

City of the Village of Minnetonka Beach
Dock Committee Meeting Minutes - APPROVED
February 6, 2024 ~ 5:30 p.m.

Present: Chair: Jeff Steinke, Vice Chair: Jim Knudsen; Committee Members: Jack Foss, Jim Knudsen, Dan Van Handel, Lucian Panait, and Chip Zawislak. Council Liaison Tracey Breazeale. Absent: Todd Pottebaum

Guests: None

Staff: City Administrator Heidi Honey, Public Works Superintendent Jason Hilgers, City Clerk Jane Burgess

1. Call to Order

Chair Steinke called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approve Agenda

(Foss motion, Van Handel second to approve the agenda of February 6, 2024. All ayes.) Motion passed.

3. Approve Minutes of June 16, 2022 Dock Committee meeting

(Panait motion, Foss second to approve the June 16, 2022 Dock Committee meeting minutes. All ayes.) Motion passed.

4. Old Business

4.1. 2023 Fall Dock Removal Feedback

Hilgers stated the removal went well even with the challenging weather. Each year is different and it is difficult to get the removal done in two weeks but it is doable. Berg's Barge does most of the dock install and removal and John Cody Jr. does Dock 15. Brock Ramaker hauled dock parts to homes last fall but is unable to do that work in the future. Wayne Ramaker will email the slip holders about the dock parts that were removed because each person will need to hire someone to get their parts to the beach or someone will have to coordinate the entire process before spring install. All parts need to be delivered within the same weekend. Berg's Barge was not willing to deliver to homes but offered their storage services. Zawislak asked if more time should be allotted to get parts on site. Hilgers stated they should try to have everything delivered to the beach the same weekend with the hope most parts will get there. If they give more time, the entire process will be spread out and it will get disorganized. Panait said he used a moving company and that may be a solution for everyone. They charged a two-hour minimum but took less time than that. Bob Melamed asked why the city couldn't hire a moving company and the residents pay for it. Honey stated the city does not want the liability for private property that they don't own but each dock could coordinate their own efforts. Dudley thought a mover was a good idea. He suggested that a consequence of not having parts on site by the set date could be the renter loses their dock. Wayne Ramaker has a list of all the slip renters at the swim beach and they could coordinate using a mover. Melameds were interested in using a mover also. The city could communicate this information as well. Steinke stated the success of this has been good communication and the people on the docks working together.

5. New Business

5.1. Spring 2024 Dock Permit Process

Burgess stated the 2024 permit applications were mailed today and are due March 1st. There is an extensive waiting list in many places and there are many new homeowners in the city wanting slips.

5.2. Dock Fees for 2024

Burgess stated dock fees were increased which is the first increase in 13 years to cover administrative costs and also a rip rap project along Crystal Bay. The shoreline is extremely eroded.

5.3. City Council Direction Explore Improved Configurations at Beach Docks 12 – 16

Steinke stated that City Council provided direction to the Committee and asked them to address the following: consistent with the City Mission Statement and Comprehensive Plan, the Dock Committee will explore and recommend to City Council opportunities to enhance the broader resident experiences at and around the swim beach to improve: lake views, safety and water quality, while preserving non-riparian dock access.

Steinke stated that over years the opening at the beach has been getting narrower. It is decreasing views at the beach, it may have an impact on water quality, but that is arguable, and may impact safety for beach users. He stated they will be looking at some possible ideas. Steinke stated that some people think water along CSAH 15 is deep but Richie Anderson did water depth measurements and found that water depths north to south are consistent so there could be an opportunity to reconfigure on the north or the south. Knudsen talked about median water depths but with the drought would it remain the same or not. Steinke reviewed site plans and photos in the packet and presented an idea Richie Anderson suggested for the swim beach. He envisioned a reconfiguration at the south end with a Planned Unit Development (PUD) from the LMCD where docks would go out further and ½ of the shore would have to be preserved. The proposed plan shows the docks to the north would be added to the docks to the south. Steinke showed a photo of Excelsior with a similar reconfiguration. Foss asked if there was any thought about adding additional slips. Honey stated the city is only allowed a certain number of slips so slips would have to be moved from other locations to that site. Van Handel stated Excelsior docks are permanent and probably owned by the city. Zawislak stated most of the houses you are trying to open views for are not getting more views. Panait stated they are talking about safety but as proposed, all the boats will need to swing wider and into the swim area. Steinke stated the docks would be in deeper water.

Steinke stated the PUD requires 232 ft of shoreline. Zawislak asked how the depth was measured and expressed concerns that the water may be deeper and there was a lot of muck that would likely not hold a pole unless it went down 20-30 ft. Van Handel asked if a barge could get the lifts in the proposed configuration. It would need to be staged and difficult but could be done.

Steinke stated that since the concept was drawn, they have found some issues with it. If this was done, the boats would block sunsets. There would be problems with wave action for boats not on lifts. Approximately 65% have lifts. Boats would have a difficult time navigating with the way the wind blows. Due to these and other things they discovered; they have now focused on a concept to the north of the beach. Richie Anderson was unable to attend tonight and provide that concept, which is basically a flip of this concept.

Zawislak stated there may be problems with the easement on the north and the docks would be in the easement. Halverson's dock is deeded to them and not able to be moved. Panait asked if it was possible to create a Christmas tree shape. Steinke suggested a work group of Dock Committee members meet with Richie Anderson to try out drawing various concepts. Zawislak talked about the expense of additional equipment with an increase in depth.

Steinke stated there may be a solution where everyone wins. Knudsen stated 21 ft poles are likely needed, which are an added expense. Mud plates would also be needed. Knudsen discussed eliminating the canopies to improve views. Breazeale stated the council objectives are to balance the use of the beach for the entire community with the desire to have docks in one of the easiest accessible areas. Additional docks have already been added to the beach. They would like to not reduce the number of slips and will not take any slips away from a current slip holder. The hope is a solution that opens the swimming beach and viewing area. Knudsen stated that the number of slips increased at the beach from being removed from other areas. There were slips removed from Lafayette Road when land was vacated. There was discussion about the shallow water impact on ability to use slips. Slips used to be open on CSAH 15 in the past but those have filled up.

Steinke received support of a work shop meeting with Richie Anderson. Steinke liked that they are empowered to find a solution. Panait asked the timeline. There is no deadline and there was discussion that it would not be reasonable to do this in 2024 but they may be able to come up with a solution in 2024 to have the design ready for 2025. Breazeale discussed getting input from surrounding community members. Zawislak talked about difficulty getting boats in and out of the configuration and determining who gets moved where.

Honey stated that two slips shown close to the firelane would not be allowed if they have canopies because there is a required double setback of 40 ft. The proposed configuration would affect views of sunsets from the beach. There was discussion about Excelsior docks being installed in a windless location, and this proposal is the windiest location on the bay. There was also discussion about who would be located where because an inboard boat would have difficulty getting in and out of its dock. There is a lot of wind and muck where this is proposed, and it would cause problems. If it is shallower to the north, it may work but the property lines may prohibit it. Steinke agreed due to these points and others which are why they are looking at the north. Dudley asked if this would be a nice thing to do but it may turn out there is really no benefit. Breazeale stated that this idea may not be possible, but they want to have them do the best they can to come up with a solution. The desire is better views at the beach since it is a city park and benefits everyone. In the comp plan and mindset is everyone in the city to enjoy the lake life regardless of if they are riparian or not. Additionally, as a community they want everyone to enjoy all of the parks. The beach is used for city activities and enjoyed by many community members, and they want to try to enhance it for the entire community's enjoyment. The hope is to benefit dock slip holders and the community. Dudley stated they may need to leave it as is.

Whitaker stated when there was talk about shutting down Lafayette Rd on 15 but a number of people elsewhere did not want increased traffic on their streets, so they didn't do it. He stated sometimes a few people shut down something for the good of many. He stated it is unfortunate that the beach area has narrowed. Breazeale stated they could possibly do the same concept on both the north and the south side.

Ramaker stated trying to make a reconfiguration as proposed would be a nightmare because each renter has their own parts and a lot of people would have to buy additional parts. Lisa Melamed suggested that it may be time for uniform docks. Whitaker said going out 100 ft is where to his dock is unstable and needs reinforcing.

Steinke will check availability for a work shop one day in March at 5:30pm with Richie Anderson to try different ideas. There was discussion about making canopies uniform colors as they are replaced over time and putting out messaging regarding that.

6. Adjourn

(Zawislak motion, Van Handel second to adjourn; all ayes.) Meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Minutes taken by City Administrator Heidi Honey.

Others present: Jim Dudley, Wayne Ramaker, Lisa and Bob Melamed