

**TOWN OF JAMESTOWN
HARBOR COMMISSION**

Minutes of the April 12, 2023 meeting of the Jamestown Harbor Commission.

Approved: 5/10/23

A meeting of the Jamestown Harbor Commission (JHC) was held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Council Chambers of the Jamestown Town Hall, 93 Narragansett Avenue, Jamestown, Rhode Island.

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Wayne Banks called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present:

Wayne Banks, Chairman
Michael Junge, Vice-Chairman
Dan Wurzbacher, Commissioner
Eric Lexow, Commissioner

Absent:

Jessica McCarthy, Commissioner
Sue Romano, Commissioner

Also in Attendance:

Edward Mello, Executive Director
Steven Bois, Harbormaster
Joan Rich, Harbor Clerk
Randall White, Town Council Liaison
Bob Laman, Conservation Commission Liaison
Benjamin Goetsch, CRMC Aquaculture Coordinator

II. Public Comment on Preliminary Determination Applications for seasonal kelp farms off Dutch Island, led by Benjamin Goetsch of CRMC

Benjamin Goetsch began his presentation by stating the public comment on a preliminary determination of any aquaculture permit is a prerequisite before the issuance of permits. These meetings allow applicants to present their proposal, are informational, and the public can ask questions of the applicants. The two applications under consideration today are for the harvesting of sugar kelp, which is an emerging industry in Rhode Island. There are currently only two other kelp farms in Rhode Island that are dedicated solely to the production of kelp, one in the Great Salt Pond in Block Island and one in the Harbor of Refuge in Narragansett. The

kelp farms are seasonal, running from November 1 to May 1, and the standard lease term from CRMC is 15 years, with 10 year renewals.

The two applicants, Spencer Bode and Gage Whilden, gave a short presentation of their proposal to each lease one area of approximately nine acres in the vicinity of Dutch Island. Mr. Bode's proposed area is east of Dutch Island and Mr. Whilden's proposed area is northeast of Dutch Island. The equipment to be used to grow the sugar kelp are two, 1,500 feet, grow lines that will sit six feet below the surface of the water. The lines will be anchored with a system of floats and mushroom mooring anchors, with a polyball float and radar reflector at each end of the grow lines. According to Mr. Bode, sugar kelp can only grow in water temperatures below 55 degrees, so the kelp would be harvested and all equipment removed prior to May 1, and would not interfere with the recreational boating season.

There were several questions from the public in attendance regarding the hours boats would be operating to service the kelp farms, how the lines and equipment would be placed within the proposed lease spaces and what the equipment would look like, impact of the farms on other species, specifically mussel beds surrounding Dutch Island, the viability of sugar kelp farming, business plans of the applicants, and questions regarding the lease terms and what happens to the leases if the sites are abandoned. A representative of New England Backcountry Hunters and Anglers distributed a handout to Harbor Commission members prior to the presentation outlining their objections to the proposed leases. Much discussion ensued.

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

A. Wednesday, March 8, 2023

Chairman Banks noted that on Page 4, Paragraph 3 of the minutes of March 8, 2023, a speaker was listed as Ted "Wallace" and his last name is "Walls", and the misspelling was repeated again in the paragraph. Chairman Banks moved to accept the minutes with those corrections and Commissioner Wurzbacher seconded. So voted: 4 ayes, 0 nay.

VI. Open Forum

A. Scheduled Requests to Address

There were no scheduled requests to address.

B. Non-Scheduled Requests to Address

There were no non-scheduled requests to address.

V. Executive Director's Report – E. Mello

Executive Director Mello stated that the Executive Director position has been advertised and applications have been coming in. The application period closes April 17, and Chairman Banks and Mark Campbell, the former harbormaster, will assist in reviewing the candidates. Mr. Mello hopes to schedule the review process early next week.

VI. Harbormaster's Report – S. Bois

Harbormaster Bois stated that the docks at East and West Ferry are being repaired and those repairs are almost complete, then they will go in the water. He will be removing the shrink wrap from the boats the end of this week, painting the hulls, and having the electronics evaluated for functionality. He has hired two Assistant Harbormasters, Matt Swistak and Larry Goss, and has met with them to go over their duties and responsibilities.

Harbormaster Bois also proposed a schedule for updating the Comprehensive Harbor Management Plan and the Harbor Management Ordinance. Both plans must be updated every five years and expired in February, and he has requested a one year extension from CRMC, which has been verbally granted. Some discussion ensued.

VII. Year-to-Date Financial Report – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Executive Director Mello stated that the 3rd quarter financial report was included in the meeting packet. There was some discussion.

VIII. Sub-Committee Reports

A. Budget – E. Lexow – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Commissioner Lexow had nothing to report.

B. Facilities – D. Wurzbacher & W. Banks – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Chairman Banks and Commissioner Wurzbacher had nothing to report.

C. Mooring Implementation – W. Banks – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Chairman Banks had nothing to Report

D. Gould Island Restoration – W. Banks – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Chairman Banks turned discussion over to Harbormaster Bois, who stated that he is meeting with Save the Bay next week and is going to get in touch with the Executive Director of the Rose Island Lighthouse and the DEM Manager on Prudence Island to set up site visits.

Vice-Chairman Junge suggested that the Commissioners review the sub-committee assignments as there are new members and a vacancy on the Harbor Commission.

IX. Liaison Reports

A. Conservation Commission – B. Laman – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Commissioner Laman stated that the Conservation Commission is in favor of the kelp farm proposals presented earlier.

B. Town Council – R. White – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Councilor White had nothing to report.

X. Old Business

A. Mooring/Permit Fees of Narragansett Bay Communities – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Chairman Banks stated that after looking at the rates, Jamestown's are not that much lower than other communities with the exception of Allen Harbor in North Kingstown, but that he could see that the rates could be increased, given the capital planning and new personnel that are being hired. There was some discussion.

Chairman Banks stated he had expected to see Ft. Getty Pier/piling survey on the agenda for this meeting, along with how to restore/recover some of the lost touch and go space at East Ferry. Executive Director Mello stated that he will have the Ft. Getty survey ready for the May meeting for a determination if the Harbor Commission wants to continue to pursue funding of that project. Both items will be on the agenda for the May meeting.

XI. Correspondence

A. DEM Pumpout Grant Awards – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Chairman Banks moved to accept the correspondence and Vice Chairman Junge seconded. So voted: 4 aye, 0 nay.

XII. New Business

There was no new business.

XIII. Open Forum – Continued (If necessary) – Review, discussion, and/or potential action and/or vote

Vice-Chairman Junge asked the harbormaster about the current pumpouts and the commissioning of them so there is not the same problem that occurred last year.


Joseph Pinheiro of Beacon Avenue offered to assist the Harbor Commission with the Comprehensive Harbor Management Plan as far as commercial fishing/aquaculture is concerned.

Bob Packer of Pennsylvania Avenue questioned when the Harbormaster and his assistants will be on the water so he knows when he can call for assistance, if necessary. He also had some observations that he has made at East Ferry regarding cleanliness of the docks and fishermen cleaning their fish on the docks; the fact that the 30 minute limit at the touch and go docks doesn't give transient boaters much time to go into town and shop or get something to eat; and suggested the installation of signs at the touch and go docks directing people to the public bathrooms, a dumpster for trash, and the fact there is no water available at the end of the dock. Some discussion ensued.

XIV. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chairman Banks moved to adjourn and Vice-Chairman Junge seconded. So voted: 4 aye, 0 nay.

Attest,



Joan Rich, Harbor Clerk