

Cove Commission meeting notes

Date- 4/1/2015 at 4:30 p.m.

Commissioners Present: Richard Friend (Chair), Christopher Pearson (Vice-Chair), Barbara Brusini, Steve Mendes, Bob Laforge, Bethany Warburton (arrived at 5:25 pm).

Commissioners Absent: Nicole Rainville and Kenneth Powell.

Others Present: Resident Sarah Lincoln of 25 Water Street.

Staff Present: Lea Anthony Hitchen, Assistant Town Planner.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion by Ms. Brusini to approve the February 4, 2015 and March 4, 2015 minutes as written. Seconded by Mr. Mendes. Approved 5-0.

Recap of the March 9th Presentation to Town Council:

The Commissioners were pleased the presentation went well and were given instructions from the Town Council to provide three areas of importance both the Council and Commission should focus on. Mr. Pearson volunteered to prepare a letter to the Town Council noting the next steps needed in order to move forward with much needed improvements to both the quality and access of the Cove. The areas of importance the Commission decided to focus on were the following: improving public access to the King Street right of way; improving public access to the Rocky Hollow right of way; and starting an exploratory phase for dredging the Town dock and boat ramp area. The three areas of focus were chosen due to not requiring much upfront costs and the Commission can begin the process of moving forward almost immediately of improving the Cove.

Preliminary Steps to a Waterfront Boardwalk:

The Commission acknowledged the planning involved is a huge task and would require a construction and operating budget for the boardwalk and the proposed marina and task management. Mr. Mendes offered the idea of having a fireworks display over the Cove during the July 4th holiday to get people down to the area as he already had someone willing to donate \$25,000 for the fireworks.

Mr. Mendes had passed the Harris Marina on a recent weekend when he ran into Dave Sandford working at the former marina. He and Mr. Sandford had a lengthy discussion about the Harris family and future plans for the shack. According to Mr. Sandford there is a hand pump well in the shack and Mrs. Harris plans to keep the shack and live in it for one week of the year. Mr. Sandford is in the process of selling the floating docks for Mrs. Harris.

House Bill 5847 – Relating to Waters & Navigation-Harbors & Harbor Lines:

The Commission discussed the bill which establishes an order of priority for persons applying for moorings, creates a fee schedule for moorings and establishes a marine safety patrol division of law enforcement. They thought the bill was completely erroneous as RIDEM staff was not aware of the bill, numerous other towns oppose the bill for good reason and all other towns along the coastline already have an established harbormaster in place.

The Commission voted unanimously to oppose House Bill 5847. VOTE: 6 - 0.

Cove Commission Membership:

Ms. Hitchen mentioned there are currently eight members on the Commission even though this is a seven member board. She noted that considering the Commission is an advisory board she felt as though it was an insignificant issue and there are three members whose term expires this July 1st so it could be temporary.

Reports:

No Harbormaster Report.

Mooring Issues – Ms. Hitchen noted that she received letters from both mooring owner Hart Kelley (#244) and Scott Leigh requesting an extension in completing an inspection of the mooring until the first opportunity in 2015. The Commissioner's accepted the letter and extended the mooring inspection.

Rights Of Ways Discussion:

Ms. Lincoln would like to see continued action on the King Street ROW; she wants actual access and never wants to be turned away as she has heard about others being turned away. The Commission suggested Ms. Lincoln document everyone who has been denied access and send a letter to the Town Council.

Commissioner's Roundtable:

Mr. Friend noted the old dinghy dock; located next to the boat ramp could use some town maintenance.

Ms. Brusini commented that she, her daughter and Mr. Blyker are ready to start the 2015 URI water testing at the town dock. Ms. Hitchen noted the Planning Department will once again be funding the program.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 6th at 4:30.

Meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.