

DATE: February 26, 2008
TO: Mayor Darlene Kordonowy
SUBJECT: Harbor Commission Annual Report to the City Council for 2007

As required by BIMC 2.46.030, the Bainbridge Island Harbor Commission hereby submits its 2007 Annual Report.

It was another busy year for the members of the Harbor Commission and our city support staff. Activities of this group included the submission of several legislative items to Council, a renewed commitment to support the efforts of our harbormaster and marine officer and in many instances actual involvement with situations on island waters.

Since the city's adoption in 2005 of the open water marina concept (A&M Plan) that project has been moving forward towards implementation thanks to preliminary funding by Council and diligent work by staff. The project is in a legislative holding pattern pending an official review of current needs and assessment of budgetary impacts. The advent of a version of such a marina will provide boaters with a safe haven for their vessels and the city with a far more definitive means to manage the harbors and how the public uses them.

In anticipation of the establishment of the offshore marina, the commission determined that a conversion of the status quo in the harbor to an organized and managed use of public lands would require a tremendous effort that would best not be left to some future official marina implementation date. Our first concern was that given the physical attributes that vessels would be required to meet in order to reside in the marina it was obvious that many of the boats in the harbor then and now would not qualify for a moorage agreement due to their severe state of neglect. Thus, working with staff we recommended and endorsed an increased effort to rid the harbor of derelict vessels.

We are happy to report that along with increased support at the state level and the timely decision by Council to fund the effort many derelicts have been processed this year and several more are in line to be disposed of or asked to leave pending the outcome of an ongoing legal proceeding.

In addition to the derelict removal program it was obvious to the Harbor Commission that existing city code was very thin or non-existent in matters pertaining to municipal harbor management. For years the police department and city staffers have been fielding concerns and complaints from local citizenry regarding the utilization of harbor waters and the city dock only to find that lack of regulation has tied their hands. In an effort to correct this situation an HC sub-committee was established and tasked with the polling of citizens, city staff, the police department and other commission members in order to identify and prioritize acute utilization problems in the harbors.

From this effort which included considerable discussion and input from the public at our monthly meetings a finalized set of recommendations for legislative action was presented to the city and Council earlier this year (see below) and all but one were adopted. It is our hope that the remaining recommendation will be implemented in the very near future. The provisions that will be made available to our code enforcement personnel (as a result of your support) will finally provide the City with the tools needed to bring order to our harbors and to pave the way for a successful implementation of the open water marina should that feature also be implemented.

Individual items of interest to City Council that the Harbor Commission, our staffers or individual members have been involved in over the course of the last year would include:

1. Development and passage of ordinance 2007-01 which extended the application of marine related nuisance codes to all jurisdictional waters and established new rules pertaining to usage of the City's Waterfront Park Dock.
2. Development and passage of ordinance 2007-16 which amended the BI Shoreline Master Program to provide for the eventual establishment of a municipally managed offshore marina in Eagle Harbor.
3. Development and submission for adoption of ordinance 2007-34 which would further implement as code the balance of the harbor management recommendations developed in the prior year by the HC. This ordinance package would fill in many regulatory holes that are needed for effective management of jurisdictional waters.
4. Development of a preliminary pro-forma and budget associated with the build-out of an offshore marina in Eagle Harbor.
5. Provided input to Council deliberations on the Noise Ordinance in an effort to address citizen complaints about high sound levels coming from gas powered electrical generators in use in Eagle Harbor.
6. Improved the participation and effectiveness of the Harbor Steward Program
7. Participated in the DOE Oil Spill Response training program that is designed to provide local citizens with the knowledge and equipment to quickly contain contaminants in the event of sinkings, vessel fires, etc.
8. Provided input to the BI capital Facilities Plan regarding project funding and equipment needs identified by the HC for enhancement of harbor facilities or constituent services.

9. Discussion and preliminary planning for an advocacy program encouraging the use of ecologically friendly anti-fouling bottom paints for boats residing in BI harbors.
10. Continue to develop strategies to achieve more economical and efficient means of physically processing derelicts vessels with the goal of reducing disposal costs to the city and state.

The Harbor Commission appreciates the continued strong support we are receiving from all departments and entities within Bainbridge City government. Additionally we are very appreciative of the ongoing efforts by staff to accommodate our needs and finally the assistance and input that we receive from harbor stewards and the general public is invaluable. We hope that what we are attempting to accomplish meets the approval of Council and by extension all concerned constituents.

Bob Selzler
2007 Chair, Bainbridge Island Harbor Commission

cc: Greg Byrne, Director
Planning & Community Development