



# **INTEROFFICE MEMO**

City of St. Marys Planning and Building Department

TO: City Council and Citizens of St. Marys  
Steve Crowell, Jr., City Manager

FROM: Roger A. Weaver, Planning Director

DATE: April 1, 2013

RE: 1. Notes on FIRST Public Work Session on the Maritime Heritage District  
2. Notes on meetings/correspondence AFTER the work session to today's date

The following are my notes on the FIRST Public Work Session as well as notes on meetings/correspondence held after this FIRST work session. The notes are simply that – notes. This office will respond to all notes after all of the work sessions are finished, and all of our interested Citizens have the opportunity to weigh in on this concept.

A few citizens were not aware of the FIRST meeting, and thought the second meeting was to be held 26 March. The 26 March meeting was a Goals and Vision meeting, and not intended to function as the second work session. The citizens reasoning about this was in the Feasibility Report section on proposed schedule. All of the target dates listed were recommendations and not set in stone.

## **1. Notes on FIRST Public Work Session on the Maritime Heritage District (MHD)**

- A. Kay Westberry: Ms. Westberry asked about how the MHD would affect the role of the HPC. She also suggested that existing governing boards be used.
- B. Jim Stein: Mr. Stein noted concerns by the Crabbing industry (see below) as to how it would affect them. He also noted concerns about competing with a private enterprise (Lang's Marina). He noted that the concept was good, but should not harm any existing businesses.
- C. Roger Wilkerson: Mr. Wilkerson is the owner of the Dream. He noted the need for navigable markers from the present one east of Lang's East Marina. He noted that there should be signage noting the rules and time limits for any use of the City controlled public docks/buoys, with telephone contact numbers posted.
- D. George Hanley: Mr. Hanley noted that the report was a wonderful start. He noted that it was premature to assume competition with Lang's Marina. He suggested an organization be created to administer the MHD that would include retention of a harbor master. He also mentioned that the Pilotage Commission could be reactivated. Mr. Gant asked of there was a need for a harbor master, with Mr. Hanley responding 'yes' based on 'stuff' that was happening. This could be funded by registration fees, etc. *(Note: Mr. Hanley provided the Planning Department with a summary of his remarks, which are attached to this memo.)*
- E. Cheri Richter: Ms. Richter noted that existing harbor services are inadequate, and needs laundry, toilets, facilities for maritime related supplies and groceries, etc. Ms. Richter noted later in the meeting that the CIG and TE grants were underway to accomplish some of the goals
- F. John King: Mr. King noted the need for a riverkeeper, who is preferably a marine scientist (possibly from the St. Marys River Management Committee). He noted that we are surrounded by water. The MHD should bring in individuals for a longer stay as well as provide opportunities for eco-tourism. HE noted that the salt marsh creates more nutrients than ten feet of topsoil in Iowa. The MHD could feature 'life' in many ways – human and ecology. He noted the need for a riverkeeper. He noted a cautionary principal regarding the use of lawn chemicals: do nothing that would harm the marsh and/or the water. Jim Gant discussed the potential of the proposed Marsh Walk, Rookery, and the Weed Street site (the location of the former Weed Street WWTP). Mr. King further noted that the City is on the Great Eastern Flyway. He also noted that St. Marys does not have a major park, although the Gilman Park is a great success.
- G. Paul Heydrich: Mr. Heydrich moved here from Charleston, SC, and enjoys boating. He noted that the report is a great beginning to a really good plan. He noted that the City should move slowly in the right direction. Fernandina charges \$8 for temporary docking. He noted that the City already has the essentials, with the understanding that there is a need to embellish and polish them.
- H. Tommy Weaver: Mr. Weaver noted that the City was inviting people to break the law, and that people are breaking the law regarding live-a-boards. He noted need for cooperation with Florida. Mr. Weaver, in a phone conversation, also discussed similar concerns prior to the First Public work session.
- I. Corey Hayes: Mr. Hayes provided the Council with a written report which is attached to this summary. He noted that on page 11, the widening of the sidewalk should be also accomplished on St. Marys Street to the east of Osborne Street. He

noted that he has free wi-fi in the store. Mr. Gant asked about the nature of his store called 'Orca'. Mr. Hayes responded that it is a consignment type of business. Mr. Gant complimented the look of their facility.

- J. Tom Canning: Mr. Canning noted that improving the waterfront is a common thread through all of the comments/data presented. He noted that some projects noted need to stand on their own. He also noted the need for a timeline for completing the study and a timeline for the subsequent implementation of any identified project.
- K. Jim Gant: Mr. Gant noted that the concept was worth investigating and that citizen involvement is absolutely crucial in the success in this – and any other – endeavor.

2. **Notes on meetings/correspondence AFTER the work session to today's date**

- A. Mr. Gene Hope and Mr. Tim James: The two men are part of the small crab harvesting businesses located in St. Marys. They stopped by and we had a lively one hour conversation regarding the MHD. Their concerns were directed toward the defining of the 'navigable channel'. They stated that the navigable channel was the 'deepest' part of the channel (which moves from time to time) as determined by sounding, and for about 100 feet either side of this would be what was acceptable for navigation. They are not permitted to crab in the channel. They noted that the incidents of snagging of a trap have been purely accidental and not sufficient enough to warrant any additional channel markers. They also noted that they provide sufficient distance between anchored boats or the buoys for the maneuvering of their boats, as well as provide room for the anchored boats to move around. They further suggested dividing up the river into zones and regulating how many boats were permitted to be anchored within the particular zone, and the distances required to be apart. This would be a win-win situation between the boaters and the crabbers.

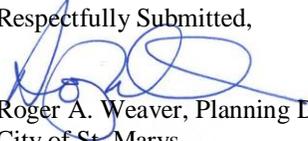
*(I noted to Mr. Hope and Mr. James that the overriding concept for the creation of the MHD was not for the City to enforce state law, or for the City to permit any individual or vessel to violate state law – regardless of the law in question. I also noted that the document was the first step in a process to make sure the City gets it right. I further noted that the target dates in the report were 'not set in stone'. Therefore the 26 March meeting was not anticipated by this office as the next work session. The March 26<sup>th</sup> meeting was advertised as a goals and visioning session – although the creation of the MHD could be a goal and a vision for the future of the City. Both appeared appreciative of the inclusion of their concerns into the document, and stated that they would continue to be a resource to the City regarding the crabbing industry in St. Marys. The balance between crabbers, fishermen, pleasure boaters, and tourists is possible with the full cooperation of all citizens that are – or will be – affected.)*

- B. Ms. Kelly O'Rourke: This office had a conversation with Kelly O'Rourke, DNR Coastal Resource Community liaison. Ms. O'Rourke noted that the document was a very early discussion of what could be accommodated by an MHD. She noted that any suggested changes to state law needed to follow proper procedures through the legislature. She also noted that DNR is comfortable with the premise that this document is a draft, subject to vetting by all appropriate parties. She suggested that a paragraph be added about enforcement issues by using the Sheriff's department – or other methods as appropriate. Ms. O'Rourke and I also discussed the navigable channel issue, and she concurred with the data given to me by Mr. Hope and Mr. Tim Jones. She noted that there will be regulatory procedures to follow if a mooring field is proposed, or if any revisions to Georgia state laws or regulations is proposed as a result of this study.
- C. Mr. George Hanley: Mr. Hanley stopped by to give me a copy of his notes from the previous meeting. These are attached.

Future comments, whether verbally received by the writer, or via email, or via US Mail, or via Council or the Mayor will be added to this listing. When the initial work sessions are completed, the documents will be revised as appropriate, and any additional work session scheduled if deemed necessary by City Council.

The above data will be reviewed and discussed at the SECOND public work session at a date to be determined.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Roger A. Weaver, Planning Director  
City of St. Marys