

Protect Pentwater Channel Citizens Committee
May 3, 2023 10am-noon regular meeting - Park Place and Zoom

Chairman Dave Bluhm called the meeting to order at 10am at Park Place

Attendees - In Person:

Dave Bluhm, Chris Brown, Tave Reser, Michael Haack, Lynne Cavazos, Manny Valdez, Jeff Hodges, Pat Hooyman, Bruce Koorndyk

Attendee - Virtual via Zoom: Chris Conroy, David Roseman, Jenny Sheehan, Amy LaBarge

1. Approval of March 29, 2023 meeting minutes

Old Business:

2. Discussion and review of **current USACE lake level report and recent depth soundings**. Reviewed monthly Corp report on lake levels. Levels are now seasonally rising. We are about .5' below last year still. Sounding conducted by Jonathan Witt, Dave Roseman/Mike LaHaye (May 5th) and Oceana County Marine Sheriff Tim Simons with Pentwater Police Chief Hartrum. The results... continual changes by wide margins, but down the middle of the channel is approximately 8'. The USACE will not be conducting a Pre-Construction sounding.

3. Status of 2023 dredging contract status and projected start/finish date:

a. Chris Brown reported that Congressman Moolenaar initiated a call with USACE.

b. Chris Brown and others will participate in the May 10 Pre-Construction meeting with the USACE (Standard procedure pre dredge).

c. Beach Nourishment (Sec 111) - Following up with Liz Wilkenson & Section Chief

d. Looking at a June 7th - July 2 start/finish date, weather permitting. Moving north from Holland to Grand Haven then Pentwater.

e. Some discussion/question that if there are funds left over that they could be used for a 2nd dredge in the fall? Let's confirm that the answer is No.

f. Pat Hooyman asked if the beach nourishment could place the spoils ON the beach instead of 8' off the shore. Discussion held. Discussion of who, what and how (media) should be communicated to the general public? All agreed that the official word comes from the HarborMaster of any harbor and boaters consult sources such as the Waterway Guide for harbor conditions as well as call into the HarborMaster upon approach. Pete Ronenburg and Doc Williams as well as the Village website, PPHC

Website and Facebook page all need to state the same consistent cautionary yet positive message of current channel conditions. Chris Brown will post the official channel depth message and then others including marinas and the PPHC social media & website can reiterate the same message. Chris Conroy offered to draft the message. Dave Roseman commented that we are making a case for a local dredge. Side note: Ludington appears to have a local dredge, surely for the Badger and others but maybe when it is idle it can meet our needs?

g. USACE has Section 216 Money to investigate design deficiency and changed conditions that would warrant design review. Conversation about consistent severe shoaling west and north of north pier head/Mermaid Rocks and about adding/replacing navigation bouy (buoy) off Mermaid Rocks that used to be in that location. This would again notify boat traffic to only enter/exit Channel going north after rounding buoy . (Chris B to check with Laude as to the fate of that bouy and a replacement.) This should be done immediately to avoid serious groundings. h. Discussion about the light structure maintenance under US Coast Guard Ninth District Aids To Navigation Teams, who are the responsible party. The closest one serving our area is out of Muskegon (address & phone). We should start a Letter-writing campaign throughout the businesses and concerned citizens: US Coast Guard, 214 S. LakeShore Dr. Ludington.

4. Update on grants and other opportunities

a. Section 111 study grant - See b. Michigan Resilient Coastline

b. Michigan Resilient Coastline: Chris B reported that we are still being reviewed by Corp for this planning study. Lynne gave update on this study only grant; also mentioned Great Lakes St. Lawrence cities Initiative for creative solutons; she is getting their timeline; next meeting end of May.

c. Section 408 opportunities/Harbor Trust Fund====> coalition efforts have stalled; utilize Moolenaar meeting and reach out to Sen Peters who has replace Sen Feinstein on appropriations committee giving hope that funds allocated to California can be rebalanced toward the Great Lakes!

d. Creative sand removal options from USACE and local contractors: Much discussion about the benefits of our own local dredge, with focus on the last 1/4 of channel with the greatest need. Village/Twp contracts/budgets needed to support local dredge Operations & Maintenance. Tug/prop wash rejected by the Coast Guard.

5. Small Harbors Coalition update

a. Meeting with Rep. Moolenaar - May 19th (Time TBD... as of 5/18 mtg will take place from 3 -4:30pm at the Pentwater Yacht Club for proximity to the channel. No coalition representatives other than ourselves are expected to attend.

6. PLIB update

a. Summary of 5/1/23 PLIB Board Meeting regarding dredging. Drain Commission attorneys declared channel is not part of the lake. Discussion on the impact of the Pentwater and Oceana County if the channel closes. Property Values drop, Oceana County Sheriff, Coast Guard and Pentwater Police have NO lake access, Harbor of Refuge eliminated for lakefarers. PLIB board has abandoned its own act's scope to include dredging. This was debated and Tom Walters of the PLA stated that Statute for Inland Lakes Management governing lake improvement boards (LIB) would have to be amended by the State Legislature. Access to the Great Lakes is prohibited from LIB statute. Propose LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN to Senator Bumstead and Rep Curt Vandewall to change this statute??? This could also add Townships that surround LIBs must also support the lakes.

7. Wind blown sand control: Manny indicated that Mears is on the DNR 2023 Budget for Improvements and that the engineering study is adding reorienting of the sidewalk to the channel from the beach so that wind blown sand doesn't so easily make its way to the channel. Noted that Bathhouse is also undergoing remodeling.

8. Other

a. April 14 Shallow Harbors meeting summary:

Notes from April 14th Great Lakes Shallow Draft Harbor meeting with the USACE in Grand Haven: Chris Conroy

1. We learned that there are Section 216 funds available to investigate changed conditions or design deficiency that could warrant project modifications. This prompted the question of whether the north pierhead should have been extended further into Lake Michigan (as we questioned the purpose of the rocks off the north pierhead), and how we could get Section 216 funds to look at our design and determine if modifications are warranted. Chris Brown requested and Liz Wilkinson agreed to get Chris the architectural drawings for the 1999 & 1996 North & South Pier revetments and wave attenuators to determine if the original drawing had the pierhead going out into the lake further (but the Corp possibly ran out of money) leaving the "Mermaid Rocks" exposed.
2. We learned that the State of MI can give funds to USACE - Harrisville Harbor, MI is an example
3. FY24 Presidential Budget Released on March 9, 2023 has \$274.5M designated for the Great Lakes; FY23 - Half of the harbors that received CDS were shallow draft harbors.
4. Update our Fact Sheet (as Cornocopia Harbor did) to create /communicate our competitive advantage to win Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Funds and Presidential Budget Funds. Get letters of support from DNR, US Coast Guard, OC Sheriff Marine Division, Pentwater Police, etc that are Key Stakeholders dependent on Pentwater Harbor as Harbor of Refuge & Safe Harbor; and add # of boat slips supported by (dependent on) our Harbor Channel.
5. Niagra -Orleans Regional Alliance (a Regional Dredging Council) County Collaboration for Dredging - has documented how channel access impact/protect sales tax revenues generated from fishing, and spending from local tourist economy and

jobs that harbors bring in. David.Godrey@niagracounty.com & Lynne Johnson Phone 585-355-5565 .
Get notes from Chris Brown also.

b. Channel Website and Facebook page: Marketing Report from Chris Conroy

1. Facebook Page admin has been turned over to Chris Conroy from Ron Beeber. Chris is working through the META Suite learning curve to successfully manage this page.

Tasks/Messages to Post:

1. **Update the public on 2023 Summer Channel - We are open!** Provide Depth at shallowest point or post the USACE soundings image/report as soon as it is available so that yachtsmen can determine for themselves whether they can successfully navigate our channel prior to summer dredge. Done.

2. Post Dredge schedule and noteworthy details - such as " hug the northern pier to avoid dredge hoses" etc. - Assistance with precise wording needed.

3. **Fundraising** efforts - Post notice of events: Michael H. will be speaking with Chamber of Commerce to make sure this is on their calendar. Fried fish provided by local fishermen/women, corn, (possible pig roast was mentioned). A small donation would be requested per plate. Chris Conroy offered to prepare a flyer for marketing this late summer event.

4. Post Channel dredging schedule of June 7 - July 2 - weather permitted - and send this update to the Waterway Guide for their Navigational Alerts. And other news worth postings as they become available.

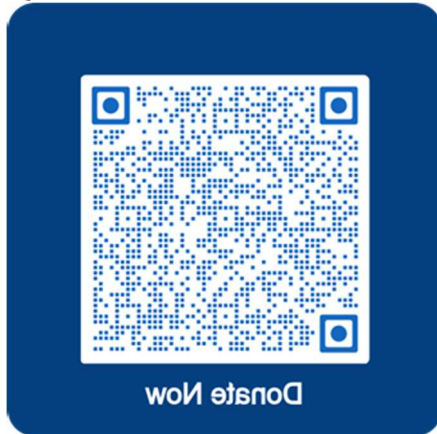
5. Logo for our Committee/Taskforce: Thoughts on this image.

Note: I need to get permission from the Village Staff or Council to use this image. I found it on their website.



6. Create **Yard Signs** (\$10 - \$20 each) to post at each Boat Launch - Advertise "Seeking donations in any amount! **Donations** can be made directly to the Protect Pentwater Harbor Campaign Fund managed by the Community Foundation of Oceana County [Our](#)

[Funds - Community Foundation for Oceana County \(oceanafoundation.org\)](https://oceanafoundation.org) - include QR code



7. Post link to **PPHC Website** [Pentwater | Protect Pentwater Harbor](#) (work with Michael Haack): Meeting Minutes; QR Code for direct link to Community Foundation fund.



8. Assist the Village Staff by updating the Pentwater Harbor Fact Sheet on the USACE website. Add the Oceana County Sheriff's Marine Division and Pentwater Police Department as **KEY STAKEHOLDERS** to help reinforce our status as Harbor of Refuge.

c. Further discussion of Aug. 19 Fish Boil fundraiser

9. Next Meeting - June 7th 10am Park Place