



STONINGTON HARBOR MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Newsletter



Volume 2, Issue 1

Spring/Summer 2013

FROM THE CHAIRMAN: *Peter Vermilya*

The Stonington Harbor Management Commission (SHMC) publishes this newsletter periodically to present important developments and information concerning the Harbor.

2012 was a good year for the Harbor. The Town voters adopted a revised Stonington Harbor Management Plan replacing the original one adopted in 2000. The Commission's decade-long experience with managing the Harbor has resulted in a Plan which is more clear, fair, and consistent. The Plan also includes a new fee schedule that begins to reflect the real costs of managing the Harbor.

The Commission, working closely with Dodson Boatyard, Don's Dock and Cardinal Cove Marina, has launched the first phase of a three year project to reposition the moorings into a regular grid pattern. This will result in a Harbor which is safer and more efficient and will increase the number of moorings available.

The SHMC Agendas, Meeting Notes, the new Harbor Management Plan, the Mooring List and the Waiting List are all available on line at <http://www.stonington-ct.gov> under the heading "Boards and Commissions", and in hard copy at the Stonington Town Hall. The Commission meets at 7:00pm on the 2nd Monday of every month at the Stonington Police Department building public meeting room.

The Commission thanks all parties for their many ideas and suggestions which have contributed to a very successful year for the Harbor – a highly valued resource. Please contact me with any questions or comments.

FROM THE HARBORMASTER: *Eric Donch*

Greetings! Here we are again waiting for the warmer weather and another great season of boating in Stonington. 2012 indeed had its highs and lows, including some extreme tides in the fall season. From

the passage of the new Harbor Management Plan, to super-storm Sandy it was another overall great season.

The new Harbor Management Plan will eliminate some questions and make the management of the moorings and wait list more transparent. If you have not seen the approved plan, I encourage you to take a look at it on the SHMC website 'Stoningtonharbor.org' or pick up a hard copy at Town Hall.

Activity in the Harbor appears to be at a new high level with sailing classes and racing from the Yacht Clubs, kayaking and stand-up paddle boards happening all around. With the increased activity it is important to remember the entire harbor is a "Slow, No Wake" zone. For those of you who cruise the Sandy Point channel, please keep in mind that due to the proximity of the beach this rule applies from the western tip of the island eastward to approximately the area of 'Rhodes Folly' (the granite blocks near the beach).

The implementation of the mooring grid is underway. (See related article) One of the most noticeable differences will be the shifting of the harbor 'inner channel' back to its original location. If you have this channel plotted on your GPS, please be sure to validate the plot in the spring. We will be placing the red/green markers that have been absent for the last two seasons back in this spring.

Hurricane Sandy blew into town October 29th to put a final cap on the 2012 season. While there was only one vessel damaged, a transient moored in the outer harbor, there was much shore side damage. Many docks at the south end of Wamphassuc Point were destroyed by the intense easterly wind and 7' storm surge. Sandy Point was stripped of much of its protective dune grass. The channel inside Sandy Point which has seen significant shoaling in the last few years appeared to fare well with little additional shoaling. The Army Corps of Engineers had already been looking at performing some dredging to maintain the channel and will hopefully obtain the funding to perform that in the near future. I look forward to seeing you on the water in the coming months. Flag me down

to say hello and give me your feedback and ideas for OUR harbor. As always, I can be reached at 860-303-5046, and VHF channels 9 and 72 when on the water.

HARBOR HAPPENINGS

NEWS FROM A HARBOR PARTNER – CUSH

Clean Up Sound and Harbors (CUSH) is a local environmental group whose goal is to reduce pollution in area coastal waters through long-term water-quality monitoring, habitat restoration, and educational programs. Since 2008, general water quality indicators have been measured biweekly in our local waters for dissolved oxygen, water temperature, and chlorophyll-a as an indicator of microscopic algae. Additional monthly samples are tested for salinity, pH, fecal bacteria, and various forms of nitrogen and phosphorus. Annual reports of our findings are provided to the Stonington Harbor Commission. Occasional water samples have been tested for oil and grease, copper, and lead.

Throughout Stonington Harbor, including Lambert's Cove, water quality based on these indicators has been consistently good. Because the Harbor is flushed by strong tidal currents funneled through Watch Hill Passage, many pollutants are probably removed before they can be measured, and CUSH data indicate that water quality is much poorer in the flow-restricted coves. Through education campaigns focusing on storm water mitigation, organic gardening and turf management and responsible boating, CUSH promotes good practices that protect the Harbor and all other coastal waters as well as area freshwater resources.

Water quality monitoring has value only if carried out long term; therefore, CUSH plans to continue monitoring Stonington Harbor with the intention of expanding efforts to include freshwater inputs to Lambert's and Quana Duck Coves. In addition, we plan to analyze Harbor sediments for heavy metals, oil byproducts, and PCBs. CUSH invites volunteers and new members to join our efforts. More information about CUSH, its goals and activities may be found at www.CUSH.Org.

Please Use the Pump-Out Boats

Turnaround time for the pump-out boats that service Stonington Harbor has been vastly reduced thanks to a discharge pump located on the new Harbormaster Boat Dock just yards from the Borough Sewage Treatment plant. The Westerly based pump-out boats no longer have to return to home base to discharge their loads and can spend that time attending boats. The discharge pump services can service only the pump-out boats (i.e., no private boats). The pump-out boat can be called to your boat via VHF Ch 8 (preferred) or by calling 401-348-2572.

• Rules of the Road: by Eric Donch

In this newsletter, instead of covering rules, I'd like touch on some common boating safety tips. One of my pet peeves is that no one seems to keep their VHF radio on.

While underway, if so equipped, every vessel should have their VHF radio on and tuned to channel 9 as a minimum. VHF is a boater's tool to communicate with marinas, launches, and other vessels. If you need to have a conversation with another vessel, once you have established contact on Ch 9, then move the conversation to another channel. Your VHF radio is not a toy, nor is it a way to catch up on the latest gossip. Please, use your cell phone for that.

Always keep channel 16 clear. Channel 16 is for hailing the USCG and distress calls only. I encourage you to monitor Ch 16 if your radio has a scanning feature. Every boater is responsible to respond to a distress call if able to do so without putting themselves in harm's way.

If you have a GPS and/or radar keep it on when underway. Practice using both when the weather is clear and the seas are low. Learning how to use either in dark, fog or stormy weather is not the best time. Practice navigating using your GPS on a clear day; that way when you need to use it, you will have the confidence and skill to do so. Also, keeping them on will keep them warm and drive away moisture.

Always keep a chart out and refer to it often. Even if you think you know the waters you are in. Remember, *slowing down* is almost always the best answer!

MORE HARBOR MATTERS

Harbor surveys are conducted during the summer months to identify unused moorings for potential reassignment to people on the waiting list. Winter stakes in place after June 30, off-regulation moorings, extended vacant moorings and rogue moorings will be identified with attached Orange buoys and will initiate a follow-up with the permittee by Harbormaster Donch.

Effective this year, Waiting List applications are valid for one (1) year and must be renewed annually. Renewal forms will go out September 30th and are due back by October 31st.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. When will the new mooring grid be implemented and what will it mean to me?

A1. The new mooring grid is already in progress and is occurring as part of the normal 3 yr mooring inspection cycle. If your mooring is to be pulled and inspected this year, it will be re-placed to a mooring grid location.

Q2. Who will be responsible for moving my mooring to a location on the grid?

A2. After inspection and any hardware changes required for compliance, your mooring will be re-located by the qualified inspection service that you hired.

Q3. What proof do I need to verify that I own the boat on my mooring, or that I am the legal majority owner in the case of a partnership?

A3. See Plan Section Art 4 Section 5A-F (p. 26-29). For a boat with only one bona fide owner, the boat owner's name on the current Connecticut registration will suffice. In the case of a partnership, the owner of the mooring must be the majority owner of the boat assigned to that mooring as evidenced by the boat owner's name on the current Connecticut registration and an affidavit that verifies the boat's majority owner for said partnership.

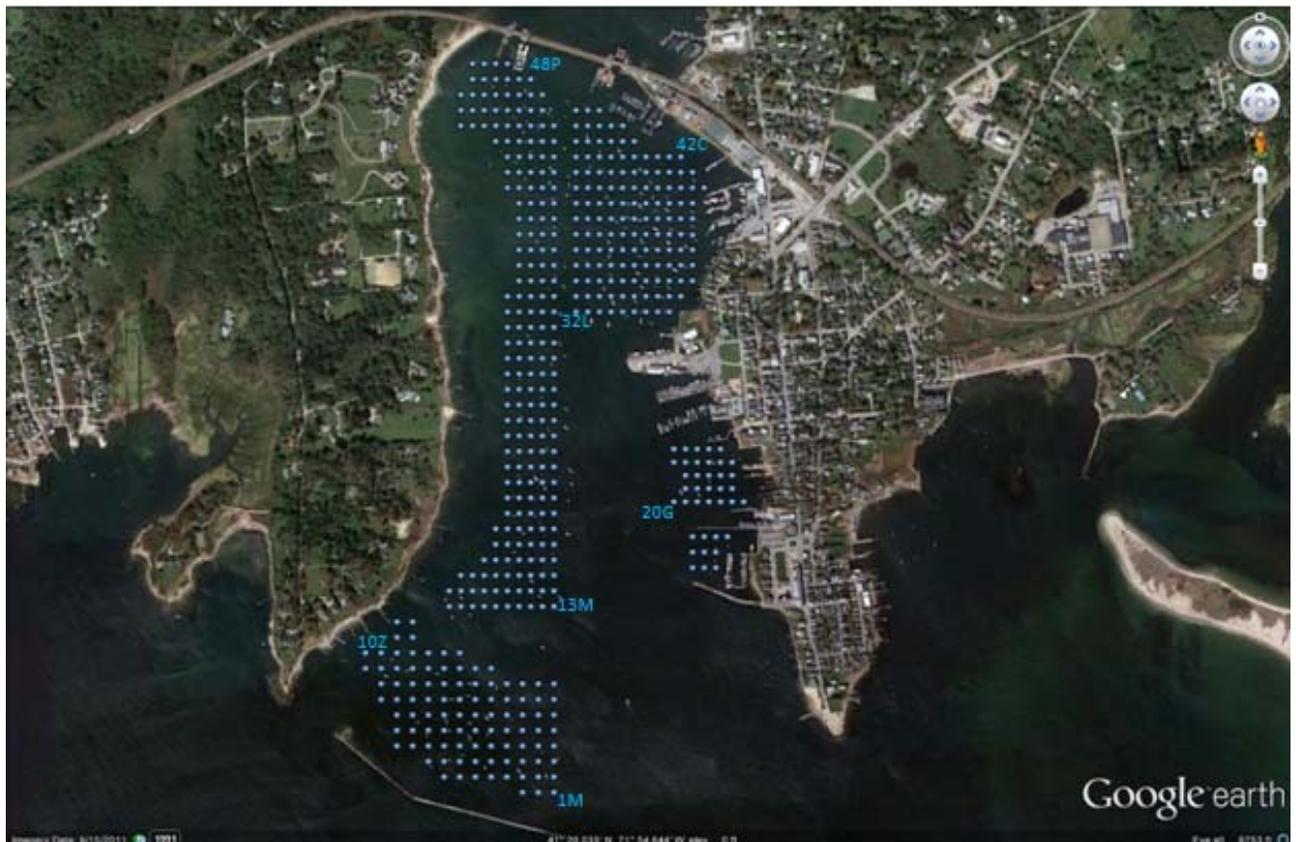
Q4. I hear that the SHMC is planning to replace or upgrade the HM boat. Will the cost for this result in an increase in the private and/or commercial mooring fees?

A4. A financial analysis is currently in progress to assess the operating funds and cash flow needed for the next 5-10 years. Any proposed increase in mooring fees will necessarily be open to public

discussions during a monthly SHMC meeting before being put to vote at a Town Meeting.

New Mooring Grid Number Scheme

To implement the grid we have a new numbering scheme to identify moorings. It consists of numbered rows and lettered columns (see chart below). Starting from the breakwater, rows 1-12 designate the moorings in deep water outside and around the transient mooring area. After the transient mooring area, rows 13 – 48 takes it all the way up to the western railroad bridge. Columns A-L defines the longitudinal part and A is the eastern most column by Dodson's boatyard. The western side of the harbor with the majority of moorings is columns M-Z. This number and letter combination will define a mooring's location. For example 1M is the mooring location closest to the green marker at the end of the breakwater. 32L is the first mooring in the Northeast section of moorings. This system should also make it easier for visitors to find the right mooring. A visitor to the harbor can be given the mooring ID and proceed into the harbor until they reach the row and then find the letter for their assigned mooring. As moorings are moved onto the grid they will be given the new number. The old ID number such as P-42 will be used until the mooring is moved onto the grid, and then the mooring will be referred to with the new ID. Gear will be re-marked as soon as practicable.



IMPORTANT DATES

December 31, 2012: All 2012 Inspections due and all 2012 Mooring Permits expire and must be renewed for 2013
January 31, 2013: New waiting list published at SHMC "Stoningtonharbor.org" and posted at Town Hall. 2013 Mooring Renewal Forms issued by Harbormaster
March 31, 2013: Mooring renewal forms due back to Harbormaster; non-renewed moorings may be reassigned
June 30, 2013: Winter stakes removed by owner, and all moorings commissioned
September 30, 2013 Wait List renewals sent out
October 1, 2013 Wait List renewals due to Harbormaster
December 31, 2013: All 2013 Inspections due. All 2013 Mooring Permits expire and must be renewed for 2014

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