

HARBOR COMMISSION
Wednesday, March 15, 2017 @ 6:00 P.M.
CONFERENCE ROOM @ CITY HALL

- 1.) The first 2017 meeting was called to order by President Reed.
- 2.) Roll Call: Butch Mehlberg, Dick Olson, Roger Reed, Nancy Rhode, Jim Viestenz
Also Present: Director of Parks, Rec., and Forestry John Bostedt, Harbor Masters Gordon Olson, Lee Rockwell, and William Vandebush; Bob LeBreck, John Mick, Steve Witt, Dale Lambert
- 3.) **Rhode moved approval of agenda; Mehlberg seconded. (5 Ayes)**
- 4.) **Approval of the 12/7/2016 meeting minutes was called by Olson with a second motion from Rhode. (5 Ayes)**
- 5.) Public Input: None.
- 6.) Correspondence: None.
- 7.) Discussion/possible recommendation/updates on the following:
 - a) **A letter of resignation from Ellis Mercier, which included knowledge of his appointment by Mayor Joe Bralik, was accepted by Mehlberg and seconded by Olson. (5 Ayes)**
 - b) A Fireworks & 4th of July Celebration @ Harbor, Saturday, July 1st was suggested by Tourism. The Commission was concerned with parking; however LeBreck indicated that shuttle busses would be available at City Hall and City Park. Mayor Heier, both the Police and Fire Chiefs, and Administrator Perrizo shared agreement in the location/decision. A band, activities and food during the day revolving around a Chamber Water Fest is being planned with a possible boat parade and viewing of the fireworks. It was noted that there would be a "Play Across the Bay" marketed between the City and OCEDC. Although the Commission questioned liability, it was assured that that is the responsibility of the Fireworks Co. who must show proof of insurance. Rhode felt that if members of the Commission, who saw it as a great idea with a lot of potential, would be needed they would do their part. **As Tourism wants to spearhead the Fireworks @ Oconto Harbor, Olson moved to allow the event. Mehlberg seconded. (5 Ayes)**
 - c) Oconto Lighthouse— Dave Duca's letter to the Commission contained his thoughts on building a lighthouse via our high school Building and Trades class. The idea was briefly discussed. Superintendent of Public Works, Jeremy Wusterbarth, will contact the DNR to analyze it.
 - d) 2017 Harbor Towns AAA Living highlighted an Oconto article which is already in print as the deadline occurred before this March meeting. Administrator Perrizo and Director Bostedt created the piece and got it published. Costs and payment were discussed. There have been 500 hits on 2016 publishing: 419 hits on Oconto. **Rhode acknowledged approval that involvement with 2017 Harbor Towns AAA Living was achieved on the Harbor Commission behalf. Olson seconded. (5 Ayes)**

- e) Wisconsin Harbor Towns Association monthly Newsletter is rendering us summer and winter article printing as a part of our membership fee. This is solid P.R.
- f) The Great Lakes Shallow Draft Recreational Harbor Stakeholder meeting is available again this year (attended by Director Bostedt and Reed in 2016); their main thrust is to look for donations. No action.
- g) Us Army Core of Engineers: The Oconto Harbor Information sheet is being completed by Director Bostedt: he is also in contact with them. Dredging update and that Cruisers and Tourism will be included under the “consequences of not maintaining”. We would like to reapply; Reed will look into it with Foth.
- h) Promoting/marketing reduced slip rates for 2017— There is indecision as to what to do to increase our intake. (Showers are being locked with boaters receiving the code.) Joint meetings have not been successful because of attendance. Viestenz suggested Tourism contact Marina Associations as they operate at no charge; they may see our situation in a new way. Viestenz did not see our Harbor as a transient harbor. We needn't pay outside sources for advice: use what is here already. A coalition was suggested. Rhode noted that we need things to do. She stated that a staff person to help promote the Harbor would help: we don't have one. Oconto County funded marketing; the City needs to do that, says Rhode. Viestenz noted that Oconto is fresh water and presently fuel costs are down. The Commission feels Tourism doesn't market the Harbor. Who has the money? asked Viestenz. How do we view our Harbor? The job of the group is to make a sound Harbor. Viestenz will look into the Cruisers DNR registration list for us. Witt stated that Oconto is the only reasonably protected harbor from Green Bay to Menominee and that our channel marking is key. A video promoting Oconto on Facebook came into discussion. Reed will approach Administrator Perrizo to discuss this issue for further ideas. **Collective working Harbors were suggested by Viestenz who made a motion to form a coalition for the local marinas to increase traffic/business. We could market collectively; promote the river; promote its facilities. Olson seconded. (5 Ayes)** Mick would like to have the coalition meet to resolve some of the issues. How do we do it?
- i) **Our past Harbor Masters all turned in their 2017 letters of intent and will be functioning accordingly as a motion was made by Olson and seconded by Reed. (5 Ayes)**
- j) Boating Safety Course Flyer notices have been placed up around City Hall.
- k) City Docks Handicap fishing pier— Director Bostedt has 2 calls in as the 50/50 Grant remains possible. A DNR aware Engineering firm is willing to work with us. Viestenz says that private industry is doing better and stock is up... they might support the issue if the cost factor were established.

8.) Board Report:

a.) Marketing & Advertisement— See 7. h)

b.) City boat ramps— No new information.

c.) Fishing Tournaments/Special Events— Oconto has 2 summer events ahead.

d.) Park(s) Inspection Report (John) Note: Fishermen have begun.

9.) **A motion for approval of accounts payable from December 1, - 31st, 2016 in the amount of \$8,269.05; January 1st – 31st, 2017 in the amount of \$1,569.29; February 1, - 28th, 2017 in the amount of \$1,311.99 was made by Olson. Mehlberg issued a second.**

(5 Ayes)

March numbers were clarified as the Jackie Foster firm fixing the jetty, ice fishing ramp, and causeway.

10.) Revenue/Expenditure Reports were reviewed.

11.) Next Meeting date/time: **Wednesday, April 19 @ 4:30 p.m.**

Agenda items: Interceptor update

Additional buoy markers

An Ad Hoc Coalition will meet Wednesday, March 29 @ 4:30 in City Hall consisting of 2 Tourism representatives, 2 Harbor Commission representatives, 2 citizens, John Mick of Hi Seas Marina; Steve Witt and Dale Lambert of the Oconto Yacht Club; and Brian Sohr of Sohr Shores. On the Agenda will be Oconto Harbor's definition of who we are and why tourists should come to our area, to put progressive thoughts in writing, and to list our strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats... which will be analyzed.

12.) **Olson called for adjournment. Mehlberg seconded @ 7:40 p.m.**

(M/C)

Minutes submitted by
Susan K. Seidl

