

Town of Wareham

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Marine Resources Commission

Meeting date: September 13, 2017

Attendees: Larry Bearse, Dick Wheeler, Don Jepson, Drew Harrison, Mary McKenzie

The meeting opened at 7:00 P.M. In Room 228 in the Multi-Services Building.

The minutes for the September 1st Marine Resources Commission Special Meeting were reviewed and approved.

The first item on the agenda, the welcome ceremony that was planned for for the new Selectmen's MRC Liaison, Alan Slavin, was skipped over as Selectman Alan Slavin was not in attendance at the evening's MRC meeting. Harbormaster Garry Buckminster e-mailed earlier in the afternoon that he, too, would not be able to attend the evening's MRC meeting. In his e-mail Garry provided significant information that addressed the items that were on the MRC agenda that was posted on the Town's website and copied to each of the MRC members, the Selectmen's Liaison, and the Harbormaster. Larry Bearse commented that Garry's e-mail was very comprehensive and the best that Garry had provided whenever he was unable to attend an MRC meeting. Chairman Don Jepson and Associate Member Dick Wheeler concurred.

Chairman Jepson reported that there was some confusion about what was decided by the Selectmen at the September 5th Board of Selectmen meeting with regard to the MRC dredging proposal article that was discussed that night. Acting Selectmen Chairman Alan Slavin's recommendation was that the Town not hire a consultant to be the project manager for providing information requested by the Army Corps of Engineers relating to the Town's application to dredge the Wareham River Channel. Instead Acting Selectmen Chairman decided that the Board of Selectmen should add the dredging of the Wareham River Channel as an action item in the Town's Master Plan. Don Jepson interpreted Alan's suggestion to mean that Ken Buckland, the new Town Planner, would be project manager for following up and Ken (in lieu of a consultant), would be responsible to ensure that all information requested and required by the US Army Corps of Engineers would be provided to the USACOE in a timely and expeditious manner. The logic being that Ken is responsible for preparing the Town's Master Plan and that action items that would be included in the Master Plan would fall within his responsibility. In the Wareham Week issue dated 7 September, Alan Slavin was quoted as saying that the dredging article proposed by MRC was written as an explanation for the need for dredging the Wareham River Channel. Instead the proposed dredging article (item) should have identified how the dredging should be funded. MRC is perplexed by the latter Alan Slavin comment, as funding is done via the US Army Corps of Engineers. MRC's concern is that if the Town's current application for dredging is not approved, then the Town would be responsible for dredging the Wareham River Channel. Preliminary estimates could be as high as \$4 to \$5 million. MRC's advice to the BOS in March 24, 2016, was that a consultant be hired who is familiar with the USACOE application process and who has a proven track record of being successful in obtaining approval for their clients in obtaining dredging approval and gaining priority working with the USACOE. The Town's previous administrators and harbormasters have tried to use a home grown approach and have failed twice in obtaining dredging of the Wareham River Channel. It is the MRC members' opinion that obtaining approval and priority for dredging via

USACOE is a very competitive process and that to try to utilize the same home grown approach will result in failure. Using a baseball analogy, striking out a third time will result in Wareham being out of the batter's box and potentially resulting in a \$4 million cost to the Town's taxpayers. All that MRC was trying to do was bring the option forward so that the voters could weigh in on the decision of either hiring a consultant or gambling on the same home grown effort that failed twice before.

Around noon on September 13th, Chairman Jepson met with Town Administrator Derek Sullivan seeking clarification as to whether Garry Buckminster or Ken Buckland, in light of the the BOS's decision, was now the designated person responsible for responding to the USACOE's requests for information. Derek's was asked repeatedly if it was Ken or Garry who was the project leader for responding to USACOE requests for information. Derek's repeated response was that it had been decided that the dredging project was now to be an action item on the Master Plan. Chairman Jepson insisted that was not an answer to his question and asked that Derek put his response in writing. Derek agreed that he would but cautioned that it would not happen right away. Chairman Jepson indicated that the aforementioned conversation would be shared with the MRC members that evening, and it was. Chairman Jepson, the day after the September 13th MRC meeting, again tried to seek clarification on the matter as to who was the person responsible for responding to the USACOE's information requests. Chairman Jepson asked to see the minutes of the September 5th BOS meeting thinking that might provide clarification. The response received was that the BOS meeting notes have not been presented for approval since mid-June of 2017.

The next item on the the agenda was the forming of a shellfish committee. Drew Harrison, a commercial quahog fisherman, was in attendance. He explained that he had read about the forming of a shellfish advisory committee, and he indicated other commercial shellfishermen were interested in finding out what was proposed. Dick Wheeler identified that one of the first priorities before forming a committee is drafting a mission statement to identify what we want the advisory committee to be and do. We were very pleased that Drew came to the meeting and he will be conversing with other commercial quahoggers and solicit their opinions as to what they would like the committee's mission statement to be. Likewise the MRC members will get together and brainstorm and seek input from Garry Buckminster as well. In his e-mail Garry reported that in the last years of Mike Parola being Harbormaster/Shellfish Constable the shellfish Advisory Committee was discontinued for lack of involvement.

The next item on the agenda was a slide presentation on the inner workings of the New Bedford hurricane barrier. Chairman Jepson and his house guests were given a tour of the inner workings of the hurricane barrier and he was able to take pictures. The USACOE engineer who maintains the hurricane barrier is a Wareham resident. He turned the request to do a presentation to MRC members and liaison over to the Park Rangers so this item was skipped over.

The next item on the MRC agenda was the forming of a Marine Resources Council/Harbor Management Commission. This agenda was put on the agenda because Alan Slavin indicated that when he was on the Marine Resources Commission he spent two years working on that proposal and he felt it should have been addressed in the current Harbor Management Plan. Since Alan was not in attendance, this item was skipped over. In his e-mail Garry opined that that he was not in favor of forming a Marine Resources Council/Harbor Management Council, and he has not changed his stance on it. He cited New Bedford as being a prime example of a troubled Harbor Management Council. This subject came

up previously when there were more MRC members and the conclusion dovetailed with Garry's opinion that adding a new layer of bureaucracy was not beneficial.

The next item on the agenda was an update from the Harbormaster on progress made in providing information requested by USACOE with regard to Wareham's application for dredging the Wareham River Channel. Again, Garry in his e-mail provided an excellent update on his progress. Garry reported in his e-mail that Ken Buckland does not have interns within his department. Garry indicated that as Harbormaster he has two interns that are biology majors, that neither has any knowledge in the field of dredging and that they are both working on shellfish propagation. Garry offered that he has filled out the USACOE's applications initial questionnaire, but he has been back and forth with his work. While he has been away he has arranged for some of his staff to complete the business contacts and other basic information that USACOE has requested. Garry hopes to meet with Ken Buckland on September 14th to review final pieces where Ken has knowledge and background (Ken has a Masters Degree in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island) so they can complete the package.

Regarding the removal of navigation aids, the Coast Guard has removed one buoy from the Wareham River Channel. They are presently pulling and replacing the rest that need cleaning and painting.

The next item on the agenda was the Harbormaster's project update and information on the Town's application for a Seaport Economic Council Grant. Again Garry's e-mail was very informative. Garry said he has been meeting with Derek Sullivan to start the process of getting the Town lined up for the Seaport Economic Council Grant, among others, for replacing the Onset Pier and improving facilities thereon. Garry has been working with Daniel Kennedy of WSP/Parsons Brinkerhoff Global Engineering and Professional Service. Parsons Brinkerhoff is an excellent firm that has some roots in Wareham's Indian Neck area. As an aside, August Belmont, who financed the New York Subway and the original Cape Cod Canal utilized William Barclay Parsons as his chief engineer for both projects. William Barclay Parsons was father to Mrs. Rudolf Weld who summered on Wareham's Indian Neck. Garry indicated that the first steps will be to get the pier project shovel ready, which means the Town should have all the design and engineering in place. While this is being done the Town needs to plan for the next 30 years, what conditions of our buildings, docks, handicapped access, boater needs, Town needs, etc. Once this is in place the Town will have a very significant chance of securing funds towards the project. Garry is estimating a \$400,000 to \$600,000 commitment from the Town to accomplish this. Garry says that this fall we will collectively need to sit with all players and determine an approach for securing funds hopefully for Spring Town Meeting.

Reading the above, I am pleased that the Town is recognizing the benefit that a qualified consultant can bring to getting things accomplished. I only wish the voters had a chance to vote on the proposed dredging article that MRC had wanted to be placed on the upcoming Fall Town meeting warrant. The proposed article that did not get approved by the Selectmen to come before the voters can be viewed on the Town Website under the September 1st MRC meeting notes.

Following is Garry's update on other projects he has been working on that I feel should be shared: " As for our daily operations, almost half of our oysters have been released to a wild setting near Onset Island. These were oysters that were in excess of 2" and less likely to be killed by predators. The remainder of the oysters have been moved to Oyster Gro Cages and are being monitored by our interns and staff. Currently the only shellfish we have left in the upweller is 150,000 quahogs which we will be transplanting to a grow out area and they will be covered with submersible netting to protect them from

predators as well. The mooring rentals and launch service continues to grow rapidly with use. The Town has never rented so many moorings thanks to Dockwa, our online mooring reservation service. Brewster/Onset Bay Marina/Safe Harbors (Parent Company) is now the largest marina Corporation in the World. We have been able to approve almost 70 new moorings this year because of our efforts in cleaning up the designated areas for moorings, this is in addition to the almost 90 new moorings we approved last summer. We have been awarded \$56,250 towards the purchase of a new pump out vessel. The total cost is estimated at \$72,000, the additional funds will be requested at Town meeting. Our vehicle fleet had two trucks that are coming to the end of their road. One vehicle has significant body rot and both are facing major mechanical issues where they are just not safe. I intend on leasing two 4x4 vehicles to replace them. Once replaced both vehicles will be turned over to Municipal Maintenance for either auction or used however they see fit. Leasing has been a

very positive option for the Town with purchasing vehicles. We have the option of a 3, 4, 5 year lease at a very much reduced interest rate. At the end of the lease the Town owns the vehicle for \$1.00. We anticipate utilizing the four year lease at this time for both vehicles."

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P. M.

I attest these are the true minutes of the MRC meeting held September 13th, 2017.



Donald H. Jepson, Chairman

cc: Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, DNR Office