

Danvers River Committee
Thursday March 17, 2022
Meeting Minutes

The Danvers River Committee held a public meeting on Thursday March 17, 2022 at the Endicott Park Visitors Center (Conference Room) at 6:00pm.

Member(s) present: Dan DeLorenzo, Chair
Matthew Byrne, Vice Chair
Bill Fouhey
Louie George
Robert Hemeon
Tom Perry

Member(s) absent: Michael McCarthy
Bob Moore
Gardner Trask, Selectman Liaison

Staff Present: Christopher Sanborn, Director of Natural Resources
Carolann Powers, Secretary

Media Present: None

Other:

Dan DeLorenzo called the meeting called to order at 6:05 pm.

Secretary's Report:

The committee was asked to accept the minutes of the meeting the February 17,2022 meeting.

Motion: Made by Matt Byrne, seconded by Louie George to accept the minutes of the February 17, 2022; All in favor: 6:0.

New Business:

Chris Sanborn updated the committee regarding waterfront business. He noted that the resident at 41Choate Ave has submitted a Notice of Intent to the Planning Department to put in a pier that extends into the Porter River. Georgia Pendergast, Staff Planner/Conservation Agent, is the Planning Department contact for this project. The South Essex Sewerage District has commented on this proposed project and will get back to Town Engineer regarding the plan. Once they provide that information Chris Sanborn

will then comment on the plans. He noted there are some easement issues regarding sewer that they are working on in addition to some concerns with neighbors; more information to come on that shortly. Chris stated that the town has been receiving more and more pier project requests over the past few years. This has raised concerns and Chris has brought this to the attention of his managers so that the town can implement limits and controls to what is allowed, which will allow all applications to be more fairly reviewed. Chris said it is important that piers do not impede navigation and recreational use of the waterways. He told the committee that the Army Corp of Engineers and the DEP are involved with this application process.

Matt Byrne asked about some of the existing floats on the dock/pier that is currently at 41 Choate Ave, noting it already appears to be big so how much bigger are they proposing it be? Chris said what is there is approximately a third of what is proposed. The resident's hope is to have a deep water slip for a vessel.

Bill Fouhey expressed concerns about this project and how it may impede navigation at a narrow part of the river. He asked where this application was submitted to, as he reminded the committee that they had formerly requested other boards and committees to notify them of such applications to keep them informed. Chris S. said these plans were submitted to the Planning Department at town hall and assured them that he is informed of all applications etc....that have relevance to the River/Harbor, and he has input on these applications/projects prior to them moving on to boards/committees/commissions such as the Conservation Commission.

Louie G. asked how far out into the river one's pier can go. Chris said the DEP & Con Comm require a certain depth of water under the floats, but said it is hard in the river because of depth changes, especially depending on where we are in the dredging process. Chris noted that Danvers is a unique community in this regard as we are a tidal river and deal with mud and other issues.

Dan DeLorenzo asked if there were existing regulations for these type projects. Chris said they do have regulations but because Danvers is unique being so tidal it is hard, which may make it more of a matter of opinion in some cases. Chris said he doesn't want to be the sole opinion and suggests creating a task force to address and manage these issues and projects moving forward, as this type of project seems to be a trend in the direction we are heading.

Bill F. asked if the Coast Guard has guidelines in this process. Chris S. said they defer to Army Corp of Engineers, but he noted all involved agencies have different interests and regulations related to those interests.

Chris said when an applicant submits a Notice of Intent, they often submit looking for more hoping to get less. The initial plans are not always what will be approved.

Bob Hemeon asked how long ago the existing floats at that 41 Choate Ace. have been there. Chris S. at least 20 years but to his knowledge some are unlicensed. Chris said he will keep the committee posted on status of this project

Chris informed the group that the Popes Landing docks are now moved back into place, and the 19' patrol boat is in the water and in service.

Chris noted that his staff are performing some repairs to the doors on 25' patrol boat. The repairs need to be done due to oxidating of the aluminum.

Chris said that Waterways Permit Renewals for the upcoming boating season were sent out on March 1st with a due date of 4/30th. Waterways Permit Renewals were emailed to boaters and hard copies were traditionally mailed to those who do not have access to email. He noted 300 permit applications have been submitted/returned to date which is a great start.

Chris mentioned there was a glitch with the initial permit renewal system that has since been corrected.

Dan D. asked about the demand for mooring and slips and what the waitlist looked like. Chris said there are 36 people on waitlist for town marina, the highest number in ten years; and 20 people on the waitlist for moorings. He stated the waterfront is doing well. He said it will be interesting to see how higher gas prices affect boating activity. He said his department is anticipating they may see more people gathering on the docks instead of travelling out on their boats.

Chris spoke to the committee regarding the upcoming budget and warrant articles. He said the Selectboard reviewed the budget last week and to his knowledge there was no questions. The budget should be moving on to Fin. Comm. for the next step in budget process.

Chris reminded the group that in regard to the 2023 Budget there are two warrant articles that were submitted for consideration at the Annual Town Meeting in May. One for Maintenance Dredging for the annual request which this year was increased from a requested \$20k to a requested \$25k. This was increased as we are getting very close to starting next dredging process. The second warrant article or capital expense requested is for \$45k for new docks for the Crane River Marina to replace B Dock. It was noted that the last dock to be replaced in 2017 was at a cost of \$28k but is now estimated at \$45K. He reminded the committee that the Harbormaster's Department generates over \$90K in revenue from the town marina each year which is put back into marina for such expenses, so those funds can assist with these expenses.

Chris informed the group that the Town of Danvers has been awarded \$125K earmark in the state budget, secured by State Representative Sally Kearns, for repairs and improvement projects at Sandy Beach. Chris said he is working with the town to identify and prioritize what needs to be done at Sandy Beach. He stated it currently needs a lot of

work, far more than the \$125k will cover but said this money will be very helpful in getting started and hopefully it will generate interest in continuing to make Sandy Beach a more desirable area. He noted that the Sandy Beach property is in rough shape and needs attention. Some of what needs to be addressed can be addressed by DPW/maintenance along with his staff, but there are many matters of concern that will require more intense attention.

Chris said he would like to see a potential rebranding of Sandy Beach and said he presented this idea to the Recreation Department and told them he will reach out to his peers at the Department of Fishing and Boating Access, specifically Doug Cameron, to see if they want to partner with the town to help fund some access projects such as kayak storage or kayak launch at this location.

Louie G. asked what the chances are that we will actually get these earmarked funds from the state. Chris said they are confident.

Louie agreed that Sandy Beach and the surrounding area does need improvement. Tom P. asked if these repairs include the plot of land next to Sandy Beach as well. Chris S. said it may.

Dan D. asked if they have considered improving the bath house. Chris said he was not sure as it would require staffing to manage the facilities while park is open. Chris said drainage is a priority that needs to be addressed at Sandy Beach as well as picnic table pavilion; it is currently in a state of disrepair and needs to be removed.

Chris said that passive recreation vs active recreation needs to be explored moving forward for the Sandy Beach location.

Bob H. said that kayak storage and/or rental at this location could be revenue generating which could be beneficial. Chris told the committee that the Recreation Department recently had a vendor reach out them regarding a kayak vault. There is an initial upfront cost to buying into the Kayak Vaults initially but eventually could become revenue generating.

Bill F. asked about the possibility of having playground instructors located again at the Sandy Beach playgrounds. Chris S. said no, not at this time. With the relatively new Christian's Law youth programs that are located where there is a body of water such as a lake, pond, or ocean etc....you are required to have certified lifeguards on duty which may make it prohibitive.

Old Business:

Harbormaster Training: Chris S. updated the committee on the status of the Harbormaster/Police Training that his staff is required to complete under the new Police Reform Act. Josh Barrett is in his 3rd week of Bridge Academy Training. Chris thanked

Chief Lovell for allowing use of a cruiser for the Emergency Vehicle Operation Course (EVOC) component of the academy.

Chris told the committee that there was a new determination regarding the Bridge Academy Training as it pertains to Harbormaster. Those not directly affiliated with a law enforcement agency may be except from POST certification. Because Danvers Harbormaster Staff operate under the DLUCS they now have an option for those existing employees who may opt not to attend Bridge Academy training to stay on as Assistant Harbormasters without Special Police powers. These employees will be differentiated from those employees that go to Bridge Academy Training; how they will be differentiated is yet to be determined but perhaps it would be by uniform and pay grade. Chris noted that for future employees he would seek candidates with these specialized police training. As of July 1st there will be two tiers of staff-based training.

Dan D. asked if any committee members or guests in attendance had anything they'd like to discuss.

Mr. Bradstreet was in attendance and asked if the allocated money the town had to survey public access to the river had been spent and the study performed, at Bradstreet Ave. in particular. Chris S. said yes, the money had been spent to the survey and yes Bradstreet Ave. was accepted by the town as a town way and a public access way to the river. Chris noted that Bradstreet Ave. and Mead St. were accepted as roadways to the water and posted as public access. The other locations are still under review regarding their public access. Chris referred Mr. Bradstreet to Stephen King, town of Danvers, Engineering Department for a list and map of all streets up to be accepted as public ways.

Motion: Motion made by Bill Fouhey, seconded by Louie George, to adjourn the meeting of March 17, 2022. All in favor: 6 :0

cc: Steve Bartha, Town Manager
David Mountain, Recreation Director