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Minutes: Forum #103

Date: September 16, 2015
Time: 10:00 AM
Location: NH Department of Environmental Services (Conference Room)
NHDES Portsmouth Regional Office
Pease International Tradeport
222 International Drive, Suite 175
Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. Introductions and Administration:

Introductions – The meeting was called to order at 10:00 by the Port Safety Forum Co-Chair John Henshaw of the Maine Port Authority with Commander John Humpage as the Co-Chair representing the Coast Guard. A quorum was comprised of 27 individuals.

Review and Approval of the June 23, 2015 Port Safety Forum Meeting Minutes – Hearing no amendments or objections to the content of the June 23, 2015 minutes, Mr. Henshaw accepted the minutes as approved.

2. Cruise Ship Season Update:

Amy Powers – Cruise Maine USA

Amy Powers (Cruise Maine USA) delivered a presentation outlining the current state of the cruise ship industry in the State of Maine. CruiseMaineUSA is a port marketing coalition serving 12 ports in Maine and two in Atlantic Canada. Cruise Maine works under the umbrella of the Maine Port Authority to represent the cruise ship marketing and community relation's efforts. This season (2015) will bring 427 cruise ship visits to our ports which represents 27 different cruise ships from 17 different cruise brands. The passenger bed day yield for this number of calls is estimated to be nearly 290,000 - this represents an increase of 11% over the 2014 season. The estimated economic impact of the cruise ship industry in Maine is 46.2 million dollars annually. Maine continues to enjoy continued overall growth in cruise ship tourism with American Cruise Lines homeporting two small cruise ships in Portland and its sister company, Pearl Seas homeporting *Pearl Mist* in Portland. Likewise, Blount homeported the small cruise ship *Grand Carib* in Portland. Also, showing growth includes Haimark Cruise lines which called on Maine ports for the first time in 2015; homeporting *Saint Laurent* in Portland. Also showing great promise, 3 cruise ships will make maiden voyages to Maine in 2016 and 3 additional companies are considering deployment of cruise ships to the region.

3. Port Activities Update / Presentations:

- ***Sarah Long Bridge Update - Ron Taylor***, MaineDOT

Mr. Ron Taylor (MaineDOT) updated the forum regarding the Sarah Long Bridge replacement. The bridge replacement project is a joint venture between the Maine and New Hampshire Departments of Transportation, with MaineDOT serving as the lead. The Sarah Mildred Long Bridge, built in 1940, provides a regional link between Maine and New Hampshire, and is the critical back-up route in case of disruption on the Interstate 95 bridge. Several issues were identified as deficient or obsolete with the current bridge including:

- the horizontal clearance;
- the alignment of the bridge; and the
- vertical clearance of the closed span.

The new bridge will improve these issues with a revised design. Specifically, MaineDOT reviewed several alignment options and worked closely with the Portsmouth Pilots to improve the bridge alignment to be closer to 90° to the channel. The final agreed upon angle reduces the skewed passage of the ship through the bridge from 25° to 15°. The new bridge will have an increased horizontal clearance from 175 feet (existing) to approximately 250 feet between fenders which will allow ships to safely transit the bridge span with tugs alongside. The new bridge will have a “closed” vertical clearance of 56 feet which will improve traffic flow and reduce the need for bridge lifts. The reduction in bridge lifts will reduce wear and tear on the bridge gear. The new bridge will have an open vertical clearance of 135 feet at mean high water.

During the various phases of the project construction barges will be deployed in the channel between the new abutments which will limit horizontal clearance to about 183'. The barges and can be moved with prior notice and coordination with the on-site contractors. The waterway is expected to experience planned closures for periods of up to 5 days during span installation, which is expected in November 2016.

Time Line –

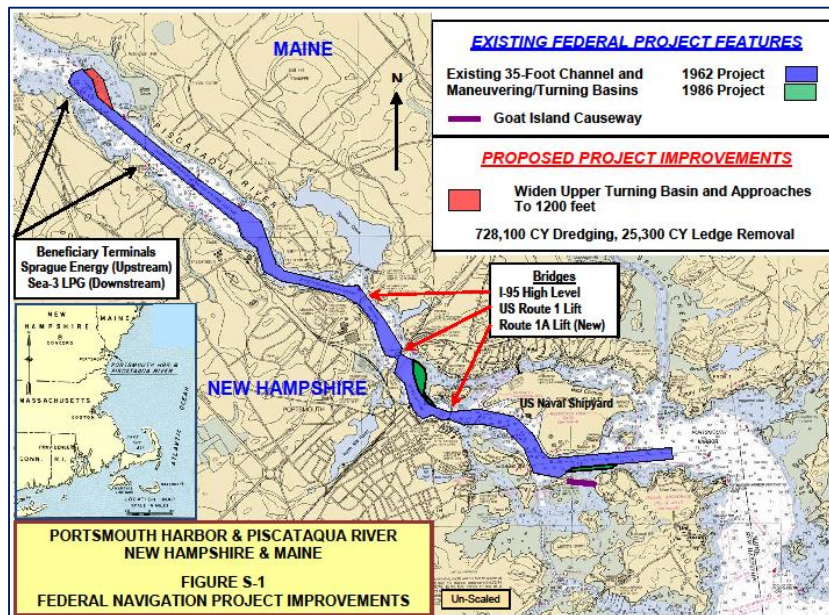
- The design process began in 2013 and construction started in January, 2015;
- The existing bridge is scheduled to be closed from November 1, 2016 to September 1, 2017;
- The new Sarah Mildred Long Bridge opens to traffic September, 2017;
- The project is scheduled to be completed by June 1, 2018.

- ***Portsmouth Coast Pilot Update - LT Metz***, MSD Portsmouth

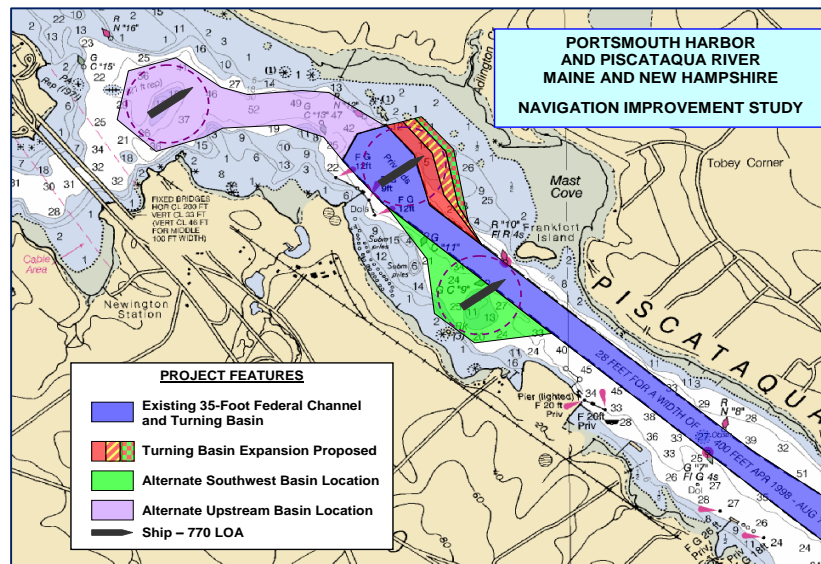
LT Metz briefed the forum on the status of the Coast Pilot update for Portsmouth and the surrounding waterways. In a collaborative effort between the Coast Guard, NH Port Authority, Portsmouth Pilots and other stakeholders, nearly 60 updates to the Coast Pilot were identified and re-drafted. Most of items revised administrative components such as business names and removing obsolete facilities. The proposed amendments were captured in a memorandum and subsequently e-mailed to the Port Safety Forum distribution list for final forum review and comment. The final day to comment is October 17, 2015. Comments may be e-mailed to brian.downey@marinecs.com. If you did not receive the draft amendments and would like an opportunity to review them, please e-mail brian.downey@marinecs.com. Once all comments are received the proposed amendment memorandum will be refreshed and sent to NOAA via the First Coast Guard District for publication in the 2016 Coast Pilot.

- **Turning Basin Dredging - Jennifer Flanagan, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Jennifer Flanagan summarized the pending Portsmouth Turning Basin dredging project. The Piscataqua River was first dredged in 1964-66 (35' channel depth) with localized widening in certain down-river areas in 1990-92. The widening was intended to make the channel suitable to facilitate 45,000 deadweight ton ships. The Turning Basin is now slated to be widened to better serve the increasing vessel sizes in the Piscataqua River and make it more compatible with 40-45,000 deadweight ton vessels. While the Turning Basin is proposed to be widened, the controlling depth will remain 35'. The project has gone through and passed the feasibility phase but is now awaiting Congressional authorization and appropriation for execution. There is no available time-line on final approval.



Depiction of the 35' channel and location of the Turning Basin at the upper left corner of the graphic.



Close-up depiction of the 35' channel and proposed widening of the Turning Basin.

4. MARAD Update:

Overview of StrongPorts Program - Captain Jeffery Flumignan, MARAD

Captain Jeffery Flumignan visited the Port Safety from to discuss the StrongPorts Program. StrongPorts is a collection of the Maritime Administration's programs and efforts aimed at improving ports' efficiency, capacity, and capabilities, as well as at further integrating the marine transportation system into the larger U.S. surface transportation system. The Program efforts are sorted into three broad categories: 1) port planning and stakeholder engagement, 2) financing and 3) project management.

The StrongPorts program provides support to ports and port authorities, metropolitan planning organizations, state Departments of Transportation, and private transportation companies that are seeking to enhance the capacity or efficiency of their local marine transportation system. The Program is designed to support ports in completing long-term infrastructure projects. StrongPorts overlaps with other U.S. Department of Transportation Programs that fund multi-modal infrastructure improvements (such as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery or TIGER Grant Program), and it also provides assistance to ports as they take advantage of programs that have traditionally excluded maritime transportation (such as the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan guarantee program).

For more information regarding the StrongPorts Program please visit www.strongports.gov.

5. Coast Guard Update:

CDR Andrew Meyers, USCG, Sector Northern New England

- **Recent Marine Safety Information Bulletins**

MSIB 2-15 – Cyber Security Awareness – During a Coast Guard exam it was discovered that a ship's primary and back-up ECDIS navigation systems were compromised making the systems unusable. The compromise was determined to be an accidental corruption by the unauthorized use of a USB drive by a crew member, in which a virus was inadvertently introduced which disabled the systems. The case did not result in an accident and the systems were eventually restored. The incident underscores our industry vulnerability and reiterates the need for higher cyber awareness.

MSIB 3-15 Voyage Planning & Marine Casualty Notifications – There were two early summer groundings of inspected passenger vessels. Preliminary investigation suggested that each related to the Master deviating from established routes or voyage plans. Neither cases resulted in injury, pollution or severe damage but serve as a reminder to follow voyage plans and be familiar with alternate routes if executed. Also, vessel operators were reminded to notify the Coast Guard in the event of a reportable marine casualty.

MSIB 4-15 Commercial Fishing Vessel Safety Advisory Committee – The Coast Guard is seeking applicants to fill six Advisory Committee vacancies. The Committee provides advice and recommendations to the Coast Guard on matters related to fishing vessel operations and safety. The Committee meets once per year and members usually communicate throughout the year on committee related business. Committee terms are three years. Applications must be received by November 17, 2015. See September 18, 2015 Federal Register 56479 or contact Jack Kemerer at (202) 372-1249 for more details.

- **Commercial Fishing Vessel Mandatory Examinations** – The forum was reminded that State-registered and Federally-documented commercial fishing vessels that meet the below criteria, must receive a safety examination no later than October 15, 2015. The criteria includes:
 - operating beyond 3 nautical miles of the baseline of the U.S. territorial sea or the coastline of the Great Lakes,
 - operating anywhere with more than 16 individuals on board (either inside 3 miles of the baseline or beyond 3 miles of the baseline), and
 - fish tender vessels engaged in the Aleutian trade.

Fishing vessels will need to complete this dockside safety examination at least once every 5 years, however, some vessels, depending on their operation or areas of service, may be subject to a more frequent examination schedule.

- **Ports of Safe Refuge** – CDR Meyers discussed the continuing need to recognize Ports of Safe Refuge in the event of a marine casualty or other need for a vessel to enter a port under emergency conditions. This topic was agreed to be raised in more detail at future Forums.
- **Water Depths/Under Keel Clearance at Waterfront Facilities** – Under keel clearances was raised as a proactive measure to protect against accidental grounding. While some facilities and port regions have adopted guidelines and informal standards, there are no regulated under keel clearance regulations. This topic was agreed to be raised in more detail at future Forums.

6. Old Business/New Business:

- **New business** – **Brian Downey**, Port Safety Forum Coordinator

As the Port Safety Forum strives to reach all port stakeholders in Northern New England, the forum rotates its meeting around the region to afford all interested parties full access to our important agendas and senior port and governmental leaders. In keeping with this tradition, the forum will continue to host four meetings per year as follows:

- April - Mid-coast or Downeast Maine area;
- June & December - Portland area; and
- September – Portsmouth, NH area.

Recommended guest speakers, suggested topics and sub-committee proposals are always welcome and encouraged. Suggestions and comments may be sent to brian.downey@martinecs.com.

7. Next Meeting(s):

- December 16, 2015 (South Portland), 10:00 AM
Centerboard Yacht Club
271 Front Street
South Portland, ME 04106

USCG Sector Northern New England:
www.uscg.mil/d1/sectornne/ & <http://homeport.uscg.mil/northernnewengland>
 Maine Port Authority:
www.maineports.com
 Port Safety Forum:
www.maineports.com/port_safety_forum.html