

Sunapee Harbor Reconfiguration Committee
Meeting Notes – 3/12/2025 5:30 p.m. Abbott Library

In Attendance: Steve McGrath, Diane Robbins, Mary Beth Carroll, Jeff Savage, Chris Whitehouse, Tim Fenton, Michael Kelly, Aaron Whipple Deb Pasculano (remote), Chris Murphy

We discussed SHA's newly acquired site on River Rd which abuts the Ben Mere property and possible uses for the site. SHA is taking a big picture view. They posted on social media, they are looking for ideas. The lot is big enough to accommodate several uses and wetlands exist.

We discussed potential lodging use in the harbor area. Riverway explored this 10+ yrs ago and determined it was not economically feasible based on a consultant's study. Given the post Covid economy around Lake Sunapee, we may want to re-explore the lodging issue; might a boutique-type inn be feasible.

Discussed relocation of the Kearsarge boat? The Fenton's would love to see the boat get used and we discussed previous developed plans for the boat on shore and the costs involved. If the boat was put next to the museum (on Riverway land) it could be run as part of the museum. Fenton's ideal future use would be finding a nearby site and re-developing/adapting the vessel to wine/beer garden establishment. Is this realistically feasible? Could "the Kearsarge" be a community project? If such a project could be completed it would help to make the harbor a destination visitation site.

Pedestrian and auto traffic flow in the harbor...per Steve's attendance at a Sunapee Safety committee meeting the Town has a highway safety committee, they are looking at town pedestrian issues and incidents. Proposing to change crosswalks in the harbor. This committee decided to wait for input from the Charette committees regarding the harbor. How about making the whole harbor a pedestrian friendly zone re: Perkins in ME? They put the discussions "on hold" because of the cost and other considerations. What is our vision for the harbor as a walking destination?

Agreed that a profile of boat launchers would be helpful to better understand certain aspects and needs of the harbor area. % of local (Sunapee), out-of-town, and out-of-state users. Will explore engaging Sunapee students as part of a volunteer project to assist with this task. Deb will check with the school. Do we want to consider ways to alleviate the harbor ramp traffic by encouraging uses of other ramps, especially the state park. The state park has a fee. The state beach ramp is apparently in poor condition. We should push for the state to repair this launch. Send a letter to the state, from the select board, Chris W will draft letter to give to Aaron to present to the select board.

Kyle Davis who spoke to us about the dock expansion indicated that the engineering firm who is/will be working on these plans is interested in attending our April meeting. Consensus that at least a portion of any added dock spaces should be made available for people to visit the harbor by boat...to encourage such traffic. Currently, the lack of boat parking discourages such traffic. If they create more dock spaces could spaces be leased only during the week and leave them open for the weekends? We want to incentivize coming to the harbor. How many spaces are they thinking of creating? DES has restrictions based on waterfront footage. Newbury is doing a better job of attracting people to their harbor, they draw a crowd every Thurs. night due to better bands. There are no places for sail boats in the harbor, could spaces be reserved? Georges Mills (GM) docks are up for getting fixed. Most barges are launched in GM, it's a better ramp, harbor ramp is shallower. More sailboats are launched from GM.

Let's continue vetting ideas/plans for re-use/redevelopment of the town waterfront site. It might be helpful to start with the land area that has to be devoted to the boat ramp...not just the access ramp itself but the land necessary for vehicles to pull up and back in. Then we can deal with what's left.

Next meeting Wednesday, 4/9, 5:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Deb Pasculano