

Date: February 20th 2014

From: Councillor James McIntosh, Chair
Councillor Mike Poetker, Co-Chair
Harbour Remediation Taskforce

Subject: Old Harbour Remediation

Recommendation:

The Harbour Remediation Taskforce recommends an interim solution to address the annual siltation that, compounded with periodic low water levels, severely impacts the navigability and utilization of Meaford's Old Harbour Basin. The Taskforce recommends on an interim basis the removal of under-utilised finger docks located on the east side of the Old Harbour Basin and reallocation of surplus funds (savings) to be spent annually on the installation and maintenance (increased temporary dredging) on the west side of the Old Harbour.

Removal of the finger docks on the east side will eliminate the requirement for annual channel dredging across a large portion of the Old Harbour from west to east. Strategic dredging along the west side of the Old Harbour Basin will support a deeper access channel into the old harbour basin along the west side maintaining better access to important marina services. This should improve access to marine services for more boaters and larger vessels for a longer period of the season (that being for winter and spring haul out, maintenance and fuel).

In addition, the Taskforce recommends, through consultation with municipal staff, that on a trial basis, three to four lengths of finger docks be removed from the east side of the old harbour basin and be installed along the west side of the old harbour basin adjacent Bayfield Street to be utilised as daily transient boat traffic and commercial slips, thereby enhancing connectivity for boaters and waterway visitors to Meaford's downtown business core. See Appendix 4.

The above recommendations are designed to ensure increased boat traffic and retention of boats in both Meaford's Old Harbour Basin and New Harbour Basin for seasonal and transient boaters, increased utilisation of Meaford's available marina services and an increased economic benefit to the community as a whole.

The Taskforce also recommends that its mandate to work with staff on long term and capital intensive solutions be continued as the opportunity arises or until assistance is no longer required by Staff.

Financial Impact:

Discontinuation of annual finger dock installation and maintenance on the east side of the West Harbour should result in savings associated with annual Spring installation and Fall maintenance requirements. These savings can be invested in increased strategic, annual dredging.

Based on our boat user consultations and information gathering sessions, the Harbour Remediation Taskforce was able to determine an approximate dollar value generated by boat traffic in the harbour.

Based on survey results received, the average operational costs per vessel docked at Meaford Harbour is \$6,750.00/year with additional ancillary costs of \$4,079.89/boat for a total average benefit to the

community of \$10,829.89/boat kept in Meaford Harbour*. A significant proportion of these funds are in return to services provided by the municipality. Additional luxury** spending in Meaford was estimated at \$235.23/boat outing to and from Meaford for a total average in luxury spending of \$2,195.48/boat per year. The total average economic impact for transient boats was \$490.00/boat per visit.

*based on survey of average length of 30 feet

** Food and Entertainment

Background:

The Harbour Remediation Taskforce was established on March 11th 2013 with the express mandate to advise Council on a plan that will identify and evaluate options to remediate the navigability and usage of Meaford's Harbour with a focus on facilitating recreational and commercial traffic. The Taskforce was to develop mid and long term solutions to remediate the current issues of navigability, including potential funding sources for remediation work. See Appendix 1.

The Taskforce established a series of stakeholder consultations; first with the community at large, in order to gauge interest in supporting future harbour operations; and second with the Grey Sauble Conservation Authority with regards to potential parameters/restrictions for any future projects.

The Taskforce Chair did briefly consult with the Chippewas of Nawash, Saugeen First Nation, and the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans to outline the mandate of the Taskforce although further consultation did not occur at the Taskforce level based on the scope of the potential work performed of the Taskforce to date. Future consultation on any larger long term projects regarding the harbour will require further stakeholder engagement and consultation.

The Taskforce assembled a list of potential mid-term and long-term solutions (Appendix 2), to be explored through future consultation, review and study. As seasonal dredging permit requirements often leave the harbour unable to function fully during the peak spring season all of the long term solutions discussed involved exploring the elimination or drastic reduction of the need for annual harbour dredging. Ongoing dredging is deemed costly and inconvenient for the long term profitability and growth potential of harbour operations.

It was determined through consultation with a Shoreplan Engineer that future consideration of any of the long term solutions proposed by the Taskforce would require significant study and capital investment to complete. As the Taskforce has yet to recommend potential funding sources the Taskforce focused on viable mid-term solutions. See Appendix 3.

Consultation:

Boat Owner and Transient Boater Survey
Public Meeting: Held June 30th 2013
Friends of Meaford Harbour
Grey Sauble Conservation Authority
Shoreline Engineer – MILO STURN

Conclusion:

It is the conclusion of the Harbour Remediation Taskforce that, in the interim, strategic annual dredging is the most cost effective and prudent solution until future funding sources can be identified and funding for longer terms solutions can be secured.

Strategic dredging activity is viewed as the best way to immediately mitigate the seasonal disruptions in harbour operations stemming from permit restrictions for dredging as sections in the harbour can be maintained to deeper and wider dimensions with greater annual spending when permitted.

The Taskforce does suggest that such a remedy on a long term basis is not recommended.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: By-Law and Terms of Reference

Appendix 2: Taskforce Solutions Brief

Appendix 3: Shoreline Engineer Comments

Appendix 4: Overhead graphic of reallocation.

Prepared By:

James McIntosh,
Chair, Harbour Remediation Taskforce

Reviewed by:

Michael Poetker,
Vice Chair, Harbour Remediation Taskforce