

Islesboro Harbor Committee
Regular Meeting
Thursday, July 17, 2025
In- Person Meeting at 6:30 PM, Town Office

 APPROVED
10/30/25

MINUTES

Call the meeting to order and establishment of a Quorum:

Chair Ken Smith called the meeting to order and a quorum was established at 6:30 pm.

Members Present: Chair Ken Smith, Earl MacKenzie, Dylan Purington, George Evans, Gil Rivera, and Peter Anderson

Members Absent: Greg Janney

Others Present: Scott de Grasse

Others Present via Zoom: None

Approval of Minutes of April 17, 2025, Regular Meeting.

Motion: To approve Minutes of April 17, 2025, as written, E. MacKenzie, seconded by G. Evans. No Discussion. Motion passed 6 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Anyone Wishing to Address the Harbor Committee
None.

Discussion of Engineering Estimate for the Seal Harbor Pier Repairs

- Earl stated he received two engineering estimates for a new dock to replace the existing one, and raising it higher. Gartley & Dorsky's estimate was exceedingly high, between \$38,000 and \$41,000 for the engineering and permitting. Tom Fowler's firm, Terra Firma Professional Engineering (TFPE), provided an estimate for about \$27,000. There are two components to it. TFPE has a subcontractor, TEC, a structural engineering firm based in Portland. Their component was about \$13,000. Tom and Earl went over TEC's estimate line-by-line, and Earl thinks that some of the lines could be eliminated or changed, which would reduce the overall figure.
- <https://www.thomasfowlerpe.com/>
- Earl recommends we use TFPE. Tom has the elevations and other data from the last time he did work here, which saves some time and money.
- We're looking at a two-foot elevation change, which seems reasonable. The highest water we've seen there was a couple years ago, when it was level with the walkway. That was a four-foot above normal storm surge, but without wave action. That's very unusual, but even with sea level rise, a two-foot rise of the pier should be fine for a significant amount of time.
- If we approve, they will do a final design. They stated September, but we would like it sooner, because of the grant we're trying to get, and it would be good to submit that application in September.
- Ken asked Earl to go over the different ways we might pay for the 50% matching funds for the grant. Earl stated that we have about \$36,000 in account, plus donations for the recreational pier that wasn't built. We had two \$20,000 donations, and another \$2,500 in numerous smaller ones. In the next couple of weeks, Earl will be speaking with the donors. He is hoping they would be willing to put that over into this project instead, because it is being used as a recreational dock. There are a couple of people who might chip in more. By the time we do the budget next spring, we should have bids back, and know what we're looking at. Hopefully that grant comes through by then.
- Ken stated that right now, we're trying to guess at how much it might cost, say \$150,000. We will try to get a 50/50 grant. If we can cut down on the local taxpayer hit, that would help a lot.

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- George asked for clarification. Earl replied that the engineering firm does the design, permitting, and structural analysis, more than what they would do for a recreational pier.
- George asked who reviews the design. Earl replied that we review it. We have some say in materials, such as laminated timber, steel pilings, and pressure treated pilings. We'll have options with the design. We're looking for long-term, low-maintenance. Steel can be problematic. The distance between supports isn't too great, so hopefully we don't need too much depth with them. We talked about two big outer ones, with an inner one so our decking doesn't cup. The uprights would be bolted directly through that big outer timber. It would be higher, 42 inches to the top, for code.
- We have the longer ramp there now, and the floats have been moved out about six feet. The moorings still need a little bit of adjustment, but it's much better. There's more room at low tide now.
- On the end, we would still have the same lift set up with the lights.
- We can get a permit by rule. There was a question about that, as we are raising the pier. It saves us a lot if we don't have to go through the whole long-term permit process. Tom said that if we go just vertical, and it's an engineered dock, we should be able to get a permit by rule, which is quick.
- Permits by DEP, Army Corps of Engineers
- George stated that the piers on Islesboro that last are the ones that are piled with granite. He suggested making the outer support granite, and then you don't have to worry about the stresses that are transmitted to the pier from the ramp.
- Earl stated that he talked about that with the engineer from Gartley & Dorsky. There are pros and cons. The granite sometimes gets taken out by ice, because it has so much area to contact.
- Earl has both estimates and can share them.
- Dylan asked if all piers on Islesboro require a plan like this. Earl replied that they've been getting plans for quite a few years now, and the Harbor Master has to approve them, for navigation and riparian concerns. Most have been designed by Gartley & Dorsky. These piers are not municipal, so they may be paying less for the plans.
- Ken suggested that when we have a number from the engineer, we should have a special meeting.
- Earl stated we did write up a proposal and gave it to Janet Anderson, based on what they're looking for with this grant.
- Ken stated that we will be in a different cycle. We don't have enough time to get everything together for this first round. We'll submit something as soon as we know exactly what we want to do.
- George asked how we can get a grant without numbers. We will put the project out to bid when we have the design and estimate.
- Ken stated that this first pier project is for Seal Harbor. Grindle Point will be more expensive and will require a lot more work on our part. It will probably take two or three years. In the interim, we should have a meeting with fishermen and aqua farmers to get their input.

Discussion of Town Anchorages mooring coordinates at Seal Harbor and Grindle Point

- Earl reported that he has most of it done, all but four moorings in Seal Harbor.
- Earl went to Grindle Point with a boat and took coordinates. He has a big master sheet created from the aerial photos. He has the coordinates for most of the buoys now within the Town anchorages, but there are a lot of unknowns. Earl would like to get together with one or two of the fishermen who are knowledgeable about what's where.
- Earl would like to get a name on every single ball this summer. He will keep pursuing it.
- There are two masters, one for Seal Harbor and one for Grindle Point. We are getting it documented.

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- Ken stated he has data from past, will give to Earl.

Discussion of Commercial Software to Keep Track of Town-owned Moorings and Related Information, as well as Ordinance Requirement to Have Mooring Inspected Every Two Years

- Ken stated that we had someone talk to us at the last meeting. If we're going to do anything with software, we would have to manage it. We can't expect the Town Office to add another task to their responsibilities. There's a lot of data to be entered, and the boatyards and Harbor Masters need access.
- Dylan stated he was thinking that we would potentially try to catalog the entire island. In this case, the software would definitely be needed. With just the two small harbors, we may be fine without it.
- Earl stated that perhaps the Harbor Master and Deputy Harbor Master could enter the data, if the software is not too complex. That could morph into something bigger later. He's interested in learning more about it. Maybe we could buy software that's not too expensive.
- Ken stated that the company that does Lincolnville (Town Moorings) is probably the least expensive.
- Earl clarified that he is thinking we can do it in house.
- Dylan stated that he pitched Town Moorings because he thought it could potentially help, but he's not committed to it. It's easy in Lincolnville to see who paid what. It's good for collecting revenue. We could work towards that, because we have expensive projects coming up.
- Earl stated that perhaps we could use that software and start entering data, then work up to the other features.
- Pete stated he did a lot of GIS work in college for his geography degree. He remapped the international snowmobile trail system using points of data provided. This mooring project might be a good student project for a student at Maine Maritime Academy (MMA), Farmington, or even a student here.
- Dylan stated that Lincolnville pays \$300/year for their software service. It has generated \$18,000 more in revenue since he last talked with the Harbor Master. It's a subscription service. They get a percentage of fees. We could set it up so the service cost is added to the fee. They're still building the software, so if we ordered the subscription, they could tailor it to what we want.
- Dylan suggested taking Google Earth images and overlay them to get all the moorings.
- Earl stated the Google images don't have date stamps. It may be old data.
- Ken stated that people can sit in on a seminar that's offered by Town Moorings. The outfit that does Rockport, they also let folks sit in. They walk you through how it works. Ken thinks one of the Harbor Masters ought to do this.
- Scott de Grasse stated that in other harbors, software is used extensively. Once you get the coordinates in, it's simple, and it generates revenue and tracks the financing. You can designate anchorages, which is helpful to boaters coming to the island. You can identify the agricultural areas that are not on Google Maps. There's a lot of justification for this island to have the software. There's a lot of marine activity.
- Dylan stated that it's going that way, like it or not. Having a new company that's fresh and willing to work with us on price as well as development is a great opportunity. The price is going to continue to go up. We need to do this eventually.
- George asked who manages the system. Dylan explained that a mooring person fills out a form with coordinates and other info and gives it to the Town Office. The staff enters the data. Then involved parties have passwords and can access the software, which has a map.
- George stated that if we get the software, we can keep track of the moorings better.
- Earl suggested that we start gathering information and learning more about it.

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- Dylan offered to come over sometime or come to the next meeting with his computer and log into his account as a mooring owner in Lincolnville.
- Ken stated that once we have all the coordinates, he thinks things will start speeding up a bit.

Harbor Master & Deputy Harbor Master Reports

Earl reported on the June 20th boat fire. Seth Wilbur's boat, Susie Pearl, had smoke coming out of it, and someone from Warren Island called the fire department. Seth sent one of his guys, Shane, who realized there were propane tanks in the cabin. Shane towed the boat with a skiff out of the Grindle Point anchorage into the channel between Warren Island and Spruce Island. It was fully engaged by that time. The Coast Guard arrived, but wouldn't let Earl aboard their boat. Blake took Earl and Dylan out. Earl took bearings and could tell which way it was drifting. It drifted between the ferry and Warren Island, where it didn't pose a threat to either. There was almost no diesel fuel in the boat, but it produced heavy black smoke for a while. Earl got some photos. Earl asked the Coast Guard if they would tow it to deep water, but they refused. The Fire Department put a fire pump on Blake's boat, and pumped water into Seth's boat, but it was pretty much burned by then. By the time the fire was put out, the only thing intact was the transom and the engine bed. PYY showed up with Ben in the aluminum boat, and drove right over the bow section. It collapsed into the water. Seth's boat is now located between the lighthouse and the western tip of Warren Island, in about 32 feet of water at low tide.

Ken asked who is in charge in a situation like this, the Fire Chief or the Harbor Master. Earl replied that he believes it's the Harbor Master's responsibility to make sure no other boats or land masses are in danger. Earl doesn't know if there's a rule. They all worked together fine. The Coast Guard wanted us to tow the boat ashore, but Earl didn't want to do that because it would have had to go through the mooring field. The Coast Guard also wanted Earl and crew to tie up to the dock, but Earl told them he was staying nearby. He wanted to have the coordinates where it went down, and wanted to make sure it was in deep water.

Earl reported that he was also concerned about a dock being built for Darrell Crate. It's close to the power cable. Earl talked with Warren, Crate's captain, who's been very cooperative. Earl wanted to make sure Prock's barge stayed north where they put the spuds down, to make sure they weren't near the cable. Crate and PYY had a diver go down to mark the cable, as it doesn't go at a right angle from the shore. They put several buoys and took bearings. It bears 315 degrees from the shore. Earl spent some time there, looking at the moorings. There are three moorings that Earl has asked them to move, as they could drag across the cable. Earl will follow up. He talked with Gabe and Christian at PYY.

Ken asked how large of a mooring can they lift. Earl replied that they can lift 7 tons. The biggest one out there is 5 tons. It hasn't been there long, so it hasn't set in.

Grindle Point

- Dylan reported that he dragged a deadhead (waterlogged log) out of the ferry area with his own boat that he uses for harbor-mastering. He dragged it ashore and it's still there.
- Dylan added that during the boat fire, all the boats used were personal vessels.
- A couple dinghies need stickers. Dylan ordered tags that he will use to let people know they need a sticker. Dylan also leaves notes in peoples' skiffs to try to get them to have life jackets aboard.

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- Dylan stated he took a fire extinguisher from his house and put it at the ferry dock. He asked about getting reimbursed, or if he should ask the Fire Chief for a fire extinguisher to put there. Earl stated that he has always gone to Janet with receipts and she has reimbursed him for various items.
- Earl added that he has a spare life ring if we need one in either harbor.

Seal Harbor

- Earl reported that most dinghies at Seal Harbor have stickers.
- There was one dinghy with 15 HP. Earl told the owner he couldn't have it there, so they got a 9.8.
- Two jet skis have showed up. They were doing power turns in the mooring field near the dinghy dock, towing a kid in a tow loop. Earl went out and put a stop to it. Dylan also made them tie up the night of the fireworks, because they were down there in the dark. In Maine, it's illegal to use them after dark. Earl stated he spoke with the owner and went over the laws. There have been complaints about noise and concerns. Kids were operating them.
- Rules: No one under 16 may run a jet ski. Anyone born after 1999 operating a jet ski must take an approved boater safety course. They can only be operated during daylight hours. If towing, they must be rated to carry three people. Inflatable life jackets can't be used. They must wear a full lifejacket. Headway speed only in an anchorage. There's a huge number of deaths each year with jet skis. Earl stated that he will enforce the law. He doesn't want anyone to see Islesboro as a comfortable haven for people whipping around in jet skis.
- The Ticonderoga is the big ketch in Seal Harbor. It was built in 1936 and is one of the most famous yachts in the U.S. It will be visiting for ten days.

Vote on proposed changes to Town Ordinance titled Municipal Shore Areas, Pier and Float Use. § 142-21, Moorings in Town anchorages:

CURRENT ORDINANCE

- D. Mooring assignments are nontransferable and may not be rented by the assignee to others.

PROPOSED ADDITION TO CURRENT ORDINANCE

- D. Mooring assignments are nontransferable and may not be rented by the assignee to others. "However, in the event sufficient mooring space is available and no mooring waiting list is in effect, upon the submission of a mooring application and transfer of ownership written document, the HM or DHM may approve the transfer of mooring ownership, provided the application meets the standards outlined in the Ordinance."
- Earl stated that he likes the proposed change. It gives us a common-sense way to handle these issues. It makes sense.
 - George stated that it's not the mooring that gets sold, it's the spot.

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Motion: To approve the proposed changes, as written, and recommend them to the Select Board, E. MacKenzie, seconded by G. Evans. No further discussion. Motion passed 4 yes, 0 no, Unanimous.

Discussion of the process by which the Town can legally address derelict floats, anchoring of large vessels, floating homes, and other issues related to boating and harbor safety

- Earl stated that we've had a couple of issues. We may end up having to put some teeth into the fact that people need to put them on a ramp and take them apart to properly dispose of them.
- Ken is wondering if there's a way to address pulling floats out in the wintertime.
- Earl stated that last winter they mostly kept floats on moorings. They probably do better in storms. Earl encourages the fishermen to get big moorings and bridle them.
- Ken asked about IIT wanting a deadline to get the floats off their land. Earl thinks they sorted that out. Some of the people who had floats there were late getting them off, but he doesn't think there's a problem.
- Ken stated that there will probably be more requests to put them somewhere. Do we have any alternatives? Earl stated that the boatyards are negotiating with shore owners.
- The Selendy property has a new building at Crow Cove, and they don't want to see the floats over there anymore. Earl would like to talk with them about it.
- George stated that Harbor Masters should have the authority to declare derelict floats as a hazard to navigation. Earl stated that the Harbor Masters do have that authority. It's also an environmental hazard.

Next meeting: Thursday October 16, 2025 at 6:30 PM in the Town Office

Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:40 pm by E. MacKenzie, seconded by G. Evans. No discussion. Motion passed 4 yes, 0 no.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carrie Reed, Secretary