

Dear City Councilors,  
Re: The Safe Harbor Expansion Project.

May I first start with the knowledge that growth will be coming to Rockland. We must welcome it but need to proceed with caution, open minds and collective wisdom. The Rockland Harbor is the next frontier north of Portland and the boating industry will continue to increase as it has for years, a history and industry we can all be proud of. How we move forward with this will be a challenge for our city.

Many of our residents are very concerned with the new marina expansion on this proposed site. There is the possibility of losing some of the most beautiful views one can behold. As I sat on Sandy Beach, as I have many times before, I marveled at the views we have; all of the harbor, the Breakwater and light house, the Camden Hills and the islands afar. Our own city beach is a precious gift. We may lose some of these views if the pier is built as proposed, not to mention that the vessels will tower above these new docks. The access into this new proposed site by land is limited to a narrow residential street designed years ago to accommodate minimum traffic in the neighborhood. Let us consider the increased traffic that will now travel down these old streets, to accommodate boat owners, guests and crew, mechanics and repair technicians, fuel and supply vehicles and all the personnel required to support the new marina.

Let's consider the amount of fuel that will be needed for these mega yachts. Where will it safely be stored? Will there be an emergency plan in place in case of fuel spills or fires? Many gallons of used engine and hydraulic oils that are pumped out and replaced when servicing these mega yachts is of concern. The city will now have to accommodate raw sewage and other service demands. CMP will have to erect additional poles and transformers to accommodate higher demand for electricity. I have heard it said that "No worries--the mega yachts have generators". Yes, they all do but they are noisy which is why they shut them off and rely on shore power when tied to the piers and docks. Let's also consider the additional impact of more noise pollution, light pollution and environmental pollution. These should be given serious consideration prior to granting any approval.

We should keep in mind there has been a hotel project in this area on hold for some time now. When I was a member of the Planning Board we looked at a large hotel proposal that went from the Safe Harbor pier and restaurant to the YMCA. That entire stretch of terraced retaining walls may still become a hotel in the future. Security for the yachting facility and possible hotel will be paramount. Will the public be allowed to have access in the future to what has become a treat for us all -the boardwalk and path from the Harbor Park to Sandy Beach. It is and has been private property all along. This area is zoned for multi-level structures far taller than the existing buildings.

I have served on the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals here in Rockland. I served a brief time on the Parks Commission and Harbor Trail Committee. I have skippered large vessels in the past, and worked around marinas and in the oil fields as a commercial diver. I have also driven the Rockland Yacht Club launch in the Harbor for the last few years. From my experience, I am very concerned with the size of this project as proposed.

We now have shoreline property available that would be far better suited for a project of this size. Rumor has it, that there is property for sale between Harbor Park and the fish pier. There is another piece of property that's also for sale north of the Ferry Terminal and south of Ohara's, where some of the schooners are docked now. This property would be a great fit for Safe Harbor Marinas with easy access off of Camden St / RT. 1. These properties may need far less dredging and as it's a larger parcel, it's better suited for this type of development. It already is a working waterfront.

I thank the City of Rockland, the City Council, and the City Manager for taking on what will become a difficult process.

Sincerely,

Kyle M. Swan  
Cedar St, Rockland

