

City of the Village of Minnetonka Beach
Dock Committee Meeting Minutes – APPROVED
February 11, 2021 ~ 6:00 p.m.

Present: Committee Members: Chair Jeff Steinke, Vice Chair Jim Knudsen, Jack Foss, Daniel Van Handel, Lucian Panait, Chip Zawislak and Council Liaison Vibhu Sharma

Absent: Steve Inglis and Todd Pottebaum

Staff: City Administrator Patrick Melvin

1) Call to Order

Current Council Liaison and former Dock Committee Chair Vibhu Sharma called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

2) Approve Agenda

(Van Handel motion, Steinke second to approve the February 11, 2021 agenda. All ayes). Motion passed.

3) Committee membership

3.1 Oath of Office for Lucian Panait- Lucian Panait recited the Oath of Office and was welcomed as a new member to the Dock Committee. Lucian currently does not have a boat but is on the waiting list and would like to acquire one in the future for use by his family.

3.2 Oath of Office for Chip Zawislak- Chip Zawislak recited the Oath of Office and was welcomed as a new member to the Dock Committee. Chip has a boat and was at dock 6-2 last year and would like to get over to Dock 10 and eventually to the Beach for the more social aspect.

3.3 Liaison to the Dock Committee- Vibhu Sharma was recently elected to the City Council and has been appointed as the Liaison to the Dock Committee because of his past role as the Dock Committee Chair in 2020. He acknowledged that his role as the Dock Liaison is to listen, take feedback and serve as a connection between the Council and the Committee. He will not be giving direction or voting as outlined in the Roles and Responsibilities of the City Council Liaisons document that was provided in the packet.

3.4 Election of the Chair and Vice Chair- Vibhu Sharma asked for volunteers to serve as the Chair and Vice Chair of the Dock Committee and mentioned that a couple of individuals have expressed an interest. In the past the Committee has had a Chair but this year there was a suggestion to have a Chair and Vice Chair with residents from different areas and dock locations to help better represent docks throughout the City. Vibhu Sharma invited the interested individuals to say something.

Jeff Steinke is willing to be Chair and has been a Minnetonka Beach resident for 17 years and been at dock 2 located near City Hall during those years. He has been involved in a reconfiguration with the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District and has an interest in preserving the boating rights that are being challenged as he sees the right to access the lake as part of the Minnetonka Beach culture.

Jim Knudsen is willing to be Vice Chair and lives at 1928 Beach Lane and has access at Dock 9 where Lafayette turns. Jim has been on Dock 9 since 1979 during which there have been some challenges and would like to preserve the slips and locations of dock. Jim has seen significant changes and wants to preserve what the City has.

(Van Handel motion, Foss second to approve Jeff Steinke as Chair and Jim Knudsen as Vice Chair. All ayes). Motion passed.

3.5 Chair Steinke asked for a volunteer to help coordinate and communicate with the Dock Committee, the beach dock installer and residents about installation and dock removal at the Beach being that it is such a large undertaking affecting many residents. Council Liaison Sharma spoke up being that he formerly served in this capacity for the Dock Committee and indicated that it involved communicating and working with Cody Rasset who is the dock installer at the Beach. He is willing to sit down and talk further with the individual assuming this role.

Chair Steinke suggested that it be a member who is currently docking at the Beach Dock which included Todd Pottenbaum, Vibhu Sharma and Daniel Van Handel. Chair Steinke suggested that perhaps Todd Pottebaum would accept this responsibility despite not being at the meeting. Van Handle indicated a willingness to serve in this role if Pottebaum opted not to but felt that Pottebaum be considered first.

3.6 There was discussion about a Dock Committee meeting schedule. It was noted that the Dock Committee typically only meets when issues need to be addressed. Vibhu suggested more frequent meetings which Steinke agreed indicating he would like to get two meeting on the calendar for 2021. Chair Steinke felt that meetings should be timed to occur after permits are issued and boats launched and then a second meeting after the boating season is over to review how things went. With that in mind he suggested a June/July meeting and an October/Nov meeting schedule. Foss and others agreed and Melvin will identify meeting dates in late June and early November.

4) New Business

4.1 Review June 18, 2020 Minutes and identify goals for 2021

Steinke had reviewed the meeting minutes from June 2020 and was in favor of a survey to gather feedback from residents about any issues and perhaps it goes out with the permit application. Steinke asked the Committee for thoughts. There was question as to when the dock slip assignment process starts and Melvin indicated that February and right now is when the permit application should be going out.

Zawislak asked about challenges with dock assignments. Melvin indicated that Administration has a waiting list and everything is up to date. He indicated that individuals who are interested in a boat slip have previously had an option, although it may not be their first priority for location, and cited some of the challenges with parking or having to cross a busy road to access the dock.

The Committee discussed the benefit of getting dock insurance which many residents overlook especially since they are extending docks further out into the lake due to low water levels and putting individuals at risk for liability. Several individuals had included their docks on their insurance schedule at minimal additional cost and encourage this to be brought up with residents. Steinke

offered to write up a paragraph on the dock insurance which he will provide for inclusion in the cover letter that goes out to residents with their dock permit application.

Vibhu Sharma suggested perhaps discussion about having a dock master at each location to help coordinate issues related to common dock parts. Van Handle felt that if you get somebody like Cody he can coordinate. Sharma did not believe this was a big issue and they both agreed residents should be aware of having to maintain safe docks.

Melvin brought up a prior discussion about coordinating all installation and removal through one installer. The group appreciated leaving that decision up to dock owners but thought there was value in providing Cody Rassetts contact information if requested.

There were questions as to how many dock permits does the City issue and what is the revenue from docks. Melvin will look into and get back to the Committee. There was further discussion about the cost of the docks relative to other cities and it was pointed out that the challenge of comparing Minnetonka Beach to other cities is Minnetonka Beach residents also have to pay for dock parts, installation and removal whereas other cities provide all of the above.

The Committee expressed a desire to have residents on the dock waiting list also receive the survey. The survey would be simple, with only 3-4 questions and residents would be encouraged to complete the survey and return with their registration. They could also e-mail their responses. After brief discussion about requiring a name it was decided not to since most will be returning with their application and payment to City Hall.

5) Old Business

5.1 Update on Dock 9

Jim Knudsen provided an update on Dock 9 informing the Committee that a new property owner has asked that docks 8 and 9 be realigned to not encroach into the neighbor's boat use area. Jim and others on the dock are looking at solutions to reconfigure the dock and will be talking further with representatives from the Lake Minnetonka Conservation District (LMCD). Jim feared if we don't reconfigure the dock the LMCD may require decreasing the number of slips. Foss inquired if the shoreland that was given back to residents was taken into consideration when LMCD assigned slips, Knudsen pointed out that yes, there was a 15 foot section that was kept for the City for access.

5.2 Update on Dock 10 (Schussler lawsuit)

Melvin provided an update on Dock 10 informing the Committee that the prior decision was appealed. The lawsuit alleges that the City is not using the fire lane for public purpose by only allowing a few residents to maintain boats on the docks. The City is hoping to prevail as this City practice has a long precedent. Another part of the lawsuit is that the City dock interferes with the resident's ability to enjoy his dock use area which he would like to use to dock several larger size boats. It was noted that there have been lawsuits in the past that have significantly hurt the City but that in this case the City benefits significantly from partnering with the League of MN Cities Insurance Trust so the cost to defend the City does not fall entirely on the City.

Foss inquired about the lake level and expressed concern at the lake level going down. He inquired if there was a minimum lake level that LMCD is trying to support. Knudsen suggested following the

Minnehaha Lake Watershed website that shares when they open and close the dam and the level of the Lake at various times.

6) Adjournment

(Foss motion, Panait second to adjourn at 6:59 p.m. All in favor.) Motion passed.

Minutes taken by City Administrator Patrick Melvin.