

River Committee Meeting Minutes

August 15, 2023

In Attendance: Jamie Houtz, Bob Danzilo, Justin Troiano, Susan Inuoue, David Pratt, Deanna Enis, Knoepe Neiuwkerk

Guests: Chris Robinson, Lora McGrath, Susan Graesser, Nina Pearlmutter, Oliver Payne and Martha Foley

6:30 Meeting Commences

Boat Excise tax Discussion

Meeting began with a discussion with guest Chris Robinson about how to go about enforcing the excise tax for boats on the river. There are many people who are paying their excise tax and some who just ignore it. It needs to be enforced but more importantly, everyone who owns and uses a boat needs to know about excise tax and understand that there should be penalties in place for those who ignore it. Chris mentioned that he was just checking in to see how the issue was coming along. Ideas were floated as to notifying the marinas that all boats need to have proof of registration to lease their slips for the season. Notice of this could be posted in the Kennebunk Post any other local papers, as well as the websites of all the towns. A notice could also be posted at all marinas as to that effect. Chris Robinson thanked us for the time to share.

Upriver signage and speed enforcement, Lund boat status

Bob Danzilo, seeing that there were several upriver home owners present, opened up the floor to field complaints and listen to the viewpoints.

Nina Pearlmutter and friends explained that the owners up the river are very frustrated that the speeding upriver has continued, and the River Committee has done nothing about it. She complained that any signage is non-existent and she has seen no enforcement to restrict this behavior. She made the argument that all of this erosion was coming from the boats speeding and causing wakes. She mentioned various paper articles she has read supporting this argument. She also expressed the resident's frustration with nothing being done about it since they have brought this up for several years. Since some of this was not all on our current Harbormaster's watch, we went over some of the Jim Black's time and what he tried to do. Nothing of any meaning came out of that either. Ms. Pearlmutter also told the River Committee that she was going to bring this to the Kennebunk Selectmen. Bob Danzilo told her that that was a good idea.

Knoepe Nieuwkerk mentioned that there has been a lot of erosion with all the ice flowing down from upriver and the frequent flooding we have had this year has exacerbated the erosion. There has been a lot of damage upriver as well as a very large piece of land was calved off, creating a little island just below Durrell's Bridge. He also made the point that young people have been enjoying that part of the river for years and he would rather have them enjoying good clean fun, instead of any other kinds of not so innocent activities. He also stated that an expert told us last year about calving of the sides of the river due to the rising of riverbeds and flooding. It happens all year long, not just the summer months. So, this issue of erosion seems to be caused by numerous things as well as boat speeding but mostly by natural and changing natural occurrences.

In summary the basic premise for the argument is that the property owners are upset over the behavior of the boaters upriver and are claiming that the speeding and recreational use of said boats are causing the erosion of their land. This happens during the summer months and that The River Committee should have the harbormaster enforce this speed zone. But major erosion is happening all year long from rising tides and extraordinary ice, rain and flooding. Nina Pearlmutter stated that she has found written articles backing her claim of boat wakes are causing most of the erosion all over the United States.

Susan Inouue, mentioned about the expert we had visit last year discussing the calving problems which occur all year long and that articles could be found to support both sides of the issue. She also put forward the astute observation of how these towns are exploding with new population and areas of these rivers are seeing more and more traffic from whalers, kayaks and paddle boards, more than ever before. We are just going to have to get used to it.

After this discussion, Jamie Houtz explained what was being done to address these boat usage concerns upriver, was to put together a small boat to patrol the area but the engine for this small boat has had mechanical problems that have to be addressed before getting the boat functional again. In addition, Jamie was going to order the signs which would be posted on their properties at to the Safe Speed Limit and a Penalties of Fines for offenders and putting the No Wake buoys in the river. Patrolling that area will have to wait until we have a functioning vessel to use for that job.

Bob Danzilo then recognized the two people from the Mousam River and asked why they were here. They responded that they were also starting to see more and more boat traffic on the Mousam and wanted to get a little input on what we were going to do about it. Signage was also discussed for them using some of our sign ideas. The committee suggested that they form their own Mousam River Committee and organize to deal with these issues.

Old Harbormaster RIB Boat- Status

Bob Danzilo started addressing the next agenda item and that was the old harbormaster boat. Jamie said that the old boat is being put out to bid once six police patrol cars that are stripped of their important stuff that the town keeps. And then that boat in those six police cars we put on GOV deals. That money could be used to buy new engine for the little red Lund that would be used for patrolling upriver. Bob asked Jamie what kind of money would be needed to get a new engine for the Lund and Jamie thought that it could be done for between \$7500 and \$9,000

Seagrass Private Property Signage

There is only Private Properties sign there but there is parking and access to the Kayak ramp. What needs to be done is to replace a sign for Public Landing access to Kayak ramp. We could look into the deed to back up the public access issue. The highway department should be able to provide the proper signage for access. The original sign for the Public Kayak Landing seems to have been removed.

Government Wharf Cameras

Cameras should be installed by the end of September. There will be four cameras, live stream, mouth of the river, 2 covering the doors and a 4th covering the parking lot. Will be backed up for ten days.

Dredging

Nothing new from Washington yet for our dredging.

David Pratt talked about a new dredge operation or dredging equipment supposed to be purchased by Town of Saco. Then the towns in York County would be able to rent and use it. Nothing more is known of this development.

Mooring update

Jamie put forth the idea of raising the mooring fees on the river to fuel a river fund that is overseen by the two towns and the Harbormaster to be used for river purposes. This could be added to the

There will be no more moorings added to the river and Jamie feels that there are still too many.

Green Can #9

Has been reinstalled.

8:00pm Meeting Adjourned

