

October 23, 2021

Maine Department of Environmental Protection
17 State House Station
28 Tyson Drive
Augusta, Maine 04333-0017

Re: Application by SHM Rockland, LLC to Dredge/Construct Floats in Rockland Harbor
Public Comment

Dear DEP,

I attach a letter I wrote to the Bureau of Submerged Lands in opposition to the above-referenced application; please incorporate same, and this letter, into the public comment on this matter (due by 1 November, as advised by Ms. Karen Faust at Submerged Lands).

I realize that parts of that letter do not fall under your mandate, but some other parts do.

I believe that the marina expansion will greatly impact South End beach, the only public beach in Rockland, and that the company's plans for future expansion will impact a great part of the harbor shoreline and lands on the harbor.

I submit this comment after the questions I raised were not answered by SHM, nor the Rockland City Council at the latest public information session on 13 October.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Regards,



Judy Pasqualge

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Rockland, ME 04841
jwaterspasq@yahoo.com

28 September 2021

Ms. Karen Foust
Submerged Lands Program
Bureau of Parks and Lands
22 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0022

via email and USPS

Re: Application by SHM Rockland, LLC to Dredge/Construct Floats in Rockland Harbor

Dear Ms. Foust,

First, thank you for extending the public comment period on the above-referenced project from 1 October to 15 October.

This letter outlines my opposition to the application, for three main reasons:

- inadequate public information and input regarding the revised project;
- the serious impact on public recreational areas, including view and environmental aspects; and
- the unclear financial benefits when weighed against these impacts.

After reading the complete application, I have many unanswered questions.

The Information Process:

Most public comment came when the project was first proposed several years ago, and was objected to and withdrawn. The current application scales back the project.

It seems that many in the public have been unaware of the project plans. There was little coverage in the local press, absence of the topic at City Council meetings, and a posting of your 1 September Notice just two weeks before the end of the initial one-month public comment period. People had to quickly request more time. A few days later the entire application was put online.

Many questions arise, for example (and crucially, as in the application), regarding: "Additional landward improvements to connect this pier to public paths are not included at this time" (page 13).

Before dealing with specific areas (see below), in general I think that the project DOES "unreasonably interfere with customary or traditional public access ways to or public trust rights (fishing, fowling, recreation and navigation) in, on or over the submerged lands"; AND DOES "unreasonably interfere with fishing or other existing marine users." If these guidelines are used, it seems that the project could be rejected on the public recreation aspect alone.

Impact on views:

- from the Harbor Master's area, including from the boardwalk (in addition, as is, the project contract allows the closure of part of the boardwalk, and the gazebo may be turned into indoor space (page 57));
- from the public South End Beach, just to the south of Archer's on the Pier; this will have a huge impact on resident/family/tourist beach recreation; many locals come throughout the year to park and eat lunch, to swim and walk, including many children;
- from Owls Head north shore;
- from Harbor and Buoy parks, just to the north of the project; the project will affect views throughout the harbor (have any drawings/copy been done that illustrate "the increased size and number of vessels" expected (page 16)?).

Impact on the public South End Beach, to the south of Archer's, and use of it:

In addition to the issue of the view (see page 27, Photo 8), it is unclear what effect the vessels will have on swimming and boating, and on potential pollutants (example, fuel and vessel discharge) (has this been determined?). Already, during the summer, there is often a 'slick' on the water in the area of the Harbor Master.

It is also unclear whether the dredging of material that contains arsenic in levels high enough to preempt use/require burial (page 83) will in any way affect the beach/water (even temporarily).

It is also unclear whether the planned southern extension of the pier right by Archer's (by the seaside part of its parking lot) will impact South End Beach. Is direct pier-to-beach access envisioned? It is necessary to have this answered.

This park/beach area is one of the best for public access, and is used by many people who live all over Rockland. I don't think there is even one equivalent beach alternative in Rockland. Has this been factored in?

Unclear Cost/Benefit Analysis: According to Rockland Mayor Glaser (Metro Show, Channel 7, 22 September, 5:00 pm), the town makes very little income off boat mooring fees (except for cruise liners with many passengers).

The estimated cost of the project is \$1,784,701, with a Federal Boating Infrastructure grant (i.e., taxpayers' contribution) providing \$1,045,760 of the total (about 59%).

Has the company made or provided a calculation of the income expected from the expanded facility, and taxes on same that may accrue to the State of Maine and to Rockland? Do benefits accrue mostly to private businesses in Rockland?

The bureau's decision, especially absent answers to the above, will reflect the level of priority placed on public recreation and environmental safety – for the general public and for residents of Rockland. I fear that the project, as is, may only prioritize the needs of marina owners and the recreation of marina users.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

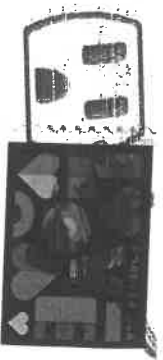
Sincerely,

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Sam!

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