

Harbor Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, September 16, 2014, 5:30 p.m.
Council Chambers, South Haven City Hall



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order by Arnold at 5:30 p.m.

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

Also present: Ron Wise, Fire Chief; Tony Marsala, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshall; Larry Halberstadt, City Engineer

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Stephens, second by Pyle to approve the September 16, 2014 agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes: August 19, 2014 Regular Meeting

Motion by Stephens, second by Sullivan to approve the August 19, 2014 regular meeting minutes with corrections.

All in favor. Motion carried.

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

None

5. Marina Reports

VandenBosch reviewed the Marina Reports. Noted the increase in Seasonal Marina Revenue for the calendar year; above all previous years. Also pointed out that when seasonal dock revenue goes up at Black River Park that leaves fewer docks for transients.

VandenBosch commented that water levels are just below average, still, but looking better than last year and that there was a fairly heavy storm last Monday with waves that went from two (2) to three (3) feet to eleven (11) feet in a matter of hours, with some damage to boats at the Marina.

6. Fireboat Discussion

Tony Marsala, Deputy Chief/Fire Marshall. Reported on the feasibility of having the fire boat stay in the marina during the summer season as requested by the commission. Described the boat and how it operates; noted problems that could arise during time in the water including possible fouling of the intake and nozzle and algae on pontoons; detailed how some of these problems could be eliminated by having a lift with an enclosure for top and sides, chaps and other covers. Marsala also noted that maintenance is currently being monitored at the station; commented on the cost of man hours away from the station to maintain the boat on site at the marina; gave historical information of the boat and noted that the boat has been called for service, on average, a little over twice a year.

Marsala noted that staff performed timed response simulations to a call received; from hitching the boat to an available truck at the station to having the boat in the water and running took between nine (9) to eleven (11) minutes.

Marsala explained that the used Magnum boat lift, available for \$1,500, needs new cables at a cost of \$400 to \$500 if all sheaves are okay. Marsala also contacted Magnum to get quotes on a new Magnum boat lift and Leaders Marine provided prices for a new lift enclosure for top and sides which has manual operation in case of power outage.

Marsala does not think very much time could be cut off the readiness of the boat if the boat is up in a lift. The one way cycle time for a lift is twenty-four (24) inches per minute. Feels that it would not cut much time off the current time needed for launching of the boat starting at the station. Marsala's conclusion is that the costs and time indicates that it is better to leave the boat where it is.

Discussion ensued regarding whether the lift has to be removed every fall. More information is needed about the used lift to determine if it would need to be removed. The lift from Leaders would have to be removed.

VandenBosch asked who makes the decision regarding whether to stay with the dry storage or purchase a used or new lift and have it installed. Chief Ron Wise responded that the board generally leaves the day to day decision making up to him, but this decision would probably be made by a combination of the South Haven Area Emergency Services (SHAES) board and him.

Marsala pointed out that maintenance fees would be more costly in sending two (2) men down to the marina with the necessary equipment to inspect and maintain the boat.

VandenBosch said the time estimate seems to him to be fairly quick and asked how long it takes, on average, to respond to a fire in the city. Wise noted that it takes from three (3) to four (4) minutes to get to a structure fire in the city with a truck. Wise said the bridge is sometimes a problem with time. Township structure fires can be more like eleven (11) minutes response time, depending on weather and traffic.

Marsala noted that lines at the gate and other boats launching could add to the time needed. Sullivan wondered if it could be arranged to get someone to go ahead of the fire boat to clear the way. VandenBosch gave his permission if there's a line at the gate to break through the exit gate. Marsala said if there were multiple calls, particularly a medical call, all of those estimates could change.

VandenBosch pointed out that the maintenance would be less in dry storage and noted even if stored above the water there can be potential humidity damage.

Wise noted that the Sheriff's marine patrol has a boat in the water. "That is a very valuable piece to have in the river for life safety."

Strong asked if it is the chief's opinion that the boat would be better off in the dry storage and both Marsala and Wise agreed that considering maintenance and costs involved the best place to keep the boat is in dry storage.

7. Bridge Reconstruction

VandenBosch noted that during the bridge reconstruction the city will permit people to store their boats upriver of the bridge so they can get their boats out of the water.

Larry Halberstadt, City Engineer: Pointed out the press release in commissioners' packet. Explained that the contractor plans to start around October 1st. Noted that the channel will be open until midnight on October 14th and work will start on October 15th. There may be a barge with a crane on it in the river; there is some steel work that needs to be done on the bridge structure.

Silverman asked about the date. Halberstadt said according to federal regulations the bridge tender must be in attendance through October 14th. Silverman and Stephens suggested that the city needs to make it clear that the bridge will be closed on October 15th. Halberstadt assured that in the case of boats still being upriver on the 15th, the city will work with the contractor to be sure any late stragglers get through; there is no intention to leave anyone stranded.

VandenBosch wondered when staff will find out where the contractor will place the barge and how quickly removal of the equipment will begin. Halberstadt noted that if there is any opportunity to extend the season beyond October 15th, the city plans to do that. Halberstadt thinks the contractors are still working out when the various activities will take place.

Pyle pointed out that this time of year and in spring there are major runs; salmon, steelhead and brown trout. The biggest question in her store has been whether fishermen will be able to get through. Halberstadt said it will be a forty foot (40') wide barge while the main navigation channel is about sixty feet (60'); a sixteen foot (16') shallow draft boat should be able to get around without any issues.

VandenBosch asked whether the project includes lights to let people know when the bridge is going to open and video for the bridge tender. Halberstadt stated that new navigation lighting will be put on the bridge; there will be additional lights at channel level, in addition to replacing the existing lights. "There will be four (4) video cameras being installed on the bridge, allowing the bridge tender to see approaching traffic from both directions on both bridge and river."

Silverman suggested having the contractor have lights on the barge during the construction.

8. Capital Improvement Plan

VandenBosch pointed out the Capital Improvement Plan on page twenty (20) which lists projects staff would like to do, with a very rough estimate of cost, indicating future years and estimates of how the funding may be available.

Two projects VandenBosch would like to apply for grants for are the South Side building renovation from the Waterways Commission, which requires a fifty percent (50%) match and the South Side Dock Extension and Wave Attenuation study, an engineering study to help us understand how we could reduce surge on our South Side and potentially North Side. Staff would also like to know how such a project might affect other parts of the harbor. VandenBosch thinks a floating dock with wave attenuation hulls underneath is probably an ideal idea but would like an engineer to look at it and tell us how it works; what the effects would be; whether it would have to be removed every year and how much it would cost.

The Maritime Museum Dock Replacement, shown as two (2) years from now, is also a grant application and the South Side dock project is related to the wave attenuation study, according to VandenBosch. The South Side Headwall Electric Upgrade is about one (1) year out. VandenBosch noted that the projects are kind of staggered. While staff does not expect to get all these grants or that this timeline is a perfect representation of what will actually happen, but it gives an idea of what would be spent and what the cash flow impact is on the Marina Fund.

Black River Park Fund. VandenBosch noted that the new fish cleaning station plan has been broken up into smaller pieces because the maximum grant that is easy to get is \$300,000 from Waterways, so the city could not apply for the entire thing as one project. The Waterways Commission does not pay for fish cleaning stations. We would apply to Great Lakes Fisheries for the fish cleaning station.

The Black River Park Driveway Improvements does not include the parking lot but includes just about everything else, according to VandenBosch, who explained that the project may need to be scaled back, or there may be extra money.

The Black River Park Boat Launch Restroom project could fall under the Recreation Passport Grant. This grant requires a twenty-five percent (25%) match and bid specs will need to be prepared for renovations that will not exceed a \$45,000 cost estimate.

VandenBosch explained that he included numbers on dredging because this Five Year Plan is something new, required by the Waterways Commission, and VandenBosch wanted to have something about dredging in the plan. VandenBosch is not confident of these figures for dredging but noted that it is roughly what could be expected.

Stephens asked if the dredging figure includes applying for permits. VandenBosch explained the city has a long term dredging contract to which he added a little bit. Permits are in place through 2016 with another a little later. This plan does not have acquisition of land for dredge spoil which could be a big issue, according to VandenBosch, but for this Capital Improvement Plan, these projects are what staff spent time on; the dredging figure is in there to show Waterways that the city is making a plan for dredging.

VandenBosch noted that the staff at Black River Park is very good at fixing and improving things so he wants to make sure they have some money to do that.

In response to questions, VandenBosch stated he would like to get a motion so approval by the Harbor Commission can be included when the grants are applied for.

VandenBosch pointed out the Abonmarche proposal for grant writing noting that in some cases prices to do the engineering have been included. On page 33 there is a list of seven (7) tasks which Abonmarche is prepared to pursue as directed by the Harbor Commission. The seventh (7th) item is to pave the gravel lot we created. VandenBosch hopes the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) or City Council General Fund) will partner with us to get that paved; the parking lot would definitely benefit the downtown and is a little above what the Harbor Commission can afford.

VandenBosch also pointed out that page 33 noted that the design is for bidding and construction after we get the grant. At this time we would only want to authorize the grant portion, generally the smaller number of the two.

Stephens asked if there is no plan or place to put dredge spoils. VandenBosch said above the bridge tested clean so those spoils can be put anywhere. "Downstream, we have a later discussion item that the Army Corps can provide dredging at almost half price, however, they may only do work in the federal channel and turning basin. I don't think their equipment can get inside marinas and inside pilings, so we would still have to find a way to get marinas dredged and dispose of that material. It can always go to a landfill, although it is more expensive. The trucking is the cost that impacts us. There are ways to get all the dredging done, in some cases cheaper and in some cases more expensive."

Stephens asked if the commission should consider reflecting in this time line the need for purchasing land for dredge spoils or paying for the cost of removing it. VandenBosch explained that the issue he sees is that it is very difficult to identify land where dredge spoil can be placed, noting that the hill on Blue Star is getting quite high. Stephens asked if the costs for land or trucking should be included when discussing dredging. VandenBosch said that would be wise, but the focus of this plan is Black River Park and the Southside Marina. VandenBosch also noted, on page 28, this is the way long range planning for dredging is done and agrees that staff does need to start looking for funds to do those things.

Sullivan asked if we are just telling the Waterways an idea of what we would like to do, helps organize us, this could always change. VandenBosch agreed. Sullivan asked if we should put a little more emphasis on dredging so staff knows that is a priority. VandenBosch noted that complete dredging has been done at this point; "We're in good shape; that could change."

In response to a question by Silverman, VandenBosch clarified that he is just covering the bases by putting that number in there.

VandenBosch noted that if one looks at the numbers of other grantees Waterways will be looking at, South Haven is ahead of many of the others. The city already has a long term dredging plan in place. Stephens asked if grants were received for the dredging done last year to which VandenBosch responded, "Yes, perhaps you could ask for money for dredging for year five (5). We like to hope that we won't have to dredge for another five (5) years. We could have things silt up and we might have to do some spot-dredging."

After discussion regarding the pros and cons of purchasing land to put dredge spoils on versus paying for trucking to a land fill, Pyle commented there are so many costs and liabilities

associated with purchasing land and maintaining it, that the cost of trucking might be the better way.

Silverman asked if the motion VandenBosch is calling for is to support the Capital Improvement Plan to which VandenBosch responded, "Yes, I'd like the Harbor Commission to approve the Capital Improvement Plan." VandenBosch would like to go ahead and authorize Abonmarche to start work on the grant applications.

Motion by Silverman to recommend to city council the approval of the South Haven Harbor Capital Improvement Plan as reflected in the report provided by staff today. Second by Strong.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Stephens that city staff proceed in pursuing grant applications as reflected in the report. Second by Silverman.

All in favor. Motion carried.

9. Strategic Plan

VandenBosch marked the plan up to show what items he thought had been completed, noting that a number of items are ongoing, so may have to be addressed again in the future.

Silverman recommended that a workshop be considered that this is something to be done on an annual basis; that staff and the commission would benefit by having the conversation to propose modifications to what has been completed, what is in progress, and any changes that come up during that conversation.

VandenBosch and Silverman noted dates that they will be out of town. VandenBosch will email some possible dates to commissioners.

10. Marina Rates

VandenBosch explained his thoughts regarding the way he presented the rates.

Marina Manager can allow short term dock rentals less than eight (8) hours.

Commercial use of marinas was approved by City Council in July or August; these figures just reflect that policy being in place. VandenBosch explained that allows for charter boats at South Marina and prevented jet skis from using the Black River Boat Launch.

Pyle asked, "If someone is here for a week do the rates go up on the weekend?" to which VandenBosch stated that from July 1st to September 1st the weekends are always higher.

Regarding the first year discount, Silverman asked if the intent is to offer this discount to encourage boaters to go to Black River Park. VandenBosch concurred but stated that when there is a waiting list that discount would not be offered. Implementation of that policy is up to the marina manager.

Stephens asked for details on the list of discounts regarding shallow draft or unused slips being rented for jet skis, kayaks and small boats. "These are typically," according to VandenBosch, "surge slips on the North Side."

Pyle asked for an update about trailer storage. VandenBosch said that is going in the contract for Black River Park Marina seasonal boaters. There is already an ordinance that prohibits it, but it has not been enforced. Due to the number of trailers increasing, with the Black River Launch parking lot becoming an empty trailer parking spot, signage will be put up next year to make it clear that trailer parking will not be permitted. VandenBosch will be authorized to issue citations citing the section of the code pertaining to trailer parking. Discussion ensued regarding alternate places where trailers may be legally parked.

Motion by Silverman to recommend to City Council the approval of the resolution setting the seasonal and transient slip rates at South Haven Municipal Marinas. Second by Strong.

All in favor. Motion carried.

11. Pierhead Dredging

VandenBosch asked the Army Corps if they would dredge near the pier heads where the wave action is, if the city paid them and received in response a detailed email of how that might work. VandenBosch noted that ten dollars (\$10) per cubic yard is not a bad rate except when one recalls that the Corps used to just do it. VandenBosch's questions for them are: Can they dredge marinas? What is the minimum project size? noting that there is always a mobilization and demobilization cost. Whatever that is, double that might be the size of the project to consider. VandenBosch asked whether the commission has other questions.

VandenBosch noted he was pleased to see the price and if they are able to do marinas, that is certainly the direction to go.

Sullivan asked if they are doing anything more than dredging, to which VandenBosch responded that the Corps has done soundings every year. Sullivan asked about having them do the hydrology studies regarding wave attenuation, however VandenBosch noted that he does not think the Corps will act as consulting engineers to us' it is a very different organization.

Silverman asked when the last soundings were which VandenBosch said was spring 2014. Silverman said we have a significant increase since spring. VandenBosch explained the areas the Corps would dredge. Silverman noted that fourteen feet (14') in the approach is probably not bad, but except for events like the Queen's Cup there aren't any vessels he knows of that utilizes that depth.

VandenBosch noted that another question might be, "Can you do 12' depth on Sheet One and what would the cost be?" Silverman would be surprised if there was a significant portion of at least the channel that is at least 12' now. VandenBosch noted the concern as always is the high spots and where waves are breaking. The Lake Michigan approach and where the piers come together and any spots that are approaching ten feet (10') for the Friends Goodwill are what the city needs dredged. VandenBosch will give the Corps an idea of what the city really needs and see if they can reduce the project to that.

Member and Staff Comments

Stephens: Asked if questionnaires are still being used.

Pyle: Commented that she didn't think the cleaning and maintenance around the Black River Parks restrooms was done as well as in the past when Black River Park staff was doing it. Passed on Norm's comments about people knocking tires off their boat trailers from hitting the posts that are there at the gate.

Noted that there is a river tournament on November 22 (normally it is after Thanksgiving) but the docks need to be left in until after that event. VandenBosch will let Ron Dotson know.

Asked if the North Side Fish Cleaning Station is still working. VandenBosch noted that it is not; staff had to take a part off that grinder to put on the other grinder and is still waiting for the part. VandenBosch noted that the missing part is the part that keeps the motor from overheating.

Asked if anyone has taken pictures of the bridge so we will have before pictures. VandenBosch responded that staff would love to have a large inventory of pictures that could be used for a website or print material. John Marple has been looking at photographer portfolios. Silverman will provide the name of a local photographer who does photos for the regattas.

Stephens: Asked for an update about Adventure Water Sports. VandenBosch is not aware that they have been back; the city attorney said if Adventure Water Sports comes in again, VandenBosch can write him a civil infraction based on the pertinent section of the ordinance. That could be taken to court if necessary. Strong questioned whether he would be renting jet skis when there is no staff there.

Adjourn

Motion by Silverman, second by Strong to adjourn at 7:05 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary