



MINUTES
Annapolis Small Maritime Business Work Group
October 15, 2024 at 5:30 pm
Virtual Meeting

The Maritime Advisory Board (MAB) of the City of Annapolis held its second public meeting on October 15, 2024. Stephen Rice called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Work Group Members Present: **Ryan Copeland, Jennifer Kaye, Seth Lehner, Wendy Madden, Shawn Owen, Mike Tomansini**

Work Group Members Absent: Chris Sjolie

Others Present: Chris Jakubiak, Director of Planning and Zoning; Stephen Rice, Economic Development Manager; Eric Leshinsky, Chief of Comprehensive Planning; Hope Stewart, SMBE Liaison; Lisa Minker, Zoning Enforcement Officer

Discussion:

Stephen Rice welcomed the members and facilitated introductions. At the last meeting, the **group was tasked with determining how O-25-21 has impacted small maritime businesses and exploring what zoning changes might be needed to help them flourish**; this included reviewing the city's table of maritime uses for outdated and updated use categories.

Seth Lehner questioned what good it would do to strike something obsolete, such as antennas. Lisa Minker explained that the city still does get permit requests for antennas as an accessory use since it is equipment needed for communications. Mike Tomasini said the Maritime Task Force determined that although 9,000 square feet of space for seafood processing would likely not return to the city, the use could still be a trigger for something smaller that could still lend itself to commercial viability, therefore what is the correct number if 9,000 is too high? Additional questions raised included:

- What criteria should be required to strike something from the use table?
 - Striking uses might not be advisable, but it is also difficult to use a hard fast number for benchmarks created 40 years ago
- Is there a threshold at which a certain use needs to be viable?
 - City staff will need to do more research to decide what is commercially viable

Seth Lehner presented a spreadsheet (attached) of what can be included in certain maritime zones from a mathematical perspective. Issues raised during the discussion of the spreadsheet included:

- Code and zoning are looking strictly at what is on land of waterfront properties but not at slips/pilings/piers, should that be changed?
- How do we manage the noise about what can be used on land and what can be developed?
- How can the city edit a formula that is fair to the WME properties?

Ryan Copeland said that Seth's analysis made sense. Mike Tomasini wanted to clarify that expanding flexibility would mean granting the ability to expand nonmaritime offerings in the existing footprint of maritime-zoned properties. He agreed that flexibility is difficult to define, and there should be a way to find a reasonable compromise. Stephen Rice added that the Maritime Task Force had determined the preservation of maritime operations that were deemed vital to maintaining the city's maritime cluster and that keeping requirements high/thresholds/triggers was an attempt to limit the growth proliferation of nonmaritime uses across maritime districts. Seth Lehner agreed to propose a new formula. Stephen Rice asked if the recommended changes were to be adopted, what the new spreadsheet would look like? Seth Lehner will provide an analysis at the next meeting.

Lisa Minker clarified that all restaurants in all maritime zones must go through the special exception process, they just have different standards. Seth Lehner says that all zones need to be treated fairly and equitably and that some commercial properties are now prevented from naturally expanding to accommodate tenants at a viable level. He reminded the group to pay attention to the fact that the city established the maritime zoning districts in 1987 and that things have changed since then.

Eric Leshinsky said that he understands the difference in scale between WME and WMM, but it is important that the city not lose more maritime uses. He posed the following questions: **at what point will we risk losing maritime use? What is needed to maintain these small maritime properties today? What flexibility is needed, if any?**

Chris Jakubiak asked if there is potential for further study and whether doubling the size of allowable restaurant space would support maritime use.

Stephen Rice advised the group to review the spreadsheet Seth shared and provide feedback.