

**CONNECTICUT MARITIME COMMISSION (CTMC)  
REPORT OF MEETING #10  
December 15, 2005**

**Location of Meeting:**

CT Department of Transportation  
2800 Berlin Turnpike - Conf Rm. B  
Newington, Connecticut

**Attendance:**

**Commissioners Present**

Carl Bard (for Commissioner Korta)  
Vincent Cashin  
Tom Dubno  
G.L. "Doc" Gunther  
Joseph P. Maco  
Carmen Molina-Rios (for Commissioner Abromaitis)  
Joseph Riccio  
Philip Smith (for Secretary Genuario)  
Martin Toyen  
Kaye Williams  
George Wisker (for Commissioner McCarthy)

**Commissioners Absent**

John Johnson  
Judy Gott  
David Shuda  
John Wronowski

**Guests**

Chuck Beck	Mel Cote	Dave Head	Mike Keegan
John McAvoy	Ed O'Donnell	John Pinto	Dave Rossiter
Bob Sammis	John Santa	Joel Severance	Geoffrey Steadman
Carmine Trotta	John Valengavich		

**I. Call to Order:**

Chairman Toyen called the meeting to order 0940. The Chair noted that eleven commissioners were present; thus, there was a quorum (eight needed).

**II. Review of Meeting Minutes:**

A motion was made and seconded, and by a unanimous vote, the 17 Nov 2005 minutes were approved.

**III. Public Comments:**

None offered.

**IV. Old Business:**

- ***Prioritized Items*** – Due to the anticipated length the presentation by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACE), the Chair asked for a motion to defer discussion on the List of Prioritized Items to the January 2006 meeting. A motion was made, seconded and approved by a unanimous vote.

**V. New Business:****▪ *Invited Guest: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE)***

The Chair introduced Ed O'Donnell, Chief, Navigation Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District. Mr. O'Donnell gave a presentation supported by Power Point slides on dredging planning issues. He stated that the ACE is the source for millions of Federal dollars for dredging projects. Surveys of the federally designated channels are conducted every 2-3 years. Maintenance dredging is 100% federally funded. Due to a lack of overall funding, priorities need to be set. Dredging projects are evaluated/ranked on an *economic-value* basis. Information was provided on the 30 projects in Connecticut waters of which 10-11 are active. Norwalk was used as an example of how the project process works, including delays, funding changes, and sediment management issues.

John Pinto and Geoff Steadman (Harbor Management Association) interjected information from the local perspective. The dredging planning timeline is too lengthy. The Norwalk maintenance dredging process started in 1996. The project has still not obtained all the Federal funding necessary to complete the work. Southport has been in the planning stages for eight years. The actual work should only take one month to complete. Dredge material disposal issues have increased the cost. Differences between how the Federal and State classify the dredged material have been significant factors. Various members of the Commission made comments relative to the bureaucracy involved in what should be a simple process. Mr. Maco asked if there was a *model state*. In response, Mr. O'Donnell stated that Rhode Island should be studied.

Rhode Island has passed water quality regulations that stymied dredging operations to the point that a one-way traffic scheme had to be used to get deep-draft vessels through the upper reaches of Narragansett Bay and the Providence River. User groups and the public complained. A dredging advocate and workgroup were established. The result is that some Rhode Island regulations were modified to accommodate dredging needs. There was discussion about what entity would be best to take on the role of being an advocate for dredging in Connecticut. Mr. Cashin asked if a lack of an advocate in Connecticut was a problem. Mr. O'Donnell replied, "Not really, but ACE would like to hear from more than the Connecticut DEP." Joel Severance, President of the Harbor Management Association (HMA), stated that HMA had been serving as an advocate and had engaged DEP on dredging issues. Jeff Steadman (HMA) stated that as volunteers, the HMA had limited resources. He further opined that the Connecticut dredging process was flawed because each town had to battle for dredging funds as opposed to the State battling for all of the towns. He also stated that the major flaw was the need for an approved Dredge Material Maintenance Plan (DMMP) to be able to use Long Island Sound (LIS) beyond the next couple of years.

Deputy Commissioner Bard stated the need to treat dredging projects like highway projects - create a project delivery team; capital project funding. He pointed out that DEP is a regulatory agency whose mission does not include project delivery. Mr. Dubno restated the need for a State-level advocate or advocacy group to press dredging projects. Mr. Smith opined that the preparation of the DMMP was the responsibility of the Federal government; not the State. He also stated that State money could not be provided to the ACE for dredging. However, Deputy Commissioner Bard offered that there was a way to combine State and Federal funds towards a project adding that it had been used on highway projects.

Mr. Dubno pointed out that New Haven had recently established a Port Authority. He also stated that New London has had a Port Authority, but it was dormant. Thus, he felt it was up to the State to serve as the dredging advocate. Mike Keegan (ACE) stated that the DMMP should be considered a joint responsibility. He challenged Connecticut to establish a prioritized list of dredging projects to better leverage the State's Congressional delegation. Mr. Cashin challenged the Maritime Commission to take on the role of dredging advocate.

A second ACE Power Point presentation was made that covered details on the active Connecticut dredging projects. A handout was provided. Each port presented fostered discussion related to the challenges of funding, dredge material management, and conflicting Federal/State regulation.

A specific question about the possibility to deepen the project depth of the New Haven channel fostered considerable discussion. Funding for an improvement project would have a 50/50 cost share and would be expensive. Although a NEPA study had been conducted the last time New Haven Harbor had been dredged, the study would have to be updated as the first step. A comment was made that since little-to-no deep draft operations took place above the Quinnipiac Bridge, any improvement project could be limited to the lower part of the harbor. That comment turned the discussion to Bridgeport Harbor since there is a similar lower/upper harbor consideration that could reduce cost.

Mel Cote (EPA) made remarks about the designation of the dredge material disposal sights in Long Island Sound (LIS). LIS has had four traditional sites. However, due to pressures from the NY Coastal Zone Management Consistency Plan, only two disposal sites will be available after approximately 2010. The New London and Cornfield sites are currently active, but will close within a couple of years leaving the Central Long Island Sound (CLIS) and Western Long Island Sound (WLIS) sites. Without a DMMP, CLIS and WLIS will close as well. Mr. Keegan provided a summary of recommendations for Connecticut related to dredging issues: Determine most immediate needs, complete the DMMP, consider forming a DMMP steering committee, consider forming a process delivery team and/or a regional dredging team.

- **Dates for CTMC Calendar Year 2006 Meetings** - The Chair proposed that the CTMC continue to hold its monthly meetings on the third Thursday of each month. He also proposed that the meetings continue to be held at the CONNDOT Building in Newington. There was some discussion about holding some of the meetings in the Bridgeport area. A comment was made that the CTMC had to submit the meeting schedule to the Secretary of State's office by 30 November 2005 or each meeting would have to be a "special" meeting. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved to hold the meetings on the third Thursday of each month during calendar year 2006.

The Chairman closed the discussion due to the time. He noted the need for coordination among all of the stakeholders and invited the HMA to participate in the process.

**VI. Date of Next Meeting:**

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, 19 January 2005, at 0930. It is to be held in Conference Room G-328 on the ground floor of the CONNDOT Headquarters building at 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, Connecticut.

**VII. Adjournment:**

A motion was made to adjourn. It was seconded and carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 1204.