

**Meeting Minutes of the
MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION
August 19, 2011**

The regular meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission (Commission) was called to order by Chairperson Mike Bryanton at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, August 19, 2011, at the Edward C. Grace Memorial Marina, 129 North Cedar Street, in Elk Rapids. The following Commissioners were present:

Commissioner Mike Bryanton, Chairperson
Commissioner Curtis Hertel
Commissioner Janet Mansfield
Commissioner Gary Marowske
Commissioner Van Snider
Commissioner James Hansen
Commissioner Robert Brown

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Parks and Recreation Division Chief, Ron Olson, and other DNR staff were present.

I. PUBLIC APPEARANCE

A. Written Correspondence

There was no written correspondence.

B. Appearances (Non-agenda items)

Mr. James Sarna, of Brighton, Michigan, addressed the Commission, voicing concerns regarding the parking situation during the Traverse City Cherry Festival, during which the City has used the seasonal boater parking area in Clinch Park for festival handicapped parking. He cited abuses in this particular lot and had photos to present to the Commission. Mr. Sarna suggested that handicapped parking be in a designated area that could be some distance away, with shuttle service available.

Mr. Jason Fleming said that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will be addressing the situation in a letter to the City stating that removal of parking for boaters is in violation of their grant which allows boaters a parking area when they pay slip fees.

Mr. Sarna also suggested that there should be a statement in a posted document indicating that it is illegal to swim in a marina harbor. Mr. Fleming said that it would be up to the local officials to enforce the rules at the marinas and boating launches.

Mr. David Powierski, representing the Sea Scouts of Northeast Michigan (a division of the Boy Scouts of America), explained their mission is to offer young adults responsible fun and adventure while instilling lifetime values and developing ethical character, etc. Its goal is to educate proper and safe boating. He also talked about accomplishments and goals of the Sea Scouts, which include starting new units in northeast Michigan, in the Thumb area, and along Lake Michigan. The group's plan is to continue expanding the availability of Sea Scouts in Michigan to as far as Duluth, Minnesota by 2015, and is currently meeting with partners to bring a Sea Scout unit to Alpena. One of the obstacles is obtaining vessels, either by grants, purchases, loans, or gifts. Another obstacle is available slips and storage.

A question was asked how Sea Scout agreements are made with a privately-owned vessel. Mr. Powierski said the owner pays slip fees, insurance, etc.

Mr. Ralph Grace, son of Edward C. Grace, of Williamsburg, Michigan, addressed the Commission in support of the expansion project for the Elk Rapids harbor.

Ms. Catherine Allchin, representing Fox Island Lighthouse Association, presented a slide show on South Fox Island Light Station. She explained projects the Association has completed and those in progress to restore and maintain buildings and the surrounding area. The Association, in cooperation with the DNR, is asking the Commission for consideration of a safe harbor on Fox Island.

Mr. Joel Lockman, representing the Grand Traverse Bay Power Squadron, commended the Elk Harbor Marina and staff as the best in the state of Michigan and is in favor of, and supports, the proposed expansion.

II. MINUTES

MOTION:

Commissioner Curtis Hertel moved to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2011 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gary Marowske. The minutes were unanimously approved.

III. **OLD BUSINESS** Information Items

A. Recreation Passport Status

Parks and Recreation (PRD) Chief Ron Olson explained that the Recreation Passport program began October 1, 2010, and, as of mid-September of 2011, 24.6% of people purchasing licenses for passenger vehicles have purchased the Recreation Passport. This exceeds the initial goal of 24.3%. Beginning October 1, 2011, the goal for next year is 30%. PRD is also working with the Secretary of State on a program with vehicle dealers to have a method to provide a Passport when a new vehicle is purchased.

B. Boating Reservation Status

PRD's Harold Herta said that he receives an update weekly on the boating reservation status. In February of 2011, numbers were up and these numbers represented summer reservations. Since that time, numbers have shrunk, but, as of mid-August, they are still even with last year. He said the Department is creating a Request for Proposal (RFP) to seek a new reservation system that will include boating, state park campgrounds, cabins, and other facilities rented on an overnight basis. He asked for suggestions from the Commissioners on how the new system should run more effectively and their ideas on new features. Business rules and requirements will be written over the next year. The current vendor contract is set to expire in 2013, and the new system will be going online January 1, 2014. He will also be talking to harbormasters for suggestions to try to incorporate whatever is feasible into the new system.

IV. **NEW BUSINESS** Information Items

A. Overview of City of Elk Rapids, Edward C. Grace Memorial Harbor

Chairperson Bryanton, on behalf of the Waterways Commission, thanked Ms. Cheryl Werth, the Harbor Commission, and the Village of Elk Rapids for their hospitality.

Ms. Werth, Harbormaster, gave an overview of the harbor. Built in 2006, she gave a history concerning the Jack Blesma Pavilion and said that is available for public and boater events. She said the harbor goal is to give every boater that comes to the community and harbor a memorable and safe experience. There is difficulty in accommodating transients – 50 boats greater than 38 feet have been turned away this year but would want to add additional slips if improvements are made to the harbor.

Kent Reynolds, vice-chair of the Elk Rapids Harbor Commission, presented slides to explain three projects, i.e. 1) courtesy docks for eight boats which were recently completed; 2) a property purchase is in the

process of being completed by the Village, for the opportunity in the Upper Harbor (Elk lake access) to add 22 fixed slips and provide electricity and water. There has been discussion pertaining to the disposition of the buildings on the property; Mr. Reynolds explained the property's history; 3) expansion of the Lower Harbor (Lake Michigan access) would create an outer basin for larger boats – 60' and 100' slips. The main concern is safety in the main fairway and at the gas docks. A design for a proposal for a breakwall has been created for the purpose of stopping the sand from coming into the harbor. Public hearings will be held. Timeline for completion is approximately five years. Restroom and parking infrastructure was also discussed, with an emphasis on the Harbor Commission's responsibility for maintenance.

B. Project Status Report – Grand Marais

Mr. Olson explained that the Grand Marais Harbor breakwater project has been transferred to the Department of Management, Technology and Budget, with \$4 million appropriated from the General Fund and \$1 million appropriated from the Waterways Fund for Fiscal Year 2012.

C. Planning Status Report

PRD's Mr. Jordan Byelich talked about various state Boating Access Site (BAS) projects that are either completed or nearing completion. Included are the \$1.1 million project at Crystal Lake in Benzie County, which will be completed mid-fall 2011; Maxton Bay BAS improvements on Drummond Island are completed; Bayport BAS dredging is in progress, Pine Lake BAS development is underway; a new launch ramp at Lake George BAS has been completed – paving is next. He commented that there is an advantage to having DNR construction crews work on these projects because of the decrease in costs. In addition, the Port Austin State Harbor is seeing a lot of use after the pilot paving project. Next steps will be buildings, docks, and dredging.

PRD's Mr. Paul Petersen talked about Grant-in-Aid projects. Included are the completed Northport marina control building and main pier repair, which is a \$63,500 state grant project, completed in mid-July; Port Sanilac Harbor – roof shingle replacement on the harbormaster building, completed May 5; St. Clair Boat Harbor pavilion building improvements project (\$12,657 state grant); a \$120,000 state grant for a St. Joseph West Basin Marina paving, landscaping and electrical project, completed in early August; and a \$40,000 state grant for new development of a carry-down launching dock, parking lot and accessible walk at Forest Home Township BAS.

PRD's Jason Fleming commented that the state has taken over the launching facility at the Port Sanilac Marina this year since the village no longer wanted to maintain operations. He also said that Grayhaven Marina in the City of Detroit is up and operating, through a private entity, as a state facility. Jason also mentioned that, after having been closed

since 2003 for budgetary reasons (and not homeland security reasons as previously portrayed), the City of Detroit reopened the Riverside Boat Launch site.

D. Maple Bay State Forest Campground BAS on Burt Lake Update

Mr. Keith Cheli, PRD's Regional Field Planner, give a brief overview with a Power Point presentation regarding the two improved boating access sites on Burt Lake. He talked about an undeveloped site, the West Burt Lake Road site, which had been idle because of a lawsuit regarding non-compliance of the local township ordinances. In order to rebuild relationships with township officials and stakeholders, meetings have been held to review the parking lot proposal and a site which is fully barrier free. PRD will go through a site review with the township. The intent is for the Cheboygan unit to maintain the site with an upfront approach to build confidence and trust with township officials. PRD has taken the lead in administering this site improvement. The \$550,000 project is slated for dock construction during the 2012 season.

E. Current Western Upper Peninsula (U.P.) Issues and Projects

Mr. Tom Paquin, Western Upper Peninsula District Supervisor for PRD, presented a Power Point look at projects in various stages of planning and development. Lac La Belle State Harbor is open and completed; Bergland Park BAS has a new ramp, just completed last fall. The Department is working with the county at the Oman's Creek BAS to relocate the ramp. Mr. Olson said that it's an important place for fishing and has a strong history. The drag line used to remove drifted materials operates constantly and is the most expensive boat launch in Michigan to maintain. Relocating the ramp would be the best solution, by diminishing the substantial maintenance required. Snail Shell Harbor, located at Fayette State Park, is slated for dock redevelopment. Fayette is a destination point in the Garden Peninsula for history and a small harbor of refuge. Also, there has been some discussion and study regarding the creation of a small, six-slip marina at Union Bay in Porcupine Mountain Wilderness State Park. Mr. Paquin also talked about future dredging needs and site paving at the Nahma and Ford Rivers, boating access sites, etc. There will also be quite a bit of future development because of the UPPCO consent agreement resulting from the Dead River dam break.

Mr. Olson said there is a need to develop policies regarding boat washing and snow plowing at access sites.

Mr. Cheli mentioned the need for better invasive species control and that the public doesn't always appreciate that monies are designated to improve sites, but neglect to include funds to control invasive species. Mr. Hansen mentioned that he is hopeful that the permit process can be streamlined with state and federal agencies. Mr. Fleming also mentioned that, because of recent statutes, there are now certain specifications for Waterways spending.

F. Establish Topics for 2012 Work Plan

Mr. Olson had sent a memo to the Commissioners regarding a proposed work plan and session for 2012, in order to identify critical issues that the Commission and PRD would like to address in 2012. He asked the Commissioners to begin to think about topics, issues and projects to address in 2012. Commissioner Bryanton appointed Commissioners Snider and Marowske to work with Mr. Olson on developing a work plan and asked the rest of the commissioners to channel suggestions to them.

Future Action Items – October, 2011

A. Seasonal/Transient 2012 Rates/Fees

Commissioner Bryanton asked the Commissioners to begin thinking about the 2012 Seasonal/Transient Rates/Fees, and asked that it be included as an agenda item at the October meeting.

B. Mr. Olson said that the DNR's Tom Reichard is in the process of finalizing an audit report regarding Clinch Park for the next Commission meeting. He also distributed gifts from the Law Enforcement Division to promote life jacket use.

C. Maia Stephens commented on co-marketing partnerships and efforts with a variety of boating groups and yacht clubs. She is planning a presentation for the next Commission meeting in October. Commissioner Curtis Hertel asked her about communication with local Chambers of Commerce and businesses, in the Detroit and other areas. It was suggested that the harbormasters work on communicating with boating groups regarding marketing efforts.

V. OTHER BUSINESS

Commissioner Bob Brown moved to adjourn this meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Van Snider. Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

The next Waterways Commission meeting will be held Thursday and Friday, October 20 and 21, in the Indian River area.