



MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

October 21, 2016
Tawas City, Michigan

PRESENT FOR THE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

Commissioner, Chair, Gary Marowske
Commissioner, Vice Chair, Alex Declercq
Commissioner, Dennis Nickels
Commissioner, Dennis Grinold
Commissioner, James Hansen
Commissioner, Nicki Polan
Special Consultant, R.J. Peterson

OTHERS PRESENT

Ron Olson, DNR
Jordan Byelich, DNR
Paul Petersen, DNR
Jason Fleming, DNR
Jacklin Blodgett, DNR
Michelle Wieber, DNR
Linnae Dawson, DNR
Anna Sylvester, DNR

NOT PRESENT

Commissioner, Ward Walstrom
Vicki McGhee, DNR
Maia Turek, DNR
Anna Sylvester



MINUTES
MICHIGAN STATE WATERWAYS COMMISSION

OPENING COMMENTS

Chair Gary Marowske called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m., October 21, 2016. Those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Written Correspondence: There was no written correspondence.

Appearances: Jim Stewart, Council for the Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA), spoke for a moment sharing concerns on the inequities shown in the current leasing of state bottomlands. Jim stated the difference of fees between commercial marinas and state, municipal and Grant-in-Aid (GIA) facilities even though they provide access of the same kind. Per a 2007 analysis, Jim informed the audience that the state of Michigan has the highest rates for bottomland leases due to a 10% charge of dockage or mooring rent, when 5% is the minimum requirement. In summary, MBIA is requesting that the Michigan State Waterways Commission (MSWC) recommend to the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the revision of the bottomland lease program. Jim hopes to make progress by this topic being discussed with representatives from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) at the December Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: Chair Gary Marowske asked for a motion for approval of the minutes from the August 19, 2016 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting. The motion was put into place by Commissioner James Hansen and was seconded by Commissioner Dennis Nickels. Motion carried unanimously, 7-0.

ACTION ITEMS

RESOLUTION NO. 10-2016-06 was presented for approval. This resolution is of support for the agency policy on state water trail designations.

MOTION: Chair Gary Marowske asked for a vote of support for Resolution no. 10-2016-06. Commissioner Dennis Grinold approved the motion and Commissioner Dennis Nickels seconded the motion. The vote was carried unanimously 7-0.



RESOLUTION NO. 10-2016-05 was presented for approval. This resolution is in support for the amendment of the watercraft registration rates and to provide for marine safety enhancements related to paddle sports and pontoon vessels operating in Michigan waters.

MOTION: Chair Gary Marowske asked for a vote of support for Resolution no. 10-2016-05. Commissioner Dennis Nickels approved the motion and Commissioner James Hansen seconded the motion. The vote was carried unanimously 7-0.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

FINANCE UPDATE

Jacklin Blodgett discussed fund balances and reviewed the documents printed to support this update, which were included in each commissioner's packet for their review. Chair Gary Marowske requested a resolution be written by the finance subcommittee regarding contingency funds by the December 2016 Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting.

MARKETING UPDATE

Documents to support this update were included in each commissioner's packet for their review.

WAYS AND MEANS UPDATE

Dennis Nickels suggested that at least one public meeting be held prior to the Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting on December 6, 2016, to receive public input regarding the resolution of support for amendment of the watercraft registration rates and to provide marine safety enhancements related to paddle sports and pontoon vessels operating in Michigan waters.

FACILITIES UPDATE

No updates to provide at this time.

OPERATIONS UPDATE

James Hansen shared a print out which outlined discussions from the Operations Subcommittee meeting from October 5, 2016. Topics included Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Community non-compliance. Commissioners expressed concern regarding the language included in DNR's GIA agreements, and it was decided on to soften the language. Dock materials update is ongoing, as Jordan, Linnae and Paul are working on developing a spreadsheet to analyze the types of docking systems available. Lastly, Jordan is working on an update regarding dock fuel dispensers.



INFORMATIONAL BUSINESS

Ron Olson briefed on the secret shopper program that, once in place, will measure customer satisfaction. This is expected to be similar to the survey that campers receive, and will be developed in the near future. This topic is to be discussed at the December Michigan State Waterways Commission meeting.

Jason Fleming discussed the slip- specific project pilot. Testing is being finished and the final touches are being put in for review. Documents to support this update were included in each commissioner's packet for their review.

Linnae Dawson and **Jason Fleming** communicated that less than 50% are compliant on the state side with proper "no swimming" signage throughout the marinas. The signage documented in each commissioner's packet for review shows the inconsistencies amongst the ones who do have it signed. Commissioner **Nicki Polan** suggested PSA's are run during boat shows and marinas, showing the importance of compliance. It was also suggested that on the proper signage, it would state the "why".

With Michigan being the national leader, having more than 12,500 state designated trails, DNR staff **Marc Miller** and **Emily Meyerson** presented to the MSWC the need for establishing designated water trails. Some reasons being- increased land values, healthy recreation and transportation options, highlighting of local history, public exposure to stewardship, and one of tourism's largest growth rate is in paddle sports. Providing clear information to the public is essential, development of standards are required to have consistent information to manage public expectations, and regional engagement and coordination is needed to develop, market and maintain a water trail are among other reasons. Emily mentioned that the water trails would be motorized and non-motorized, and would have segments categorized as beginner, intermediate and advanced. In order to achieve this, a draft policy would be created and after following the proper steps, the end result would be read as, State Designated Water Trails: Water trails that are supported by broad-based community partnerships have applied for designation, have been granted that status by the DNR. The trail provides conservation, heritage and recreation opportunities.

Regarding the MBIA partnership, Commissioner **Nicki Polan**, stated we were asking for \$25,000 and that she has been in touch with **Vicki McGhee** as they are working on an alternate route to take. This topic is to be addressed at the December MSWC meeting.



PROJECT UPDATES

Jordan Byelich updated the commission that the East Tawas State Harbor project is expected to be completed by Spring, 2017. This project includes primarily dredging, sheet piling, and dock installation. Another project, at Bellville Lake East Boating Access Site, entails reconstruction of approximately 75-100 parking spaces, multi ramp lane launch, and restroom. The project is nearly complete. Snail Shell Harbor was completed this past summer and open to the public as of September 1, 2016. This facility improvement had broadside dock replacement and the addition of piers for approximately 15 transient slips. This total project cost was around one million dollars with a portion of funds from a federal grant.

Paul Petersen was joined by Michigan SeaGrant spokesman (Northwest District), Mark Breederland. Mark spoke regarding the status of the Integrated Harbor Assessment projects at New Baltimore, Pentwater, and Au Gres, and also the current Proof of Concept communities work at St. Ignace and Rogers City. Mr. Breederland stated the transfer of deed from the DNR, requesting ownership of land, for Au Gres has been requested. After a recent onsite visit to Portage Lake in Onekama, Paul reported that the design package to correct revetment concerns at the Army Corp of Engineers channel project is anticipated to be 95% complete by April 28, 2017.

GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL REPORT

The US Army Corps of Engineers – Detroit District Great Lakes water level outlook was included in each commissioner’s meeting packet for their information.

OTHER

Locations and dates for 2017 Michigan State Waterways Commission meetings were reviewed and are to be finalized prior to the December meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

The next Michigan State Waterways Commission Meeting: Lansing, December 6, 2016