

**MARINERS' ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE BAY AND RIVER DELAWARE
MEETING
September 12th, 2013 MINUTES**

The Regular Quarterly Meeting of the Mariners' Advisory Committee for the Bay and River Delaware was held Sept 12th, 2013 at Ristorante LaVeranda Philadelphia. Captain Stephen Roberts presided over the meeting. Captain Roberts called the meeting to order at 1100 hours. The meeting was attended by 54 Members, Associate Members, and interested parties.

I. Welcome

Captain Roberts welcomed members and guests.

II. Reading of the Minutes

Tom Johnson moved that the reading of the minutes from the previous meeting be approved, John Gazzola seconded. All approved.

III. Report of the Treasurer

On behalf of MAC Treasurer Rick Iuliucci, Scott Anderson reported a balance of \$13,625.79 and welcomed new member Hollstein, Keating, Cattell and Johnson to the MAC.

IV. Aids to Navigation USCG

Christopher Runt reported on the following lights and projects and distributed a detailed report on the following:

Maintenance and Improvements projects

1. Miah Maull Shoal Light (sound signal)
2. Delaware Bay Light 32
3. Bulkhead Bar Range
4. Pea Patch Island Dike Lt C
5. Reedy Island Dike Lt C
6. Devlin Lower Range Front Light
7. Edgewater Upper Range Front
8. Fisher Point RF
9. Salem River Range Rear Lt
10. Liston Range Rear Lt
11. Future AtoN Improvements
 - a. Baker Range
 - b. Delaware River and Bay Deepening Project
 - c. Replacement of:
 - i. Liston Range
 - ii. Reedy Island Range
 - iii. New Castle Range
12. Navigation Items of Interests
 - a. Offshore Renewable Energy Installations (OREIs)
 - b. Mid-Atlantic Ports Meeting
 - c. Offshore Anchorages
 - d. GPS interference tests/frequencies/center point/Impact radius

Captain Roberts, Captain Bradley and Christopher Runt entered into a discussion regarding Buoy #32's temporary removal to be completed November 23rd. A few options were floated to have something in place during the interim.

V. NOAA

Jon Swallow reported the following:

1. This will be another challenging year.
2. NOAA will be favoring navigation issues.
3. Focus on readiness and recovery.
4. Support USCG
5. Focus attention and energy on chart users such as pilots etc...

Rachel Medley reported the following

1. New charts (previously distributed to the MAC)
2. *The Thomas Jefferson* is surveying the mouth of Delaware Bay.
3. Have worked with the ACOE and the pilots on moving forward with Horseshoe Bend Range.

Denise Gruccio reported that John Walters is working with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on the Ocean (MARCO) on a series of meetings in different ports to collect information on how our coastal and ocean resources are used.

Darren Wright updated the MAC on the following

1. PORTS funding update
2. Detailed the progress of 3 downed stations.
3. New website and asked the MAC to try it out.
4. The new Delaware Bay Forecast Model (DBOFS) which focuses on tides, currents and geological information going out 48 hours; detailing winds and damage pressure. Unlike tide predictions, it does take astronomical effects into account along with forecast from the Weather Service.

Captain Roberts added that the link can be found on the MAC website and as progress continues on our channel developments, we'll be using that a lot more as a tool for managing traffic.

Walter Drag from the National Weather Service gave a brief description of the various forecast models to predict high water level events:

1. DBOFS: <http://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/ofs/dbofs/dbofs.html>
2. Stevens Institute: <http://hudson.dl.stevens-tech.edu/maritimeforecast/>
3. National Weather Service: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/mdl/etsurge/>

VI. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)

Tony DePasquale distributed his report and commented on the following: (See distribution).

1. Delaware River, Philadelphia to Sea & Main Channel Deepening
2. Wilmington Harbor- new bidding due to glitch.

3. Delaware River: Philadelphia to Trenton- Funding due to Superstorm Sandy beginning in October.
4. C&D Canal- shoaling rates have been low; no activity.

VII. Sector Delaware Bay

COTP Kathy Moore made some new introductions on her staff and commented below on Conrail's plans for a remote control bridge operation.

VIII. Old Business

Captain Roberts reported the following:

1. **Tacony Palmyra Bridge:** The TPB was closed for two weeks in August, but the work was not completed. An eight day closure is scheduled on September 1st for December 6th through December 14th 2100-2100 hours.
2. **Low Water departures:** Regarding sailing deep ships out of the "Philadelphia", where do you time low tide from? (a) Philadelphia Harbor or (b) the pier that you sail from. Sailing from Philadelphia Harbor gives you a little more time. Further discussion will be tabled for the December MAC meeting.
3. **Wind Industry** presentation: Kris Orlich of the Atlantic Wind Connection gave an A/V report of the offshore wind energy project that would connect the various wind energy areas with energy infrastructure on shore.
4. **The registration date for the 2014 National Harbor Conference** date has been set for August 25th. The convention follows on the 26th and 27th.
5. **PARS:** Captain Broadley reported that a permit was granted for Stage 1. An update will follow in December.

IX. New Business

1. **New Ships for Tioga:** The PRPA made a presentation on a proposed new service, 18 ships per year, (wood pulp) for Tioga Marine Terminal. There was concerned discussion on the fully loaded draft (40' 11") of the ships being built for the project. Captain Roberts reported that for most of the channel, these ships safely can transit safely, but there are a few areas in the channel that raise concern. The ACOE is taking another look at some data discrepancies and will review areas with new surveys; specifically in the Tincum area. A MAC working group has been formed to review the safety factors in bringing these ships in.
2. **Delair Railroad Bridge Automation project:** Robert Carter of Conrail reported that they are proposing a plan to remote-control the operation of the bridge openings. Currently they have a 24/7 bridge operator position that they'd like to eliminate. With current technology, cameras, etc..., they feel its now time to operate the bridge remotely, but with the existing shore side "train" dispatcher. A new radio "**tone pad**" functionality, "*a dedicated call-in scheme*", was discussed in addition to normal methods of reaching someone to open the bridge. They are filing in the Federal Register: Notice for Proposed Rulemaking and for a comment period.

There will be a concurrent test period, under the guidance of the USCG, with both the bridge and train dispatcher to operate the bridge remotely.

Captain Roberts reported that the MAC has met twice with Conrail and noted that in New York, they have been successfully running bridges remotely, but do station a bridge operator during certain weather events. He added that many of the ships do not have, at a ready place, if at all, a radio that the pilots can get to that has the **tone pad** functionality described in the presentation.

USCG COTP Kathy Moore commented that the bridge is normally closed. She added that some mariners sensitive to the opportunity of an opening and are piggybacking on that opening. Now you have circumstances where 3 vessels are transiting under an opened bridge, an opening that is now considerably longer than anticipated. She added that this is a safety issue that somehow if the MAC could get the word out about communicating with the bridge operator.

There was also some discussion with the problems and conditions related to a “bridge open” radio messaging. Captain Roberts noted that such frequent messaging would interfere with regular radio calls. Mr. Carter closed his comments with advising the MAC that this is a one year advanced notice.

3. **Philadelphia Energy Solutions Wider Beam proposal:** Their operations plan on the Schuylkill River at Point Breeze has a 65 foot limit on barges. They are asking to increase the 65 foot beam limit to 80 feet. Currently there has been no opposition. They asked to bring this up in front of the MAC for comments or concerns.
4. **Baltimore Regional Exam Center:** Abigail Cochenour of the National Marine Center spoke briefly on the exam applications and procedures.
5. **New MAC Chairman:** Captain Roberts announced that he is stepping down as the MAC Chairman and that Captain Jon Kemmerley will be our new MAC Chairman.

X. Adjournment

Captain Roberts announced the next meeting of the MAC is scheduled for December at 1100 hours at the LaVeranda Restaurant at Penn’s Landing.

With no further agenda items or discussion, Greg Adams moved that the meeting be adjourned Tupper Barrett seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 1245 hours.