

Harbor Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, January 21, 2014
5:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers
South Haven City Hall



City of South Haven

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

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

Also present: John Marple, Marina Manager; Tony McGhee, Abonmarche

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Strong, second by Pyle to approve the agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes: December 17, 2013 Regular Meeting

Motion by Stephens, second by Reineck to approve the December 17, 2013 regular Meeting Minutes as written.

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 gave an overview of the various Marina Reports and commented on lake levels.

VandenBosch updated the Commissioners regarding the status of the bridge rehabilitation. The project has had to be re-bid. There will be some conflicts during the boating season; the contractor may or may not do preliminary work before the boating season.

6. Jet Ski License Agreement

VandenBosch noted that Linda VanDerZee, doing business as LJ Agency, Inc., is requesting to renew the license agreement for a jet ski excursion business. VandenBosch pointed out that he turned the original license agreement into a three (3) year contract to save time and paperwork. The amount is the same as last year. This will be a very similar operation to what was there before. This agreement can be terminated by either party by November 15th of the year.

Sullivan asked the rationale for the amount chosen to charge for this license agreement. VandenBosch explained the way the agreement amount was arrived at.

Strong noted that there is not really anything else that space could be used for. Sullivan noted that the area used by the jet ski business is prime real estate; suggested it would be ideal for advertising, for instance, sail boat sales.

Pyle commented that she hopes the city plans to help keep LJ Agency in business, not run them out of business.

Stephens asked about feedback regarding the operation. VandenBosch said he has only had one complaint regarding tying up the jet skis to the dinghy dock.

Arnold remarked that the original agreement requested that VanDerZee's assist the city by pulling the buoys; VandenBosch noted that the jet skis don't have the displacement to pull the buoys out of the water; pulling the buoys is dangerous work and the city has hired someone to do that. That stipulation has been removed from the agreement.

Strong noted that VanDerZee's provides available jet skis to law enforcement in case of emergency.

Motion by Stephens, second by Sullivan to recommend to City Council that the license agreement be approved.

All in favor. Motion carried.

7. Fish Cleaning Station

VandenBosch explained that we have received some drawings and conservative cost estimates, and noted that unless construction costs go way up construction will probably come in below that.

VandenBosch pointed out that the fish cleaning station cannot be done by itself, because the drive around it is needed. Estimated cost at \$414,000. VandenBosch recommends that we look at it again and try to minimize the amount of driveways we are building and noted that the city will not be able to get a grant to cover the entire project. Great Lakes Fisheries Trust is probably the most promising source but is not taking applications this year. VandenBosch

noted that the grant administrator seems to think this proposal has the potential to qualify. Great Lakes Fisheries Trust awards fifty (50) percent for a project. The Water and Land Conservation Fund only pays \$100,000 which will not take us very far. VandenBosch pointed out that there is competition among city projects, as well; the North Beach project is currently in front of the Black River Fish Cleaning Station project for a grant from the Natural Resources Trust Fund.

Tony McGhee, representing Abonmarche, noted that when estimators are asked for prices for the future estimates tend to go kind of high. There are primarily four (4) grants out there for which this project can qualify. McGhee reviewed the possibilities of what could be received from those grants. Abonmarche will apply for those grants at no cost to the city. There is a lot of asphalt so the costs get up there pretty quickly. But when it is all said and done it will be the premiere fishing launch and cleaning station.

Stephens asked if you can stack these grants, to which McGhee responded, "Yes, it has been done."

Stephens asked what could be done to reduce the amount of asphalt for the first phase. "We do not have to redo all the entryways and roads in the first phase," McGhee noted, explaining that Abonmarche is looking at ways to do that and still get the functionality of the site.

VandenBosch said when the dredging project is done the city should have what is usable as a gravel snow storage area and overflow parking for the downtown.

Strong suggests that a way be found to straighten the road into the launch ramp in the first phase.

VandenBosch noted that the city may not apply for anything until 2015 and Abonmarche and staff will continue to refine the design.

Pyle expressed concern of missing the deadline for 2015, if there will be many other municipalities stockpiling projects to apply at the end of 2014.

VandenBosch said if the overflow parking area is viewed as an extension of downtown parking, it may be something we can work with the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) on. VandenBosch noted there would need to be a walkway for access and Pyle suggested "lined with pretty trees."

8. Cruise Ship Dockage

VandenBosch noted that cruise ship dockage is a long term idea; he was reading an article about a lake tour done by cruise ships and wondered why they do not come to South Haven. Pointed out drawings provided in the packet that show how a cruise ship would fit in the harbor, and noted that the question is how to meld that with summer boat traffic.

Pyle said preparing that head dock for cruise ships would offer additional slipping for transients when the cruise ships are not here. Discussion regarding providing some “pay by the hour” and “pay by the day” slips on that spot when cruise ships are not here. Strong wondered whether there would be an extension of the south side dock if this plan were implemented to which VandenBosch responded, “Yes, that is a possibility.”

VandenBosch noted the symphony barge that was parked along the sea wall; surge is a very real problem. Stephens expressed her amazement that the symphony barge was not equipped with fenders to help prevent damage.

Strong likes the cruise ship dockage idea; Pyle agreed. VandenBosch remarked that this area could also be used for the Queen’s Cup. VandenBosch noted that his initial thought was of installing steel pilings and a landing but agrees that a dock might also be useful if the area were used for slipping transients.

Reineck asked for clarification of the harbor line issue which VandenBosch explained, “As long as the structure itself is within the harbor line such a project is okay.”

Strong said the South Side head dock could be extended west toward the lake. Reineck asked whether the limestone would need to be reconfigured. VandenBosch was not sure and explained that since this is a concept at this time, no one has gotten into engineering.

Stephens said such a project is historically accurate; the Maritime District would love it, but expressed concern regarding the surge. Reineck said when that rock was put there it was laid and re-laid and it was crucial to the action on the other side of the river. VandenBosch said it is something that will have to be looked into and hopefully the pilings or dock could be installed in a way that would break up surge. Strong noted that if planning for such a dock is something the city wants to move ahead with consulting with a surge expert for ideas on how to do the project to improve the issues with the surge would be wise.

VandenBosch pointed out that another concern is how slips across the river will be affected. Strong noted cruise ships, as freighters used to, might back in or out.

VandenBosch asked whether the board thought views from Riverfront Park would be affected and noted he is not sure how tall a dock would have to be to accommodate a cruise ship. VandenBosch guesses exiting from the ship is done through the side of the boat. Reineck said the boat will obstruct the view when it’s there; Strong noted that cruise ships typically do not stay in any port for long, maybe a day at most. VandenBosch noted that he does not yet know what cruise ships may need such as water, electric or sewer connections.

Strong thinks it is an idea worth looking into; suggested contacting a cruise company and seeing if South Haven is a place they would like to visit. Pyle suggested the express ships that are cropping up everywhere might also be interested. VandenBosch has contacted two cruise companies but has not heard back.

Reineck asked about cost to construct to which VandenBosch responded that we do not know because we do not know what the cruise ships require.

Arnold asked if the city were to host cruise ships whether the harbor would become a commercial harbor to which VandenBosch noted, "Yes, and might qualify for dredging."

VandenBosch will continue to look at possibilities and eventually the commission will look at all potential projects and prioritize.

Member and Staff Comments

Sullivan. Hoping in the next meeting or two we could start looking at maintenance items such as sediment traps.

Stephens asked if we should revisit our Strategic Plan. VandenBosch noted that budget is coming up so this is a good time to look at that.

Pyle, Strong and Reineck had no additional comments.

VandenBosch. There is a lot of ice in the harbor so hopefully there will not be damage.

Adjourn

Motion by Strong, second by Stephens to adjourn at 6:17 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary