

Harbor Commission Minutes

December 9th, 2025 at 5:30pm

645 Pine St., Front Conference Room & Zoom

Commissioners in Attendance: Lantieri, Bergmann, Johnson, Boehm & Etter

Staff in Attendance: Lewis, Moreau, Sauve, Kaeding, Peterson, McClenahan & O'Daniel

Public Present: none

1. Waterfront Update

Moreau began by sharing screen and explaining that she and her team would be sharing an overview of the season. She touched on the many cancellations of Canadian tourists that dramatically impacted revenues, but shared that they have taken steps to try to address those losses. Moreau continued that the largest encampment in Burlington right in between the marina and the campground at the Urban Reserve came with many challenges including site security issues that have affected their operations at North Beach and campground reservations. She shared that despite many efforts including overnight patrol/security and solar-powered motion lights in the woods, among others, that they endured break-ins and theft that was difficult for staff and patrons.

Peterson introduced himself and shared an overview of the Marina, noting that despite the challenges they had with decreased Canadian traffic, it was an overall successful year with a lot of projects, a great staff and lots of marina usage. He continued by sharing that despite a 24% decrease for moorings and slips, overall revenue went up thanks to fee increases which were approved by the Commission, selling extra commercial slips and allowing for extended stays.

Etter asked how the total of nights people stayed compared from this year to last. Peterson answered that it actually increased. He continued that they embarked on new commercial boating operations, where people could rent a 20ft boat to take out on the lake, as well as a fishing boat that people could charter. They also added a commercial banner program to promote the various businesses operating in and around the Boathouse. Peterson continued that they began selling Community Boathouse specific branded merchandise and that they also added new deck furniture that was available to the public, which were heavily used. He shared that they hosted 2 public events this past season – the Lake Champlain Poker Run and the Antique Boat Show. Peterson continued that they worked on a lot of projects this summer, including re-decking the Perkins Pier Marina, upgraded the mooring field, invested in public safety by installing lighted buoys and doubled the amount of swim buoys in all of the swimming areas. He shared the past 4 years of customer satisfaction noting that this year's was the highest so far – 4.92 out of 5!

Etter asked if there were the same amount of reviews as years past.

Peterson answered that they were down a bit, but despite that he feels they're trending in the right direction. He continued that this is the 2nd year that they achieved Elite Fleet status and noted that this is because of the incredible customer service the staff provides. Peterson closed by sharing that his winter will be filled with contract work and planning capital projects to get ready for 2026!

Etter asked if the boat rental piece could be added to the website.

Peterson confirmed that he would.

Public Forum was opened at 6pm. With no one present for it, it was closed at 6:01pm.

Kaeding opened by sharing that the start to the season was a little tough but things finished out okay and that they officially have their own logo now which they're excited about. He then echoed Moreau that revenues were down 20% across the board and noted that this was mostly due to the lack of Canadian traffic and that this was in alignment with businesses throughout Burlington, but that some cancellations were due to site security concerns. He continued by sharing data about beach closures due to Cyanobacteria, noting that there were many more closures than last year because it was so hot and the water levels were so low. He continued by touching on the positive contracts with vendors at both North Beach and Oakledge.

Kaeding and Moreau noted that there were some issues at the beginning of the season with underage drinking and rowdy behavior, but BPD was helpful and Kaeding shifted his schedule to help with enforcement. They continued that it was difficult to have seasonal staff interfacing with aggressive people and behaviors, and that they were fearful for their safety.

Moreau shared that most of the behavior happened in a specific part of North Beach and were domestic disputes, but that it was still disturbing to witness and problematic. She acknowledged that this is not an issue specific to North Beach, but City-wide, and that they will welcome any support available moving forward. Kaeding chimed in that there were many no-trespasses issued this season, most at North Beach but one at Oakledge.

Moreau circled back to explain that there is a seasonal staff team dedicated to checking all of the municipal beaches for Cyanobacteria multiple times a day. She shared that this high level of monitoring is why Burlington's beaches are closed more often than others. Lantieri noted that the total number of closures and alerts combined are similar to last year, just flipped so there were more closures than alerts this year, so it tracks.

Boehm gave kudos to the team for aligning with the State and having an incredibly well-used system for everyone to be in-the-know about the alerts and closures. She then asked if the Cyanobacteria closures impact anything other than swimming.

Kaeding answered yes, that they get Campground cancellations based on closures and parking revenue goes down.

Moreau chimed in that despite that, they are very insistent that people know because first and foremost is the safety of all patrons.

Kaeding continued by sharing actual numbers for the difference in numbers from international rentals, noting the drastic decrease between 2024 and 2025. He shared

that to try to off-set these revenue losses, they are going to have 5 seasonal campsites for long term rentals, transition tent sites to “primitive camper” sites available for small campers/vans without electricity hook-up, selling branded items with the new logo, focus on a new design and location for the playground area as well as adding volleyball courts, and increasing parking spots.

Moreau closed by sharing that the goal is to address the issues at hand in a safe and humane way, with an openness to trying different approaches and innovating. She feels confident that her team is up for the challenge.

Boehm shared her gratitude for the Waterfront team, and the Campground specifically, noting that she had not heard of any of these issues from people she knows who camped there this summer.

Lantieri asked how the Commission could support them moving forward.

Moreau responded that sharing the history of initiatives they have tried and is always helpful to get out there. She continued that they want the community to know they recognize when there are issues and do not try to cover them up, but instead continue to try to face them head-on. She closed by noting that the team values feedback from the community, so sharing anything that comes to Commissioners would be extremely welcomed and helpful.

2. Adjournment

Boehm made a motion to adjourn the Harbor Commission and re-open the Parks Commission, Etter seconded. The meeting was closed at 6:27pm.