

Michigan State Waterways Commission

Meeting Minutes

Location: Virtual meeting

Date: April 29, 2022

Roll Call

Present for the Waterways Commission:

- Commissioner, Chair, Barb Brooks, Boyne City, MI
- Commissioner, Vice-Chair, Pat Egan, Marquette, MI
- Commissioner, Secretary, Mary Rising, Fenton, MI
- Commissioner, Fred Sitkins, Suttons Bay, MI
- Commissioner, Elaine Isely, Grand Rapids, MI
- Commissioner, Chris Shepler, Harbor Springs, MI

Others Present:

- Ron Olson, DNR, Ann Arbor, MI
- Maia Turek, DNR, Traverse City, MI
- Jordan Byelich, DNR, Haslett, MI
- Michelle Wieber, DNR, Recorder, Lansing, MI
- Vicki McGhee, DNR, Lansing, MI
- Michael Desnoyer, DNR, Jackson, MI
- Linnae Dawson, DNR, Elmira, MI
- Scott Pratt, Novi, MI

Not Present:

- Commissioner, Mark Yonan

Opening Comments:

- Chair, Barb Brooks called for a moment of silence in remembrance of Paul Petersen, former Waterways Grants Program Manager.
- Chair, Barb Brooks called for the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m., April 29, 2022. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually.
- The meeting began with reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Appearance:

- Jim Sarna, Williamsburg, MI, offered his sympathy towards the loss of Paul Petersen. Mr. Sarna spoke to the Commissioners regarding slip rates. He questioned the process for pricing increases, and why the larger slips do not see an increase when the shorter slips do. Mr. Sarna was advised to contact the local government. A memo regarding this topic will also be submitted for the June meeting.
- Sandra Pritchard, Boyne City, MI, member of the non-profit group, We the People of Boyne City. Ms. Pritchard stated to the Commission they have strong opposition against marina expansion. Over seven hundred signatures have been obtained, all for protection of erosion, invasive species, and the river mouth.
- Mark Breederland, Traverse City, MI, Michigan Sea Grant Program, offered his sympathy towards the loss of Paul Petersen. Mr. Breederland stated to the Commission that he attended the Shallow Draft Harbors meeting, presented by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Breederland mentioned a focus on great communication. Mr. Breederland reminded the Commission of the May 2 deadline for the Michigan Pumpout Grants, with a hopeful grant cycle in the fall as well.
- Michael Cain, Boyne City, MI, City Manager of Boyne City, offered his sympathy towards the loss of Paul Petersen. Mr. Cain informed the Commission of grants submitted for dock replacement and expansion. Mr. Cain requested consideration as revisions, consults with the public meetings have taken place, components thoroughly studied.
- Penny Hardy, Boyne City, MI, resident of Boyne City stated to the Commission she has a love for natural resources.

Action Items:

- MOTION: Chair Barb Brooks asked for a motion for approval for the minutes from the April 29, 2022, Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was put on hold until suggested revisions were made. The revised minutes will be up for approval at the June 14, 2022 meeting.
- Retreat Action items are a standing agenda item. There were no updates made to the list since the previous meeting.
- Special note – although six of the seven Commissioners were present for the meeting, Chair Barb Brooks excused herself from voting on the resolutions to avoid conflict due to the content, therefore the vote counts appear different.

- MOTION: Vice-Chair Mary Rising asked for a motion of approval in support of resolution number 04-2022-01, Resolution of Support for Lexington State Harbor Project Michigan Natural Resources Trust Fund Grant Application. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Elaine Isely and was seconded by Commissioner Fred Sitkins. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.
- MOTION: Vice-Chair Mary Rising asked for a motion of approval in support of resolution number 04-2022-02, Resolution of Support for Cheboygan Lock and Dam Project Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Chris Shepler and was seconded by Commissioner Fred Sitkins. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.
- MOTION: Vice-Chair Mary Rising asked for a motion of approval in support of resolution number 04-2022-03, Resolution to Approve the Grant Awards for Waterways Funding. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Pat Egan and was seconded by Commissioner Chris Shepler. Motion carried unanimously, 5-0.

Committee Reports:

- The Facilities Subcommittee met to review grant applications and discuss the recommendations in detail. Commissioner Pat Egan supported the recommendations while Chair Barb Brooks abstained due to potential conflict, as the harbor she represents had submitted grant applications.

Informational Business:

- Guest speaker, Keith Kompoltowicz, Chief of Watershed Hydrology, Detroit District, United States Army Corp of Engineers, spoke to the Commission on the Great Lakes water levels. The recent record-high water levels are thankfully no longer an issue.

General Updates

- Ron Olson reported to the Commission that the FY23 budget is being considered with the legislature, no further updates to provide yet.

Financial Updates

- Financial information updates were provided to the Commissioners in the meeting packet. Michael Desnoyer provided further details including updates to revenue and expenditures.

Operations Updates

- Linnae Dawson provided an Operations update to the Commissioners. Linnae noted the numbers were strong for slip reservations, and that the price of gas does not seem to be slowing things down. Staff have been busy preparing for the season as the harbors are beginning to open. Linnae also mentioned there has been support for electric boats/boat charging stations. The annual Spring Harbormaster meeting will be held on May 5.

Marketing Updates

- Maia Turek and Stephanie Yancer updated the Commission on the celebration of the 75th anniversary of boating. May 9 is the official public kick-off of the celebration. The website of Michigan.gov/boating provides further information on how to be a part of the anniversary happenings.

Project Repots

- The Michigan State Waterways Development Program Project Report was included in each Commissioner's meeting packet for their information.
- Jordan Byelich provided an update to the Commission on various State projects. Jordan talked about the issues in the federal navigation channel at Little Lake Harbor and stated that it should be announced in May if federal funding is approved for the US Army Corps of Engineers' to take on improvements at Little Lake Harbor. Port Austin State Harbor was impacted by ice and high-water damage. Pending repairs would include a new breakwall extended off the existing federal breakwater and a complete replacement of the west dock, including all new main and finger piers. At the Clinton River Cutoff Boating Access Site the last steps of the bidding phase are in process for this launch relocation and parking lot redevelopment/expansion project. The launch is being relocated due to a history of heavy sediment collecting in the launch basin. Lexington State Harbor is nearing completion on Phase 1 construction which includes an expanded and redeveloped harbormaster building with boater's laundry, staff storage, boater's lounge, and staff and office space.
- Vicki McGhee shared with the Commission the vigorous process on how the grant applications received are scored. Multiple communities submitted multiple applications, which does not happen often. There were three emergency applications submitted, fifteen non-emergency applications submitted, with four not being awarded due to lack of funding. Commissioner Pat Egan recommended a closer look at how project applications are currently scored.

Transmittals

- No transmittals to report.

Great Lakes Water Level Report

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District Great Lakes water level outlook was included in each Commissioner's meeting packet for their information.

Non-Agenda Items

- Chair Barb Brooks thanked those who made public comments for their interest and attendance.
- Chair Barb Brooks reminded the Commissioners of the Harbormaster meeting on May 5, and to join if their schedules allowed.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

The next Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting: June 14, 2022.