

**Minutes of the
Michigan State Waterways Commission
October 25, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission (MSWC) was called to order by Commissioner Alex Declercq at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, October 25, 2013 at the East Tawas Bay Beach Resort 300 East Bay Drive, East Tawas, Michigan 48730. The following Commissioners participated:

Commissioner Al Declercq, Secretary
Commissioner Nicki Polan
Commissioner Dennis Nickels
Commissioner Denny Griswold
Commissioner Ward Walstrom
Commissioner Jim Hansen
Special Consultant R.J. Peterson

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) liaisons were also present.

Commissioner Alex Declercq introduced himself and stated he would be Acting Chair for today's meeting in the absence of Gary Marowske. He opened the meeting with public comment.

I. PUBLIC APPEARANCE

A. Written Correspondence

Correspondence was received from **Duane Colegrove/Steven P. Abrahamson** regarding commercial use of publicly owned and operated marina space. There were three (3) letters received, copied and given to each Commissioner for their review.

B. Appearances (Non-agenda items)

The following individuals spoke publicly before the Commission:

Jefferson Henry – Muskegon, MI Ludington, marina charter boat issue. Spoke to the matter of competition between commercial and private marina owners.

Frank Garner – Caseville Harbor. He came to the commission meeting to thank the Commissioners for their support and help with dredging.

Bernie Schenk – Oscoda, MI, under use of the facilities at the river mouth of the Au Sable River. There is considerable beachfront and a changing building that are there not being used. Suggests developing the beach with perhaps rental cabins. All of the utilities are already in place and believes it would not be a big expense to revitalize that area.

Kaye Chartier – representing Tawas City. Reminding the commission that she is hoping that monies will be available in the spring to dredge the Tawas River. Paul Petersen suggested that an application for a grant be filled out to request grant money to dredge that area. He stated that applications are due in April of 2014.

Jim Sarna - Traverse City parking situation has continued to work out well as he reported at the Waterways Commission meeting in June. It has provided a lot more parking for transient and seasonal boaters. There is concern about a theatre (Bijoun) that has been built near the parking lot. They opened up the theatre without providing any parking for their guests and Jim feels the theatre visitors will be utilizing the parking spaces and that the lot is there for the boaters, not the theatre.

Tom Pawiaczyk – AuGres, MI Boat launch (second largest boat launch on the east side of state). Would like to see improvements made to that boat launch and an example is the driveway that needs attention. He believes a dredging is scheduled for the Au Gres sometime in early 2014.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the August 23, 2013 Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Declercq moved to approve the August 23, 2013 Minutes of the Michigan State Waterway Commission. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Dennis Nickels and it carried unanimously, 6-0

B. City of Ludington Resolution regarding Commercial Use. This resolution was brought up for review and discussion in the August 23, 2013 meeting and it is being brought forth today for action. Ron Olson gave a brief overview of what this resolution was about before the vote was carried out.

MOTION: Commissioner Declercq moved to approve Resolution No. 08-2013-01. The motion is for support of the resolution brought forth by Commissioner Jim Hansen and seconded by Commissioner Dennis Grinold. The resolution carried unanimously, 6-0

- C. Resolution for a Land Use Order to amend the number of fee boating access sites. Ron Olson suspended this item because of edits and changes that need to be made to the resolution. This item will be tabled until the December Waterways Commission meeting.

III. OLD BUSINESS

- A. Emergency Dredging Program Update – Bill Boik spoke to and explained a “projects” list, (Project Progress Summary as of 10-23-13) that was included in the packet providing status on project completion and money allocated.
- B. Operations Update – **Jason Fleming** reviewed the numbers for reservations and cancellations. People are making more reservations and keeping them and using the reservation system more. The new system, Central Reservation System. (CRS) is on schedule and the dates for activating are still the beginning of November 2013. Jason praised the work and efforts of field staff that has spent countless hours to get this system up and running and serve the public more efficiently.
- C. Financial Update – **Jackie Blodgett**. Jackie reviewed and explained a Projected Budget Estimate chart she provided in the packet. We are already starting our 2014 year and budget. Jackie compared the projections versus what our budget came in at when the year ended. She indicated that some monies have not yet come in and have not yet been documented but most predictions were close to or right on point.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

- A. The Michigan Boating Industry Association (MBIA) is holding their yearly Recreational Boating Educational Conference which is to be held on December 3-5, 2013. There was discussion to interact with this conference with perhaps the December 6, Waterways Commission Meeting. Commissioner Nicki Polan is the Executive Director of the Michigan Boating Industry Association. Ron Olson indicated that he would see if any of the dates can be changed to coincide with the MBIA events.
- B. Boy Scouts/Sea Scouts have contacted the Waterways Commission to provide or waive rental fees for their vessel to be docked as long as they are using the boat for training or educational purposes. Ward Walstrom spoke to the Commission about a request he was given for this matter. This issue was

addressed in spring of 2012 and does allow for Sea Scouts to have a dock without fees based on the guidelines outlined by the Commission.

MOTION: To approve the memo of May 29, 2012 that allows a variance to allow for seasonal slips at no cost for Sea Scout vessels at Waterways sponsored facilities. The motion was moved by Commissioner Ward Walstrom and seconded by Commissioner Dennis Grinold. It carried unanimously, 6-0.

- C. There was discussion to change the term of the Chair of the Waterways. Article 1 – Officers, state that “the terms of all officers shall be for one year and members shall be permitted to hold the same office for one additional consecutive year.” Commissioner Hansen proposed that the language be changed to “the terms of all officers shall be for one year and members shall be permitted to hold the same office for consecutive years by the vote of the commission.”

MOTION: To approve the change in term of the Chair from 1 year to consecutive years by vote of the commission. Motion moved by Commissioner James Hansen and seconded by Dennis Grinold. It carried unanimously, 6-0.

- D. Presentation by DNR field staff, **Chuck Allen**. A presentation of East Tawas was given as well as the history of how the AuSable was a lumbering mecca at one point then moved to fishing industry in the 30’s to the 50’s. Now the harbor serves as a recreational haven.
- E. Discussion of future revenue was brought up by Chair Declercq. Looking to the future, there is concern that funding will decrease and the Waterways may not be able to maintain its “footprint.” There is the possibility to increase current boating registration fees \$3-5 or perhaps requiring watercraft such as kayaks and canoes that we currently do not register to become of that registration process. The concern is to address the revenue issue now before it becomes a crisis in 3-4 years. Ron Olson cautioned that while we can certainly analyze future revenue and options, we will have to see how the sales tax and other revenue enhancing avenues play out before decisions can be made to increase or change registration costs.

With the conclusion of the Waterway Commission business, the meeting was adjourned.