



Harbor Committee

Joint Meeting Minutes - draft

Provincetown Select Board & Harbor Committee

Monday, October 28, 2019, at 6:00 p.m.

Judge Welsh Room, Provincetown Town Hall

260 Commercial Street, Provincetown, MA 02657

Harbor Committee (HC) meeting called to order at 6pm in the Caucus Hall. All members were present: David Flattery (Chair), Laura Ludwig (scribe), Susan Avellar, John Santos, Elise Cozzi, Wendy Loughlin; Rex McKinsey, town staff liaison.

John moved to approve the minutes presented in the packet prepared by Rex. Susan seconded the motion and listed the dates of the minutes: March 20, June 20, August 1, September 9, September 30, October 16, all of 2019. All were in favor and the motion passed.

Joined the Meeting already underway with the Select Board in the Judge Welsh Room.

At 7:33pm, David F introduced the committee members and asked each of us to deliver our reports.

John described history of the pier and stated that we have no complaints about pier management, but have issues with the way the harbormaster office has been handled. Susan reviewed the 20-year history of the harbor management plan and amendments and pointed out that the role of harbormaster as described therein points directly at public safety and enforcement of regulations, which should be a role supervised by Town Manager and not a pier manager. She clarified for the Select Board that the role of the Harbor Committee is in an advisory capacity, a role we were fulfilling by presenting to the Board.

Wendy then reviewed activity on the pier and how it has evolved over two decades. She pointed out that certain important work with shark detection and research was brought to a halt due to the unexpected staff change this summer, and that safety issues increase as the pier becomes more active. Elise reviewed the 2015 MOU between Town and Pier Corp, highlighting the core components of pier and facility management, and reiterating that there was never an inclusion of Harbormaster Services in its inception. She concluded that the Pier Corp is a good facility manager, and that recommendations made by the Town in 2015 are being met to varying degrees (financial transparency, maintenance, increased tenancy, etc.).

David Flattery responded to an earlier request from the Select Board Chair asking about the Committee's concerns regarding pier management or harbormaster services. Items that had been brought to the Committee's attention by tenants or users of the pier included a lack of attention to short-term maintenance since Luis Ribas left us, whereby fishermen are greasing and fixing the cranes in order to offload their catch. A concern about vessel speeds and wakes in the harbor, identified over a year ago as a major safety issue and prioritized by the Committee since then, was originally being addressed by the Harbormaster but then stalled, effectively undoing recommendations made in the spring. He noted that calls for assistance from stranded boaters or people on the breakwater, normally routed to the Harbormaster, were being attended to by a private responder whose personnel and resources were better able to respond.

Laura then discussed the Committee's version of the organizational chart originally proposed by the Town Manager and Pier Corp at earlier meetings; the most significant element is the separation of Harbormaster Services from the Pier Corp, moving that office squarely under the Town Manager so that there is no question about oversight in issues of enforcement, safety and resiliency, and retaining the 295 (Marine Department) budget.

David Gardner confirmed that the organizational structure by charter indicates that the harbormaster's office reports to Town Manager with agreement from the Select Board. He said the Select Board will meet with the Pier Corp on November 13 where they will provide their annual report and present their proposal on the management structure.

The committee was asked about its connection to the Pier Corp and whether there is any communication between the two groups. David G stated that both have distinct jurisdictions (facility and harbor) and that staff liaisons communicate and report to their respective boards. It was agreed that arrangement could be improved with a clearer chain of communication. Rex described the Harbor Committee's role as advising and recommending to the Select Board on issues of waterfront access, Ch. 91 regulations and Harbor Access Gift Fund disbursement, and the HMP. A member of the Board asked whether the Harbor Committee considered the issue of climate change in its role; Rex pointed out that virtually every component of the HMP reflected the potential impacts of climate change, as it was very much the governing issue when the Committee updated the Plan last year.

In his closing remarks, David F stated that the work of the harbormaster and marine coordinator/staff liaison are interconnected as the position of one working on science, environmental and economic issues needs the authority and resources of the harbormasters or marine department and visa versa.

The Select Board stated they would not make any motions on our recommendations tonight and thanked the Committee for its presentation. Susan moved to adjourn; John seconded and all were in favor. Meeting adjourned 8:32pm.