

# Harbor Commission

## Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 15, 2012  
5:30 p.m., City Hall Council Chambers



City of South Haven

### 1. Call to Order

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

### 2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Silverman, second by Strong to approve the May 15, 2012 Harbor Commission Agenda moving Marina District Item #8 immediately after Item #4.

All in favor. Motion carried.

### 3. Approval of Minutes: April 17, 2012 Meeting

Motion by Silverman, second by Stephens to approve the April 17, 2012 Harbor Commission Agenda 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.

### 8. Marina District

**John Marple, Manager of Old Harbor Inn.** Explained that the idea for naming a Maritime District came from discussion of renaming some streets, which is not what we are doing at all. Marple likes history and the area we are talking about has unbelievably rich maritime history. The City also has the Michigan Maritime Museum located here which is a great resource. The desire to create the Marina District in recognition of the rich maritime history and to brand the neighborhood so we can attract more people into the Harbor Walk area goes along with such a district being a good advertising and focal point for the Maritime Museum. This is just to designate an area as a destination point within the South Haven Area and to recognize our vast history. Marple noted that the current project is to rehabilitate the

historical signs, each with a replica of the catwalk, which will take two or three years. A prototype of a sign is being made to show to potential donors. Marple pointed out that the naming of the district has received support from the Chamber of Congress, the Conventions Bureau, The DDA and the Maritime Museum.

Silverman noted that the Harbor Walk is just one of the many things within the Maritime District. Silverman asked for clarification that this designation has no taxable or zoning implications which Marple acknowledged to be true. Silverman noted that the Yacht Club is probably one of the oldest buildings in that district having been built as a log cabin in 1941 and in continuous use as a yacht club.

Motion by Silverman, second by Stephens to approve the Resolution with the change of the heading to Maritime District instead of Marina District.

Pyle questioned whether this will open opportunities for more grants. Marple said it is possible.

Stephens asked what specific property is being designated as a Maritime District. Marple said from pier head to pier head all property adjoining the river only.

Sullivan asked if the City is looking at creating other districts. VandenBosch said this is really more naming a neighborhood or area. The board discussed whether it is necessary to name the area. VandenBosch said when you are in the designated area today there is not much to see that reminds one of the maritime history of shipping and so forth.

Arnold called the question.

All in favor. Motion carried.

## **5. Marina Reports**

VandenBosch gave an overview of the Marina Reports, noting that Marina Fund revenues are well ahead of expenses according to the table on Page 9 of the packet. The Black River Park Revenues show 2012 Fiscal Year revenue; noted that in the month of April there was not a functioning gate at Black River Park. The River Maintenance Fund has assessments as revenue along with Downtown Development Authority (DDA) contributions and a percentage of the revenue from Black River Park and Marina Fund. Soundings do not reflect an immediate need for dredging, so a reserve is being built up for when a larger dredging is needed.

VandenBosch noted that Lake Michigan Water Levels show us at a couple of inches above the chart datum; a fairly low level although above record lows. At this time we have no depth issues in the areas we cover with our dredging.

## **6. Reservation System Reports**

VandenBosch pointed out that Pages 15 & 16 show graphs of the first two weeks or so of the Black River Pay Terminal usage. Transaction Details on Page 17 shows the type of information that the terminal keeps; the time of day, the type of payment, etc.

Pyle asked whether an additional sign could be posted that indicates no change will be given. VandenBosch said we hope to have a larger sign by Memorial Day or soon after.

The bridge operating schedule was included in the packet, allowing for opening pretty much every half hour, without lunch hours. The board discussed early opening of the bridge; before the normally posted times.

VandenBosch noted that Page 19 shows the Operator Detail Report, with totals, refunds, adjustments and over/short columns. Silverman asked if these reports provide mailing addresses, cell phone numbers, e-mail etc. VandenBosch will look into that.

Page 21 is the Reservation Arrival Report which helps staff plan for slip assignments.

Page 22 is a report that indicates whether all the boats are registered. This would be used for the dock check.

VandenBosch noted the legal size sheets are reports from the State which give a detail report of the customers that have reserved slips through the state reservation system. VandenBosch noted we get payments from the State about a month after the payments are made. We are just getting started with these systems, and as we get into the season we will probably be able to report more interesting information.

Stephens asked how the system seems to be working. VandenBosch said the Pay Terminals seem to be working very well. VandenBosch noted that the signs are not up but people are using the pay terminals. The South Beach is not yet striped so it is difficult for people to pay as they do not know what parking spot number they are parking in.

Abshire, Contract Marina Manager, noted that this is the transition stage; there are some definite positives, like the reporting ability. Once a customer makes a reservation, he remains in the system (not the credit card info). Abshire said there are a lot of negatives but the State help system is very efficient and good. Abshire is trying to streamline processes as much as possible; the whole South Side is on the State reservation system, but the North Side is on the old reservation system and has to be input manually; Abshire noted that costs (slip fees) need to be adjusted to be the same instead of local pay and State pay. Customer comments have been somewhat negative and the learning curve has increased our work load tremendously. Abshire believes by next year staff will have the system streamlined and efficient.

## 7. Strategic Plan Prioritization Report

VandenBosch noted that **Dredging** is at the top of the list and the **Ongoing Dredging Project Funding** is also there as an additional priority. VandenBosch pointed out that this list is the result of the prioritization done by this board. Silverman asked if the board needs to take any action to which VandenBosch responded no.

Pyle asked if there are any small items we can start working on and remove from the list.

VandenBosch noted that dredging is being actively monitored and staff will be aware if a need arises. A new dredging permit must be applied for by at least late fall.

**Emergency Services:** Coordination meeting was held and we are helping the Emergency Services work together. Silverman said the coordination meeting at the beginning of each season is something that ought to be continued. Silverman's concern is lack of ability to deal with an emergency situation. We have absorbent material but are anyone trained to use it? We have an emergency vessel most suited for river or inland lakes. Silverman believes we should work with Emergency Services to look at grant opportunities to fund a larger, more versatile vessel which can be permanently moored in the harbor. In talking to the other Emergency Services, we have learned that they will not fight fire; this area could be addressed in communicating with South Haven Area Emergency Services (SHAES) and others to look for grants to provide some of the funding.

**Harbor Traffic Flow and Safety.** VandenBosch had a dozen "No Wake" signs printed up but has not been out to find locations for them. The Board suggested on the City Marina, on the bridge, Pyle wants to see some of them put up. VandenBosch said we are aware of some traffic problems at the Black River launch. Pyle mentioned the lack of visibility from the bridge tender. Silverman said we might want to move that up, as a \$6,000 item in the grant while for \$500 you can get a 4-camera system with a DVR. Silverman asked if there is something we could do to encourage this to be addressed.

Motion by Silverman to recommend to the Public Works Board to promptly install cameras and a monitor to permit better visibility by the bridge tender both upriver and downriver. Second by Pyle.

Sullivan asked about adding a light to indicate the bridge is closing. Silverman would rather deal with that separately.

Arnold called the question. All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by Sullivan to add a light to the bridge as a signal to boaters when the bridge is going to close, or is closing. Second by Silverman.

All in favor. Motion carried.

VandenBosch said it is difficult to find an agency to work with **Erosion and Contaminants** since it seems to come from upriver, perhaps from agricultural practices, causing the south branch to flow in muddy.

**Ongoing Dredging Project Funding** is actively collecting some money.

**Municipal Marina Facilities** Silverman asked if Abshire has done an inventory of things to be corrected before the season gets underway. Abshire noted that she was startled to find a sinking of the concrete launch ramp at Black River Park, leaving a gap which is quite

extensive; a patch was done but is very temporary. Staff has completed Phase I of the pedestal replacement and Abshire hopes that the ones we are not replacing will make it through the six-year process. Staff replaced six pedestals this year. Abshire added that staff is pressure-washing at the Maritime Museum; most of the head dock has been done where the trees overhang and make the surface slippery with moss. After the fishing tournament staff will pressure wash the South Side Marina docks.

**Fueling of Marine Vessels** Strong noted that the board discussed contacting all the marinas and making sure all the information is posted; it is posted at Black River Yacht Club and Riverbend Boat Club but whether it has been posted elsewhere is unknown to Strong.

**Public Access** VandenBosch noted that work is being done to fix up the old Street Garage area that has been being used as a construction storage yard now that construction is winding down. A grant application has been submitted and is being considered which would turn that area into a park and eventually the gazebo from Dyckman Park will be moved to the old Street Garage site. Abshire said staff cleaned along the ravine at Black River Park and it looks really good. VandenBosch noted that cleaning was requested by this board.

Sullivan wanted to know if the plan for the former Street Garage area was the plan presented to this board not long ago. VandenBosch said we have brought a number of plans to this board, and noted three. The one we have submitted a grant for is the one for the Street Garage site.

Strong asked if there was anything in those grants about from the Steelheaders Fishing Area, noting it would be good to have a walking bridge between there and the old Street Garage site. VandenBosch said we need to make it easy to get to that restroom on the Steelheader's side so the City does not have to build another restroom.

**Electrical Utilities** This board requested some electrical inspections; VandenBosch explained that the electrical staff person had an accident and was out for a while. Abshire said that staff person is aware of the request for inspection and he is back to work as he is the one who installed the new pedestals.

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Arnold called the question.

All in favor. Motion carried.

## **9. Marina RFP**

VandenBosch noted that it is the City Manager's decision whether to have a Marina Manager who is under contract or City employee; the City Manager would make a recommendation to the City Council in that regard. VandenBosch noted some comments have been received since this agenda went out, which will be taken into consideration. A draft copy of a Request for Proposal (RFP) is provided in the packet, including some of the comments received.

VandenBosch noted that one question was whether the City would be required to go with a contract manager if we do this RFP; VandenBosch said if none of the proposals received are good proposals, this is not the type of proposal where the City is obligated to go with the lowest bidder. This is a different type of proposal.

Sullivan asked if this board would have input on the responses or proposals received. VandenBosch said that may be the way the City Manager may want to go, to take a recommendation from the board to City Council for a decision. It will be the City Manager's decision whether he wants to take input from this board.

Motion by Silverman to request that the City Manager review with the Harbor Commission the responses received to the Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Marina Management Contract before a decision is made. Second by Sullivan.

Yeas: Pyle, Silverman, Strong, Sullivan, Arnold

Nays: Stephens.

Motion carried.

### **Member and Staff Comments**

Pyle noted that the payment to the boat launch is great, but the corners on the road seem to be creating problems, coming west from Wells, the dirt road is not wide enough for making that corner. Pyle suggested opening it up.

Pyle asked about the tokens; VandenBosch noted that they are here but Hochstedler was not in today; Hochstedler should be back tomorrow.

Pyle asked about VanderZees Jet Ski Excursions and conflict with Harbor Fest. Arnold said he recalled VanderZees stated that they would not be in the harbor for Harbor Fest when the dragon boats are there. VandenBosch stated that the agreement is complete, VanderZees have been invoiced for the \$1,500.00 fee and they have applied for and received the building permit for installing the floating docks. VandenBosch said he believes VanderZees placed the swimming buoys as agreed upon. Arnold noted that he heard the guides were at the boater safety classes recently held.

Strong said the ledge at the pier head is about 10' and it is almost all the way across the harbor. Silverman said that will be a problem if it is 10' straight across from pier head to pier head; there will be boats that will be unable to enter the harbor and finish the race. Strong asked if there is anything that can be done about it. Strong noted the shelf is outside the harbor. Silverman asked if we need a permit for dredging outside the harbor. VandenBosch said there is a fast-response way to work with the Army Corps. Silverman asked how we find that out. VandenBosch will ask Tom O'Brien. Silverman asked if we need to exert more pressure to get beyond a "no." VandenBosch said it has required action at the federal level to get even commercial harbors dredged this year so the City may need some kind of political action. Silverman noted he will work with VandenBosch over the next few days; asked Strong to keep him up to date on what he is seeing out there and pointed out that he has put his dinghy in the water and will try to assess the depth as well. Silverman said it will be difficult for boats coming in at 2:00 to 3:00 in the morning to navigate a limited area in a place many of them have never been before.

Pyle asked if the Tall Ship is having problems. Silverman said he thinks they draw 9'. Stephens said the Tall Ship Friends Good Will draws 8' 9". Stephens asked about placing some sort of navigational buoy for the Queen's Cup.

Silverman said we are only six weeks away from the event we started talking about over sixteen months ago. Things seem to be coming together; hopeful it will generate a great deal of attention. If you look at any of the magazines from Great Lakes Scuttlebutt and The Blue, they have information about the Queen's Cup. Silverman updated the board on some of the activities that will take place during the Queen's Cup.

Pyle noted that the bridge went down a couple weeks ago and wondered if it is working okay. VandenBosch noted that a mount on the hydraulics broke and staff is very concerned that the

bridge will be able to operate during the period before the grant funding is available. Pyle asked if we pay J & B Landing for their barge use and VandenBosch responded with a yes.

Silverman congratulated the City on the street and landscaping work on the newly designated Maritime District.

Strong noted next weekend is the boating tournament. Pyle noted there will be a lot of revenue brought in.

### **Adjourn**

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

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom  
Recording Secretary