

\$5 Million Marina Renovation Work To Begin in September

By Karen Gould

With 51 pages of unrolled blueprints and documents spread before them, the Mackinac Island Planning Commission received an update on the \$5 million renovation project planned for the marina. Initially scheduled to begin this spring, commissioners were told Tuesday, May 15, that work now will begin in mid-September. The project is expected to be completed by June 2008.

With only minutes to review the plans at the beginning of the meeting, commissioners postponed any action.

Keith Cheli, the district planner for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR), attended the meeting with Gary Ellenwood, DNR district supervisor, and Tom Paquin DNR unit manager from Cheboygan.

Funds for the project come mostly from boater registration fees, allocated from the Michigan Waterways Commission, Mr. Cheli said. The number of boat slips will not change during the remodeling project, he said.

The DNR operates the Island's 76-slip marina and harbor, which is popular among boaters because of its location.

The project, Mr. Cheli told commissioners, will include

everything above the water, along the shoreline, and on land.

"It's going to be complicated," he said. "There are a lot of factors and issues we'll have to deal with. Weather is probably going to play a big role this winter."

The project has been awarded to Ryba Marine Construction of Cheboygan and construction material will be stored on site or on Ryba Marine barges.

The project includes new decking and water, sewer, and electrical replacement and upgrading. Once the decking is removed, he said, the superstructure will be stripped and repainted. The wood decks and finger piers will be replaced with recyclable material.

Also, the marina's cable moorings will be eliminated, he said, and replaced with fixed pier slips.

A new ice suppression system will operate in the winter months, replacing the antiquated bubble system that is difficult for staff to operate, said Mr. Cheli. The new system is quieter and will help protect the superstructure of the marina.

"It's really a complete overhaul of everything over the water," said Mr. Cheli. "It will look fresher, but in reality, very much the same as what



Mackinac Island State Harbor staff opened the marina Tuesday, May 15. They continue to prepare for the boating season and are looking forward to renovations this fall. The marina is operated by the Waterways Division of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. From left are Harbor Master Charlie Maltby, dock hands Nick Jamieson and Aaron Johnson, and assistant Harbor Master Derrick Horn. Missing from photo is dock hand Brad Van Horne.

you see now."

Dredging in the shallow areas will make the marina more usable, as some sailboat keels have hit bottom in past seasons and boulders along the shoreline will be removed.

Facilities on land are failing, commissioners were told. The site, which includes restrooms and showers and a park area between Main Street and the water, will get picnic tables and seats for visitors and boaters. New wood overlook areas will be redone, and manufactured limestone seating areas will be created. Concrete which is manufactured to look like limestone, will be used for a retaining wall that will replace the split rail fence.

"It's going to have a nice

tie with a lot of the native stone on the Island," he said, "and provide a better connection with the character of the Island."

The embankment down to the marina will be reshaped in a gradual slope. Walkways will be replaced to improve pedestrian flow.

A portion of the grassy area will be raised and leveled, providing space for picnics and other family activities.

Commissioners Trish Martin and Mary Dufina, citing Mackinac Island's National Historic Register designation, said they are concerned about the appearance of the manufactured products proposed for the project.

The character of the Island was taken into account when

designing the project, replied Mr. Cheli. The DNR has been testing the deck material in sections of the dock, and he invited commissioners to visit the marina to compare them with the wooden boards. The new product retains the same appearance as wood, yet lasts longer, he noted.

Natural products cost approximately 50% to 60% more than the manufactured decking and limestone-like blocks, he said.

"What it boils down to," said Mr. Cheli, "is trying to find that balance between the use of public money and trying to address local character, detail, and quality issues with the improvements."

The DNR Wildlife division had reviewed the project and had reported no concerns with wildlife habitat, Mr. Cheli said, in response to Ms. Martin's concern for otters that inhabit the marina area.

Also of concern is a proposed trash building that abuts the street, which does not meet zoning setback requirements, according to city building inspector Dennis Dombroski. He suggested moving the 7-foot by 8-foot structure away from the sidewalk.

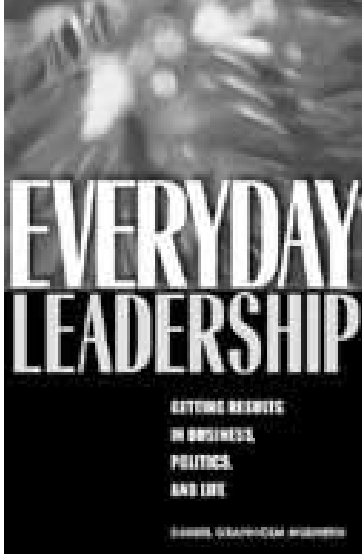
The structure could be moved, said Mr. Cheli, although the building was placed there because of convenience to where the marina places garbage for pickup.

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the residents of Mackinac.

Margaret Doud

Dear Community,

*Life on Mackinac Island is very unique, with many ups and downs to life. The community here has really shown their support by bringing us up when we were down. We would like to take this opportunity to **THANK** those who organized the benefit for Mason McLean. We would like to thank the people for their generous contributions toward Mason's eye surgeries. The people of Mackinac Island and St. Ignace have opened their hearts to us and we humbly open our hearts with great admiration and gratitude. Our son is doing well day by day and we hope with optimism and the support of this community that it will get better. The turn out we had the other night has shown us hope for better days to come. **From the bottom of our hearts we thank you.***

Sincerely, Shelly, John and Mason

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