

**Protect Pentwater Harbor Channel Committee
March 8, 2024 Minutes per AGENDA**

Attendees - In person: *Dave Bluhm, Chris Conroy, Chris Brown, Jeff Hodges, Michael Haack, Manny Valdez*

Attendees via Zoom: *Tave Reser, Lynne Cavazos, Pat Hooyman*

1. **Review/approval January 17, 2024 meeting minutes - Approved (and added to PPHC Website)**

2. **Review current USACE lake level report, updated USACE reporting, other. - Dave shared USACE website images.**

Also, USACE will be out this spring to measure as they too want to see what the impact of winter movement is after a full dredge.

a. **Navigational Structure Inspection Report -**

b. **Great Lakes Observation System Funding -** Guy Meadows - Chris Conroy reached out to Guy for update. Guy won (was awarded) the NOAA water level study,

but typical fed govt delays for an April contract signing has been delayed and will likely be finalized June 1. Great news - One of the data buoys will be off

Pentwater!! He would love to be invited to any and all meetings with us, USACE, MSHC and Moolenaar. He looks forward to partnering to share data and solutions.

c. **DNR Harbor of Refuge -** Chris Brown - Chris Brown clarified that the Harbor of Refuge designation comes from the US Coast Guard (not the State DNR as previously stated) under Citation 46 CFR 114.400 of the USCG code, and per Chris, this is a municipal function only to apply for this designation and he has done so/will do so. Side note: Unable to find an actual application process to obtain this designation so Chief Hartrum (Harbormaster) has been asked to confirm with the USCG our status and/or application submission. The USCG's Places of Refuge Policy is attached with the following definitions:

[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-46/part-114#p-114.400\(Officer%20In%20Charge%20Marine%20Inspection%20or%20OCMI\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-46/part-114#p-114.400(Officer%20In%20Charge%20Marine%20Inspection%20or%20OCMI))
[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-46/part-114#p-114.400\(Harbor%20of%20safe%20refuge\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-46/part-114#p-114.400(Harbor%20of%20safe%20refuge))

Harbor of safe refuge means a port, inlet, or other body of water normally sheltered from heavy seas by land and in which a vessel can navigate and safely moor.

The cognizant Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, shall determine the suitability of a location as a harbor of safe refuge. The suitability will vary for each vessel, depending on the vessel's size, maneuverability, and mooring gear.

Officer in Charge, Marine Inspection, or OCMI means an officer of the Coast Guard designated as such by the Commandant and who, under the direction of the

Coast Guard District Commander, is in charge of a marine inspection zone, described in Part 1 of this chapter, for the performance of duties with respect to the inspection, enforcement, and administration of vessel safety and navigation laws and regulations. The “cognizant OCMI” is the OCMI that has immediate jurisdiction over a vessel for the purpose of performing the duties previously described.

Michael Haack also described his captain's licensing experience & the option to allow the US Coast Guard to commandeer his boat as necessary into a civilian fleet (aka US Coast Guard auxiliary function). This is a benefit to our community if a civilian fleet is needed and our charter captains have opted in!

In the meantime, we can work with Linnae Dawson staff rep on the DNR Waterways Commission to submit our "why come to Pentwater" pitch in the NOTES section of the Michigan DNR Harbor Guide - Pentwater Harbor Guide entry. Likewise, we can work with Liz to update the USACE Notes section beefing up our amenities and benefits of Pentwater as a destination. Chris Conroy will take the lead on these writeups and submit to the committee and village leadership for approval.

3. Update on grants and other opportunities

a. **Section 111 study grant** - Per Chris Brown, USACE Liz Wilkinson is still working to get this for us. This study grant will assess whether or not the reventment design is the cause of our harbor mouth shoaling.

b. **Michigan resilient coast grant** - update on grant application - Lynne and Manny gave an update. Actually 3 intermingled grants at play and Lynne will provide a copy of the presentation she gave to the Pentwater Service Club on 2/29/24 with a description of each grant: MI Coastal Resilience, Great Lakes & Stl Lawrence Initiative, and MI Parks & Friends partnership, with the first step being a Sand movement planning & design phase with \$50000 guaranteed... the goal is to get all three grants working together for a total of \$100K . The Township is the applicant on these grants with the support as needed from Manny (DNR). Timeline: preliminary meeting including Village/Township/DNR (and Oceana Beach Association?) in early April to move forward with the design plan

c. **Section 408 opportunities** - Investigate with possibility of updating or modifying the Village's Dredge permit from the USACE to include clean out of the attenuators, or allow us to contract locally with firms like Josh Adams. Question for USACE engineers: Why were the attenuators put in initially? Are the attenuators functioning as designed? **ACTION ITEM:** submit these questions to USACE and request modification to dredge permit.

4. **Channel maintenance** - No Wake painting, other? - No update

5. Local/State/Federal Politicians and USACE

a.. **Funding for 2024 dredging and attenuator cleaning** - Chris B gave update from January meeting with Congressman Moolenaar, Village President Jeff Hodges, himself, and USACE Liz Wilkinson. Pentwater is on the 2024 Works Bill but

this bill is awaiting White House and Congressional budget approval. (Note: Recent newsletter from Congressman Moolenaar's office implies that this 2024 Works Bill has been approved.) Dave Bluhm has a call into USACE and will follow up to confirm whether any 2024 funding for dredging will be coming our way, otherwise we need to work with Liz Wilkenson to get on the 2025 Works Bill. Getting on the Works Bill starts with the USACE - they provide the ASK, then we can press our federal reps & the White House to approve . There is a shortage of hydraulic dredging companies - 3 fewer than in the 1980's when we last had low water like now. If USACE owned their own dredge they could manage the needs of the harbors in the Grand Haven area under their purview better. Liz's new district chief Nick Zager (Detroit District) is supportive of this concept. Dave Bluhm has reached out to USACE's Liz Wilkensen to set up an early April meeting with them to flush out their ask, then bring in our elected officials to solicit their support for a bill or funding with flexibility to meet all the shallow harbor needs. Bring in the coalition members. Our #1 ASK: Annual April mtce dredge needed (not full expensive dredge in August... This is a waste of taxpayer money when economies need early seasonal dredging. #2 ASK: modify permit from hydraulic to mechanical since smaller projects offer better likelihood of available mechanical dredge operators. To ensure success in getting into the 2025 Works Budget, we need to piggyback on the Climate Change /Coastal Resilience theme.

#1 - Set a date with Liz to meet with the MSHC in early April before April 18th Grand Haven Shallow Harbor meeting

#2 - Contact MSHC members to urge their attendance/participation in a workshop to brainstorm solutions - bringing their top 1 or 2 requests (for example, PTW's ask is for an annual April 1st entrance dredge instead of a full August dredge)..

Key message to our legislators: With climate change and shifts this is no time to cut funding for dredging.

#3 - Meeting with MSHC, USACE and elected officials - Early May timeframe. (MSHC contact list attached)

b. **Meeting with politicians, USACE and shallow harbors communities** - See above #1, 2, 3 - holding off on draft letter . MSHC contact list.(see attached); Encourage MSHC member to attend April 18th USACE meeting in Grand Haven and invite them and our elected official to planning meeting once we have the ASK from USACE, as well as invite to Awareness event aka Fish Fry (instead of Fish Boil per Dean Jessup recommendation). See attached - January 29th Office Hours with Curt Vanderwall "leave behind"

6. **Local fundraising for maintenance dredge.**

a. **Spring Fall 2024 fish boil fry fundraiser-** Michael Haack - Need champions, organizers. - Michael to set up a Brainstorming Planning meeting for early April via Zoom including Dave Bluhm, Chris Conroy, Jeff Hodges, Tave Reser, Dean Jessup, Bruce Koorndyk from the Pentwater Sportfishing Association, and other local volunteers to brainstorm the event goal, date, and logistics and to enable Dean to bring a solid concept to the PSA Members at their May Board meeting.

Goal of event: Community and Legislative Awareness of Dredging need and need for federal funding of USACE;

Date: hopefully leverage PSA Mini Tourney - August 31 to insure needed quantities of fish

Establish Committees:

Marketing communications: target attendees/invitees: shallow harbor coalition, elected reps, local fishing/boating/sailing/law enforcement community

Location logistics - tent, tables, paper products

Cooking logistics - (Secure cooking pots and oil (permits needed?); cooks

Side dish logistics

Ticket sales? Donations collections

Other.....

7. Other

a. **Local/Private sand removal options and local dredging equipment activities.** - Chris B noted that a local fisherman recorded depth measurement of 5' in spots at the channel mouth in the past two weeks

b. **Spring drone survey** - Dave followed up with Mark Shotwell confirming his willingness to use his drone to get harbor mouth shoaling visuals. He is just waiting on the right day.

c. **Channel Website and Facebook page activities** - Michael and Chris C. continue to keep both updated.

d. **Other media activities** - Detroit News Series - No update

8. ***Next Meeting - April 24th 9:30am Park Place (note time change)***

Chris Conroy
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