



## **MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION**

October 4, 2019  
Alpena, Michigan

### **PRESENT FOR THE WATERWAYS COMMISSION**

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

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

Vicki McGhee, DNR  
Linnae Dawson, DNR  
Michael Desnoyer, DNR  
Jordan Byelich, DNR  
Paul Petersen, DNR  
Michelle Wieber, DNR, Recorder  
Anna Sylvester, DNR

### **NOT PRESENT**

Commissioner, Pat Eagan  
Ron Olson, DNR  
Maia Turek, DNR

### **SPECIAL GUESTS**

Mary Beth Stutzman, CEO, Alpena Convention & Visitors Bureau



MINUTES  
MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

**OPENING COMMENTS**

Chair Dennis Nickels, called the meeting to order at 10:51 a.m., October 4, 2019. Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**Appearances:** Gary Sams, resident of Grand Rapids, Hartshorne Boat Owner’s Association. Mr. Sams stated operational control issues are continuing with the new condominium community. Mr. Sams recommended the DNR to receive the purchase agreement for review.

There were also several written correspondence received from the public regarding the following topics – Grand River dredging, Friends of the Lower Grand River, docking in Epoufette, Naubinway Marina, Clinch Park Marina, Eagle Harbor State Harbor, and dockage consideration.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**MOTION:** Chair Dennis Nickels asked for a motion for approval of the minutes from the June 19, 2019 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Steve Arwood and was seconded by Commissioner Barb Brooks. Motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

**MOTION:** Chair Dennis Nickels asked for a motion for approval in support of resolution number 10-2019-02, Resolution of Support for FY2020 Waterways Capital Outlay Funding Plan. The motion was put into place by Commissioner Steve Arwood and was seconded by Commissioner Pete Beauregard. Motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

**MOTION:** Chair Dennis Nickels asked for a motion for approval in support of resolution number 10-2019-03, Resolution of support to Honor Commissioner, James Hansen. With suggestion to edit, the motion was put into place by Commissioner Steve Arwood and seconded by Commissioner Pete Beauregard. Motion carried unanimously, 6-0.

Chair Dennis Nickels presented outgoing Commissioner, James Hansen with a recognition plaque on behalf of the Michigan State Waterways Commission and DNR staff. Mr. Hansen ends an 8-year term served on the Commission. He resides in Escanaba and has represented the interests of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula boaters.



Chair Dennis Nickels welcomed newly appointed Commissioner, Elaine Isely. Ms. Isely is the Director of Water Programs for the West Michigan Environmental Action Council, a role she has held since 2012. Elaine currently serves on the board of the Dispute Resolution Center of West Michigan, on several committees, with the John Ball Zoo and is a former member of the Lower Grand River Organization of Watersheds, and Elaine resides in Grand Rapids.

### **GENERAL UPDATES**

**Vicki McGhee** informed the Commission that the 2020 budget passed. Due to the record-high water levels experienced this year, facilities are anticipating and preparing for any ice damage that may occur during the upcoming winter months.

The 2020 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting locations were presented to the Commission. After discussion, the proposed locations were supported. The Commission has agreed on meeting in Lansing for February, April and December. Muskegon in June, Menominee in August, and Cadillac in October. These locations are always subject to change. The meeting dates will be announced at the December meeting.

**Jordan Byelich** shared a video captured by a drone with the Commissioners. The video included footage of harbors and boating access sites. The footage will help with promotion of boating, development planning, and will also allow to track shoreline and facility changes over time.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATES**

**Michael Desnoyer** provided a summary of updates based on the information provided in the meeting packet, which was provided to all Commissioners for their information. Michael informed the Commissioners most financial information was reported for 2019 but final numbers will be presented at the December Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. Michael will share budget projections for 2020 as well, at that time.

### **OPERATIONS UPDATES**

**Linnae Dawson** provided multiple updates. Although the October Harbormaster meeting was not held this year, it was a topic of discussion. Linnae mentioned some hot topics that will be covered at the next Harbormaster meeting - marketing, geese, staffing, harbor host, and attendant training. Linnae also reported out on highwater issues that were captured around all corners of the state, some of the included facilities were, Elmwood Township Marina, Traverse City Duncan Clinch Marina, Manistee, Lake St. Clair Metropark, New Buffalo, Port Sanilac, Escanaba, Frankfort, and Boyne City, just to name a few. Rates for seasonal and transient boaters have been published for the 2020 season.



## **GUEST SPEAKER**

Special guest, **Mary Beth Stutzman**, CEO, Alpena Convention & Visitors Bureau, spoke to the Commission, mainly highlighting the economic value of tourism activity in the Alpena area. In the past 10 years (approximately), there has been a 25% increase in visitor spending, and over 39% increase in overnight visitor travel. Economic value of activity generated at the port of Alpena is staggering for a community of its size. Recreational activity generates \$45.5M, commercial activity generates \$128.3M, and Alpena's overall value of the water-based cultures resulting from the port on Lake Huron, \$173.8M. Ms. Stutzman also shared a short video filled with boating-related topics.

## **PROJECT REPORT**

The Michigan State Waterways Development Program Project Report was included in each commissioner's meeting packet for their information.

## **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.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 1:19 p.m.

**The next Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting: Lansing, December 5, 2019**