

City of Newport, RI
Waterfront Commission
2023 Summary of Accomplishments and Attendance

- Membership
 - The commission bid farewell to Paul Harden and Mary Ann Marin
 - We welcomed Mark Marosits and John Kokulis
 - Early 2024: Jerry Baum will step down, to be replaced by Patrick O'Connor
- Stone Pier dinghy dock
 - CRMC application was submitted and approved.
 - Construction is moving forward, with completion expected in March 2024.
 - New rules for pier usage and boat storage were developed with the help of the local citizen group Friends of Stone Pier
- Ann St. Pier
 - There is some movement with regard to the long-running lawsuit pending preventing the city from expanding the pier. In early 2023, the judge presiding on this case asked for a resolution and we hope to see the issue resolved in 2024.
- Elm St Pier
 - The pilings supporting the pier are extremely degraded and are slated for extensive rehabilitation. In the meantime, temporary repairs have been made.
- Private mooring rental
 - At the height of the season, there are often more boats looking for overnight moorings than local businesses can support. This becomes a safety issue as vessels then crowd the temporary anchorage.
 - The Harbormaster's office with the concurrence of the Commission instituted a new policy allowing the city to rent private moorings to transient boaters.
 - The policy will only be used if the mooring permit holder's boat is off the mooring for at least overnight and if the permit holder has given the Harbormaster's office permission to rent the mooring.
 - The policy cannot interfere or compete with regular commercial transient mooring rentals. The policy will only be used if commercial moorings are unavailable.
 - The fee cannot go to the mooring permit holder. It can only be used to defray the annual permit renewal fee for the mooring
- Online mooring permit renewal system
 - Started in January '23
- Small boat mooring field
 - Will operate differently from the regular mooring field. City will own and operate the field, assigning moorings yearly to small, primarily entry-level boat owners.
- Commercial mooring transfers
 - The city is trying to keep commercial (or rental) moorings from slipping into private usage by individuals, yacht, clubs or marinas. This has become a problem in recent

years, and it has drawn the attention of CRMC. The transfer process is where we are concentrating our efforts.

- NYC dock expansion
 - The yacht club proposed an expansion of their dock with the addition of a wave attenuator. Required repositioning of one private mooring. All parties were satisfied with the compromise.
- Houseboat bill
 - The Commission is working with Rep Lauren Carson to craft a bill that will give Newport some control over the unwanted/unregulated expansion of houseboats on the harbor.
 - The proposed bill is enabling legislation that gives each municipality the option of regulating houseboats as will best suit the needs of each harbor.
 - There are many stakeholders, and the process has met with some pushback, particularly from the RI Marine Trades Assn.
 - Next step is to get the bill onto a list of legislative priorities for the city.
- Ft Adams boat ramp expansion
 - The commission has met extensively with DEM and other stakeholders to get the state to consider expanding the launch ramp behind the mule barn at Ft Adams.
 - It is a vital piece of infrastructure that is used extensively by recreational boaters, municipal, state and federal agencies, as well as local businesses.
 - Particularly during storm preparations, the ramp gets jammed, and can become dangerous. Increasing the ramp capacity will better serve the public and greatly enhance the surge capability under storm circumstances.
 - Progress has been slow but we are looking to get the ramp project onto DEM's long-range list of projects. We will continue to monitor this.
- Kayak Racks and handicap access
 - Dinghy racks do not get used as much as Kayak racks. Also it's possible to fit more kayaks into the same size rack as dinghies.
 - Applications for Kayak slots exceeded the available slots in 2023 by 293 to 223.
 - The harbormaster's office with the concurrence of the Commission is exploring transitioning some dinghy slots into double kayak slots.
- Ocean Race
 - Arrived in Newport in May 2023. By all accounts, the event was a success. Spectator fleets were respectful of the course and Harbormasters' staff did not report any serious problems. Intermodal transportation was provided by Oldport Marine.
- Newport Transportation Plan
 - The Commission had the opportunity to read and make suggestions to the authors of the Transportation Plan. Our main suggestions centered on making the harbor and waterborne transportation a more integral part of Newport's overall transportation system. Particularly during the festival weekends, Newport Harbor intermodal transport carries a significant number of passengers, which greatly reduces the load on streets and parking. The authors were receptive.
- Comprehensive Harbor Management Plan
 - Work on the plan is moving ahead at a solid pace. The plan will be ready to submit to City Council in January 2024.

- The Commission is working closely with the Harbormaster's office, Friends of the Waterfront, local businesses, private citizens as well as CRMC. CRMC staff have attended several Commission meetings as well as HMP work group meetings, providing us with valuable guidance. It has been a very productive and collaborative effort and we are expect that CRMC will view it positively once it reaches their office.
- Kayak and paddleboard safety in the harbor
 - Kayaks and small self-propelled craft are an excellent way for people to get on the water. However Newport harbor is congested and extremely busy.
 - In 2023 Commission member Mark Marosits and the Harbormaster's office started a program to enhance the safety of kayakers on the harbor. The program uses small teams of volunteers on the water (in kayaks and stand-up paddleboards) actively engaging kayakers, as well as on-shore safety and orientation courses. Mark personally had over 500 on-water interactions with paddlers during the summer
- Recreational boat traffic safety and shipping on Narragansett Bay
 - An incident in summer 2023 where a sailboat in a regatta passed dangerously close to a loaded, inbound tanker prompted Sail Newport and the harbormaster's office to call a meeting with stakeholders in the safety of small boats on the bay. Four members of the Waterfront Commission provided input and attended the meeting. The meeting resulted in gudelines for training sailors as well as establishing better communication between large ships and regatta organizers.
- Friends of the Waterfront
 - FoW elected new leadership early in 2023 and the Commission restated its commitment to move forward collaboratively in the work to ensure waterfront access to the public. FoW and Commission members routinely attend each other's meetings and there is excellent communications between the groups.
- Goat Island causeway
 - The Commission , especially member Gary Lash, worked with the city to ensure that maritime traffic passing under the causeway would not foul the lines of the fishermen above. Signs were placed reserving the three center spans for vessel traffic. Special thanks to city employees Tim Sullivan and Bill Riccio.
- Proposed new ordinances:
 - All vessels should be off their moorings by 01 December. There may be exceptions but there are too many issues with derelict boats on moorings through the winter.
 - We need to eliminate "place-holder" boats. These are vessels that just sit on a mooring, completely unused and simply holding the mooring for the absent owner.
 - Mooring renewal fees: The Harbormaster, with the concurrence of the Commission are proposing raising the fees approximately 15%. As of January 2023 Newport mooring fees are below average for the state.

- Visions for 2024
 - Approval of the Comprehensive Harbor Management Plan
 - Nail down a solid commercial/rental mooring transfer process and explore reclaiming moorings that have slipped into private (or essentially private) use.
 - Stone Pier
 - Explore an intermodal transport stop off at the pier: Is it practical, desirable, possible?
 - Elm St. Pier
 - Continue with repairs and refurbishment; make it more user friendly for the boating public while preserving its historical co-use by locals for swimming and relaxing.
 - Ann St Pier
 - Resolve the lawsuit, and start exploring options for extending the pier.
 - Pump-out stations
 - We need to get more stations, and get the stations that are there to be operational.
 - In summer 2023, the operational pump-out stations were: Newport Yachting center, Ann St. pier, and Goat Island Marina.
 - Small boat mooring field
 - Push ahead with establishing an affordable mooring option for local small boat owners.
 - Waterfront access
 - Collaborate with Friends of the Waterfront and CRMC to preserve and increase access to the waterfront.
 - Push ahead with Ft Adams ramp expansion. This is an ongoing collaborative effort between DEM, CRMC, and users.

<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Absences</u>
▪ Paul Harden - Chair 01/23 – 02/23 Stepped down 02/23.....	0
▪ David Kane - Secretary 01/23 – 02/23 Chair 03/23 – 12/23	0
▪ Fred Roy - Vice Chair 01/23 – 02/23 Secretary 03/23 – 12/23	1
▪ Gary Lash - Vice Chair 03/23 – 12/23	0
▪ Robert Anton	3
▪ Jerry Baum	0
▪ Henry DiPetro	2
▪ John Greichen	1
▪ John Kokulis – Joined 11/23.....	0
▪ Mary Ann Marin stepped down 03/23	3
▪ Mark Marosits - Joined 10/23	0