

Harbor Management and Improvement Committee

Minutes of Meeting
January 11, 2024 @ 4:00 p.m.

Attending: Nick Carter, Chair; David Reiley; Al Hutchins; Ellery Brown; Maynard Bray; Mike Sherman; Jon Wilson; David Tarr; Bill Mayher; Matt Dallett, Secretary

The meeting was called to order, and the minutes of the meeting held on December 7, 2023, were approved.

Nick noted that the role of the Committee as proposed in the draft Comprehensive Plan needs to be refined with the members developing a system and criteria to assess the needs of the Town's landings. There was a general discussion in which it was agreed that one or two Committee members should take responsibility for assessing each landing and that each meeting address one or two landings in depth.

David Tarr recounted the experience of the Shellfish Committee, focusing on the work done at the Gaffney Boulevard landing on Flye point. He and David Reiley briefly discussed the ownership, access, and other features of that landing and answered questions about it. It was agreed that this landing be the initial subject of Committee assessment with Nick and David Tarr being responsible, and various criteria were suggested.

Al then led a discussion of the proposed dinghy dock at Naskeag Point. There were comments and suggestions made about the dock's orientation. It was generally agreed that it extend southeast from the pier far enough to avoid blocking launching from the existing ramp, then angle eastward, and that it have a perpendicular float at the eastward end. Larger boats would be able to tie up on the end float during higher tides. In response to a question from Jon, Al opined that no permit would be needed for the dock as it would be a seasonal structure. After further discussion of the siting of the new dock, Al noted that he would be looking to the Committee members for assistance with construction decisions. It was arranged that interested members would meet at low tide, 2:30 p.m., on Monday, January 22, to view the site. There followed further questions about the dock's construction and discussion of solutions.

Al and the Committee members who fish from Naskeag Harbor then discussed the existing concrete launching ramp, reiterating that it is too high for use at lower tides. Al said that he would not be able to undertake the reconstruction due to the volume of damage in the area from the recent storm. Following discussion, David Reiley undertook to arrange for the work.

David Reiley noted the need for maintenance of landing infrastructure such as the proposed dinghy dock. It was generally agreed that this is the responsibility of the Town's public works function.

Nick then raised the topics of usage and management of the new dinghy dock, and there was extended, general discussion. It was agreed that commercial users – who were estimated to represent approximately 10 skiffs -- should have priority of use with painted lines and signage indicating the part of the dock restricted to them. Skiffs using the dock should have a maximum length of about 16'. Al estimated that the dock would have room for several dozen skiffs in total; however, it was suggested that tie-ups be prohibited on the south side of the dock in order to prevent bigger boats from using it, which may reduce the number of users.

It was the view of the fishermen who use Naskeag Harbor that any necessary enforcement could be managed by gentle persuasion. Matt asked whether the Town should have a specific ordinance backing up the dock rules in case any more formal action was needed. David Reiley responded that he did not think that was necessary but that he would consider it.

There followed a brief discussion of whether to restrict usage to boats bearing a sticker indicating that the owner had paid excise tax to the Town. Recognizing the difficulty of enforcing that and the uneven compliance with the excise tax requirement generally, and acknowledging that other towns on the Peninsula do not prioritize marine excise tax collection, it was agreed that the new dock would be open to all.

Nick asked for suggestions for signage to be posted by the dock.

The next Committee meeting was set for 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 8. Then, there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m..

Respectfully submitted,

Matt Dallett, Secretary