

**Danvers River Committee
Thursday August 18, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

The Danvers River Committee held a public meeting on Thursday August 18, 2022, at the Endicott Park Visitors Center (Conference Room) at 6:00pm.

Member(s) present: Matthew Byrne, Chair
Dan DeLorenzo
William Ciesinski
Andrea Daley
Bill Fouhey
Louie George
Michael McCarthy
Bob Moore
Tom Perry
Gardner Trask, Selectman Liaison

Member(s) absent: Robert Hemeon

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

Media Present: None

Matt Byrne called meeting called to order at 6:03pm.

Secretary's Report:

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

Motion: Made by Bill Fouhey, seconded by Dan DeLorenzo to accept the minutes of the August 18, 2022; All in favor: 8:0.

New Business:

Chris Sanborn updated the committee on the status of the waterway permits. To date, they've issued 600 Waterways Permits, 42 Tender Permits, 22 Season Ramp Permits, 95 Mooring Permits and 65 Dockage Permits. Additionally, there are 35 people on the marina wait list and 26 on the mooring wait list. They are currently chasing 2 people allowing them 14 days to pay their fee or they will be issued a \$30 fee. As stated at previous meetings, Deputy Harbormaster Dave Arathuzik has been working to assign mooring space from the wait list and cleaning that list up.

Chris noted on 8/4/22 there was a distress call for a person in the water off of Liberty Marina. Bystanders were able to pull them to safety prior to emergency services arriving and they were

transported to be evaluated at the hospital. The victim was on a small inflatable, went overboard and was clinging to a throwable device. He is fine and has returned to boating.

It was noted that on 8/7/22 a microburst caused a barge off of Liberty Marina to break partially lose and swing around damaging other boats

Chris also stated that on 8/14/22 there was an accident at DPYC, it was a serious incident where a passenger on a boat was helping them dock and had their head injured between the boat and the piling. They were transported to hospital.

Mike C. commented that Harbormaster's response time is excellent.

Louie G. made mention to a recent high profile drowning on Martha's Vineyard which occurred when the victim was jumping off a bridge, he asked if we as a town had any signage posted on our bridges to regulate or prohibit jumping. Chris S. said Andrea Daly had also inquired about this, but he had not yet connected with the Chief of Police to see if they want to consider posting signage. He noted there is no regulation or bylaw currently prohibiting this.

Chris reminded the group that DPYC, the Town Marina & Popes Landing have throwable devices and life rings on their docks.

Andrea Daly had concerns about trash, particularly in the neighborhood near Wright's Beach. She feels the Carry In/Carry Out Policy is not working and is wondering if the town can reconsider that policy. Chris said we can put it on the agenda for next month's meeting. The committee agreed it is worth discussing at next meeting but feel this would require a town-wide policy shift.

Chris S. said if the town was to put a barrel in one location and not others it could create problems.

Gardner T. said the town has a strict policy regarding Carry In/ Carry Out but said perhaps the town can reinvestigate.

Old Business:

Chris Sanborn provided a brief update on docks and piers and where the town is in the review process with Urban Harbors Institute (UHI), which is associated with UMASS Boston. Their mission is to provide policy, planning, scientific, and management expertise to coastal/harbor communities. They will be developing baseline conditions for docks and piers (number of docks & piers, length of the structures, locations and license #'s) in the town of Danvers. They have assigned a supervised graduate student to this project, and they have begun to gather baseline data and will provide an update in a few weeks. Chris S. they will continue to provide updates as they come in. The Grad student hourly pay of \$25 hour for 12 weeks will be paid by the town. Chris noted the town still has not ratified a contact with UHI, but despite that they have started working on the back end of the Danvers project.

Mike C. asked if this project includes both Residential & Commercial docks and piers. Chris said yes for now but moving forward the plan will focus on residential.

Matt B. asked if this information will be going into the Town GIS mapping system. Chris said the hope is yes.

There was a brief discussion on Waterway Fees for the 2023 season. Chris S. reminded the committee that they should be prepared to have a recommendation for fee changes at our September and or October meetings.

Matt B asked if Chris was able to obtain any useful info from other communities re: their fees. Chris said no as it the fees in each community are not comparable, it is like comparing apples to oranges.

Louie G. asked how much revenue is generated by lates fees each year. Chris said \$1000-\$2500 a year is generated, the majority of these being violations, as violations fall into this GL code. Louie G. asked if we could increase the late fee.

Bill F. asked why the Dockage Fee does not go toward dredging. Chris S. the only fee approved to go directly into the dredging fund is the Waterways Fee. The dockage fee is specific to only those boaters at the Town Marina. Their Dock Fees help support repairs at the town marina. Chris noted that Bill may be thinking of an Enterprise Fund or Revolving Fund where all harbor related fees would go. Chris said he can talk with Rodney Conley, Town Finance, to see what direction they want to go in.

Mike C. asked if it would be possible to ask all boaters and others to make a tax -free donation to the Dredging Fund when they are paying their Waterways Fee or Excise Tax. Chris said he can inquire about that. Mike said putting a blurb in the Waterway Fee Application/renewal asking if they would like to make a tax-free donation to the dredging fund may be a good way to reach people. The committee liked the idea.

Louie G. asked about the rate of Ramp Fees at Pope's Landing, noting they are not much different from what they were in the 80's. Chris noted his inquiry but reminded the committee that these fees are set/regulated by the state and noted regardless they are not a huge source of income.

Dan D. noted the Waterways Fee hasn't been increased in years, noting he felt if we increase it gradually it could help with the dredging fund. Matt B., Louie G., Mike C., and Mike M. agreed with Dan that we should consider increasing the fee.

Chris asked the committee if they thought increasing the fee would negatively affect local marinas, would they lose boaters to surrounding communities. The committee felt only if a large jump in the fee, if a small incremental increase in the fee annually they felt it would be ok. The committee said if stated clearly why the increase and what the money is going to then most boaters will likely understand. Matt B., Louie G., Mike C., and Mike M agreed w/Dan that we should increase the fee. Chris will put together some numbers for next month's meeting to see what those increases may look like.

Andrea Daley informed the group that she received phone calls from residents in the Condos near John George Park who are concerned that each time the town dredges it causes them to lose soil from their property. She told them it is their land, and they would need to manage that. Chris said yes, they would be on their own regarding managing any erosion on that property. Chris said as far as the town dredging project causing the erosion on their property, it more likely due to tidal hydrology. Gardner Trask reminded the committee that the town dredges every 20 years. Bill F. reminded the group that the condo association at one time was interested in piggybacking onto the town's projects for revetment in that area, but to his knowledge they have not pursued it.

At the July River Committee Meeting, Chris Sanborn received a report from Matt Byrne of a possible sewage outfall issue on Mead St. ultimately making its way into the Porter River. Chris S. had investigated it with the Town's Engineering Office and at that time they were unaware of a problem but would investigate further. Chris S. will continue to investigate and provide a follow-up at the next meeting as he has not been able to connect with Engineering Dept. further regarding this to date.

Louie G. asked about the water quality at Sandy Beach he wanted to know if the sign posting its closing was a permanent closure sign or has there continually been an issue Chris said there has been an ongoing issue. Matt B. asked if they would sample the water quality at other locations in addition to Sandy Beach. Chris said to date they haven't, but he recently had a conversation with Aaron Henry, Director of Land Use and Community Services, about this and they will test in multiple locations. Bill Bradstreet asked if it's not too costly, can we do at multiple locations during different tides to determine a pattern or source of the contamination. Dan D. noted he also saw a similar closing sign in Beverly at a beach location, appears to be an issue in other communities as well.

Chris Sanborn followed up an idea he presented at the July meeting of offering a winter boat storage area in the back parking lot of Pope's Landing to offset some of the future costs of dredging. Chris said it is estimated the town could generate up to \$50k annually in revenue with minimum overhead; but also told the committee that he wanted to be sensitive to taking customers away from our private marinas in town. Unfortunately, this will not be an option as the State Land Management Agreement will not allow storage on their sites. We cannot store anything in this location for more than 18 hours. In addition, they had liability concerns. Bill F. said they do this type of storage at Winter Island in Salem. Chris was surprised to hear that and will reach out to them to see if their Land management Agreement is written differently than ours to allow that usage.

Matt B. asked what benefits the town receives from this Land Use Management Agreement, if the town already owns the property, why the agreement, what is the benefit? Chris said they help to fund improvement projects.

Bill B. said he noticed a lot of store boats on their own property and was curious about this allowance. Chris said this allowance is not related to his department. Matt B. said he believes there are boat storage regulations in town.

Motion: Motion made by Bill Fouhey, seconded by Louie George, to adjourn the meeting of August 18, 2022. All in favor: 9:0

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