

PORTS AND HARBOR COMMISSION
Minutes for Regular Meeting
February 7, 2012

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Bruce Painter called the regular meeting of the Ports and Harbor Commissioner to order at 7:04 p.m. in the Valdez City Council Chambers.

II. ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Bruce Painter, Laura Meadors, Bernie Culbertson, Mark Swanson, Jeff Johnson and Steve Cotter.

Colleen Stephens was absent and excused.

Also present: Diane Kinney, Ports & Harbor Director; Steve Waller, Harbormaster; Karen Feero, Recording Secretary.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 21, 2011

The minutes for the December 21, 2011 meeting were approved as presented.

IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

There was no business from the floor.

V. STAFF REPORTS

Steve Waller, Harbormaster reported the harbor staff has kept up with the snow removal during the recent event. Mr. Waller noted the ice in the harbor has caused damage to the lift dock. A piling at the end of the dock where the harbor skiffs are tied was lifted out by the ice. Mr. Waller informed the commission a vessel stored in dry dock fell over due to the snow load and damaged the vessel that was being stored next to it. Mr. Waller reported that B&B Contractors are working on the J-K Dock Electrical Project and anticipated the project being completed within the next two weeks. The restroom renovation is ongoing and the final walk through is scheduled for February 16th.

Diane Kinney, Port Director reported the airport renovation project is ongoing. The contractor will be back within the next two weeks to finish up the areas that need to be corrected. The chairs will be ordered after the current project is completed.

Ms. Kinney reported that city council did not support the proposed launch ramp dock at the Small Boat Harbor. The council felt the cost of \$1,195,340 was too high for the project. Ms. Kinney said that she and the City Manager will be

meeting with the Corps of Engineers later this month to discuss the Harbor Expansion Project and they will discuss with them the feasibility of adding launch ramps in the new harbor design.

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Discussion Item: Port Tariff & Fees Review

Ms. Kinney said she added in the 3%/year rate increase for the next 3 years as discussed at the last meeting. The next scheduled 5 year extension for the cell site leases is in 2014 and at that time the city appraiser will re-evaluate the rates. Ms. Kinney suggested rewording the draft resolution to state \$750 per month for 2012 and \$772.50 per month for 2013, then the commission could review the rate again for 2014.

Ms Kinney also changed the dockage rate for smaller vessels on the tariff as suggested at the last meeting. The suggested rate was \$63 per 24 hours for vessels 0-60 feet. Ms. Kinney said she did not have a rate increase recommendation at this time due to the economy and comparisons with other ports.

Commissioner Culbertson confirmed that the majority of the larger fishing vessels have with contracts with the canneries and they pay for dockage.

Mr. Waller asked if the water fee at the Kelsey Dock will be changed since there is no water fee at the harbor.

Ms. Kinney explained there is a water hook up fee of \$45 and an additional cost of \$3.00 per thousand gallons for water and she did not recommend changing this fee.

Commissioner Cotter asked how the public is notified of the tariff changes for smaller vessels at the Kelsey Dock.

Ms. Kinney responded that the harbor staff will direct the smaller vessels to the Kelsey Dock if there is limited space at the Small Boat Harbor. The Port staff will inform the fishermen of the cost as they come in.

Ms. Kinney said she would make the change to the tariff for the smaller vessel dockage cost.

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Discussion Item: Harbor Seawall Dock Replacement

Commissioner Meadors questioned whether this project will interrupt the Tour Dock functions this summer.

Mr. Waller responded that there should be no interruption during this project.

Commissioner Swanson asked if there are concerns with the existing dock being made of concrete and the new dock being made of wood material for the floats. Commissioner Swanson was also concerned that the material used will not change the type of vessels that is able to tie up at the dock.

Mr. Waller verified that the existing dock is made of concrete with a change to the replacement being made out of wood. Mr. Waller said that the change in material will not change the type of vessels that tie up to the dock.

Commissioner Culbertson asked if Mr. Waller knew what type of wood material is being used for the dock. Commissioner Culbertson mentioned he has seen and used recycled material and he wanted to know if the contractors reviewed this type of material.

Mr. Waller commented that he understood the contractors would be using wood and not recycled material so it matches the other new docks that have been installed.

Commissioner Cotter asked if the 152 foot dock section on the drawing is the portion being replaced. Mr. Waller confirmed that it was.

Ms. Kinney asked the commission to review the replacement plans for any concerns.

Mr. Waller commented he was initially concerned with the contractor's calculations of weight on the dock. He mentioned the contractors were using only the snow weight and not the equipment weight, so the calculations have been corrected.

Commissioner Painter asked if there was a timeline for the project.

Ms. Kinney responded that the engineer has to complete the final design then the project would be put out to bid. Ms. Kinney said if the design is not completed soon the project will start this fall.

B. Discussion Item: Use of the Fishermen's Dock Storage Area

Commissioner Culbertson said that he had been asked to have this topic on the agenda. Commissioner Culbertson said this area is where the fishermen repair nets and when the cranes are being used this area can get congested with traffic so an alternative work area is needed for net repair.

Ms. Kinney commented that she received a call from another fisherman with the same concerns.

Commissioner Swanson asked if this area was managed by the harbor office.

Mr. Waller responded that the harbor office does manage the area and he suggested signage to help with the congestion. Mr. Waller mentioned the harbor staff will remind Silver Bay Seafoods to use their company's area for business vehicles which will help with the Fishermen's Dock area.

Commissioner Culbertson mentioned that he was given permission to use the harbor's parking lot across from Radio Shack to mend his nets a few years ago. Commissioner Culbertson asked if the harbor could help find an alternative area similar to this space for net repair.

Ms. Kinney said the city wanted to support the fishing industry. She mentioned the community strategic planning meetings and said this could be a great opportunity for the Ports & Harbor Commission to forward ideas to the planning cells that would be beneficial to the fishing industry and the old Sea Otter RV Park area.

Commissioner Cotter agreed that Sea Otter would be a perfect area for the fishermen, but in the meantime the city needs to find an alternate place for them to work.

Ms. Kinney confirmed with Commissioner Culbertson that the early part of the fishing season is the time needed for additional work areas.

Mr. Waller agreed the area across from Radio Shack is a prime location for the fishermen to work on their nets.

Ms. Kinney said the area across from Radio Shack is not that busy during the beginning of the season. The harbor staff could make a portable sign to place in this area to block it off for the fishermen to use.

Commissioner Culbertson suggested placing limits on the fishermen since the space is only to be used temporarily. Commissioner Culbertson felt these limits need to be in writing and given to the fishermen in order for the area not to be abused.

Commissioner Swanson agreed that the signage with additional information on the usage will help the public not abuse the space.

Commissioner Culbertson recommended painting a few lines similar to a fire lanes to help keep the crane and fish pump area clear at the Fishermen's Dock.

Chairman Painter asked what SERVS involvement is with the area.

Mr. Waller commented that SERVS uses the area for parking SERVS employees' vehicles and there were a few issues with the snow removal earlier in the season, but the issues have been resolved.

C. Discussion Item: Ice in the Harbor

Ms. Kinney referred to the article on ice problems in harbors that Sarah VonBargen found. Ms. Kinney asked commissioners if any of them had been in other harbors that had ice problems.

Commissioner Swanson recommended the bubbler system for the harbor.

Chairman Painter understood that Tim Lopez, the retired Harbormaster used the bubbler system many years ago and it seemed to work.

Commissioner Meadors mentioned she has seen the bubbler systems work in the Great Lakes area with a boom around the vessel.

Mr. Waller said the bubbler system does work but the electricity cost is too high.

Commissioner Swanson questioned whether the harbor had a policy on breaking up the ice in the harbor.

Mr. Waller responded that breaking the ice depends on the weather conditions. He said harbor staff will break up the ice when it is windy and the tide is right since the wind helps move the ice out of the harbor but it can be difficult to break up the ice if it has been really cold and if the tide doesn't carry it out, pieces of ice re-freeze on other pieces, making the ice thicker and harder to deal with.

Commissioner Swanson recognized each individual boat owner would be responsible for the bubbler system along with the electricity cost which could be expensive.

Commissioner Cotter questioned whether or not the harbor can prepare for the vertical uplift before it happens or does it just happen without warning.

Mr. Waller responded that the vertical uplift happens fast without warning.

Ms. Kinney spoke with Alan Sorum about the bubbler system as well. Mr. Sorum said the bubbler system works but the cost of electricity is too high.

VIII. REPORTS

A. Valdez Small Boat Harbor 2011 Year End Report

There was no discussion on this item.

B. Pioneer Field Airport Terminal Building 2011 Year End Report

Commissioner Meadors asked if the State of Alaska made a decision on the 12% concession fee.

Ms. Kinney said they had not made any decision yet.

C. Community Strategic Planning Report

Ms. Kinney and Commissioner Swanson have been attending the community strategic planning meetings and the planning cells are currently discussing objectives.

Commissioner Swanson felt the meetings have been very productive.

Ms. Kinney reported the Community Open House has been postponed and that the next meeting is for the core group, which is the council and a representative from each of the cell groups.

Commissioner Swanson mentioned the support for ports and harbor land use is active and strong with community members.

IX. INFORMATION

A. Small Boat Harbor Expansion – 2011 Federal Priorities

Ms. Kinney said that the City Manager had put together the federal priorities sheet that was included in the packet. She said she and Mr. Hozey will be meeting with the Corps of Engineers later this month. She said they should have a better idea of where we are with the project from the Corps by the next commission meeting.

B. MarineLink.com Article “Legislation Aimed at Reducing TWIC Red Tape”

C. Valdez City Council Minutes of 12/5/11 and 12/19/11

There was no discussion on these two items.

X. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Commissioner Cotter requested a discussion item on decreasing the rates for cruise ships at the next meeting. He felt it was a new idea to explore and to discuss.

Ms. Kinney said that she, Lisa VonBargen, Colleen Stephens, and Dave Peterson went to Seattle and visited the cruise industry a few years ago. They were interested in the information on the new plaza and upgrades to the dock, but were more interested in the excursions Valdez had to offer. Ms. Kinney will place this as a discussion item on the next agenda.

Commissioner Meadors expressed her thanks to the harbor staff for doing such a great job during this challenging winter.

XI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

CITY OF VALDEZ, ALASKA
PORTS AND HARBOR COMMISSION

Bruce Painter, Chairman

ATTEST:

Karen Feero, Recording Secretary