

# **PORT OF BELLINGHAM**

**MAC (MARINA ADVISORY COMMITTEE) MEETING  
TUESDAY, APRIL 14, 2009  
SQUALICUM HARBOR OFFICE  
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON**

## **Minutes**

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### **Committee Members Present:**

Peter Border  
Hamilton Hayes  
Jeff Hegedus  
Ryan Kapp  
Paul Lavelle  
Tim Mumford  
Joe Orem  
Jim Splaine  
Doug Sterrett  
Roger Van Dyken  
Jim Young

### **Committee Members Absent:**

Mark Gumley

### **Port Representatives Present:**

Dan Stahl  
Mike Endsley  
Pam Taft

### **Committee Members Excused:**

Ron Kleinknecht  
Gene Knutson  
Jerry Writer

### **Visitors/ Guests:**

Commissioner Jim Jorgensen

## **Roll Call**

Jeff Hegedus called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm.

## **March 10, 2009 Minutes**

Jim Splaine made a motion to approve the March 10, 2009 minutes. The motion was seconded by Ham Hayes. The motion to approve the minutes passed unanimously.

## **Public Comment**

There was a large contingent of public that wanted to speak regarding the Port's weblockers. The comments noted below are only those that were given relating to the current issues with the Weblockers.

1. Reider Solberg, a long time resident and Bristol Bay fisherman, voiced concerns about the Port's program especially regarding the requirement for moorage.
2. Buck Malloy is a long time Bellingham resident who keeps his boat in Cordova and does not have moorage. He would like the Port to amend the requirement for moorage and the active commercial fishing rate. He also talked about perhaps having leased versus ownership in a vessel.
3. Al Kapp asked for the moorage to be deleted.
4. Milan Slipcevic is on the top of the waiting list for a weblocker at Squalicum and has been there for a long time and encouraged the Port to work through a process that would allow active commercial fishermen to use the lockers.
5. Randy Chiabai, owner of Redden Net, commented that the moorage requirement would force active commercial fishers to find storage elsewhere which would hurt local business. He also stated that the Port's role as a steward is to support marine business. There was long discussion about the Port's Web Locker Program. He asked the Port to reconsider.
6. Kevin Marilley currently qualifies with moorage but asked the Port to drop the requirement. Kevin talked about the process of the MAC as it relates to Port Commission.
7. Jim Baumgart echoed the same comments as Kevin Marilley.
8. Rob Funkhouser stated "there are guys that need to go" regarding commercially inactive fishing gear. Rob also talked about federal dollars that were used to rebuild the web lockers.
9. Robert McDonnell in web locker 212 meets the criteria now but may not in the future. He suggested that a slight adjustment to this (i.e., the moorage component) would fix 99% of the problem.

With that the public comment period was closed. MAC Chair, Jeff Hegedus, addressed the audience encouraging all that wanted to speak to do so now: that the MAC would not start its regular agenda until all concerns and questions had been heard. With no further comment, Jeff asked for the next agenda item.

## **Web Locker Implementation**

Dan Stahl, Director of Marine Services began by giving some background as to how the Port's Web Locker Program for 2009 was developed. This goes back to a large number of meetings with the Marina Advisory Committee in 2007 and 2008. The goal of those discussions was to find a way to support the commercial fishing fleet and to try to resolve the issue of the large amount of unused gear that was occupying the web lockers to the detriment of the active commercial fishermen. MAC members and staff actively sought outside input from various user groups including Port tenants. A program was eventually finished and forwarded to the Port Commission for their consideration. The Port Commission adopted the MAC's recommendations and implementation began in the first quarter of 2009. This resulted in a number of letters being sent out to active commercial

fishermen who showed up at the meeting this evening based on questions on the implications for the 2009 work plan.

Having finished his general comments, Mike Endsley, Harbormaster for Squalicum, was asked to talk about some of the specifics that were raised in the public comment period. Mike also talked about a more general initiative to improve the housekeeping of the commercial areas of Squalicum Harbor regarding the Storage Yard, storage under the weblocker overhangs , and net carts in the parking lots.

When staff was finished the MAC members engaged in discussion about the issues that had been raised during public comment. Roger Van Dyken reminded the people who had come to give public comment that the Port has long sought commercial fishermen to be on the Marina Advisory Committee. These attempts have largely been unsuccessful. This is due in part to the unpredictable and difficult work schedule that most commercial fishermen have to live with. Roger expressed his appreciation for Ryan Kapp's commitment to the MAC. Roger explained that despite Ryan's busy schedule he reads the agendas and the minutes and provides comments back to either other MAC members or Port staff so that the commercial fishing perspective is represented at the meetings. Roger then asked if there were any members in the commercial fishing group who gave comment this evening who were willing to help Mr. Endsley in determining what gear from the common areas was allowed to stay and what was "junk" and needed to be disposed of. Kevin Morelli, Charlie Brandt and Rob McDonald all expressed an interest in assisting with this effort. Roger next asked a question regarding commercial fishermen who are on the waitlist for the web lockers. Roger's question was "If the Port were to delete the moorage requirement should the Port give preference to those that have moorage in the harbor?" There was some discussion amongst the commercial fishermen in the audience and they very quickly stated the consensus of the group was that seniority on the waitlist, the current procedure, is the most fair. Ham Hayes reminded the commercial fishermen present of the Port's and the MAC's specific intent in developing the 2009 Weblocker Program. Ham went back to the minutes from the MAC meetings in 2007 and 2008 and read several excerpts that very clearly defined the Port's interest as being supportive of the active commercial fishing fleet and marine trade tenants. This was not known to many in the audience.

After further discussion amongst the MAC members, Ryan Kapp made a motion to strike the moorage requirement from the 2009 Weblocker Program. Ryan's intention in making this motion was that the Port Commission would consider a change to the current Rules and Regs regarding weblockers that would affect this change. Ham Hayes seconded the motion and after additional discussion the motion passed unanimously. Dan Stahl commented that he would take the MAC's recommendation to the Port Commission work study on the following week and would follow up with the Port Commission ensuring that they understood the intentions and the vote that the MAC had just executed. With the weblocker issue resolved for the evening a short recess was granted where most of the commercial fishermen left. The MAC then resumed its agenda.

## **ASB New Marina Update**

Dan gave a quick synopsis of the update that staff gave the Port Commission at their March 17 meeting. This was as a follow-up to the MAC meeting on March 10 where the MAC unanimously approved Layout B and a preferred opening location for the ASB. This work by the MAC was appreciated by the Commission. Dan further discussed with the MAC the update at the Port Commission meeting which included discussion about public access, parks, berms and the connections to the upland area also known as Area 1 or the Marine Trades Area. The next Port Commission update for work study is May 19. Dan promised to keep the MAC apprised as the design discussions for the new marina continue.

Dan also provided some follow-up to the discussion at the last meeting regarding wind and wave data and commented that he would try to do some additional wave analysis for a typical rough entry as opposed to a significant hundred year storm event that would aid future operators with expectations, and perhaps the Port, with operating and stand-by criteria.

## **Customer Service Survey**

Pam Taft, Blaine Harbormaster, updated the MAC on the customer survey that Port staff recently distributed. The surveys are mostly in with an occasional one being returned here and there. We have gotten about a 20% return from each harbor which is very good. The initial numbers have been compiled but to remain consistent with other Port surveys, the Marine Division was going to have another department at the Port do a final compilation that would then be reported fully to the MAC at their next meeting. Pam highlighted some of the feedback that the Port has received that will help us to refine our current operating procedures to hopefully deliver a higher level of customer service. Some discussion ensued about janitorial work at the Port's marinas as an example.

## **Tariff Structure**

Mike Endsley, Squalicum Harbormaster, reviewed the current rate structure as embodied in the Port of Bellingham Moorage Tariff No. 1 and reviewed the three rates that are currently employed – a monthly rate, a weekly rate at \$2.00/ft, and a daily rate at \$.50/ft. The Port receives feedback that these rates sometimes provide a very awkward situation for customers depending on when they receive their services from the harbor. One recent example of a person showing up in the middle of the month provided moorage billings that the customer perceived as gouging although this is not the intent of the Port's regulations. This section of the Moorage Tariff has not been updated since 1999. In an effort to update Port procedures, Port staff has surveyed comparable marinas and many of them have a simpler procedure for prorating marina rates although there is significant variation in how they crunch the numbers. Discussion with MAC members ensued. Peter Border commented that this is essentially a fairness issue and recommended that Port staff refine their analysis and bring it back for MAC consideration at their next meeting.

## **Visitor Moorage Rates**

Pam Taft highlighted a staff analysis of the existing moorage rates charged at the Port's harbors. We currently charge \$.50 per foot per night year round and this includes electricity. The Port's rates for visitor moorage have not been adjusted since 1998. Pam distributed a one-page analysis (attached to the minutes). Pam's recommendation based on a market survey was to increase the Port's rate from \$.50 to \$.75 per foot per night including power for a peak season as defined by April through October and allow the rate to revert back to the \$.50 for the off peak season. It was noted that if this increase were enacted it would not impact the program that the Port has where we give three days of free moorage for work done with local marine trades vendors. This a very popular program and encourages boaters to come to Bellingham to work on their boats and last year we had 60 vessels participate in this program to the benefit of the local marine trades community. Ham Hayes commented that he would appreciate some analysis to compare the revenue generated from this program with what it costs the Port to provide the service. Dan indicated that staff would bring this issue back at the next meeting. A long discussion ensued about the philosophy for setting visitor moorage rates at Port facilities. Roger Van Dyken commented that this is often times the first way that people see our community (ie as a visiting boater) and that there may be an advantage to having a very low rate to attract people to come here for the first time and see what wonderful services are offered. Hamilton Hayes further requested that Port staff analyze our previous year expenses to develop a proper metric for developing visitor moorage rate increase proposals. Staff stated that analysis will be done and presented at the next MAC meeting.

## **Security Updates**

Mike Endsley gave an update to the security situation in Squalicum Harbor where we have had an increased frequency of break-ins in the men's showers. We have increased our surveillance in this area and hope to have the shower and laundry amenities back in working order soon.

## **Additional Staff Updates**

- Legislature is in session in Olympia and there is currently discussion about diverting money from the RCO (Recreation Conservation Office) funding for boat launches. Several marine related groups including the WPPA (Washington Public Ports Association) have weighed in on this issue to try to keep the rationale unchanged for this funding mechanism. As a note of background, the RCO receives funding from the over the road fuel tax that is not used by people purchasing fuel for marine consumption. Roger Van Dyken, who is a former legislator, suggested that Kelli Linville, the local representative in the House, is in a key position to positively impact this debate and recommended that members contact her stressing that having a rationale for a dedicated fund is often very compelling.
- Power cords – Mike gave a brief update about power cord enforcement in the marinas. This has been a significant issue for HAT (Harbor Awareness Team) where non-standard power cords can provide significant source of ignition in boats. Mike will develop language and bring it back in May for a motion to amend the Port's Rules and Regs that would allow the Port to disconnect

substandard, nonstandard power cords after sufficient notice is given to the boater.

- Opening Day – May 2. CYC is doing some donations for the BBCBC (Bellingham Bay Community Boating Center).
- Gates will be open after Opening Day with the exception of Gate 9 which will be closed after dusk.
- Roger Van Dyken thanked the staff for their efforts in helping to coordinate CharterFest. CharterFest is a cooperative venture between the Port and charter companies, showcasing the services available in Bellingham.
- Ham Hayes announced his resignation from the MAC. Ham announced that he will run for Port Commission and did not want to politicize his position on the MAC. Ham thanked the MAC for their good services and said that he would continue to attend but as a public citizen and not as the vice chair. Due to the lateness of the hour, Jeff Hegedus suggested that they elect a vice chair to fill Ham's place at the next meeting.

At 8:45 p.m. the meeting was adjourned.