

Harbor Commission

Workshop Minutes Harbor Coordination Meeting Emergency Services

Tuesday, April 15, 2014
4:30 p.m., North Side Marina
148 Black River Street, South Haven, Michigan



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order

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

Also present: Ben Plachta, Coast Guard Aux; Darryl Emrath, U. S. Coast Guard; Michael Hostetler, Van Buren County Marine Patrol

2. The Harbor Commission will hold a workshop coordinating emergency services in the harbor.

Dredging. VandenBosch gave an update regarding dredging, noting that the Federal channel looks like it is silted in to 5.5 below datum. The dredging contractor is aware of the problem. This spot, which is near the Idler, is an issue for some boats. Noted that the majority of the dredging project has been completed and other than this spot the harbor and river are in good shape. VandenBosch has a request in to the Army Corps to come in and do soundings.

VandenBosch noted the city is applying for a grant with LimnoTech for a weather buoy. The buoy will be out a couple of miles; they are still in the permitting process. This will give us better weather information than we have now. The big difference is that with current weather equipment the city does not have good wave height data available. The city will find out May 12 if we get the grant to put this in. Responding to a question, VandenBosch noted that the grant is from NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) out of Columbus, OH. Plachta stated he understands there are maintenance costs. VandenBosch noted that we have commitments for donations to cover much of that; if we get the grant we will start requesting that money. While the amount committed is a little short of what we need money-wise, but perhaps we can get in-kind donations from people to pull the buoy out for the winter, etc. Solicitation of donations is on-going, per VandenBosch. The buoy has a temperature string below it that gives water temperature every few feet; this will be helpful to keep up with the

thermocline for fishing. If the city is awarded the grant it will be installed sometime this summer.

Direct fueling. Per VandenBosch, the Harbor Commission has done some education on the prohibition of direct fueling; i.e.: no direct fueling except at the gas docks. Will probably try to do more education this year.

Fuel Spill Response. VandenBosch explained that in case of a fuel spill, 911 will be notified and they will call the correct agency. Noted that the city has some floating boom available but that is all he is aware of. Darryl Emrath, U.S. Coast Guard, will get back to the Harbor Commission regarding spill response equipment. Hostetler said he thought he remembers that SHAES (South Haven Area Emergency Services) has some. Strong thinks Barney has some. Discussion regarding who owns the booms that were put in around the Wilhelm Baum when it sank.

Tug Sinking. VandenBosch noted that after the Wilhelm Baum was pulled out it was discovered that there was a rusted area that was above the water line but the weight of the snow pushed it down and it took on water and sank. Noted that it took about three (3) days to get the tug out.

Queen's Cup. VandenBosch said South Haven will not be hosting the Queen's Cup race this year but we have an application for next year. Noted that the Coast Guard participated in that last time. City staff is working on getting approvals for next year.

Independence Day. Actual fireworks are on the third of July. That is somewhat routine, per VandenBosch.

Fire Boat. Silverman asked whether there has been any further discussion about an additional fire boat. Discussion ensued regarding the one that that SHAES has is really for inland lakes; they keep it on a trailer which means it is always late to get here for a fire. Silverman expressed that one is put in the harbor it should be one that can go out on Lake Michigan. VandenBosch said the city could provide a dock, but Wise said they are satisfied with what they have because they can respond in the harbor/river as well as inland lakes. Wise seems willing to consider adding a fire boat but is looking for that as a donation. Silverman said he may be happy with it but it does not do much good sitting on a trailer at SHAES. Silverman noted that when the two fires occurred, the fire boat was not able to get into the harbor in time to be effective. VandenBosch said Wise might be interested in a second boat but the funding is not there.

Hostetler stated that there are no inland lakes in their service area. Noted that there is no inland lake they can launch a boat on in their service area; by the time they would get to an inland lake it would not be effective. Silverman noted that there are two types of material that the tubes are made of; noted that there is a product you can put on them, Chaps, which is used on boats in the Caribbean. Silverman suggests talking to the chief more directly; having Chief Wise attend a meeting with the Harbor Commission. We are continually putting ourselves at risk by not putting that boat in the water in the harbor.

Strong mentioned the fog horn on the South pier. Plachta said you have to be on Channel 83 (eighty-three) and click five (5) times. Said it works but if you go past the light house you can hardly hear it. Plachta said it was reduced due to complaints. Silverman asked how we can increase the volume. Plachta said the old foghorn had a louder tone. Muskegon is the one that handles that. Emrath said he would have to look up what the standard is; questioned why that was even altered as it is a federal statute. VandenBosch clarified that the city is responsible for the structures but not the navigational aids. Plachta will come up with what is up there and what the decibels are. Silverman asked if Plachta could get that information to Emrath, who said there is a standard and he can find out what that is. Reineck pointed out that people still rely on the foghorn to which Strong added, "Especially the small boats." Plachta noted that you cannot make it work from on the pier, only out on the water.

Ben Plachta noted we have the local Coast Guard Auxiliary flotilla which was established in 1974 after the Coast Guard shut down the South Haven station in 1973. This year is the Auxiliary's fortieth year here, and the seventy-fifth year for the Coast Guard, which has been here since 1939. There is going to be a small celebration; a short ceremony outside if the weather is good, then coffee and cake here at the North Marina facility. The ceremony will include some brief comments and a plaque for presentation to the city. Plachta thanked the city for the use of the buildings; due to Upton and the city. VandenBosch said it is great that the auxiliary provided that service for so many years. Discussion ensued regarding the salvage business and that the Coast Guard Auxiliary can only respond to emergencies. After a question from VandenBosch, Plachta said he started doing these forty-two (42) years ago. Started in St. Joe, and then transferred here forty (40) years ago. Silverman asked who made that call that the salvage guy gets first dibs to which Emrath responded that it is a federal statute. Plachta noted that the government does not want us to compete with the private entity.

Discussion ensued regarding the ice still being on the lake; plugging the channel now that the wind is coming from the north.

3. Adjourn at 5:10 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary