

Harbor Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, April 16, 2013
5:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers
South Haven City Hall



City of South Haven

1. Call to Order

Present: Stephens, Jeffers, Pyle, Silverman, Strong, Sullivan, Arnold
Absent: None

2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Pyle, second by Silverman to approve the agenda with the addition of Item 9a. Maritime Museum Request.

All in favor. Motion carried.

3. Approval of Minutes: March 19, 2013 Meeting

Motion by Stephens, second by Jeffers to approve the March 19, 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 Marina Reports for the various municipal marinas.

6. North Side Marina Report

VandenBosch stated that as of yesterday the marina facility was opened, having passed substantial completion as of March 29. Landscaping, sun shade, adjustments on lights and flagpole to be installed still to be completed; the North Side Marina is open and will be requesting funds from the state and making payments and finalizing it for a few months to come.

Marple reported that by the end of this week the North Marina will look pretty good. VandenBosch thinks the 1% bonus for substantial completion by the end of March was a good move.

7. Ramp Fee Petition

VandenBosch noted that the request is to lower the fees for the pass card to the ramp at age 65 to a flat \$60 or \$65 from May to May. Sullivan suggested a rebate. VandenBosch explained the usual process for rate setting. Pyle suggested a pre-season savings for everyone; if rates are set in September, cards bought before January 1st would be discounted and cards bought after January 1st would be purchased at the regular rate. Strong asked and Jeffers suggested contacting Mr. Robert Baker in regards to the petition.

Motion by Stephens to invite Mr. Baker to the September Harbor Commission meeting; second by Pyle.

Staff will contact the petitioner about attending the September meeting.

All in favor. Motion carried.

8. Dredging Update

North Side and South Side Dredging

Dunkley Spoil Site Restrictive Covenant

Black River Dredging Project

See staff update in the April 16, 2013 Harbor Commission Workshop minutes.

9. Nichols Landing Deck Extension, Special Use Permit

VandenBosch explained the difference between Federal Harbor Lines and City Project lines; noted that his recommendation is to deny the request; the City Project lines would prohibit building out.

Bob Lewis, applicant: Stated that he proposes to purchase the Nichols dock space. "The dock is 12' wide; even now we could have a row of tables and add restrooms; the restaurant could operate that way. One original proposal was to expand to the farthest harbor lines. Lewis explained that now he understands that the ten (10) feet to the City Project line is the farthest he could expand and "it may not happen this year due to the calendar." Suggested opening with the dock as is and expand in 2014.

Sullivan asked whether the city project lines have always been where they are now. VandenBosch stated that the City Project lines apparently were there earlier but the city does not have much of a record but seeing how the docks and headwalls line up, City Ordinance 740 is considered the latest ruling on where the harbor lines are.

Pyle noted that there is docking extending beyond the City Project lines; VandenBosch explained that maybe those are floating docks. Strong and Silverman said that they did not think floating docks were treated any different than fixed ones. Silverman asked how the City and Federal lines differ. VandenBosch: "Federal Harbor lines indicate where the dredging is done while the City Project line is how far the docks may extend." Silverman said it protects the integrity of the harbor lines; east of the Idler, the portion of that line that relates to the turning basin probably had something to do with the fact that it was once a turning basin. Now we have the Museum Marina and the Museum's Orley dock which extends out and changes the character of that area.

Pyle noted that she feels the concept of waterfront dining is what South Haven is about and the city does not have anything to offer except the Idler.

Silverman noted that nothing done east of the Idler would impede on navigation or safety. Strong agreed, especially if the proposed dock is only built ten (10) feet out. Sullivan expressed concern for setting a precedent.

VandenBosch said the Harbor Commission could recommend to City Council that the City Project line be the same as the Federal Harbor line and added, "City Council has the ability to change this."

Silverman stated that might be a longer range solution, but to do that the commission needs to look carefully at the effect immediately west of the proposed dock build-out; how much difference would there be to the north side of the river with opposing boat slips on either side of the river; whether the city harbor line is to the south or the north. VandenBosch explained that both harbor lines were amended to allow the building of the ~~Maritime~~-Museum *Marina* in the turning basin. Sullivan asked if the slips were already there when the Maritime Museum was built; Silverman and VandenBosch noted that yes, the slips were probably already in existence.

Pyle asked what Mr. Morris thinks about the proposed project to which Strong noted he had breakfast with Morris, who said as long as he can get in and out of his slip he has no problem with the proposal. Pyle pointed out that Morris' slip for his charter fishing boat is the closest of any to the proposed project area.

The board and Lewis discussed whether tying off of boats should be permitted on the dock if dining is added. Sullivan commented that anybody that owns a boat could anchor there. Lewis said dinghies would be okay, but he would want to limit transients to four (4) hours or less, so someone would not be sitting there and the boat is between them and the view. Silverman asked how a boater could access the dock with the proposed fencing illustrated in

the application. Lewis said a gate could be provided. Marple pointed out that there is plenty of room in the transient marina.

Pyle had concerns with boat traffic waiting for the bridge in the area of the proposed build out and noted, "It can get very congested during those waiting periods." It was noted that there are tie-ups for dinghies under the bridge. Strong wouldn't mind the ten (10) foot build-out but is concerned about any size boat tying up there. Lewis asked if the dock could permit tie-ups if he did not expand the dock. Discussion ensued regarding whether docking should be allowed there if the docks are extended.

Lewis noted that he has a couple of other meetings to attend before many decisions can be made. Silverman inquired about the Harbor Commission form that has been included in previous packets. VandenBosch provided a copy of the Harbor Commission application form which the applicant needs to complete for the next meeting.

Motion by Silverman to adjourn discussion of the dock build-out proposal to the next Harbor Commission meeting, second by Sullivan.

Strong requested some updated pictures indicating the harbor lines. Stephens noted that we need a lot more information to be able to make an educated decision.

Arnold called the question:

All in favor. Motion carried.

Silverman recommended that the city adopt the Federal Harbor lines. VandenBosch stated, "It may well be that in the past the Harbor Commission has recommended that and the City Council has acted on it." Silverman requested sufficient diagrams so the Harbor Commission can make recommendations, pro or con and noted that if the two sets of lines were the same, it would remove the current confusion.

Sullivan asked if the Harbor Master has the ability to demand that a moored boat will move, which VandenBosch indicated is true.

9a. Maritime Museum request.

The board discussed the request. Pyle pointed out the Google map noting that if events are held on the proposed connecting dock parking might become an issue. Silverman asked if his interpretation of the request is correct.

Motion by Silverman, second by Stephens to approve the Museum request to extend their dock and connect it to the city dock. All in favor. Motion carried.

General Comments

There were none.

Member and Staff Comments

Sullivan: Noted that when dredging is done in the North side marina, could the city do anything for stake holders and slip holders up north of the bridge. Also asked If the city could provide an area for Type Two (contaminated) spoils. VandenBosch said the city does not have any place to deposit dredge spoil; there is a need to purchase land and have had some discussion but staff has been so busy that the discussion has not gotten very far.

Silverman: Asked the Marina Manager his view of the upcoming season.

John Marple, Municipal Marina Manager: Said if the city gets the river dredged it is going to be a whole lot better. "Seasonally, I am very happy we are about a year ahead of where I thought we would be. Transient boating has me scared to death; the nature of transient boating and vacationing has changed." Marple stated that this summer we are filling slips on the weekends and we are wide open during the week; need to do something about rates and do some marketing. Marple stated he does not have an answer for that particular situation and reiterated that during the week we have an issue. Marple said he is open to suggestions.

Silverman: Said he is on some sailboat forums and there is speculation about which and whether any harbors will be open. Silverman believes someone from the city or Marple's staff should be on there making comments of the progress of dredging, available sites, and what is available, that sailboats can tie up to. Silverman will send Marple a list of forums.

VandenBosch: Has been putting video clips on a city Facebook page, Google+ and YouTube.

Pyle: Asked if Marple has addressed any of the responses from the surveys we did last year. Marple updated on what he and his staff will be doing, who will be on staff, etc. and stated that overall the facility is in good shape. Mid-May the Bloomingdale Communications will be up and running and there will be wi-fi available. Cable is available in the clubhouse. There are a lot of things we need to do in the future, including gas grills at the museum and on the south side. There will be staffing eight hours a day at the North Marina once the season starts.

Pyle: Suggested a referral program for transients and seasonals. Marple said it could be helpful, but you have to show them value, if you do, they will show up in port.

Pyle: Asked about an open house for the North Marina Facility. Marple noted that there is a public opening May 18; a ribbon cutting May 24; and staff is mulling over a boater's grand opening reception for the Memorial Day weekend.

Stephens: Was encouraged to hear that Marsala is open to potential dock space for the fire boat. Silverman said it is a necessity; that particular boat is really designed for inland lakes. It

is not an open water boat and is at maximum usage on the river. Silverman said commissioners should keep our eyes open to either promote or assist in a fundraiser for a new vessel that would better serve our harbor and improve our safety. People are generous and recognize the need for a better boat. Pyle noted that they may be aware of sources for funding or for a boat.

Pyle: Asked for an update regarding the fish grinder. VandenBosch said Norm has hired an electrician and/or plumber to help him work on it and the plan is to get it working.

Stephens: Asked when the dredging money for the federal channel is to come in – Army Corps has said late summer or fall according to VandenBosch. After questions, VandenBosch stated that the city is not spending money on that since the Corps are coming.

Silverman: Asked for an update on the dredging funding and the city's plans. VandenBosch noted that the city does not know exactly how much grant money we are going to get but city is planning to dredge all but the federal channel.

Adjourn.

Motion by Strong, second by Silverman to adjourn at 6:48 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary