

Kennebunk River Committee Meeting Minutes – March 15, 2016

Members present:

Rick Roberts, Mark Sutton, Charlie Barker, Bob Danzilo, Jack Jensen, Rich Woodman, Susan Inoue, Ray Billings.

Members absent: Pete Donovan

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Rick Roberts
Approved minutes for March 2016.

Old business

- Spirit of Massachusetts vessel

Harbormaster Billings brought to discussion the current status of the Spirit. The Spirit has been classified as a C-ROD (Craft Routinely Operated Dockside) by the USCG. The Spirit will officially open in the spring of 2016.

New business

- Lanigan Bridge Clearance Issue

The Committee was approached by Keith Wallace, resident of Kennebunk, about his concerns with the under-clearance height of the proposed bridge. Mr. Wallace is a Bridge Construction Engineer and expressed his concerns to the Committee. The Committee had not been informed by Maine DOT of any of the bridge design. The Committee was not notified of meetings regarding the bridge. Mr. Wallace explained there is no minimum standards for under-clearance on bridges set by Maine DOT. After receiving detailed information regarding the bridge construction and under clearance during flood conditions and MHHW (Mean Higher High Water), the Committee concluded the following and sent this letter to both Towns and Maine DOT:

With the ever increasing traffic on the river (Power vessels, Sail vessels, Jet Skis, Paddle boarders, Kayaks, Canoes) the Kennebunk River Committee's main objective is for safe, unimpeded passage on the river and has safety concerns with the proposed project:

- 1) The proposed under clearance of the bridge has the same inadequate clearance as the existing bridge. At normal high tides (MHW), there is only a 2 foot under clearance which creates a dangerous situation for non-motorized vessels trying to navigate up non-motorized vessels have no means of stopping and can be lodged under the bridge and create a rescue situation. There have been reports of rescues at or under the bridge during tide cycles. At prime high tides (MHHW) and flood conditions, navigating under the bridge is impossible. This inadequate under clearance will prevent rescues on the river during MHW and flood conditions.

- 2) The proposed under clearance of the bridge has the same inadequate clearance as the existing bridge. At prime high tides (MHHW) and flood conditions, the bottom of the bridge is under water. It is likely these conditions will happen more often in the next 100 years. Building a “100 year bridge” with it’s under structure exposed to rushing water and collisions of surface debris is not the preferred approach on most MDOT projects. An increase of 2 feet of under clearance would help to insure the longevity of this structure.
- 3) The Committee feels this proposed bridge does not follow the Comprehensive Plans for either Kennebunk or Kennebunkport.

The Committee recommends the following:

- 1) A minimum under clearance of 4’ at MHHW. This allows safe, full access at MHHW for rescue vessels, kayaks, canoes, paddle boards and keeps the entire river (north and south of the bridge) open for continued use during most tide phases.
- 2) The Committee believes the entire river open during most tide cycles will help alleviate the ever increasing vessel congestion on the river below (south of) the bridge. This would be a great opportunity for existing businesses on the river to encourage patrons to use non-motorized vessels above (north of) the bridge and away from the designated and federal channels south of the bridge.
- 3) Both towns reconsider the bridge construction and follow the Comprehensive Plans.

Despite the Committee’s concerns and recommendations, the under-clearance cannot and will not be changed. MaineDOT sent the Committee a letter stating in order to raise the under-clearance, the cost of the bridge would be greatly increased, the angle of the arch would not meet ADA regulations and some businesses entrances could be impacted.

The Committee sent another letter to both Towns and Leanne Timberlake at Maine DOT strongly recommending that hand rails are added to the bridge on both north and south faces of the new bridge. These hand rails will give non-motorized vessels a way to gain control and save themselves from a dangerous situation especially during flood conditions and MHHW (Mean Higher High Water).

The Committee received a letter from Leanne Timberlake stating that Maine DOT would install hand-rails as recommended and would add warning signage.

- Conservation Committee

Ellen Wolf from The Kennebunk Conservation Committee appeared before the River Committee and told the Committee about the high levels of E-coli in the river. River Committee member Jack Jensen suggested having Jake Amand from NERR at Laudhold Farms attend the April 19 meeting to discuss where the sources of E-coli are originating and ways to prevent pollution. The River Committee agreed to ask Mr. Amand to next meeting.

- No other Business - Vote to adjourn at 8:45 P.M.

- Next meeting: April 19, 2016 /7:00 **PM** / Kennebunk Town Hall.

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