Saco Coastal Waters Commission
Minutes of the November 10, 2004 Meeting

I. Call Meeting to Order – At 7:15 p.m. a Saco Coastal Waters Commission meeting was held at City Hall.

II. Roll Call of Members – The members present did not constitute a quorum. The members present: Chairman James Bastille, Treasurer Robert Barris, and Robert Morowski. Assistant Harbormaster Tom Casamassa arrived at 7:25 p.m. Harbormaster Don Abbott, Council Liaison Ron Michaud, Robert Lapointe, Glenn Chadbourne, Wayne Hutchins and Peter Scontras were absent this evening.

III. Approval of Minutes – September 1, 2004 & October 6, 2004

Minutes were presented, no action was taken.

IV. General
   A. 5000 Account

V. Old Business

VI. New Business
   A. SHIP Grant Camp Ellis – Architects Re-Design

   The Corridor Commission had concerns about odors. The only way to stop odors is by having refrigeration. The temperature would be roughly 40 °.

   The Commission members asked the Architect to provide figures for refrigeration of the bait house cooler area which is 930 sq. ft. before the Workshop. Right now the figure of $215,988 includes Heat & AC in the office and bait area, and only heat in the restrooms. The figure of $196,819 is for the same Heat & AC areas, but it is minus 2 Dormers, and the 2” Masonry Veneer.

   The Architect suggested having plastic flaps around the barrel area, so that when the doors open, it doesn’t heat up the cooler area. The cooler area would be used roughly 2-3 hours in the morning and 2-3 in the evening. Also discussed was the possibility of putting the veneer on at a later date.

   The SHIP Grant is for $100,000, and the commission would be responsible for the remaining balance.

   Robert Morowski moved, Robert Barris seconded to submit the Plans to Workshop to see about getting some funding, a loan, and Council approval with the updated figures on refrigeration included, and possible recommendations for lowering the costs through elimination of dormers and concrete veneer. The voting members who were present: James Bastille, Robert Barris, and Robert Morowski were all in favor. On 11/12/04, Wayne Hutchins voted in favor of the motion per e-mail. On 11/15/04, Robert Lapointe voted in favor of the motion per e-mail. The motion passed with five (5) yeas.

   This item will be reviewed by the City Council at a Workshop on November 22, 2004. All members should attend this meeting.

   B. Motorized Jibs – Get Prices

   Public Works Director Mike Bolduc stated that he would get prices on a ½ Ton.

   C. River Patrol

   Treasurer Robert Barris presented an Interdepartmental Memorandum from Sgt. Joe Stephenson of the Biddeford Police Department.
The memo is as follows: We have had another successful year on the water, with even more contacts than last season and an obvious increase in compliance levels. Recreational boater compliance with required safety equipment increased dramatically and the response to our patrols have been positive. Although there is evidence to suggest that the degree of poaching is much higher than realized, we had very few violations. Commercial/Recreational fishing traffic was at an all time high and a few problems were experienced between local lobster fisherman.

The State Marine Patrol lost resources again this year and we saw a dramatic reduction in their presence on the water. Due to this reduction, our patrols took on a more important role and we saw another increase in the amount of calls for enforcement related questions and general boating/fishing assistance.

The following is a breakdown of the statistics for the entire 2004 season:
- 668 boats stopped;
- 278 warnings issued for improper safety equipment, imprudent speed, etc;
- 515 safety checks performed;
- 73 fishing checks;
- 16 rescue calls or calls for assistance (mechanical failure)

We also issued 23 civil summonses for wake violations, improper safety equipment, and fishing violations; plus one criminal summons for reckless watercraft operation.

Given the current trend, we should see even more boating traffic next year, especially if the bass fishing remains high and the other species continue to flourish around the river. We have also seen an increase in wildlife to the area, with the addition of three bald eagles nesting along the river and the continued visits of the Beluga whale.

Questions arose this year, as they did last year, regarding the need to regulate the river, making the entire river a “No Wake” zone. Given the trends, this would be a valid study and something the Cities may want to look into. The lack of adequate areas for recreational activities, such as waterskiing and the use of personal watercraft (jet skis), are limited at best. Even the areas where there is enough open water to concentrate these activities, the operators encroach on or violate the 200 foot rule. Furthermore, given the small craft often seen in the river (kayaks, canoes, etc) a boating accident is waiting to happen.

The other observed problem this year was the lack of proper “No Wake” buoys and their positioning along the river. Although we received brand new, and much needed, replace buoys, the addition of two or three more and the re-positioning of them would help significantly.

Finally, it was realized that both cities lacked good and enforceable local ordinances to regulate the activities on the water. Of the citations issued, the average fine amount was $125. This money, since the violations were written under state law, went to the State. If local ordinances were created for similar violations, especially for wake zone violations, this money could go back to the respective cities to off set the costs of the programs.

The Commission members feel that there should be new ordinances presented that would be accepted in both Saco and Biddeford. Any monies generated to any new law enforcement ordinances would be split between the two Cities. Treasurer Robert Barris said that he would get together with Wayne Hutchins, to draft some language to be presented to both City Councils. Jet and Water Ski’s were also discussed. There should be some place on the river where they are allowed.

The Commission members next year would like to have the breakdown for boats, broken down even more, to see how many of these stops are on personal watercraft.

Since 4 more docks are being added, there should also be 4 more pilons added as well. A couple more “No Wake” buoys should also be added.
D. Mooring Waiting List – Clarification

Assistant Harbormaster Tom Casamassa asked if the City Clerk’s office could list on the Waiting List the location of where the individual would like to have their mooring, either Camp Ellis or Up River.

E. Harbor Master & Assistant Harbormaster Positions

These positions will be up for review and recommendations by Commission members in April.

VII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

ATTEST:_____________________________________________________________________
Michele L. Hughes – Recording Secretary

APPROVED:__________________________________________