



**TOWN OF OLD SAYBROOK
Harbor Management Commission**

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**HMC SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2022 7:00 P.M.
SECOND-FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM, TOWN HALL - HYBRID**

To access the audio from this meeting, please use the following link:

<https://youtu.be/9t2j3XTtkTc>

1. Call to Order

Chair Robert Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Robert Murphy, Chair; Paul Connolly, Secretary; Robert Soden; Lou Vinciguerra; Chris Costa, Mike Ott, Ray Koski, Barbara Koski, James O'Donnell (remote), Lynne Steeves (remote), Jennifer Donahue, Clerk and three other unidentified neighbors.

Absent: David Cole.

3. Review and Potential Action re: Zoning Referral: "Smoke on the Water at Dock & Dine" Application for Special Exception /Coastal Site Plan Review

Mr. Murphy reported that the above-referenced application had been withdrawn and no discussion or action related to it would occur this evening.

4. Applicant Presentation/Discussion on Potential Ways to Develop 91 Sheffield Street Including Bother Water-Dependency and Public Access

Mr. Murphy explained that this was an informal informational presentation and discussion requested by Mr. Ott and Mr. Nielson. Mr. Ott introduced himself and apologized that Mr. Nielson was not present due to a miscommunication. He presented a historical review of the previous uses at the property including as a location for Ocean Surveys at one time as well as a residence and sail loft in the 1970s.

Ms. Costa discussed how the area was designated as marine commercial in the 1970s or possibly earlier, probably based on previous use. A few years ago the zone was converted to marine industrial as the Zoning Commission hoped to protect marine uses by removing residential uses to prevent the town's marinas from being converted to housing.

Mr. Ott presented a map of the area and discussed the characteristics of the land, including the cost of dredging that would be required for a marine use. He also noted that of the 10 acres that the site encompasses, half of it is tidal wetlands and what is left is oddly shaped with one narrow driveway. Required setbacks related to the Gateway Conservation Zone, tidal wetlands and flood ordinances further decrease the usable land on the site. There is a creek suitable for kayaking and canoeing that would have little impediment except for at dead low tide. The owner is willing to provide public access and a parking easement. Mr. Ott noted that the shallow water depth and cost of dredging make the property unsuitable for a water-based use.

Ms. Costa talked about the owner's choice to pursue a text amendment and residential development. She also noted that the limitations related to Sheffield Street's capacity need to be considered. Mr. Ott also noted that his group would be open to participation in restoration of the marsh along the tidal wetlands and installation of a walkway.

Mr. Murphy asked members of the public in attendance what they would like to see there as the Koskis had submitted a letter advocating for preservation of the natural habitat. Other neighbors expressed the desire to keep the area as open space for climate mitigation, a bird sanctuary and an area for middle school educational activities. They expressed concern that the owner's litigation related to the property is blocking progress on any of these other uses.

5. Potential General Discussion of Zoning Process

Ms. Costa discussed questions commissioners had and noted that she is available to support them whenever complicated applications come before them.

6. Adjournment

Mr. Murphy made a motion to adjourn at 8:14 p.m. seconded by Mr. Vinciguerra which was so VOTED unanimously 4-0-0. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 17, 2022 at 7:00 pm in the Old Saybrook Town Hall second-floor conference room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Donahue
Clerk, OSHMC