stephens: Did City Council approve a dinghy dock for Admiral Jack's? Our recommendation to City Council was that the Harbor Commission did not want to see dock space there. VandenBosch said any boat can have dinghies tied up; he is not sure that tying up dinghies

on a barge is something that had to specifically be asked for. Strong said he recalls the commission did not want any big boats tied up.

Pyle: There could be interpretation/confusion of a difference between boats and dinghies and noted there are a lot of boats in the harbor that stick out beyond the pilings, and there is a lot of space in the navigable harbor way. Pyle thinks there is a misconception that what he is doing is what is already being done in the harbor.

Reineck: Believes Joe intended to have dinghies but not "boats".

: Noted it irritates him if someone says one thing and does another but also pointed out the width of Joe's boat is narrower than the width of the Idler and if you add the width of the dinghies, it is not wider than the width of the Idler. Does not personally believe it is providing any negative consequence to boat navigation – either coming through (either direction) or waiting. "No harm, no foul," noted that if there were a future project, would like to see everything in writing. If we suddenly see power boats tied up, there may be intrusion into navigable space.

Strong: He personally would not tie up there as there is no bumper, and Joe's signage says dinghies only. The liability is Joe's, not the city's, according to Strong, and agreed.

VandenBosch: Noted that if a dangerous traffic situation develops, the city will have an issue to deal with, but it is certainly allowed to tie a dinghy up to a boat in the harbor.

Pyle: Commented on the shortage of dinghy docks already in South Haven; having the barge does bring people up into town.

VandenBosch: Wants people with dinghies to have access to the downtown.

Adjourn

Motion by Strong, second by Reineck to adjourn at 7:21 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary