

Comments on the Staff Report to the Mayor and Council Members of the Town of Cobourg, Ontario;  
Subject Cobourg Harbour Aquatic Safety Audit Report-Back. Report Dated 30 April 2020.

### **Introduction**

I am (name) (title) representing the members of the Cobourg Yacht Club (CYC) and I wish to express my appreciation for this opportunity address the Mayor and Council.

As noted, CYC gladly participated in the initial interviews and in the subsequent review at the Parks and Recreation Committee. In general, CYC is supportive of the objectives of the Safety Report. In our initial submission we commented on 5 of the recommendations, 2 of those comments were to note our existing compliance, so effectively we commented on only 3 items plus some general observations.

I will review our area of concerns and make some general observations at the end of this presentation. In some instances, these comments are far more blunt than original comments, as the original comments seem to have been ignored.

### **Firstly, Section: Policy Development, Recommendation #6; Best Practices and Standards.**

The Sail Canada Training program, to which the CYC adheres and its instructors are qualified, complies with the Transport Canada requirements for recreational boating schools and is one of a dozen such programs that are recognized for excellence and compliance by World Sailing, which is the international governing body of sailing. To say that the requirements of Sail Canada programs are comprehensive is an understatement. In the Stakeholder Comments it was very disappointing to note, firstly, the absence of the recognition of existing compliance with national bodies and, secondly, the Staff Response defending the LSS commentary on Best Practices and Standards. The point here is that the LSS recommendations are largely ill-informed and irrelevant. During the interview process it was quite apparent that the majority of the LSS group, with the notable exception of the Power Squadron representative, were unaware of Sail Canada training standards. The requirement for compliance with national bodies should be paramount and consequently render irrelevant other requirements that have been put in place for different purposes and whose relevance is most questionable; additional requirements and their accompanying red tape should not be arbitrarily thrust upon organizations when far more relevant and comprehensive standards already exist. It is very disappointing that the Staff Response has ignored this commentary which has previously been made by CYC and I believe also by the CDBCC.

**\*Learn to Sail is not a camp but a regulated educational program conforming to standards set by our national body, Sail Canada.**

### **Secondly, Section: Policy Development, Recommendation #7; Enhance Craft Safety and reduce risks inside the Harbour by separating motor craft.**

The Staff Response of “Water safety zones could be easily marked to separate paddle craft and swimmers from motor boats and other self-propelled craft” is essentially true but it sadly ignores the impact. The option of building specific channels or fairways for use by motor boats entering and leaving the harbour gives “right of way” to those boats operating within those channels; other boats, including dragon boats and canoes, crossing those channels are expected to give way. Refer to the Federal Comments on the Staff Report to the Mayor and Council Members of the Town of Cobourg, Ontario; Subject Cobourg Harbour Aquatic Safety Audit Report-Back. Report Dated 30 April 2020.

Government's Collision Regulations Part A Rule 9(d) and limitation on local Rules placed by Part A Rule 1(b). Consequently, marking motor boat channels will increase the danger rather than decreasing it. Alternately, creating a substantial "keep-out" zone excluding motor boats would not only eliminate anchoring within the harbor but would limit the scope of evasive action a motor-boat currently has. In short, this is far more fraught than it would appear to the non-boater. It is disappointing that these considerations, which have previously been presented by the user groups, are being ignored.

\*ignores use of coach boats that are used with all sailing instruction as a mandatory safety regulation by Sail Canada. These motorized craft shadow all students in the Learn to Sail program.

\*ignore the safety issue of sailing vessels using harbor to raise their sails prior to exiting the harbor.

\*ignore the Collision Regulations for boats entering and exiting harbor

\*does not take into consideration, the large number of visiting boats, that will conform to Collision Regulations set by Transport Canada NOT a small harbor with unique rules. There is no opportunity to "educate users" as suggested.

\*does not appear to be any consultation with The Coast Guard.

Further, one of the most critical issues has not been addressed. The western portion of the harbour is filling in with sand and has already significantly decreased the amount of usable space available to dragon boats, canoes and sailing school boats. Without prompt action in the form of dredging this whole conversation may well be academic. In the mean-time, the inaction on dredging is increasing risk by forcing all craft into an ever-decreasing space. Again, it is disappointing that this is being ignored.

**Thirdly, Section: Policy Development, Recommendation #16; Designate camp user group indoor and outdoor space that are more appropriate, reasonable and safer than current storage areas.**

To re-iterate our previous comments:

"The CYC has both a junior club building and a club-house to protect its participants from the weather as necessary and washroom facilities in the main club house".

The significant safety issue faced by the camp participants is from vehicular traffic in the west parking lot, especially from reversing vehicles and vehicles with trailers. Consequently, eliminating the need for camp participants to traverse the west parking lot is most important; crossing the driveways is far less hazardous. What would be useful is to have:

- A simple wood-chip type pathway along the north side of the carpark from the vicinity of the compounds toward the Marina office and CYC main club-house and their facilities;
- Also, a pathway along the south-side of the parking lot from the CYC and Canoe Club compounds to the launch ramp.

These pathways would obviate the need for program participants to traverse the car-park and provide a safe pathway to the available wash-rooms. This may mean the sacrificing of one or two spots in the SW corner of the car park but that is a small price to pay for the enhanced safety.

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The CYC also recommends minimizing the use of the launch ramp by camp participants. This could be achieved by the installation of a simple cottage style seasonal dock in the NW corner of the harbor close to the compounds. There is also a need for the Marina to provide an Accessible Dock.

- **NO SWIMMING: the children on paddle boards are in the water to board their craft. Sailing School students are also in the water as they practice turtling exercises, they also step in and out of their sailing craft once the boats are launched**

CYC recommends the Town conduct a feasibility study of these proposals.”.

Again, these comments been ignored.

### **Other Safety Issues**

As noted in CYC’s earlier response ‘There are often power cables, water hoses and bicycles creating trip hazards and impeding the safe use of docks. The situation where the posts for power and water outlets have been placed opposite each other along the sides of the docks further reduces the available space for foot traffic, there are also power cable and water hose hangers on the dock side of the posts which further restrict the available space. The safety of the docks is made worse in times of high water when people are running and refilling generators due to the additional equipment including gas cans and cables. Also, the lack of lighting, in times of high water, exacerbates these issues. CYC recommend:

- the creation and enforcement of rules around the use of generators and putting other equipment such as bicycles on the docks;
- new or refurbished docks should have the water and power outlets staggered and not placed opposite each other;
- the existing “inside” hangers be removed and the use of additional waterside hangers be investigated;
- high-water proof dock lighting is of the utmost urgency.

Again, these recommendations seem to have been ignored.

### **Summary.**

The CYC applauds the Town’s initiative in this regard and continues to be supportive of the vast majority of the recommendations. The CYC is very disappointed that its input to-date has been ignored and consequently feels that the commitment to further consultation is more of style than substance. We feel a commitment by the Town to include the main user groups in the report/study drafting and revision process would avoid what is unnecessarily impinging on an otherwise good and productive relationship.

Mayor and Members of Council; Thank you for your time attention in these most trying of times to what, on the current scale of challenges, must seem pretty trivial. I sincerely hope that by 2021 using the harbour will, again, become important to us all.

Questions?

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