

Delegation to  
Town of Cobourg  
Committee of the Whole  
June 22, 2015  
by Deborah Panko

Thank you for allowing me this time to speak about the West Harbour.

I am a member of Willow Beach Field Naturalists and a supporter of the Preserve Our Heritage Harbour campaign at [cobourgharbour.ca](http://cobourgharbour.ca) but am speaking for myself as a Cobourg taxpayer and thus a stakeholder in the harbour where I walk, ride my bike, and sometimes just sit in my car, looking at the view.

I would like to thank Councilor Rickerby for considering this issue as much as she has and for putting her motion forward. The 2nd part of it is a move in the right direction but would go much further in clarifying the situation for everyone if it were amended to read, **“WHEREAS any boat slips in the West Harbour are prohibited at any time in the future”**.

This amendment will:

1) keep intact, without future threat, a West Harbour that is both a refuge for wildlife and a paddler's dream, skirted by a marina for yachters, 2 very different kinds of beaches, a boardwalk, an ecology garden, then the expanse of Victoria Park... every part in and of itself essential and worth visiting

2) ensure quality space for those who do not have big yards or cottages or take expensive vacations but who need and will continue to rely on public amenities and common green areas (in this case, the open blue waters of the West Harbour)

3) ensure that the mandate for the new Waterfront Advisory Committee is to improve the entire harbour area for everyone, confident that in 2017 boat slips in the West Harbour are not once again an option, a very good possibility given that Shoreplan's report includes 4 such options and that members of the staff-driven, previous 'steering' committee and the Cobourg Yacht Club both still, as far as I know, support boat slips in the West Harbour and will sit on the WAC

4) strengthen the order of decision-making in Cobourg where the public elects a council to direct town employees, like the CAO, the head of Public Works and the Marina Manager, whose original 'marina expansion plan' became both a 'done deal' and a 'non-plan plan', a sorry state of affairs that doesn't need repeating

5) eliminate the marina's financial plan, an outdated "bigger is better" model based on unreliable predictions, and calculated to turn the public waters of the West Harbour into a parking lot for boats that will revitalize the downtown as much as the parking lots of Walmart and Home Depot have done

6) eliminate the risk to the taxpayer, either directly or indirectly, since there are no reserves for the marina to fall back on if the proposed loan for boat slips in the West Harbour is approved in 2017, a gamble staff has up to now seemed willing to take

7) ensure that expenditures on projects, operations and/or support facilities already in progress for potential boat slips in the West Harbour are cancelled thus saving the marina money

8) focus the Cobourg Yacht Club on using its boat slips for both locals and transients more efficiently where the existing footprint of the East Harbour will once and for all be established as the club's ample share in accordance with the size of our town and its local users

9) redefine 'expansion' as referring to an extended boardwalk, a cafe close by, more fruit and nut trees, more walking paths, more residents who feel like they belong because their voices are heard, the expansion of a generous spirit that willingly grants what people need, in this case, the tranquil and healing waters of the West Harbour

This amendment will:

10) open a clear, unhindered path for designating our West Harbour a Marine Nature Park, where its specific habitat can be protected, right now, against constant excessive human intrusion, for example, Public Works dumping sludge at the West Headland, irreparably damaging what took 50 years to grow and flourish

11) connect us to other 'progressive' municipalities who work to find a variety of options so that what's beautiful, that is, the West Harbour can be preserved for future generations - as was Victoria Hall

12) put an end to the uncertainty and frustration of a growing number of people who do not want their council, in 2 years time, to have to revisit a decision that could and should be made now

13) restore Cobourg's confidence in its council who all said pre-election, 2014 that they would work in the best interests of the town

Make a motion to prohibit any future boat slips in the West Harbour right now and you will accomplish all of this.

**Amendment to change the 2nd part  
of Councilor Rickerby's Motion**

WHEREAS the Cobourg Marina Expansion Operations and Facilities Study (Shoreplan Engineering Ltd. December 2014) and any amendments be received for information purposes; and

**WHEREAS any further 'plans' (discussion?) regarding expansion of slips at the Cobourg Marina into the West Harbour cease effective immediately for the time period of 2015 and 2016; and**

FURTHER THAT the current Marina Expansion Steering Committee (Working Group) be dissolved and be replaced with the newly formed Waterfront Advisory Committee.

## **Resource re: Marine Nature Park**

The West Harbour Waterfront Development Plan, recommended by Hough Stansbury Woodland Naylor Dance Ltd. (nationally/internationally renowned firm at the time) for the harbour area from the 1990s (included Jack B. Ellis and Associates, Shoreplan Engineering Ltd. and Tarandus Associates Ltd.)

### **From their text...**

“The following principles guided the preparation of the west harbour plan for Cobourg:

- the plan must reconnect the west harbour area with the existing commercial and residential areas of the waterfront with view for a wide range of users;

- the plan must protect and improve existing environs associated with the harbour, and ensure that new development areas enhance the habitat quality and diversity for wildlife and humans;

- the plan must establish a scheme for the transitional development and expansion of boating facilities as demand and economics dictate;

- the plan must balance the intensive recreational/marine related development with a more passive parkland system that interlinks the fabric of the harbour open space system.”

\*This was in a pre-dragon boat and paddler program era for the harbour.