

KEYPORT HARBOR COMMISSION
Meeting Minutes
April 8, 2024

Meeting called to order 7:02pm

Attendance: Jack Straub, Chairman (JS)
Greg Davis, Vice Chairman (GD)
Nancy Smalling, Secretary (NS)
Al Litwak (AL)
Joe Merla (JM)
Council Member Melissa Vecchio (CMV)
Council Member Ron Peperoni (CRP)

JS brought members up to date regarding his research into past dredging issues involving the Harbor Commission. He stated he could find no evidence in past minutes that Monmouth County had performed dredging operations at the Municipal Boat Ramp. NS stated that at one time Monmouth County had been contacted for a price to use their long arm excavator, but then decided not to loan the equipment to Keyport.

[According to Harbor Commission minutes from March 2021, Council Member Victoria Pacheco confirmed that a shared services request was placed for Monmouth County's long arm excavator to clean the ramp the last week of March 2021. At the April 2021 Harbor Commission meeting Council Member Kathleen McNamara informed the Commission that according to Borough Administrator Jay Delaney, Monmouth County stated their equipment was too heavy, so he went back to a previous vendor, Ken's Marine, to arrange cleaning.]

Ken's Marine was in the process of what NS described as "passive cleaning" when the NJDEP issued a violation notice on May 18, 2021. As a result of the violation, on June 15, 2021 the Keyport Borough Council passed Resolution R157-21, authorizing award of a contract to CME Associates for permitting and related engineering services for dredging of the Municipal Boat Ramp.

On July 29, 2022 NJDEP issued a permit authorizing 75 cubic yards of new dredging in association with Keyport Borough municipal boat ramp on Block 94, Lot 1. The permit expiration date is July 28, 2027.

JS informed members that based on his most recent meeting with BA Humphrey, potential contractors who had been contacted had not responded to a request to come out to look at the site. He then asked the BA if Harbor Commission members were able to learn of any other potential operators who might be able to perform the dredging, if those could be forwarded to her, to which she agreed.

JS has asked Finance for a monthly printout from the new kiosk at the boat ramp during the preseason, they have agreed and will provide a weekly printout once the summer season starts.

Floating dock for the fishing pier is awaiting installation, JS was informed by DPW that they are waiting for someone to tow the floating dock from the ramp to the fishing pier.

Waterfront Concession agreements were sent to HC from CMV and forwarded to members. NS questioned five year length, it was explained that it is an annual lease with possible extensions up to five years.

The notice for the Snapper Contest on the KBBC Events poster is incorrect, it lists the contest as 9am to 11am, contest ends at 12pm with awards going to 1pm. The posters may have already been printed, but fortunately the start time is correct. All paperwork submitted to the Borough lists a 1pm end time. The Snapper Contest on September 7 is the same date as the makeup date for the St Patrick's Parade, however the contest should be finished by 1pm on the waterfront when the parade is just starting on Maple Place. There may be some parking issues in the morning, we will encourage Snapper Contest participants to arrive early.

JS mentioned KBBC may be interested in partnering with a fishing contest on the day of the KBBC Light the Bay event on August 8. The Fishing Flea Market will be holding a fishing contest in Raritan Bay, KBBC is investigating the possibility of having the contest boats also participate in Light the Bay.

JS is arranging for new kiosk signs, they will have the Borough Ordinance added.

NS stated that DPW has a three-sided glass display case, HC has previously asked for it to be switched out with the current case near the payment kiosk. JS will try to find more information.

CMV asked about other signage in the Beach Park area and the possibility of NPP involvement. JS stated way finding is identified in the 2024 NPP plan as a possibility, if funds are available after the sidewalk costs are determined.

AL mentioned recent high tides have resulted in additional debris from Aeromarine washing up at Cedar Street Park. GD stated he was at Cedar Street Park yesterday and it was much cleaner than usual, JM said the Borough had recently cleaned. AL stated when debris washes out into the harbor it is HC responsibility to make sure harbor is safe for navigation.

AL passed along a message from Mike Lane, who was not able to attend the meeting. Mr. Lane wanted to remind the Harbor Commission that Brown's Point Marina should not be parking trailers with boats on them on the property from Labor Day to Memorial Day. It has resulted in customers parking cars on the street, which limits parking for residents and businesses.

Public Comment, John Merla, 34 Broad Street:

About 30 years ago the Borough had some dredging done by the boat ramp, a Middletown company used an oversized floating dock with a crane for the operation. John also mentioned debris washing up on the boat ramp recently had not been cleaned for five days. Joe Merla said it used to be cleaned weekly, should be cleaned all the time. NS said it should be on the DPW list.

NS mentioned there had been a HC request to DPW to take up the ADA compliant mat which leads to the beach at Cedar Street Park. It was supposed to be removed for the winter and stored at DPW, they never took it up and is now covered in sand.

CMV asked if everyone was OK with the yoga on the waterfront. JS said it is a great service for residents, his only concern was the inconsistency on fees that are charged for events on Borough property.

JS concluded the meeting with an item that was recently featured at the Keyport Historical Society in a display on the history of Aeromarine:

“January 1934 (90 years ago) - Upperco offers to lease the Aeromarine to the Borough of Keyport ...The lease was approved by the Borough, but Upperco never signed the document as the result of a political dispute.”

Meeting adjourned 8:10pm.