



**Manchester-by-the-Sea Harbormaster**  
**Harbormaster**

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**THE WATERLINE**

Greetings Boaters,

**Waterway Permit Fee**

On Monday November 5<sup>th</sup> the Manchester Harbor Advisory Committee and the Harbormaster appeared before the Manchester Board of Selectman with a recommendation to raise the rate for waterway use from \$6.50 to \$10.00 per foot for all recreational boats. All waterway fees directly support harbor related expenses including current and future projected dredging costs. The Harbor Advisory Committee also recommended a change to the transfer from the waterway fund to the dredge fund from \$20,000 to \$70,000.

With this increase Manchester now has one of the highest regional per foot waterway fees, on par with the State of New Hampshire. A casual observer would rightly question the need to have the highest waterway fee on the Northshore. The reason is dredging. The current dredge fund is inadequate to meet the expected town share of costs for the upcoming dredge project and leaves nothing for the next round of needed dredging. The Harbor Advisory Committee spent a great deal of time studying and discussing appropriate funding levels for current and future projects. Manchester should be well placed to pursue continued maintenance dredging with new funding levels.

**MASSPORT**

Normandeu Associates is under contract by MASSPORT to survey the eel grass beds to identify the total acreage in Manchester, Beverly and Salem. Work began on Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, chilly work to be sure. The survey will be used to help MASSPORT determine whether Manchester is a suitable candidate for the replacement mooring program. This survey in no way obligates Manchester to do, or agree to anything.

MASSPORT is currently studying two different plans to protect eel grass habitat in Manchester from damage caused by traditional moorings and boat anchors.

1. Replace all existing traditional block and chain moorings in Area G and part of Area F with helix style moorings that have little or no impact on eel grass. Purchase and installation cost of these moorings would be paid for by MASSPORT. The benefit to mooring holders in these areas is clear since all new or replacement tackle in these areas must be of the low impact helix type.
2. Install a number of day use recreational moorings in the area near Long Beach and the Ram Islands. Many of you will have noticed the increased number of boats anchored on weekends in this area of the harbor. So many in fact that the harbormaster has been forced to curtail some water-skiing and tubing activity due to safety issues, an unfortunate situation. Well planned placement of these moorings would ensure broader recreational use of this wonderful boating area traditionally enjoyed by Manchester residents such as water-skiing.

MASSPORT is concerned that the moorings would be assigned permanently to boaters on the waitlist. Language designating the moorings for transient day use only as well as language protecting traditional use of the area could be inserted into any agreement signed by the town. It would seem appropriate to request a “sundown date” on any agreement should Manchester opt to discontinue the program.

So what does Manchester have to give up you ask? MASSPORT would like the area at Long Beach to be designated a “No Anchor Zone” in order to protect the eel grass. MASSPORT would fund the purchase and installation of advisory buoys. Discussion with MASSPORT is in the early stages although the survey suggests forward movement. MASSPORT has been on one site visit with members of the HAC, mooring service companies, boat yard owners and the Harbormaster to identify the actual eel grass beds.

Please contact me with any and all questions and I will update you as more information comes in.

### **Boat Excise Bills**

My apologies to all who received incorrect excise bills. The glitch was corrected and new bills are on the way. Please disregard and discard any boat excise bill on yellow paper, the correct bill will be on white paper.

### **Safe Boating Graduates**

Sixteen folks young and old completed the Massachusetts Safe Boating Course and received certificates from the Massachusetts Environmental Police on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Thanks to the Environmental Police for assisting in course instruction and Manchester Parks and Recreation Department for offering the course. Good work!

### **ATONS**

Prock Marine continues to replace missing spindles around Salem Sound. Four are in place with two installations left including Whaleback Ledge. Weather has slowed progress but the project is still ahead of schedule.

### **Piers and Floats**

The order has been placed for the new crane at Morss Pier. The new crane should be in place in four to six weeks. The new crane will replace the failing original crane that served the working waterfront so long and so well. Up next, a new deck for the Reed Park Pier and replacement of some town floats.

### **Weather**

I hope everyone is hunkered down and ready for today's latest round of bad weather. Fortunately the tides are not expected to be as high this time around. You may still need to hold on to your hat. Hats off for the great job done by all in preparation for Sandy, especially Fire, Police and DPW!

### **Hours**

The harbormaster is still available forty hours a week through November. As of December 1<sup>st</sup> availability will drop back to approximately thirty hours a week.

Please contact me with any and all questions.

Stop by, say hi and don't forget your lifejacket! You can follow harbor happenings on Facebook at Manchester Harbormaster Department, updated as often as is practical.