

Meeting with Oregon State Marine Board Representative Regarding the City Boat Ramp Matters

July 19, 2022

Council President David Pierce welcomes the public and has people go around and introduce themselves. There were approximately 10-11 citizens who attended. The Mayor attended about 5-10 minutes into the presentation.

Pierce introduces Janine Belleque and Josh Tacchini from the Oregon State Marine Board. Next, he reviews the purpose of the meeting and the expected outcomes.

The group gathers at the end of the ramp to inspect its condition and discuss that. CC President Pierce describes the condition of the ramp and current events that may have affected its condition.

Janine noted that it is a fairly typical boat ramp. It was probably constructed in the 70's, and that design is currently not used anymore due to the issues we are experiencing. It is being undermined at both ends, which is typical. Sometimes the planks are picked up and put back into place after repairs to the base. The large rocks in the water were probably closer to the edge of the ramp to prevent undermining. They may have moved due to high and low water and water dynamics. Looking at the end of the ramp, there may have been one more plank, but that may have gone away over time. We've lost some base material under the edges of the planks. We can put base material back and place large rip rap rock along the edge to hold the material in place, and this will last another 20 - 25 years with routine maintenance of the large edge rocks.

Janine was asked if the condition is dangerous. She says, "Not really. Is it suitable for a trailered boat to go over it? That comes down to how you want to manage the site." There are several facility owners across the state that when the water gets within 3 feet of the toe of the ramp, they will start posting signs saying only 3' to the bottom, small craft, carry-down access. When the bottom of the ramp gets exposed, they will often restrict it only to carry down because when a trailer drops off the edges, that would put more torque on things to get up and out. It also depends on the type of boat. Drift boats launching is not dependent upon a ramp. They are designed to go to the edge and then shoved off a flatbed trailer. So, it can depend on the boat and the application being served.

Janine continues. There are a couple of different things the City could do. You could monitor the water level. You can post notice. If you post a notice that something is going to be restricted, you should probably coordinate with the other two locations on the Tualatin that have a concrete boat ramp to make sure they are aware that you are going to tell people that there are alternative locations. Make sure that they are not closed, or there is something else going on so that you are communicating. The river is a transportation corridor. A boat ramp is an on and off ramp into a community. So when you close something down, you need to think of where the alternative location is. If you are going to restrict it, what is the alternative? You should try to work collaboratively with adjacent local governments because it's important. They have great resources and can give you a lot of guidance on how they manage activity and use.

CC President Pierce then recaps what Janine has stated. He discusses ways to get out the message should the City temporarily restrict certain access. He noted that Janine doesn't see any immediate danger at the edge of the ramp. He reiterates the City's proposal to fill the voids with gravel and use large rocks to prevent undercutting. Taking up the last three planks or possibly extending the ramp are more long-term projects. However, temporarily restricting access at certain times is a tool we could use if the City and community so chose.

Janine concurs and notes that noticing restricted access during low water levels is not uncommon. She mentions other OSMB notification avenues available to the public on restrictions and site updates.

Pierce asks for a point of clarity if we can suggest only carry-down access or if we can prohibit ramp access (to larger craft). Janine notes that it is up to the City. She would strongly recommend that we would want to treat that very carefully due to the legal issues with Lake Oswego access. Most parties are not prohibiting it because EMS services need access. Every boat ramp is an emergency response access. In areas where they close the ramp, they are closing it for everybody or closing it for specific activities and times. A lot of it comes down to what their shoreline management plan is. Is there a need to protect the shoreline? Again, don't just post it; provide alternatives. Don't just say "no."

Public Questions to OSMB:

Q. A friend whose children were on their paddle boards in the river and then they were swimming was yelled at by a neighbor. The neighbor was misquoting Oregon waterway rules because they can swim in the river below

the high water mark. Is there a mechanism in which to report this kind of intimidation that I'm experiencing?

A. Contact the Oregon Department of State Lands. They are the land owner for submerged land and the land owner for the water. It's best to contact them as it's sometimes a complex matter.

Q. How is the high water mark determined?

A. They look at the ordinary high water mark, not in times of floods like 1996. However, with FEMA changes, in many locations, that level is going up.

Q. What is your opinion on the quality of the water in terms of safe swimming?

A. OSMB does not test the water. DEQ would do that. Mark Fitzsimmons of the Tualatin Riverkeepers notes Clean Water Services tests fairly frequently. Some of it is posted online, or you can contact them. Even during periods of high rain, the e. coli level in the Tualatin is fairly normal. During the past 4-5 years, it's not been an issue or reached a point of danger. Michael Salch also notes that WES monitors quality in this area. He believes a storm drain from Childs Rd. empties into the river somewhere near the ramp. There may also be one in Heritage Park.

Pierce notes that the meeting time is running out. He wants to clarify the concern of restricting access during certain hours, as is done at various state parks. The intent is not to have use during "sleeping hours." That's nothing unusual but should be nothing onerous as well. He notes that most open hours are sunrise to sunset. The operating hours should be such that the majority of the community can use the park during what would be considered normal recreational hours. Janine concurs with Pierce's assessment.

The other question is, if the long-term project of removing the last three bars is undertaken, what permits would be required and how difficult would that be? Janine answers that the Dept. of State Lands has an exemption for maintenance replacement in-kind. Minimal conditions would need to be met. The Corp of Engineers might have a nexus with this. They also have a simplified permit process to restore the boat ramp to existing conditions before the damage occurred. The amount of work is minimal and could be allowed under a letter of permission.. Permitting should be streamlined.

Again, minimal conditions would need to be met. If the City was extending the ramp, it would be more complicated.