

HARBOR COMMISSION
MINUTES
June 21, 2006

I. Roll Call

Jim Bartlett	Present
Yvonne DeWindt	Present
Al Dika	Present
John Flemming	Absent
Tom Graham, Jr.	Present
Bill McCullough	Present
Jim Offield	Present
Fred Rachwitz	Present
Jane Ramer	Present
Dick Schiller	Present

Also present: Harbormaster Bob Bokram and City Manager Fred Geuder.

Chairman Jim Bartlett called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. Minutes

Motion by Schiller, seconded by Dika, to approve the minutes of March 22, 2006, as presented.
Motion carried.

III. Public Comment and Correspondence

None.

IV. New and Old Business

A. Review of Future Capital Projects

Bartlett noted that the City Manager had listed several potential projects on the agenda, not necessarily in order of priority, but for discussion purposes. He suggested that the Commission discuss each idea.

Bartlett also noted that as of December 2005, the Waterfront Fund had a cash balance of about \$440,000, which was in excess of the Commission goal for repair purposes.

In response to questions, the City Manager noted that the docks themselves are not insured for physical damage and the bonds, which were issued to defray the cost of the floating dock, will be paid off in September 2008.

Ford Park Launch Ramp

Replacement of the launch ramp dock has been discussed for some time now, and it was suggested that a floating dock be considered. Bartlett said he would contact Floation Docking System's Dan Carmichael to have him look at it and give the City an estimate.

Blacktop Approach to East Floating Dock at the Marina

The City Manager suggested that this be looked at; it has settled in places, and was torn up somewhat during the electrical upgrade in 2005.

Bartlett noted that a number of years ago when he was Harbormaster, the City had asked then Bidstrup Engineering to evaluate the sheet piling, to determine whether it was failing. At that time the City did have work done to strengthen the sheet piling system. Bartlett suggested that the City Manager contact Benchmark Engineering (formerly Bidstrup) to look at that area again.

DeWindt suggested that the connecting ramp to the floating dock be looked at also. Bokram said Flotation Docking Systems would be here soon for routine maintenance, and he would have them take a look at it.

Skirting for West Dock Finger Piers

The City Manager suggested that the 60' finger piers be looked for skirting around them, as was done to the west dock.

Bartlett asked whether boats floated under the fingers, because there was no skirting. Bokram said the uprights were long enough that boats did not drift underneath the piers.

It was suggested that the City Manager ask Walstrom for an estimate on this work. The City Manager also noted that if these fingers were upgraded, we might want to consider Trex decking.

Replacement of 30' and 45' Finger Piers on the West Dock

The idea behind this suggestion was to install new fingers that would be easier to adjust because of the differing water levels. It was suggested that the City Manager seek estimates for this upgrade.

Priorities

Based on the discussions, Bartlett suggested that the priority for these upgrades would be as follows:

1. Ford Park Launch Ramp
2. Replace 30' and 45' West Dock Finger Piers
3. Upgrade Approach to East Floating Dock
4. Install Skirting on West Dock 60' Finger Piers

The City Manager noted that this was really information that needed to be done in time for budget preparation in November.

B. City Master Plan Objectives for the Harbor and Waterfront

The City Manager noted that the Planning Commission was in the midst of doing an update of the City's 1990 Master Plan. He was seeking the Harbor Commission's input on the objectives in the plan for the Harbor and the Waterfront. The City Manager noted that the objectives listed were the wording from the 1990 Master Plan, and had probably been based on the original Harbor Plan.

Bartlett questioned the objective "Permit more boats to be docked within the harbor." He felt this was a broad statement, and suggested that any increase be looked at in context of the entire plan.

Bartlett questioned the objective, which stated "Maintain or decrease the area of City-sponsored buoy moorings in the harbor." Dika suggested that this may be referring to the area leased from the state, but felt it should not be decreased or increased. The number of moorings in that area could be revised. The City Manager will look at that wording.

Rachwitz asked about the objective, which stated, "As user speed increases on the water, the desirability of the use decreases." It was suggested that this objective was more related to the City's ability to control user speeds, but different areas of the harbor have different rules.

Bartlett commented that Isle Royal's "no wake" rule also takes into account the size of the waves where the boat is traveling.

The Commission discussed the objective "Encourage the resort associations to limit the use of their shoreline and riparian water surface to unconstructed use." Offield said he was not uncomfortable with the statement, but perhaps the wording could be improved.

In relationship to swimming uses, Graham questioned how the swimming buoys were placed at Zorn Park beach. He felt the swimming area was smaller. The City Manager was asked to look into this.

Pringle Pfeifer suggested that the objectives in the City's Master Plan should match what is said in the new Harbor Plan. She also asked whether or not the objectives for the harbor could be re-stated in some form, because some are objectives, some are statements, etc. Could the bullet points be grouped?

D. Other Comments

Rachwitz noted that he saw a seaplane fairly close to the Zoll Street beach, and questioned if there were rules about seaplanes.

An idea was offered as to whether the swimming area for Zoll Street could be marked. It was suggested that the City Manager talk to the City Attorney about this idea to see if there are any legal ramifications.

Harbormaster Bob Bokram reported that the numbers to date this year are about the same as last year. He did note that the average boat length had gone down.

Bokram also reported that the Harbor Springs Marina was named the #2 marina in the State after Mackinaw Island's in a Detroit Free Press reader survey. It was pointed out that this would mean the Marina was the #1 marina in the Lower Peninsula.

The City Manager announced that Mike Johnson was hired as Assistant Harbormaster.

V. Meeting Schedule

The next meetings of the Harbor Commission are scheduled for Wednesday, July 19, 2006, beginning at 4:00 p.m., and Wednesday, August 9, 2006, also at 4:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager