

**CONNECTICUT MARITIME COMMISSION (CTMC)
REPORT OF MEETING (Mtg. #07-08)
15 August 2007**

Location of Meeting: Aquaculture Vocational School Bridgeport, CT

Attendance:

Commissioners

Present

Chuck Beck (for Commissioner Carpenter)
Vincent Cashin
Tom Dubno
Susan Decina (for Commissioner McDonald)
Judy Gott
Joseph Riccio
Martin Toyen
Kaye Williams
George Wisker (for Commissioner McCarthy)
Robert Virgulak

Absent

G.L. "Doc" Gunther
Joseph P. Maco (for TSB Chair Kelleher)
Phil Smith (for Secretary Genaurio)
David Shuda
John Wronowski

Guests

John Crowther	Michael Griffin	Robert Hammersley	David Lis	Tony Mobilia
LCDR Kevin Oditt	Ed O'Donnell	John Pinto	Joe Salvatore	
Geoff Steadman	Alan Stevens	Kurt Walton	Grant Westerson	
LT Matt Wingate				

I. Call to Order:

- Joe Riccio, the Vice Chair, opened the planned abbreviated meeting at 9:30. An initial quorum of 9 was present. Marty Toyen, the Chair, arrived at 0950.

II. Review of Meeting Minutes:

- The draft minutes of the 18 July 2007 meeting were reviewed. After a motion by Judy Gott and second by Vin Cashin, the minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

III Discussion Open to Public

- No comments were offered by the public. Kaye Williams did provide an update on Doc Gunther's recovery after surgery.

IV Old Business:

- Dredging Update: Update was deferred to the September meeting to abbreviate the meeting and allow time to tour the Aquaculture Vocational School facility.
- Joe Riccio provided an update on the Feeder barge project. A terminal facility willing to participate on the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) side of the route has yet to be identified. Kaye Williams asked about the press articles of late that quoted various Bridgeport politicians (current Mayor and declared candidates for the position) who were instrumental in securing the project for Bridgeport now calling for the termination of the project based on "local environmental concerns". It was stated that the Bridgeport Mayor would be attending the Bridgeport Port Authority meeting next week to address the future of the project. Joe Riccio reminded everybody that the purpose of the Feeder Barge project was a proof of concept project with a goal of getting truck traffic off of the SWCT I-95 corridor which would reduce emissions as well as congestion. Despite delays the concept still needed to be tested. The alternative is to accept the status quo. He stated that the contract between the Port Authority and the CONDOT was good until May 2008, time enough for another push.

There was some discussion about the failure of a feeder barge experiment between NYC and Albany and the difference between that project and the Bridgeport project. A comment was made and reference to materials distributed to the CTMC about the pressure on the nation's ports to turn working port properties into residential/retail facilities was made. A Bill Introduced in the U.S. House entitled "Keep Our Waterfronts Working Act of 2007" was discussed. Vin Cashin offered that maritime freight transportation was cheaper per unit measure than highway freight costs. Joe Riccio provided information on the cost per container and the time/distance advantages of a trucker picking-up/delivering a container to Bridgeport vs PANYNJ. George Wisker mentioned the environmental benefits of a barge type operation vs the use of trucks for the longer haul. Vin Cashin that tugs were beginning to use cleaner fuels. He also commented on the fact that containers emanating from the PANYNJ would have already been scanned/cleared for security purposes. Bridgeport and the other CT ports could also serve as the back door to the PANYNJ if that port was incapacitated due to a terrorist event.

- The Chair arrived and stated that OPM Secretary Genuario would be attending the 19 September 2007 CTMC meeting to make a presentation on budget issues.

V New Business:

- Pilotage Rate Issue - Vin Cashin provided information about the Connecticut Marine Pilots, how the pilot rotation/assignment is scheduled, the sharing of the work with NY licensed marine pilots and the attempt by the CT Pilot Commission (CPC) to increase the pilotage rate. There has not been an increase in rate since 1983. The proposed change to the CT regulation that sets the rates would provide a 6% increase a year for three successive years. It would also divert the 6% being paid by the pilots to the CT General Fund to an escrowed account to be managed by the Joint Rotation Administrator under the supervision of the CONNDOT to be used for pilot training and equipment upgrades. By CT General Statute, the Commissioner of CONNDOT has the authority to set pilot rates and has agreed with the proposal. However, when CONNDOT forwarded the proposal to OPM for concurrence, OPM recommended the proposal be disapproved and forwarded the decision to the Governor's Office for a final determination. It was stated that the fees paid to the pilots were charged to the shipping companies thus involved no state funds. The bottom line of the presentation was to ask for the CTMC to send a letter of support of the proposed rate change to the Governor and OPM. The Chair Stated that the Chairman of the CPC, Mike Eisele, would be attending the 19 September CTMC meeting and that he endorsed Vin Cashin's request. Vin Cashin made such a motion which was seconded by Bob Virgulak and approved after some additional discussion by 9 affirmative votes. There was 1 abstention.
- Norwalk Harbor Management Commission – Geoff Steadman opened the discussion about the need to complete Phase 2 of the Norwalk Harbor dredging project. He introduced the Chairman of the Norwalk Harbor Management Commission (NHMC), Tony Mobilia, and others from Norwalk in attendance (John Pinto, Mike Griffin). It was explained that dredging Norwalk harbor has been a 10 year quest fraught with delays caused by permit and funding issues. Tony Mobilia provided information all of which was contained in a letter that the NHMC had sent to the Chair of the CTMC in advance of the meeting and distributed at the meeting. Two central issues emerged during the discussion: (1) a DEP requirement that the dredge materials be capped after being disposed at the Central Long Island Sound (CLIS) disposal area and (2) funding.

There was a lengthy discussion about the difference between the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) determination that the dredged materials were suitable for open water disposal and the CT DEP determination that capping is required as a sediment management issue. Reference was made to letters between the ACOE and CT DEP dating back several years. A copy of a Nov 23 2004 letter from CT DEP to the ACOE explaining the sediment management issue was provided to the CTMC.

There was additional discussion and differences of opinion about the date of the tests conducted, how the material could be capped, and the possibility of again extending the Water Quality Certificate (WQC), commonly referred to as the permit. The Chairman pressed George Wisker on the issue of CT having a higher standard than the federal government with regards to the quality of materials to be disposed of in Long Island Sound. The reply reiterated the State needed to manage the sediment to ensure that there were no long lasting effects of putting less suitable materials on top of more suitable materials regardless of the location.

The meeting took a turn to broader issues: the need to establish a dredging fund; a possible need to reduce the authority of the CT DEP by statute as was reportedly done in RI; and the need for an economic impact study to be done to show the importance of the harbors to the State's economy. Jeff Snyder made comments on the expertise of the ACOE and the need to change the CT DEP standards. The discussion would have continued but had to be deferred to the 19 September meeting to allow the attendees to take a tour of the School as had been planned.

VI Date of Next Meeting:

- Marty Toyen reminded all that the next meeting of the CTMC is scheduled at 9:30 AM **Wednesday** 19 September, 2007 in Conference Room A of the CONNDOT HQ building in Newington, CT.

VII. Adjournment:

- As people were departing and queuing for the tour, a motion was made by Chuck Beck, seconded by George Wisker, and approved unanimously to adjourn. The meeting ended at 11:07 AM.