



MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

April 30, 2020

Teleconference Meeting

PRESENT FOR THE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

Commissioner, Chair, Dennis Nickels
Commissioner, Vice Chair, Steve Arwood
Commissioner, Secretary, Mary Rising
Commissioner, Barb Brooks
Commissioner, Pete Beauregard
Commissioner, Elaine Isely
Commissioner, Pat Egan

OTHERS PRESENT

Ron Olson, DNR
Jackie Blodgett, DNR
Vicki McGhee, DNR
Jordan Byelich, DNR
Paul Petersen, DNR
Linnae Dawson, DNR
Michael Desnoyer, DNR
Michelle Wieber, DNR, Recorder



MINUTES
MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

OPENING COMMENTS

Chair, Dennis Nickels called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m., April 20, 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this meeting was held virtually. The meeting was started with reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Appearances: There were no public appearances.

ACTION ITEMS

MOTION: Chair, Dennis Nickels asked for a motion for approval of the minutes from the February 7, 2020 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Steve Arwood and was seconded by Commissioner Mary Rising. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

INFORMATIONAL BUSINESS

Jordan Byelich provided a Waterways Facilities Assessment update. The update included a review of the public webinars held and the results of the survey offered to those who participated in one of the two webinars. The assessment, webinar presentation, and a recording of the webinar held on April 9 can be reviewed by visiting www.michigan.gov/dnrwaterways.

GENERAL UPDATES

Ron Olson informed the Commissioners of actions being taken and impacts on the Department due to the COVID-19 crisis. Other topics included the Executive Orders, 2020-3, which temporarily restricts discretionary spending by state departments and agencies, and Executive Order 2020-4, which temporarily suspends hiring, creating new positions, filling vacant positions. Both Executive Orders, as well as high-water issues have impacted waterways operations and projects.



FINANCIAL UPDATES

Financial information updates were provided via email to the Commissioners. Michael Desnoyer highlighted some financial figures from the spreadsheet, including impacts of COVID-19 in terms of revenue loss and 2020 projections. Discussion included prioritizing projects and consideration for project deferment.

OPERATIONS UPDATES

Linnae Dawson provided updates to the Commission. Based on COVID-19 crisis, Linnae said there is a delay in opening of State harbors until at least June 10, but opening will depend on when the Stay Home EO order is lifted. We recommended that Grant-in-Aid (GIA) marinas follow our lead, but they operate independently from us and some may choose to initially open with minimal services until the Executive Order is lifted. The Harbor Host pilot program has been delayed. Operational guidance will be sent out to GIA marina's; this would include updates from the Governor's Executive Order.

HIGH WATER IMPACTS

Updates have been actively reported from State harbors and Grant-in-Aid communities on the impacts of the record-high water levels. The grant application deadline, for assistance on critical high-water level emergencies only, was extended to May 15, 2020. These critical project requests must follow an internal review and approval process due to the discretionary spending Executive Order. Further information regarding high-water impacts were part of the attachments each Commissioner received for review.

PROJECT REPORT

The Michigan State Waterways Development Program Project Report was included in the attachments each Commissioner received for review.

GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL REPORT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District Great Lakes water level outlook was included in the attachments each Commissioner received for review.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:25 a.m.

The next Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting: June 16, 2020