

**CONNECTICUT MARITIME COMMISSION (CTMC)
REPORT OF MEETING (Mtg. #07-05)
16 May 2007**

Location of Meeting: CONNDOT HQ Newington, CT

Attendance:

Commissioners

Present

Chuck Beck (for Commissioner Carpenter)
Vincent Cashin
Susan Decina (for Acting Comm Angelo)
G.L. "Doc" Gunther
Joseph P. Maco (for TSB Chair Kelleher)
Joseph Riccio
Martin Toyen
George Wisker (for Comm McCarthy)
Robert Virgulak

Absent

Tom Dubno
Judy Gott
David Shuda
Phil Smith (for Secretary Genaurio)
Kaye Williams
Jon Wronowski

Guests

John Crowther	Bob Hammersley	David Head	Ed O'Donnell	Michael Piscitelli
Dave Rossiter	Joe Salvatore	Joel Severance	Bill Spicer	Geoff Steadman
Alan Stevens	Kurt Walton			

I. Call to Order:

- Chairman Marty Toyen opened the meeting at 9:34. A quorum of 9 was present.

II. Review of Meeting Minutes:

- The draft minutes of the 21 March 2007 meeting were reviewed. The April meeting was canceled. After a motion by V. Cashin and second by C. Beck, the minutes were approved by 8 affirmative votes with one abstention.

III Discussion Open to Public

- Alan Stevens made an announcement about the Maritime Day celebration in New London at fort Trumbull on 22 May 2007. C Beck stated that there are numerous related activities over a several day period as part of the celebration. Information is available at http://www.thamesriverheritage.org/national_maritime_day.htm
- Bill Gash, Executive Director of the CT Maritime Coalition, announced that the CMC was working on a draft RFP to hire a consultant to conduct the economic study of the CT Maritime Industries. Copies of the draft were distributed. Since the CMC is also considered the maritime cluster, the study would provide the updated information needed by the CTMC to assist in justifying dredging projects. Mr. Gash requested that members of the CTMC review the draft and provide input to insure completeness. Due to a stated desired two week turn around, it was decided that individual comments should be e-mailed directly to Bill Gash (ctmaritime@msn.com) with a copy to Marty Toyen (mtoyen@seaworthsys.com).
- Doc Gunther opined that this is another opportunity to emphasize the environmental benefits of dredging. Joel Severance stated that he had a copy of a report on the economic impact study of the CT River that he would provide for further distribution to the CTMC members. Ed O'Donnell stated that Massachusetts had recently conducted a similar study.

- Vince Cashin stated that the scuttlebutt was that TURBANA would be moving out of Bridgeport, using it as an example of an economic loss caused in part by a lack of maintenance dredging in Bridgeport harbor. When discussed, it was determined that the move was not yet confirmed. Furthermore, there were several other factors being weighed in the decision making process: increases in electrical costs to maintain the refrigerated warehouse and labor costs.
- Mike Piscitelli provided an update on the New Haven Port Authority (NHPA) land use plan. He stated that a draft of the plan had been approved by the NHPS Board of Directors. He will provide copies to the CTMC in the near future.

IV Old Business:

- Meeting with CT Congressional Staff - Marty Toyen provided information on the meeting held on 5 April with staff members of the CT Congressional Delegation (CODEL). A summary of the meeting was also provided with the handouts. Overall the CODEL staff members were very knowledgeable on dredging issues particularly on the Ambro Amendment. The staffers made it very clear that their respective Representatives/Senators were not inclined to take any action to repeal Ambro. They offered assistance/support for any CTMC efforts to create a State dredging fund.
- Dredging Project Update:
 - Joe Salvatore provided an update on the work of the dredging workgroup formed at the March CTMC meeting. The workgroup met and has drafted a dredging “introductory” letter aimed at chief elected officials in CT. Once the draft is refined it will be presented to the CTMC for approval and distribution under the Chairman’s signature.
 - George Wisker provided an update on the Long Island Sound Dredge Material Management Plan (LIS DMMP) Project Development Team (PDT). The PDT is part of the LIS DMMP process tasked with developing a Project Management Plan (PMP). The PDT met about a month ago and reviewed a draft of the PMP. The PMP will be used as a vehicle for the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers to conduct “scoping” meetings to obtain public comments/input. It is anticipated that there will be 6 scoping meetings (3 in NY and 3 in CT) commencing in September 2007.
 - Status of the Long Island Sound Dredge Material Management Plan (LIS DMMP) – George Wisker provided information about the Regional Dredge Team (RDT) steering committee conference call held on 15 May. There was some discussion about having dredging project applicants providing information on alternative disposal methods that might be available. With respect to funding for the LIS DMMP, nothing new had occurred. The \$1.74M in the FY 07 federal budget has yet to materialize and probably won’t. The FY 08 Federal budget proposes \$2.8M for the LIS DMMP. There was considerable discussion not directly related to the DMMP about the need to keep the CT CODEL informed about the potential loss of TURBANA, how the loss would increase truck traffic on I-95, the need to not only engage the CODEL on funding for the DMMP but also on Ambro, etc.
- CT Maritime Cluster (CMC)/DECD Development of Commercial/Recreational Data - See comments on CMC RFP by Bill Gash provided above under Public Comments.
- Revenue Sources for Maritime Projects/Proposed Draft Legislation - Chuck Beck reported that the HB 7070 died in the Transportation Committee. He further reported that there was still one dredge funding related bill apparently in play; SB 983 AN ACT FUNDING CERTAIN DREDGING PROJECTS. Senator Finch sponsored the Bill that would provide \$5M from the General Fund to CTDEP to “fund and implement dredging projects in the greater Bridgeport area”. Doc Gunther stated that positive action on both Bills was still possible as the CT

Legislature hammers out the final "budget" bill (i.e. Appropriations Bill).

- CONNDOT Purchase of 201 Waterfront Street, New Haven – Mike Piscitelli reported that despite the letter of support from the CTMC to Commissioner Carpenter, CONNDOT was standing firm on its need for the identified Quinnipiac River Bridge project waste storage facility at 201 Waterfront Street.
- Meeting with Transportation Committee Co-Chairs – Marty Toyen reported that despite several attempts on his part, neither Senator DeFonzo nor Representative Guerrera returned his calls/e-mails, thus a meeting was never held.

V New Business:

- Presentation on Navigational Improvement Program - Mark Habel (ACOE) was scheduled to attend the CTMC meeting and make the presentation but had to cancel due to illness. The presentation will be scheduled for the June meeting.
- Errata – Status of CTMC Appointed Commissioners - Marty Toyen introduced Susan Decina as the DECD Commissioner's new "designee". Chuck Beck reaffirmed the need to obtain copies of each CTMC member's letter of appointment. Copies can be e-mailed, faxed or mailed.

Marty Toyen stated that the CTMC should not to lose sight of other maritime issues such as the disparity between how Rhode Island and Connecticut taxes (or doesn't tax) aspects of the recreational boating industry. John Johnson and Bill Spicer provided examples. John Johnson will arrange for the CT Maritime Trade Association to make a presentation at the June meeting of the CTMC. CTMA ay seek CTMC support for legislative relief.

There was a discussion about keeping CAD cells designed for large ACOE funded dredging projects open so that "smaller private projects" might use them. The example of a dredging project conducted by the USN in the Thames was offered but after discussion was determined not to apply. The conversation drifted onto Cadmium as a contaminant in dredge materials. It was stated that the source is unknown for the most part but an issue in several if not all CT waterways. The discussion then returned to how CAD cells should be used/made available. Marty Toyen attempted to tie the conversations together by reminding all that the key is coordination which is why a dredging project coordinator position was established within CONNDOT. His comments were supported by remarks from Ed O'Donnell who stated that the ACOE practice was to design a CAD cell large enough for the federal project plus any additional private projects that might take place during the same mobilization effort.

Doc Gunther provided his perspective on the Caswell Cove dredging project. He stated that the material that was originally destined to be place in a whole in the bed of the Housatonic will be/have been deposited in the Long Island Sound disposal site. He further stated that unfortunately the material being dredged from the entrance to Milford harbor is being/would be used to cover the Caswell Cove material as opposed to being used as beach nourishment material as originally planned.

Vince Cashin asked if the CTMC should provide a letter of support for the effort to suspend the state sales tax on fuel. John Johnson stated that it would be best to wait until the CTMA made its presentation next month.

Bill Spicer and Doc Gunther raised the issue of efforts within CT to improve the education and skilled labor pool related to the marine industry. Comments were offered about the Magnet School in Groton, the Sound School in New Haven and the Aquaculture School in Bridgeport, problems acquiring liability insurance and building permits.

In response to a question, Joe Riccio provided an update on the Feeder Barge Project. Labor agreements and a designated spot within the NY/NJ Port area still pend, however there has been some positive movement on both. Joe Maco asked if the roll-on roll-off versus lift-on lift-off method of loading the barges is an issue. Joe Riccio stated that it was not. He amplified his response by stating that a lift-on lift-off operation would be several times more expensive.

Joel Severance that the “no discharge” efforts along the coast of CT were enjoying good success. He rhetorically asked if the same approach should be taken against commercial vessels.

Doc Gunther raised the issue of a field of debris that accumulated as a result of the recent flooding rains and gathered at a marina located adjacent to the I-95 Bridge as it crosses the Housatonic River. Questions and answers about who might be responsible ensued. All were reminded that Governor Rell had asked for CT to be designated a “disaster area”. The resulting designation would have allowed federal funds to be applied for the proper removal of the debris. Doc Gunther stated that the debris had been dragged to the center of the channel and set adrift. Bill Spicer added comments about such debris being a problem in the vicinity of the Race (the eastern entrance to Long Island Sound).

Joe Riccio stated that the FY 2007 Port Security Grants had been awarded. A brief summary of the amounts and recipients was provided.

George Wisker provided information on the Committee on Marine Transportation Systems (CMTS) and the National Dredge Team (NDT). The NDT is in the process of evaluating the need to update the current national dredging policy created by MARAD in 1994. The current federal/national standard is to use open water disposal as the least cost, environmentally acceptable method for the disposal of dredge materials. The standard is used to establish the base funding the ACOE will receive for a project. Comments are being solicited concerning whether standards should be established on a regional vs. national level to account for limitations imposed in a specific region. An example would be the limitation Ambro has placed on CT. The NDT web page is <http://www.epa.gov/owow/oceans/ndt/>.

Joe Maco provided comments about the up coming June meeting of the North Atlantic Ports Association being held in Wilmington, DE. He inquired if anybody from CONNDOT would be attending to represent the Port of New London. He was reminded that CONNDOT is not the “port authority” for New London but merely a landlord.

Joe Maco asked questions about the EPA article that had been made part of the handout package. The article stated that the “*Six government agencies tasked with regulating dredging activities in Long Island Sound have reached an accord on a process to support the goal of reducing or eliminating open water disposal of dredged materials into the Sound while maintaining the economic viability of New York and Connecticut working ports*”. Joe opined that the article needed an economic reality check. He felt that without the ability to use Long Island Sound for open water disposal, the CT ports were doomed. George Wisker provided clarification on the article stating that the article did not provide any new information merely affirmed what had been taking place within the RDT and PDT previously discussed under **Old Business** Dredging Project Update. Ed O'Donnell stated that the NEPA process says that open water disposal is the last choice and has for some time. There was some additional discussion about dredging, open water options, CAD cells, etc, all of which was a rehash of comments previously made earlier.

VI Date of Next Meeting:

- Marty Toyen reminded all that the next meeting of the CTMC is scheduled at 9:30 AM **Wednesday 20 June 2007** at the Fort Trumbull Conference Center in New London, CT.

VII. Adjournment:

- A motion was made by Joe Maco, seconded by Joe Riccio and approved unanimously to adjourn. The meeting ended at 10:57 PM.