

Michigan State Waterways Commission

Meeting Minutes

Location: Lansing, Michigan

Date: December 8, 2023

Roll Call

Present for the Waterways Commission:

- Commissioner, Susan Stewart
- Commissioner, Elaine Isely
- Commissioner, Candice Miller
- Commissioner, Craig Lehrke
- Commissioner, Fred Sitkins
- Commissioner, Erik Krueger
- Commissioner, Scott Labonte

Others Present:

- Michelle Wieber, DNR, Recorder
- Vicki McGhee, DNR
- Jordan Byelich, DNR
- Linnae Dawson, DNR
- Michael Desnoyer, DNR
- Nick Van Bloem, DNR
- Curt Wemple, DNR
- Ron Olson, DNR

Not Present:

- Maia Turek, DNR

Meeting minutes

Opening Comments:

- Vice-Chair, Elaine Isely called the meeting to order at 10:50 a.m., December 8, 2023.
- The meeting began with reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Commissioners and DNR staff offered a warm welcome to newly appointed Commissioner, Erik Krueger.

Public Appearance:

- Steve London, boater from Boyne City was in attendance to make an appeal to deny an increase in slip rates. Mr. London stated it would be a disservice to boaters and the public, and that Boyne City has other options to gain revenue.
- Theo Nash, sailor, informed the Commission that he spends time boating in the Straits area and wanted to compliment the improvements found at Mackinac Island State Harbor, specifically the comfort station.

Written Correspondence:

- There were six written correspondences that were included in the meeting packet. Most came from concerned boaters of Boyne City, regarding the slip rates at F. Grant Moore Memorial Marina. Another regarded the reservation system, sent in by the Harrisville Harbor Commission.

Action Items:

- MOTION: Vice-Chair, Elaine Isely asked for a motion for approval of the December 8, 2023, meeting minutes. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Fred Sitkins and was seconded by Commissioner Craig Lehrke. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.
- MOTION: Vice-Chair, Elaine Isely asked for a motion for approval in the assignment of officer elections that took place during the meeting. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Craig Lehrke and was seconded by Commissioner Susan Stewart. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.
- MOTION: Vice-Chair, Elaine Isely asked for a motion for approval in the assignment of subcommittees that took place during the meeting. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Candice Miller and seconded by Commissioner Scott Labonte. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.
- MOTION: Vice-Chair, Elaine Isely asked for a motion for approval to deny rate increase for Boyne City boat slips. The request to raise seasonal rates 12% above level 1 rates for the upcoming season is denied secondary to the completion of outstanding, executed DNR Grant-In-Aid projects. The Commission encouraged Boyne City to reapply for applicable

rate increases in the future. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Scott Labonte and was seconded by Commissioner Susan Stewart. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

- The Commissioners agreed to wait until the next meeting to discuss retreat action items.

Committee Reports:

- Linnae Dawson mentioned to the Commission that a memo was received from the community of Harrisville. The memo was a request to be dismissed from the reservation system. The request was granted, and the paperwork is process.

Informational Business:

General Updates

- Ron Olson reported to the Commission that he had recently attended and spoke at the Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA) meeting. Topics noted were wake boats, boating registration fees, law/regulations, and fuel rates. Ron noted that MBIA was in great support of raising boating registration fees, including paddle craft. Chair, Elaine Isely spoke up to encourage a staffed booth at the Quiet Adventure Symposium.

Financial Updates

- Financial information updates were provided to the Commissioners in the meeting packet by Michael Desnoyer. Michael mentioned total revenue was up from 2022 and total expenditure were up over 2022. It was also noted that for fiscal year 2024, \$500,000 was received for water trails, provided by the general fund.

Operations Updates

- Linnae Dawson provided information in the meeting packet. Linnae also informed the Commission that an internal audit was completed. Some changes in grant agreement language will be implemented. In future grant agreements a project map and quarterly reporting will be required. The requirement to utilize the Parks and Recreation Division's reservation system will now be optional. The city of Boyne City requested a rate increase for boat slips. The request was denied, at least until planned renovations have been completed.

Marketing Updates

- No updates to provide at this time.

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 that were notable in 2023. This included Mackinac Island State Harbor, Cedar River State Harbor, Eagle Harbor State Harbor, Clinton River Cutoff Boating Access Site (BAS), Port Austin State Harbor, Cheboygan Lock and Dam, De Tour State Harbor, Bowers Harbor BAS/East Arm BAS, Torch River Bridge BAS, Presque Isle State Harbor, Lexington State Harbor, Rockport BAS, Black River Mouth BAS, and Grayhaven State Harbor BAS.
- Curt Wemple presented a slideshow to the Commission, reporting on grant-in-aid facilities with project activity in 2023 including Charlevoix Ferry Beach BAS, Clark Township Hessel Marina, Harbor Beach Marina, L'Anse Marina, Mackinaw City Municipal Marina, Marquette Presque Isle Marina, Petoskey Municipal Marina, Waucesha Township Lake Mary BAS, Whitewater Township Park BAS, and Northport G. Marsten Dame Marina.

Transmittals

- Meeting dates and locations for 2024 were submitted to the Commission.
- A letter submitted by Governor Whitmer shared the announcement of new Commissioner Erik Krueger and reappointed Commissioner, Craig Lehrke.

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

- Commissioner Craig Lehrke encouraged presence at this season's boat shows.
- Commissioner Scott Labonte expressed thanks to the team for the orientation presentation. Scott also questioned if the Michigan State Waterways Commission has ever supported "of the year" program such as a harbormaster, or marina/harbor. It was noted that had not happened in the past. Scott also mentioned that October 8 is harbormaster recognition day.
- Commissioner Fred Sitkins shared an email that was sent to him regarding the request of BAS space to accommodate Leland Wine Festival.

Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

The next Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting: April 26, 2024, in Lansing