

**East Greenwich Cove Management Commission Meeting Minutes
January 17, 2023 Meeting**

In-person, Regular Meeting

East Greenwich Town Hall Conference Room, East Greenwich, RI 02818

Start time: 5:00 pm

Committee Members Present:

Bill Weedon (Past Chair), Jane Eaton (Co-Secretary), Johann Patlak (Co-Secretary),
Ted Moulis, Jeff Stevens

Staff Present: Andy Wade (Community Services Director), Al Ranaldi (Planning Director)

1. Call to Order

- a. Bill Weeden called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

- a. The meeting minutes for December 13, 2022, were reviewed.

Motion made to approve minutes by Jeff Stevens, seconded by Ted Moulis

Ayes - Bill Weedon, Ted Moulis, Jane Eaton, Jeff Stevens, Johann Patlak (not present for the vote)

Motion passes 4-0

3. Public Comments

- a. Three East Greenwich residents were present as members of the audience. The issues that they wanted to bring forth to the attention of the committee are noted below:
 - A request to ensure that the committee is monitoring the management of and the type of activities taking place with the King's Street right-of-way (ROW); to ensure the ROW is kept open and accessible for public use. (Mr. Gelineau / Kings Street)
 - A suggestion to improve and/or redesign the lighting located near parks and public gathering areas along the waterfront. Presently there is a high level of light pollution from overly bright lights from the Sewage Treatment Plant and the Town Dock, which negatively impacts the nighttime ambiance of park settings and wildlife. The bright lights could be replaced with high-efficiency light sources that save energy and reduce light pollution. (Ms. Heau / Exchange Street)
 - Owners of sailboats with drafts more than 5', that also lease town moorings, are unable to access the town dock due to low water at both low and high tide. Access to the dock provides a safe and convenient way for sailboat owners to load and unload their boats with guests, race crews, provisions, etc... (Mr. McLaughlin / Carrs Pond Road)
 - The growing trend of East Greenwich marinas is to cater services and dockage to large yachts. This includes large transient yachts. The trend significantly reduces the availability of affordable services and dockage to town residents with smaller boats. (Mr. McLaughlin / Carrs Pond Road)

4. Reports and Presentations

a. **Waterfront Study Update – Al Ranaldi**

Al presented a draft copy of the PowerPoint presentation prepared by the consultants on the Waterfront Master Plan. Highlights of the presentation are noted below:

- The plan presented the waterfront in three geographical sections: North, Central, and South.

- Within each geographical section, goals were identified and recommendations were listed based on: near-term recommendations, mid-term recommendations, and long-term recommendations.
- The focus of many of the waterfront recommendations will be to improve coastal resiliency. A plan for coastal resiliency is critical in addressing coastal flooding, erosion, sea level rise impacts, and natural storm damage protection.
- Grant and loan applications to pay for the waterfront improvements will be submitted by the town to the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank. This bank is Rhode Island's hub for financing infrastructure improvements for municipalities
- While committee members had many suggestions and questions about the draft plan, Al Ranaldi advised the consultants will schedule a public workshop in the next few weeks, where input from residents will be taken.

b. Harbor Management Plan – Al Ranaldi

Al advised that the Harbor Management Plan was in the process of being finalized. Once finalized the plan will be sent through a review and approval process:

- First review to the cove commission for committee input
- Second review to the Coastal Resource Management Council for pre-approval
- Third review to the town council for adaptation
- Fourth review back to the Coastal Resource Management Council for final approval.

5. New Business

a. Future Meeting Dates

Meeting dates will be scheduled in advance. The next commission meetings are scheduled on the following Tuesdays: 2/21/23, 3/21/23

b. Town Dock Maintenance – Discussion Tabled

c. Harbor Master Duties – Discussion Tabled

6. Old Business

a. Commission Responsibilities

Bill Weedon reported he was waiting for an answer from Tom Assad regarding a meeting with EG Town Council President Mark Schwager. Tom had planned to meet informally with Mark to get his perspective on the commission's responsibilities to the town council.

b. Meeting with EG Town Manager

Andy Wade advised that Town Manager Andy Nota has been scheduled to attend the February 21st meeting. Mr. Nota will be discussing the status of the town's public waterfront right-of-ways and also his presentation to the RI Coastal Resource Management Council.

c. Long Street Right of Way (ROW)

Members of the committee expressed concern over the recent actions by the EG Marina owner. While still in negotiations about the ROW with the EG Town Manager, the EG Marina owner continues to not comply with ROW guidelines, impedes public access to the ROW, and continues to use the ROW land for his own business use.

Although the EG Marina owner did previously comply when requested to remove previously placed business use structures on the ROW. The owner recently placed his business trash dumpster within the perimeter of the ROW land and the sign for the ROW, designating public access, was removed.

To validate that the EG Marina owner is moving forward in “good faith” during negotiations with the town manager over the use of the Long Street ROW and to ensure the integrity of the land boundaries for the ROW are maintained, the committee recommends the following:

Motion to request the Town Council advise the EG Marina Owner to completely remove his business trash dumpster from the Long Street ROW land that abuts the marina’s parking lot, so that it does not impede or prevent public access to the ROW, and to allow for the integrity of the current ROW land boundaries be maintained.

In conjunction with this request, the Town Council is also requested to replace the missing Long Street ROW sign which designates public access.

Motion made by Jeff Stevens, seconded by Johann Pakis

Ayes (5): Bill Weedon, Johann Patlak, Jeff Stevens, Jane Eaton, Ted Moulis

Motion passes 5 - 0

d. Rocky Hollow Right of Way (ROW)

Andy Wade advised the committee that four bollards were installed across the access to the Rocky Hollow ROW to prevent encroachment from abutting landowners and businesses.

7. Commission Comments

a. Right of Way Enforcement Policy

Committee members expressed concern over what appears to be an inconsistent policy by the Town when dealing with landowners and businesses that encroach upon or use ROWs for their own use. It was noted that the Town inconsistently uses a “hard-line” penalty approach for some while using a “softer-line” penalty approach for others, even though the ROW infractions were similar.

c. New Town Dock

Bill Weedon requested “consideration of a new town dock where spaces can be rented to small fishing boats and where a sailboat can load and unload baggage and passengers. Al indicated that there is a possibility that the coastal resiliency grant could pay for the dock if we make the case for example that it would reduce stress on eelgrass and bank erosion from dragging kayaks down a bank”.

Meeting Adjourned

Motion made to adjourn at 6:05 pm by Bill Weedon, Seconded by Ted Moulis

Ayes - Bill Weedon, Ted Moulis, Jane Eaton, Johann Patlak, Jeff Stevens.

Motion passes 5 – 0

Minutes were taken by Jane Eaton