Members Present: Jeff Thomas (Chair), Mike Kinney (V-Chair), Joe Voci, Kevin King, Gregg Fraser, Dan Shearer, Doug Brown and recording secretary; Paula Cushman

Members Not-Present: Chuck Martinsen, Chuck Eastman

Call to Order: Quorum present meeting was called to order at 7:00pm


Minutes: Review and approve minutes from February 3, 2021.


Public Comments:

Public Comments; Edward Arthur- Full time resident, 95 Bay Rd., abuts Cedar Lake. Member of the Friends of Cedar Lake are concerned with the invasive species of the lake. WWC members refer Mr. Arthur to the WQMC and the Conservation Commission.

- Review and approve the minutes of February 3, 2021
- Harbormaster Report- G Fraser

Waquoit Bay boat ramp – Per the Public Access Board, the permits are in hand and it has tentatively been placed on the calendar for Fiscal Year 2022.

Update on West Falmouth boat ramp – The state did publish request for comments, no final word from the Army Corps of Engineers, on the shallow depth beneath the launching float, during low tide but we expect them to follow along with the Conservation Commission and the state, that once the Chapter 91 License is issued, we expect them to approve the permitting.

Megansett Approach Channel Dredging – We are in preliminary discussions with the Town of Bourne, to create a joint application for the dredging of the approach channel only. This was recommended by our engineering firm. Must pass through both town’s Conservation Commissions.

Re classification of shellfish areas in mooring fields. State has signed on with the sanitation shellfish program. They are now implementing the requirements associated with shellfish areas that harbor 21 or more boat moorings. This will change the classification of those areas from approved, to conditionally approved. The affected areas in Falmouth are the mooring field in Waquoit Bay, the east side Eel River East and Quisset Harbor outer. Conditionally approved means these areas can only be open for shell fishing from November through April and only if there are less than 21 boats present on the moorings.

There is a moratorium on any new mooring permits in Eel River West Information can be found on line. A complete study should be conducted in 2021 and ready to reopen in 2022.

Eel River West – Spoke to the engineer who worked with Chatham, he was clear it shouldn’t be a long process. He has experience and can use some of the information gathered from the similar process he completed for the town of Chatham. He expects verification in May or early June. Once announced it should be put on the put on the Select Board agenda to get their approval.

K King – Ramp in West Falmouth does Conservation Commission have restrictions of 3 feet in depth?

G Fraser- They do have restrictions but not on Public entities or access.

D Shearer- When is the West Falmouth boat ramp project to begin?

G Fraser- Because of time of year restrictions, we can expect work to begin next fall.

- Waquoit Bay Embayment and Inlet Dredging Project Status Updates

J Thomas – Project summary meeting on Feb 5th, with the WBYC, town members and WEBNERR went well, my need another session. I had a meeting on Feb 18th with WQMC, they could only offer moral support. I briefed the Shellfish Advisory Committee this evening on our intentions for this area. They are anxious to get our final dredging samples.

G Fraser – The committee did not seem to have a problem with the area between the 2 jetties and the Channel area between 3 and 7. They did seem to have a problem with the area after the jetties, because it goes right up to shellfish flats. To avoid opposition, we may consider moving forward with the 2 sections that are of no concern.

D Brown- County’s looking into some of the areas that have a time of year restrictions because of winter Flounder, fisherman report there has not been Flounder in those areas for a long time. The county is trying to declare those areas as free of winter Flounder, in order to free up areas for the dredge.

G Fraser – It’s great that the county is interested in doing that, we have fought that battle with state in the past with Horseshoe Crabs and birds, as well as Flounder. They say it’s “mapped territory” for those species therefore they are not willing to change. The Harbormasters association pushed the DEP, but was told it was up to the town to prove there are no species, or Flounder in that area, not the other way around. It may be time for the County bring it to their attention.
D Brown – Maybe they can temporarily waive the restrictions? We should all get together and ask for the same thing.

G Fraser – It may be a good time to bring it up again, show them they are trying to protect a species that does not exist in that area.

D Brown – It’s good to know it’s been brought up before.

**Dredge Spoils**

J Voci – Held a meeting with 6 or 7 people, included James Rassman of WEBNERR. We received a preliminary survey by WH group, showing no hazardous materials. J Rassman is interested with working with WEBNERR in supporting the marsh areas that are within piping distance for the placement of the spoils. This may be the most cost-effective way to go. Scope ranges from 10,000 or 13,000 cubic feet, this must be better defined as well as weather that material is suitable for the marsh areas. The town of Salem had some problems with permission given, then taken away causing lawsuits. The team will be working on answering how much material is being dredged, what exactly that material is and what funding source will be used before going to town meeting. Our next meeting April 5, 2021.

M Kinney – Has anyone gotten marsh nourishment permits in Massachusetts?

J Voci – Not that I’m aware of.

M Kinney – I have read that there are some states doing this type of thing. They may have different thresholds, but may be worth reaching out to them.

J Voci – Yes, worth exploring.

G Fraser – Rhode Island may be one state that allows it, I will check. WEBNERR seemed interested that a portion of this project deemed as research so that they have the ability to place material on their marshes. Can prove to the regulatory authorities that this material is beneficial to refurbish and protect the marsh areas. We also spoke about building a de watering structure on the beach side outside Washburn, it’s cost effective and the equipment can reach easily.

J Thomas – Have we defined the consultants on this project?

G Fraser – No, not at this time, we must have a funding source before we can contract with them. Moving forward, I feel we must add additional line items to the capital budget in August or September. Separating the dredging funds from permitting and engineering funds. We can’t deplete our dredging funds for permitting and engineering.

M Kinney – That sounds like a good educational tool for engineering costs to the town.

G Fraser – We were firm with our 50k in comprehensive permit this morning, but I found out in my conversation with WHG this morning that any soil samples more than 3 years old, will no longer be accepted. So all the dredge projects that are older than 3 years, have to be re sampled.

J Thomas – Is our timeline August budget to prepare for town meeting to be ready for fall.

G Fraser – Capital requests come out in late summer, they then go to Finance Dept., Town Managers office then to the Finance committee then the recommended items move on to Town Meeting.

J Thomas -Who do we have quotes with?

G Fraser – Waquoit Bay the contractor is dealing with the town of Mashpee. We don’t have money in hand to request permitting. Would like to include Megansett in this project.

Doug Brown – are we closer to the point to educate our town Engineering Dept.?

G Fraser -Not sure what or how much additional training they would need and I don’t know of any other towns that do that kind of work.

- Eel River West Project Status – Covered in Harbormaster report.
- J Thomas - relying on that Grant to move forward.
- G Fraser – Yes, we have a figure of 85k, which we don’t have, so we need that grant to move forward.
- Member Comments-

Kevin King – we have town engineering should we reach out to them to use them?

G Fraser - willing to reach out to DPW director Peter McConarty.

M Kinney – was Lynn useful 6 or 7 years ago?

G Fraser - she did help but could not do the engineering part of the project.

G Fraser - Will talk to Peter McConarty maybe he has some suggestions.

M Kinney – Good use of Plymouth County Dredge equipment.

G Fraser – DPW provides operator Josh, who does an outstanding job. Trunk river looks beautiful. Fresh river is down 18”, we did Salt Pond and now the county dredge is at Little Pond. He will remove the outfall hump at the head of Falmouth Inner Harbor and large deposits of excess sand from the Harrington Street and Megansett boat ramps.

- Next Meeting Date – April 7, 2021
- Meeting Adjourned at 7:56 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Paula Cushman