

Wolfeboro Board of Selectmen
Public Meeting Minutes-Approved
August 10, 2017

Members present: Chairman Luke Freudenberg, Brad Harriman, Linda Murray, Dave Bowers and Dave Senecal

Staff absent: Town Manager David W. Owen

Staff present: Police Chief Dean Rondeau, Planning and Development Director Matt Sullivan, Director of Operations of Public Works Department Adam Tasker and Recording Secretary Michele Chamberlain

Chairman Freudenberg opened the special meeting at 7:00 PM.

Non-Public Session RSA 91-A:3, II

Mr. Sullivan stated a non-public session is not needed.

Public Hearing – On Proposed Expansion of Town Docks

Mr. Sullivan stated he would like to give recognition to the members of the Ad Hoc Town Docks Committee; Chairman Dave Senecal, Linda Murray, John Thurston, Steve Durgan, Paul O'Brien, Bob Tougher, Town Manager Dave Owen, Public Works Department Adam Tasker, Parks and Recreation Department Justin Chaffee and himself.

He stated when the discussion began back in 2016 there were a couple of items in mind which included providing additional boat slip capacity and to adapt the docks to accommodate larger boats. He stated there are some issues with boater safety and boater access. Mr. Sullivan stated with the expansion these concerns would be addressed. He stated this is an opportunity to strengthen the economy by bringing more visitors to the Downtown area to spend money here which will increase the local economy. Mr. Sullivan stated that maintenance and improvements would be made to an existing municipal asset that is important to maintain over a long period of time. He stated the Town Docks are one of the biggest assets to the Downtown area. He stated these were five of the biggest components when the Committee began to formula its plan.

Mr. Sullivan stated the process to date is as follows:

- 1) Formation of Ad Hoc Committee of the Town Docks
- 2) Five Committee Meetings
- 3) Development of Proposed Dock Layout Plan

- 4) Two Meetings with NHDES Staff
 - Rene Pelletier and Darlene Forst
 - On-site and Concord Meeting
- 5) Consultation Meetings with Stakeholders (Mount Washington, Winnepesaukee Belle, Direct Waterfront Abutter)
- 6) Revision of the Proposed Dock Layout Plan

Mr. Sullivan stated he would like to make a quick note. He stated the boat ramp expansion is scheduled to take place this year and it is an independent project. The boat ramp expansion is still scheduled to take place in the fall of 2017.

Jim Rines, White Mountain Survey & Engineering, Inc. addressed the Board. He presented a slide show on the proposed dock expansion. He explained that the no wake zone buoys are 150 feet from the existing Town docks and the new plan shows that the buoys would be 150 feet out from the expansion. He stated when the Committee met with the Mount Washington it was decided to include in the expansion relocating the piling cluster by 50 feet and the landing spot of the Winnepesaukee Belle would have an expansion of about 20 feet allowing the unloading process to be easier. He stated the first dock would have an 80 foot addition. The second dock would have a 70 foot addition and the last three remaining docks would each have an addition of 60 feet. The total dock length would become 200 feet for four of the docks and 170 feet for the other one. There would be no change to the dock next to the abutter because the wetlands bureau does not allow you to cross over the line. There would be approximately 24 boat slips as calculated by NHDES Wetlands Bureau added with the expansion excluding anything to do with the Winnepesaukee Belle dock. The depth of the water did not change dramatically. There would be no changes made to the Mail Boat and Rescue dock slip. Mr. Rines stated it was discussed with NHDES that any time there is a major expansion (five or more dock slips) a public hearing is required. He stated typically that public hearings take place in Concord. He stated that depending on the comments here tonight NHDES may consider waving the public hearing in Concord and accepting a videotaped portion of this public hearing which will help move the process along a little quicker. The permitting process takes 75 days from the date of the completed application. Once NHDES takes action on the application and if they require additional information you then have 60 days to provide that additional information. The State then has 30 more days to review that information. Once the State approves the application there is then a 30 day appeal period and then major applications need to be approved by the governor and council which can't take place until after the 30 day appeal process. Mr. Rines stated that approval from the governor and council could take about 4 - 6 weeks. He stated it would probably be a 6 month permitting process.

Public Input

Limited to 3 Minutes per resident, not to exceed 15 minutes in total

Chairman Freudenberg opened the public hearing.

Mary DeVries, Executive Director of the Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce, addressed the Board. She stated: The Board of Directors of the Wolfeboro Area Chamber of Commerce has asked me to speak on its behalf that they are very much in favor of the proposed expansion of the Wolfeboro Town Docks. Expansion of the docks will improve how Wolfeboro welcomes boating enthusiasts. Expanding the docks will accommodate the growing demand for more visitors choosing to arrive by boat. This will complement marketing efforts of the collective community, including the Town itself, that are put in place for the health of our local economy. Importantly, the proposed expansion will continue to support the use of Wolfeboro's port by excursion boats such as the Mount Washington, Millie B, the Mail Boat and the Winnepesaukee Belle. If dock space is not readily available in Wolfeboro, purchases for goods, services and meals will be made in other towns. Expansion of the Town Docks, very much like improvements already being made to the boat launch, is in keeping with the Town's intention to properly maintain its assets. Ms. DeVries asked the Board to please move forward with the proposed expansion of the Wolfeboro Town Docks.

John Rourke, resident of Wolfeboro, addressed the Board. He stated he is concerned because if there is any type of wind that is blowing towards the Avery Building he has seen boaters crashing into other boaters. He stated adding additional space would make this problem worse. Secondly, he stated that some boaters leave their boats parked at the Town Docks for most of the day which he thinks should be addressed.

Barbara Bridges, owner of Bridges Hallmark, addressed the Board. She stated she thinks the expansion of the Town Docks would be wonderful for the businesses Downtown. She stated if boats try to come to the Town Docks and they are unsuccessful then they probably would try it a few times but then go elsewhere. She stated space is needed for those that want to come to enjoy our beautiful Town. She stated she would encourage the Board to move forward with their expansion.

Kathy Eaton, owner of Molly the Trolley and Chairman of the Wolfeboro Economic Development Committee, addressed the Board. She stated from a business standpoint we need to provide more access to people trying to come to Town by boat. It is only a win/win situation for everyone in Town. She stated if they come by boat then they are not coming by car and we have enough cars in Downtown as well. This expansion is very important. She stated when EDC did their Retention and Expansion Survey one of the suggestions made was for more dock space at the Wolfeboro Town Docks. She stated several businesses thought it would be good for the Town's economy. She stated the Economic Development Committee supports this expansion one hundred percent. Ms. Eaton strongly encouraged the Board to move forward with this expansion and thanked them for responding to the business community needs.

Wally Keniston, resident of Wolfeboro, addressed the Board. He questioned if anyone has thought about further lighting of the Town Docks. He stated when docking at 9 o'clock at night it will be completely dark.

Chairman Freudenberg stated that is something that needs to be addressed. He thanked Mr. Keniston for the excellent comment.

Bruce Tergalson, resident of Wolfeboro, addressed the Board. He stated he has used the Town Docks for over 20 years and he is in favor of the expansion.

Suzanne Ryan, resident of Wolfeboro, addressed the Board. She questioned if the State was funding the expansion. She stated it was a wonderful idea and that she has a boat and she was in favor of the idea but she asked what the estimated cost would be.

Chairman Freudenberg stated the Board is currently working through the numbers but they do not have a specific number yet but the estimate will probably be in the range of \$250,000 to \$400,000.

Ms. Ryan questioned if out of that money there would be any repairs to the existing docks.

Chairman Freudenberg stated there are some thoughts and plans to resurface the existing docks at the exact same time as the expansion.

Ms. Ryan asked if it was included in the cost.

Mr. Sullivan stated the existing dock repair maintenance is estimated to be about \$30,000 and that cost is not included in what we are talking about. It is a separate cost.

Ms. Ryan questioned if we were exposing ourselves to more liability with the expansion of the docks. She questioned if there was an accident at the Town Docks (Town facility) would the Town be liable. She questioned since it was on State waters if the State would be responsible or does the Town assume the liability.

Chairman Freudenberg stated it was an excellent question and asked Chief Rondeau to explain the answer.

Chief Rondeau stated no. He stated when there is a crash on a Town road or a State road the Town is not held accountable because there is an automobile crash. He stated if there is a crash between two boats on Lake Winnepesaukee it is between the two boaters.

Chief Rondeau stated the police department has not written many violation docking tickets because they have not seen these instances happening. He stated when people come to Wolfeboro to shop they are not usually shopping for more than four hours because they want to get back out on the Lake to enjoy the water. Chief Rondeau stated they do not see a lot of these violations but what we do see is a lot of people leaving their boats overnight or people docking where they are not suppose to be docking. He stated people that have a house on one of the islands and come into Town to work more than likely have a slip to park or they are a member of Goodhue & Hawkins and they park their boat there. He stated we take action when we find someone doing this but it does

not happen very often. Chief Rondeau stated if there are specific violators he would like to know about them and he will talk to those people. He stated this is not about the Police Department ignoring the Town Ordinances but rather an explosion of boaters on Lake Winnepesaukee. He stated when the economy starts to really take off and more people are coming to Town we want to have the infrastructure in place to capture the business. He stated this is an excellent way of doing this.

Ms. Ryan questioned if the Town or State could designate an area for the larger boats and the smaller boats. Ms. Ryan questioned when the pilings are moved will boaters be required to stay further away from them. She stated people will still be circling around because 24 slips won't be enough spaces. Ms. Ryan stated the wake zone is going to be moved further out. She questioned who would be paying for the new dock for the Mount Washington and if there could be further expansion if they did the current proposed expansion plan.

Steve Durgan, Owner of Goodhue & Hawkins Marina, addressed the Board. He stated there is a State rule that all boaters must slow down when approaching no wake areas when they are 150 feet from them. He stated it does not matter how far out the docks are boaters still need to slow down 150 feet from the docks. He stated there is a buoy out 150 feet from the Town Docks but it is not a law it is just so people know how far 150 feet is. He stated the Committee has talked about maybe moving the buoy out 200 feet so that it would give a boater a margin of error which would increase boater safety. He stated most boaters are very respectful and getting in and out of the Town Docks is not an easy thing to do. He stated the last statistic he heard was there were 64,000 boaters on Lake Winnepesaukee and 36 marinas around the Lake. He stated Wolfeboro only has one marina and one yacht club so most of the boaters are not coming into Wolfeboro. He stated if they can't get into Wolfeboro then they are going to go to Alton Bay. Mr. Durgan stated it is time for Wolfeboro to take advantage of the boating traffic.

Ms. Ryan stated she would like to conclude that the questions she asked were not meant to be negative but to get an understanding of the expansion. Ms. Ryan stated she was in favor of the expansion. She questioned again if it was legal to have separate spots for smaller boats.

Brendan Donahue, Employee of Bailey's Bubble, addressed the Board. He stated he was here tonight to speak for Deb Skelley. He stated Ms. Skelley was in favor of the expansion. He stated the other day a family from Meredith came to the Bubble just to try our blueberry pie ice cream. Mr. Donahue stated that an expansion to the Town Docks would add to our economy. He stated the extra dock slips would allow Bailey's Bubble and Dockside to provide more employment opportunities for youth. He encouraged the Board to move forward with the expansion.

Chairman Freudenberg closed the public hearing.

Dave Bowers stated he is the only residential abutter to the Town Docks. He stated when boaters think the docks are full there usually are a few spaces open inside where no

one can see from the water. He suggested having a high school student as a watchman for the Town Docks because it would increase turnover and it would help Police. He stated about twenty five years ago he gave the Town permission to build a dock expending the dock onto his property in return of taking the chain linked fence down. He stated this agreement was not put in writing and suggested that Mr. Sullivan put it in writing so that a future owner (Mr. Bowers stated he will not live forever.) could not change the agreement. He suggested maybe the Chamber could hire a Dock Monitor to help move traffic.

Dave Senecal stated the Ad Hoc Committee observed different town docks around the Lake. He stated some of them were very impressive but the Ad Hoc Committee decided to expand the existing Town Docks. He stated the Committee met with Randy Pelletier and Kathy Forst in Concord and received positive input from them about expanding the docks. Mr. Senecal stated the Mount Washington was very pleased with the plan. He stated the Winni Belle was fine with the plan. Mr. Senecal stated nothing will change where the Mail Boat is located. Mr. Senecal stated a warrant article may be looked at this year to reserve funds. He explained the project would not be done until 2019. He stated he wanted everyone to understand that it will not be in a warrant article this year and done next summer. He stated the Ad Hoc Committee would like to phase the expansion in with two phases. He stated the expansion will be done in 2019 but the boat ramp will be done this fall because of the ongoing work that will be done in that parking lot. The boat ramp is already funded and not part of this project.

Linda Murray stated she is 100% behind this project. She stated she looks at the work of the Community as a whole in what has been done. She thanked the Community, the businesses that took part in the Business Retention and Expansion Committee, the Economic Development Committee, the Board of Selectmen and the Ad Hoc Committee for all their hard work on providing the expansion plan that was shown tonight. She stated the plan makes sense and she looked at other town docks with Mr. Senecal and Mr. Durgin. She stated the other day when she was at the Town Docks there were thirteen boats circling to find a dock space. Ms. Murray stated we need these boaters to be able to park and shop in our Town. She stated this is a win/win situation for all of us.

Brad Harriman stated he agreed with everyone. He stated there was positive support from everyone tonight. He stated that the Town of Wolfeboro is unique. He stated we are the only Town that has a Downtown right down by the waterfront. Meredith has restaurants and Laconia has the arcade. He stated we are unique because people coming in can hit all of our shops. Mr. Harriman stated this is a great project and the Board of Selectmen is in support for the project to continue.

Chairman Freudenberg stated he is in favor of the project and would like to thank the Ad Hoc Committee for all their hard work. He thanked the members of the public for all the good comments and their suggestions. Chairman Freudenberg stated if any members of the public have more questions they should contact the Town Manager, the Board of Selectmen or members of the Ad Hoc Committee because this is a process that will continue over the next couple of years.

It was moved by Dave Bowers and seconded by Brad Harriman that the Board of Selectmen endorses the White Mountain Survey & Engineering proposal as presented tonight for the expansion of the Town Docks.

Linda Murray questioned that the hearing was to just get general support today.

Dave Senecal stated it was just to support the project.

Linda Murray stated she just wanted to make sure.

It was moved by Dave Bowers and seconded by Brad Harriman that the Board of Selectmen endorses the White Mountain Survey & Engineering proposal as presented tonight for the expansion of the Town Docks. Members voted and being none opposed, the motion passed.

It was moved by Linda Murray and seconded by Brad Harriman to adjourn at 7:46 PM. Members voted and being none opposed, the motion passed.

Respectfully Submitted,
Michele Chamberlain