

SPECIAL MEETING DES MOINES CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES

September 17, 2005

The special meeting of the Des Moines City Council was called to order at 9:05 a.m. by Mayor Sheckler at the Activity Center, 2045 South 216th, Des Moines, WA.

ROLL CALL - Present: Mayor Bob Sheckler, Mayor Pro Tem Scott Thomasson, Councilmembers Gary Petersen, Dan Sherman, Maggie Steenrod, and Susan White. Absent: Councilmember Richard Benjamin. Also present were City Manager Tony Piasecki, Harbormaster Joe Dusenbury, Chief of Police Roger Baker, Building, Planning, and Public Works Director Grant Fredricks, Finance Director Paula Henderson, Park and Recreation Director Patrice Thorell, and Deputy City Clerk Angela Chaufy.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Appointments to the Voter's Pamphlet Argument Committee for Preparation of Arguments For and Against the Proposed Levy Lid Lift

MOTION was made by Councilmember White, seconded by Councilmember Sherman, and passed unanimously to confirm the Mayor's appointments to the Local Voter's Pamphlet Argument Committees, for preparation of the arguments for and against the levy lid lift ballot propositions as follows:

YES: Florence McMullin, Jeanne Moeller and Norman McDonell

NO: Jim Heath

Marina Master Plan

City Manager Piasecki introduced the subject. The discussion would be focused on the large policy issues concerning the function and expectations of the Marina.

Harbormaster Dusenbury said that the Marina Master Plan was adopted in June 2001. He identified the following goals of the Master Plan:

- Protect the core marina business.
- Identify trends in the recreational boating industry.
- Adopt changes in response to the identified trends.
- Provide amenities for non-boating uses.
- Create new revenues.
- Minimize revenue loss.

A plan to expand guest moorage, increase public space, and replace the seawall was developed. The following projects identified by the Marina Master Plan have been completed or are near completion:

- Redondo Boat Launch facility improvements.
- Electrical system upgrade.
- Minor boat yard improvements.
- Preliminary design of guest moorage reconfiguration.
- Longterm storage yard.

- Vending area consolidation.
- Master Plan update.

City Manager Piasecki identified the following policy issues before Council:

- What is the appropriate level of commercial activity on the Marina floor?
- Should the guest moorage be expanded?
- Should the Marina phase out the public sling launch?

Harbormaster Dusenbury informed Council that a market assessment revealed that the salmon season had decreased, the number of larger boats had increased, and the number of smaller boats had decreased. Vacancy rates reveal that the transition from smaller to larger boats has been much slower than anticipated. As other marinas are approximately five years ahead of Des Moines in preparing for the need for larger slips, Des Moines has been able to respond to the continued need for smaller slips. In addition, the boat ownership mix of the Des Moines Marina's service area continues to match the marina's slip mix. He reviewed a graph illustrating the usage of the sling launch from 1990 to 2005. He explained the impact of the salmon season on launch use and noted that launch use and revenues are down. To maintain and increase revenues, a part of the Marina Service Manager's job is to market the Marina to yacht clubs and groups. During the past summer, the Marina has occasionally utilized "hot berthing" to make room for larger groups. Harbormaster Dusenbury said that the groups have a much broader season than salmon fishing.

Recognizing that the public launch is used by several non-residents, Mayor Sheckler identified the City's obligation to the area as a whole versus to its residents as another policy question before Council.

Harbormaster Dusenbury noted that Des Moines does not collect regional taxes to support the launch.

City Manager Piasecki informed Council of the following comments expressed by Marina users during a recent boating weekend:

- A meeting room was needed.
- Another lower cost restaurant choice was desired.
- A shuttle to town was necessary.
- More places to shop were desired.

Councilmember Sherman noted that the current Marina Master Plan called for a meeting room and expanded guest moorage by the end of the year. He questioned why these projects were not underway.

City Manager Piasecki explained that the actual costs of the projects were higher than the estimates. He noted that revenue from the dry stack storage would have been used to pay off the bonds but the construction of the dry stack facility had been deleted from the plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson remarked that the conversation has focused on trading one seasonal business for another seasonal business. He suggested that Council discuss expanding permanent moorage to maximize revenues. While noting that the City was not obligated to provide launch

services to the area, he recognized the City's choice to provide the public service and the historic component of the launch. Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson said that the breakwater at Redondo was still inadequate to safely retrieve boats in bad weather. He said that he was not in favor of a large excavation to create more water. Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson recommended that the City maintain the current fill area and use it to its best use.

City Manager Piasecki noted that some commercial uses could result in year round activity.

Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson said that a meeting hall was not necessarily a marine business but an auxiliary use for guest moorage.

Councilmember Steenrod said that she was not comfortable with the dry stack storage due to the project's increased costs. She agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson's statements against removing dirt from the area. Councilmember Steenrod suggested that a hardware store with a meeting space on top be developed. She asked what the life of the existing launch was.

Harbormaster Dusenbury said that permanent moorage was best for the marina in terms of stable revenues but guest moorage was best for the City's economic growth.

At 10:08 a.m., Mayor Sheckler declared a ten minute break.

Harbormaster Dusenbury displayed and described the following three conceptual alternatives resulting from the Master Plan Update process.

Option 1: Expanded guest moorage, moved parking area, remodeled Harbormaster office with attached commercial space, and expanded boatyard/marine hardware store/maintenance shop facility.

Option 2: Same as Option 1 except the commercial space is located in a separate facility from the maintenance building.

Option 3: A heavy commercial usage facility, no expanded guest moorage and boat storage area, one maintenance shop facility, and some boat storage area.

Harbormaster Dusenbury said that, in his opinion, a commercial space in the marina would compete with the downtown area. He felt it would be better to use the space for moorage rather than for commercial uses. A shuttle service to the downtown, commercial area could be established. Harbormaster Dusenbury said that combining the launch and the travel lift into one facility would reduce costs. A rate study could determine how fast the different revenue streams could grow, how much the revenue streams could contribute to capital, how much bonding was feasible, and how much outside money was needed. Harbormaster Dusenbury reviewed potential grant sources. In response to Councilmember Petersen's questioning about the dry sheds, Harbormaster Dusenbury said that 10% of the existing storage units contained materials other than boats while 20% of the units contained boats that were not in use.

Councilmember Sherman questioned whether the City could expand the marina to year-round use as ski areas have done.

Mayor Sheckler identified the following questions before Council:

- 1) What is the appropriate level of commercial activity on the Marina floor?
- 2) Should the guest moorage area be expanded?
- 3) Should the Marina phase out the public sling launch service?

Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson recommended that the second question be reworded to “should we expand the water area of the marina?”

Mayor Sheckler asked each Councilmember to express their opinions regarding the three questions.

Councilmember Sherman

- 1) No to Option 3. He did not want multiple buildings on the Marina floor. Since Des Moines is known as the “Waterland Community”, the community needs to be able to see the water. Councilmember Sherman liked the idea of locating a marine store in the Marina area.
- 2) The marina needs some guest moorage but he was unsure of the amount necessary in light of the dollars involved. Removal of any dirt should be thoughtfully considered by Council.
- 3) Maintain some sling launch activity as it is an amenity of the marina.

Councilmember Petersen

- 1) Preferred Option 1, no to Option 3. He felt that West Marine and the boat yard would be an asset to the Marina.
- 2) The marina needs some guest moorage but not a lot as activity is seasonal and does not produce a steady income. A constant income is needed.
- 3) A variety of equipment is needed to provide service. There is value in having at least one lift available. The launch brings business into the City.

Councilmember Steenrod

- 1) The marina needs some commercial activity. She agreed with Councilmember Sherman’s comments regarding preserving the views of the community. She said that a coffee shop, fish place, boat yard, and West Marine would be good commercial uses for the Marina. Councilmember Steenrod suggested that a commercial facility be located along the cliff rather than on the water. She recommended that the boat storage facility be more aesthetically pleasing. She voiced support for two commercial buildings. If they could be located on the cliff, then that is where they should be placed. She questioned whether the Harbormaster facility needed to be remodeled?

Harbormaster Dusenbury said that the Harbormaster facility could be better utilized by storing rarely used equipment and supplies elsewhere.

- 2) In response to Councilmember Steenrod’s questioning, Harbormaster Dusenbury said that a stronger economic development impact is associated with guest moorage rather than with permanent moorage.

- 3) Councilmember Steenrod asked for more information regarding the launch - i.e. what is the life of the current launch? If the launch is removed, what options do people have?

Harbormaster Dusenbury said that the boats could be launched by the travel lift launch and extend the use of the guest slips.

Councilmember White

- 1) The ferry service could dictate additional commercial activity. She would like to keep the options available. If ferry service was confirmed for Des Moines, she might support Option 3.
- 2) Expand guest moorage and market the marina as a destination.
- 3) Remove the sling launch as it is not profitable.

Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson

- 1) Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson spoke in support of developing a boatyard, marine hardware store, and second restaurant in the marina area. He said that the procurement and lease process should be identified.
- 2) Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson did not think it wise in the long-term to remove land resources for more water resources. He noted that the Yacht Club and Anthony's have meeting facilities. Mayor Pro Tem Thomason questioned whether the guest moorage should be located by Anthony's. He noted that the width and height of boats also needed to be addressed.

Harbormaster Dusenbury informed Council that the consultant had said that the current configuration of the marina was adequate for now and the exact configuration details could be delayed.

- 3) Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson said that the sling launch could be removed as long as a boat launch was provided. He suggested that the City explore using the Des Moines Yacht Club facilities. Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson stated that the Des Moines Yacht Club property was key to the Marina Master Plan. He recommended that the City not put in a launch without addressing the parking issues. Mayor Pro Tem Thomasson urged Council to step back and consider whether there was a better way to do business.

Harbormaster Dusenbury explained that the Yacht Club had upland moorage. Their capacity was also limited by parking constraints. He said that reducing permanent moorage would result in reduced net revenues.

Mayor Sheckler

- 1) Prefers Option 1 or 2.
- 2) Expand guest moorage.

- 3) Favors elimination of sling launch due to revenue changes but the City must first seriously study alternatives.

In response to Councilmember Steenrod's questioning, Harbormaster Dusenbury explained that the guest moorage could not be located along the north wall in front of Des Moines Beach Park as the water was not deep enough and the area was not protected. He also noted that it would be difficult to obtain permits to develop the area.

City Manager Piasecki summarized the following direction provided by Council:

- Expand the boat yard.
- Discuss procurement processes.
- Encourage development of a marine hardware store.
- Explore commercial uses north of the Harbormaster office.
- Expand guest moorage.
- Provide more detail regarding the financing package for the expansion of guest moorage.

Councilmember Steenrod encouraged Council to build flexibility into the Plan in case the passenger ferry service came to Des Moines.

Harbormaster Dusenbury said that all of the options would work with the ferry service.

Councilmember Steenrod recommended that staff provide a view foil overlay illustrating the various options with the ferry service. She also asked for a picture of the current Marina layout.

In regard to the sling launch, City Manager Piasecki summarized Council's consensus that the launch should not go away without a more compelling alternative.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at Noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela M. Chaufty
Deputy City Clerk