

## **River Committee Meeting 5/16/23**

**In Attendance:** Jamie Houtz, Bob Danzilo, Justin Troiano, Susan Inuoue, Reiner Nieuwkirk, David Pratt. Leanne Travers, Deanna Innis, Shiloh Schulte

### **6:30pm Meeting commences.**

Bob Danzilo opened the meeting outlining to the new members the responsibility and jurisdiction of the River Committee and how it oversees the actual navigable water of the river and all that affects it. He stressed the importance of getting a handle on the work of the River Committee and all the rules and laws pertaining to its work and function. He then proceeded to hand out copies to all the new members, the Town of Kennebunk, Chapter 80 pertaining to the Kennebunk River, The Interlocal Agreement between the two towns concerning the Kennebunk River and a copy of the Kennebunk River Ordinance.

Basic introductions of the new members to the old members and vice versa.

### **Mooring Complaint**

Rob Egan who owns the mooring #19 spoke to the committee about the charges incurred by him for his mooring to the tune of \$1500 , a \$247 inspection fee plus repairs to his ground tackle. Then this year is charged again for another inspection and repair fee. Rob recognizes the importance of inspections but feels the repairs should be good enough to last longer than that.

Jamie Houtz explained that the next inspection for recreational boats will now be 2025 and every two years from here on. He also mentioned that after the winter that we had, he made the decision to inspect again to see how the tackle held up. He is developing a data base with these moorings and so keeping the records on what had been done and what kind of tackle is needed will be important going forward. He also mentioned that different parts of the river have different currents and stress factors which are considered when choosing ground tackle.

Mr. Nieuwkirk agreed that Rob's bills were very high and felt that we need to make sure our third party mooring company uses heavy enough tackle to carry the two years safely and maybe longer, so that repairs are necessary less often. We all agreed with this and Jamie and Bob will put something together for the mooring company, requesting heavier gear to insure that the tackle should be fine for at least two years.

A visitor, Craig Prescavich, mooring ball 59, talked a bit about his travails in dealing with the shifting depths of his mooring and his ground tackle. He and Knoepe Nieuwkerk talked a little bit about ground tackle and what he can do to adjust his issues.

## **Dredging**

Shiloh Schulte mentioned that he had heard that a dredging operation was coming up.

Jamie mentioned that that was a real good rumor and then made a report on dredging. He had spoken with one of Senator Collins aides who had shared with him their press release. The Press release said, "Senator Collings has requested that the 5.1 million be included in the fiscal year of 2024 of the energy and water development appropriations bill for this project, which is a critical first step in the process. Appropriation subcommittees are now responsible for drafting their respective spending bills for FY 24. The next milestone will be when subcommittees release their draft bills and we will know which requests have been incorporated into legislation. We will be sure to stay in touch."

Jamie thinks that since there is no urgency involved, this will not happen. We would have to come up with a way where the two towns can mount some kind of action to appropriate these funds. This is worth looking into.

Mr. Nieuwkerk mentioned that as long as he has been fishing this river, the basic depth has stayed the same and certain hours are just not workable for some boats and those boats work around those times. It is just the nature of our river. Wells harbor has the same problem. If boats cannot adapt to the river conditions,

then they can always try and find a better place for themselves as many have done in the past. It is just the nature of our river.

A general discussion was discussed about the navigable channel in our river and how numerous businesses on our river wanted to “jump on” any Army Corp of Engineers dredging. Any “add on” would have to be an operation with private money to dredge out areas that could help them.

A description of our navigable channel was given by our Harbormaster from 75 feet up to Doan’s Wharf and then 50 feet up to the turning basin and then 40 feet to the Bridge. This was mostly for the new peoples benefit.

### **Mooring Barge**

Mooring barge is back in the River to be used when and if needed. Jamie gave a description of how the barge was built by Bob Williamson and how the town bought it a couple of years back when we were doing the mooring work ourselves. Now, we are faced with what to do with it in the future.

Dave Pratt asked about who owned the moorings and Jamie Houtz gave him an explanation of how the moorings tackle are owned by the mooring owners but the ground the blocks are set is owned by the municipalities and they receive their mooring fees.

At this point there was also a discussion about being able to request heavier tackle before the season from the Pepperrell Cove company and Jamie said that when the letters are received in February, let him know your intentions and it can be done. We also discussed the different parts of the ground tackle assembly that need the most care.

### **Voting**

The following people were voted into office for this year.

Chair— Bob Danzilo  
Vice Chair—Susan Inoue  
Secretary—Justin Troiano

Jamie mentioned to Bob that he had a calendar he wanted to share with him which showed the dates you would need to get a request for a change of ordinance entered into the pipeline. Shiloh Schulte said that anyone can come to an Ordinance Subcommittee meeting and submit a request to change an ordinance but if the River Committee did so, it would carry more weight being a town committee.

Shiloh began a discussion of how to raise some more revenue to develop a capital account as stated in Article 80-5 B. which could help us raise money for things like dredging etc. Leanne Travers asked about the marinas and the other businesses on the river. Do they have any fees that are charged to people and businesses using the river. Maybe there should be. Shiloh also mentioned that if we were slowly and consistently building a decent reserve, when we needed that last piece of funding, it would be easier to get it from the towns.

Susan Inoue brought the last subject of the meeting up as to the health of the river from pollution is also the domain of the River Committee. She mentioned the e-coli outbreak of a couple of years ago as something we need to stay vigilant about. (Over the years there have been issues with fertilizer and nitrates and other pollutants coming from upriver farms and golf courses.)

Meeting adjourned at 7:40PM