

**Minutes of the
Michigan State Waterways Commission
February 8, 2013**

Approved March 22, 2013

A special meeting of the Michigan State Waterways Commission (Commission) was held at 2:00 Friday, February 8, 2013, at the Michigan Library and Historical Center, Lake Superior Conference Room, 702 West Kalamazoo Street, Lansing, Michigan 48909. The following Commissioners participated:

Commissioner Gary Marowske, Chairperson (via phone)
Commissioner Van Snider, Vice-Chairperson
Commissioner Al Declercq, Secretary (via phone)
Commissioner James Hansen (via phone)
Commissioner Dennis Grinold
Commissioner Dennis Nickels (via phone)
Commissioner Ward Walstrom (via phone)
Special Consultant R.J. Peterson

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Parks and Recreation Division (PRD), Liaisons were present.

I. PUBLIC APPEARANCE

A. Low Water Levels – Immediate and Future Impacts

Director Jon Allan, Office of the Great Lakes, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), presented a summary of low water levels and the state's plans for addressing dredging. Key aspects of his presentation included:

- Highlighted the low water cycle we have been in for over a decade leading to historic low water levels in December and January
- Said that the state is seeking substantial funding for the dredging needs in the state (short term and long term funding)
- Illuminated the advocacy for federal support including Washington DC-based advocacy for the use of the Harbors Maintenance Trust Fund revenue
- Spoke to the interdepartmental cooperation between the DNR, DEQ – Permitting, Office of the Great Lakes, the Waterways Commission, Small Harbors Coalition and others in addressing this pressing needs
- Noted that the state is working on streamlining the permitting process and making it less burdensome for applicants to obtain permits while still maintaining environmental protection
- Emphasized, that though we are dealing with dredging at the present time, it is incumbent upon us and the state to begin to seek longer term, and broader based sediment management strategies for the long term health of our harbors, ports and river mouth communities.

B. Appearances (Non-Agenda Items)

Mr. Brett Marr, Michigan Boating Industries Association (MBIA), thanked the Commission and the DNR for their dredging support. He referenced a press release issued by MBIA, dated February 8, applauding the Governor's recognition of emergency dredging needs (handout).

Mr. Chris Yonker, City of East Jordan, referenced their recent correspondence to the Commission requesting emergency dredging of East Jordan harbor. He also spoke of the need to address sedimentation issue from Jordan River.

Mr. Dennis Eade, Michigan Steelheaders, reported that they have approximately 7,000 members. He stated that they are thrilled by the collaboration approach of the Governor's office and the departments (DNR and DEQ). He also expressed concern for the eastside of the state (Thumb area).

Mr. William A. Crane, City of Caseville, reported that they have over 450 boat slips. Both the private and public marina and channels need to be dredged. They would appreciate any help available; without dredging they will have to shut down.

Chief Olson referenced Appendix A1. He gave an update of lake levels and the process used to create the Emergency Dredging Plan.

II. ACTION ITEMS

A. Resolution – Adopt the 2013 and 2014 Emergency Dredging Plan

- 1) 2013 Capital Outlay Emergency Dredging Projects
- 2) Postponement of 2013 State and Grant-in-Aid Projects
- 3) 2014 Amended Capital Outlay Project List
- 4) Support the Redevelopment of Identified Line Item Funds; Subject to State Supplemental Budget Process

B. Resolution – Policy Changes and Temporary Amendments to the Waterways Grant Process for the Emergency Dredging Plan

- 1) Match Amounts
- 2) Payments

C. Resolution – Support Efficiency of a Streamlined Dredging Permit Process

Chief Olson read the recommendations as listed above.

MOTION: Commissioner Hanson moved to approve Resolution No. 02-2013-01. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nickels and it carried unanimously.

III. ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

A. Communication for Emergency Dredging Plan

Chief Olson discussed the next steps in the DNR process; 1) a news release will be deployed as quickly as possible, 2) legislative liaison will send notices out to legislators, and 3) Commissioners asked to call each of the entities associated with the delayed

projects (staff will follow up by sending written correspondence). Chief Olson also referenced the “behind the scenes staff” and thanked them for their hard work.

Ms. Kim Fish, Water Resources Division, DEQ, explained that they are currently in the process of trying to improve and streamline the permitting process for this emergency situation. The DEQ has identified the following potential changes: Expand the expedited permitting categories for dredging, Statutory amendment requests (not yet approved), and DEQ procedural changes.

Director Allan stated that they are diligently looking at the permitting process/practice and will continue to make sure that it is as efficient and effective as possible.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:17.

The next Waterways Commission Meeting: Friday, March 22, 2013 in the Lansing area.