

NMTA Government Affairs Committee

MINUTES

Logan Brown, Chair
Deke Jones
Bill Devoe
Doug Dixon
Hoby Douglass
Jagen Twitchell
Neil Falkenburg
Jennie Spillane
Jason Zittel
TJ Quandt
Mark Gleason
Monique Webber

George Harris
Jay Jennings
Carl Burke
Cliff Webster
Doug Levy
Max Martin

Jay Jennings welcomed members previewed the agenda and threw it to George for NMTA organizational updates.

George shared that we are optimistically pursuing a national work force development grant from the Marine Retailers Association of America (MRAA) which may lead to a staff position dedicated to workforce development.

Jay Jennings began down the list of topics and welcomed Logan Brown, Chair, to the call.

Permit updates:

Boatyard General Permit – Jay reminded members of the upcoming release of the boatyard permit (7/20). Jay verbally described elements of the new permit with revised copper benchmarks and other modifications. Jay conveyed those initial conversations with the Puget Soundkeeper Alliance resulted in a commitment to communicate before either entity sought to appeal. They have no current plans to challenge the verbally proposed permit. General discussion and comments ensued as we anticipate the delivery of data from Integral environmental to measure the potential impacts possible with the revised benchmarks.

Salish Sea Nearshore Aquatics Programmatic (aka “marina permit” now to be referred to as SNAP) – Jay introduced broadly the recently released 359 paged nearshore permit. Logan brown led the discussion and shared insight regarding implementation v. what it looks like on paper.

Jay introduced the discussion of the **November elections**. Cliff Webster provided a brief landscape analysis going into November and Carl and Jay added points of information. Jay foreshadowed the Political Action Committee tasks to be completed after the August primary elections

WDFW – commission appts. – Carl Burke briefed the committee on upcoming change to the Fish and Wildlife Commission and the important opportunity he is pursuing with the governors office and legislators to improve the make-up of the commission.

Pump-out/Discharge facility expansion – Jay Jennings reported on his work with Soundkeepers, RBAW, DNR parks, Sea Grant and others to lead a coalition to petition the legislature to address the need for a more robust and accessible pump-out infrastructure. Jay and Soundkeeper staff will convene a meeting to formulate a legislative proposal for 2023.

Jay Jennings provided updates around activities in the following areas: voluntary **commercial gillnet license buy back** being carelessly implemented by WDFW. NMTA's support for RBAW's **Mind the Zone** public education campaign to keep users of Lake Union safe and allow scheduled landings of seaplanes.

Deke Jones provided an update and insightful information around Sound Transit's northern expansion across Salmon Bay and into Ballard. We are optimistic that a tunnel option is the only viable option to accommodate coast guard restrictions. Monique shared that there is a likelihood that a sailboat with a 285-foot mast will be arriving and may be an opportunity to visually communicate the need for a tunnel rather than a bridge which will impede some vessels seeking entry.

Jay shared that **BST Associates** conducted a scientific analysis of how boats are valued over the years in the market versus how the existing **Watercraft Excise Tax** depreciation schedule ignores depreciation after 14 years of owning the same boat.

Jay briefed the committee on developments around the **Puget Sound Pilots' tariff (rate) filing** to the Utility and Transportation Commission and that we agreed to the filing which would reduce rates applying to recreational yachts by around 40%, while allowing the Pilots to transition to a fully funded pension over the next 16 years with a small surcharge.

Government Affairs team transition – Jay shared news that longtime NMTA advocate and lobbyist in Olympia, Cliff Webster (Carney, Badley, Spellman), is retiring as of 10/1 and that Jay is interviewing lobbying firms to replace Carney, Badley Spellman and committed to select and reach agreement our choice so that we will not have a gap in service.

Logan Brown adjourned the meeting around 11:30 AM

The next GAC meeting is scheduled for 9/7/2022 at 10AM