

HARBOR COMMISSION
MINUTES
August 15, 2007

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	Absent

Also present: Harbormaster Mike Johnson and City Manager Fred Geuder.

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

II. Minutes

Motion by Offield, seconded by Dika, to approve the minutes of July 18, 2007, as presented.
Motion carried.

III. Public Comment and Correspondence

None.

IV. New and Old Business

A. Harbormaster Update

Harbormaster Mike Johnson reported on the season:

1. Approximately 100 people came for the retirement gathering for Bob Bokram.
2. Johnson noted that his staff had done a great job this year.
3. The Regatta went well from the Harbormaster's perspective.
4. The City has received a 75% grant for replacement of the pump for the sewage pump-out.
5. Johnson noted that revenue and usage seems to be roughly the same as last year; total boat days may be down, but length of stay is up slightly. Also the boat length appears to be up.

Bartlett commented that he felt Johnson was doing a good job in his first year as Harbormaster.

B. LTYC Regatta

Bartlett introduced Bryan Burley and Kevin Farrell from the Little Traverse Yacht Club, who were at the meeting to talk about the annual regatta.

Burley said that the regatta has been ailing a bit in the past few years, with a trend line for number of participating boats continuing to fall. He noted that the regatta is a signature event in Harbor Springs, and is recognized as one of the top retail week-ends of the summer. Burley said they were not here to ask for anything, but to brainstorm ideas.

Burley noted that the mission of the LTYC is to promote sailing on Little Traverse Bay, not to make money. But Burley did acknowledge that the regatta does contribute to about 15% of the Yacht Club's annual budget.

Burley noted that the LTYC was doing a top to bottom review of the event and may make changes as needed.

In talking to the regatta participants, the good things noted about the venue include:

1. The availability of the Junior Sailors to crew.
2. The scenery of the Little Traverse Bay.
3. The sailing on the bay.
4. It is a vacation.
5. The lodging/parking costs are reasonable.
6. Dining in the area, and including Dudley's Deck and Gurney's.
7. The proximity of the downtown and the shopping.

Concerns noted include:

1. The race courses.
2. Cost of docking and overall cost of the event.
3. Parking problems.
4. A feeling to some that the sailors are not welcome

Burley noted that the entry fees and docking were somewhat higher than the Mackinaw races. Parking has been less of an issue recently.

Burley noted that one class of boats that has not been there recently was the Great Lakes 70's, that have been at Bay Harbor and raced on Thursday-Friday preceding the race. One issue with these boats is that their draft is about 11', which is a problem on the City dock.

Kevin Farrell noted that next year is the 100th anniversary of the Chicago-Mackinaw, and with that race being the week before the regatta, it makes for a marketing opportunity. Kevin noted that he felt that the community at large should benefit from the races.

Bartlett thanked Burley and Farrell for coming to the meeting. Bartlett noted that the Harbor Commission's position is as an advisor to the City Council on fees and policies.

Rachwitz asked why the GL 70's were at Bay Harbor. It was noted that Bay Harbor promoted this and offered them a deal a couple of years ago, but that some of the 70's owners were ready to come back.

Bartlett also noted that the peak number of boats was over 20 years ago and reached 130 boats. Following that regatta, the City and the Yacht Club agreed to a limit of 80 boats (plus 10%).

The City Manager noted also that 20 years ago the Pier was not using the Pointer on a regular basis. He also noted that the City is subject to some State controls on the use of the West Dock.

Farrell threw out the idea of having a barge in the harbor to raft the larger boats off.

Dika noted that liked the tradition of the regatta.

Graham asked how many local boats participated, and was told that the number was about 10.

The various race rules that may limit local participation were discussed, and it was noted that the Yacht Club would look at those issues.

Bartlett asked the Commission whether they thought that overall the regatta was good for the community, and the consensus was definitely that it was.

Burley noted that some of the other races rent the marina space on a per boat basis, and then charge the participants. It was noted that perhaps something like that could be considered, but the City would need to look at the impact on its revenues.

Bartlett noted that the City would be happy to look at options, but encouraged the Yacht Club to look at ways to get more local participation.

Farrell also noted that the Yacht Club is still looking at hosting the Star Class race series in September of 2008.

C. Member Comment

None.

V. Meeting Schedule

The next meeting of the Harbor Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, September 26th, at 4:00 p.m.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

Frederick W. Geuder, City Manager