

*****ATTACHMENTS*****

From: Joseph Heidemann [<mailto:jheidemann@rcspkg.com>]

Sent: Wednesday, July 20, 2016 9:50 AM

To: Rajer, Mary

Subject: pier

Good Morning Mary and Mayor,

I told someone that I would send this idea up the flag pole. They would like to see a red and green light before you go on the pier. This light would be controlled by the Coast Guard I believe. Just doing my duty of passing along information from the citizens.

Joe Heidemann



LAKEFRONT WATER SAFETY TASK GROUP

ALDERPERSON JOHN BELANGER, Chair of Public Works Committee

MIKE FROH, Chair of the Board of Marina, Parks and Forestry

JOE KERLIN, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry

CHUCK BUTLER, Sheboygan Fire Department

JEFF MARES, Sheboygan Police Department

CHUCK ADAMS, Sheboygan City Attorney

CHAD PELISHEK, Director of City Development

MATT WIRZBACH, Representative from SEAS

LARRY WILLIAMS, Citizen Member

SCOTT HANSON, Citizen Member

SCOTT LEWANDOSKE, Citizen Member/Aldersperson

ROBERT STANICK, Army Corps of Engineers

JASON DWYER, U.S. Coast Guard (Jared Shear will serve as alternate member)

STEVE STEINHARDT, Sheboygan County Sheriff's Department

KAREN DAVIS, Community Recreation Department

MATT BAUER, Harbor Center Marina

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Re: Response to Sheboygan looks to prevent South Pier drownings
Craig Meyer [craig_meyer_2006@yahoo.com]

You forwarded this message on 8/11/2016 2:37 PM.

Sent: Thursday, August 04, 2016 9:07 PM
To: Alderperson Scott Lewandoske; Rajer, Mary; mjozwiak@sheboyganpress.com

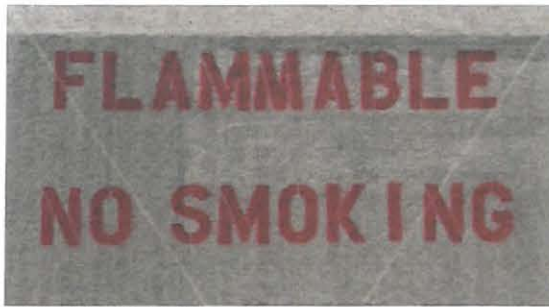
Mary and Scott,

I was thinking about this a little more to today. I already made the suggestion of putting something to hold on to and making it clear which direction to go to reach the ladder. You can't really risk handles that are so far apart someone would have to let go to move. A cheap way to do a "railing" type solution would be a chain run through eye-hooks. This would allow the victim to grab on anywhere and slowly move to safety. All you would need is galvanized concrete anchoring eye-hooks and chain that could fit through them strong enough to hold the weight of a person (or two, or three). The chains would terminate/end at the ladders so someone could hand walk themselves down the chain to their own rescue. If you added that to the stencil idea (or water resistant signs of some sort) you would heavily increase the chance that someone could survive at a very low cost. Even in the extreme cold, at least a person could get to a ladder to get out. Your bill of materials would be chain, eye-hooks, a concrete impact drill, stencils, spray paint, and a boat... Maybe a weeks worth of work for a competent contractor. This would have increased my chances of survival by an immeasurable amount and having this experience I can say this with absolutely certainty.

I did a google search to find images to help show what I'm thinking...



<http://cache3.asset-cache.net/gc/528837799-rusted-metal-chain-against-brick-wall-over-gettyimages.jpg?v=1&c=IWSAsset&k=2&d=iJHe0%2BIGEG7yjApYGM27HaOXKV2aVXHxQTz3pQBzUjO9XPWYbgXg6U1%2FAIAURN>



"This Way to Ladder -->"

http://image.shutterstock.com/display_pic_with_logo/93823/93823,1213415634,1/stock-photo-painted-warning-sign-on-concrete-wall-flammable-no-smoking-13725274.jpg

Best Regards,

Craig Meyer
407-230-2154

On Wednesday, August 3, 2016 8:49 PM, Craig Meyer <craig_meyer_2006@yahoo.com> wrote:

Mary and Scott,

Thank you both for reading and reaching back out. If there is anything else that I can do please let me know. If I think of anything else that could be useful I will let you know. I'm really glad to hear that Scott and others are going to try to improve the safety of the pier. I've attached a picture of my family. Had I died that day on the pier, none of my beautiful children would be here today.... Thanks again and good luck with the planning!

On Wednesday, August 3, 2016 1:38 PM, Alderperson Scott Lewandoske <Scott.Lewandoske@sheboyganwi.gov> wrote:

I did call up Craig, who sent this email and the two of us spoke for about 20 minutes and gave more details and dis give me permission to share this email with the other committee members.

Scott Lewandoske

From: Craig Meyer [craig_meyer_2006@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 02, 2016 11:53 PM
To: Alderperson Scott Lewandoske; Rajer, Mary; mjozwiak@sheboyganpress.com
Subject: Response to Sheboygan looks to prevent South Pier drownings

Mr. Jozwiak, Mr. Lewandoske, and Ms. Rajer (office of Mayer Vandersteen),

I am writing this in response to the Miller Jozwiak's story titled "Sheboygan looks to prevent South Pier drownings" which appeared on July 19th in the Sheboygan Press. I am hopeful that I can share something to help any efforts being planned to improve safety measures at the north and south piers.

In about the year 2000 I came almost as close as anyone has probably ever come to drowning off one of those piers and still survived. Since I wasn't rescued my story has gone completely untold to anyone who would be concerned with pier safety. I was about 19 years old at the time and visiting from Fond du Lac where I had grown up. Unlike the locals, I wasn't aware that the great lakes could be as powerful as an ocean and even if someone had told me I probably wouldn't have understood what that meant.

There was a storm over the lake and the water around the beach and pier were rough. As waves

crashed against the pier a little bit of water would spritz into the air. A friend of mine and I, unaware of the danger, decided to run down the north pier to the Lighthouse. Along the way my friend who fell behind was hit by a wave and "pushed" by the water. He became concerned and he turned back. I continued on not knowing I was now alone. As I reached the end of the smaller section of the pier (shortly before the lighthouse platform) a wave suddenly crashed against the side of the lighthouse platform that was so powerful that the water completely blotted the lighthouse out of view. I instantly recognized the danger and started to turn back, but as I started to turn a wave crashed against the pier in front of me and shot a wall of water straight into the air. As the water hit me it blew me off the pier with such force that resisting would have been impossible no matter how much time I had to prepare. I remember hitting the pier and sliding across it before ending up under water. I'm not sure how long I was under the water but the darkness and the currents left me struggling to figure out what was up or down. At that time I was fairly physically fit and an experienced swimmer. I was able to swim to the edge of the pier and reach up onto the side. At this point I was on the harbor side of the north pier somewhere between 20 and 100 feet from the lighthouse platform.

From that point forward the waves continued to crash over the pier moments apart and the intensity seemed to grow with each wave. Many of the waves would blow me off the pier again and I would be forced to swim back against strong currents pushing me away. My ultimate goal was to climb back onto the pier but it wasn't possible. During the calm moments between the waves the water level would drop to the point that the pier edge was probably 3 or 4 feet above the water line. I could barely reach the top of the pier with the tips of my fingers and there was nothing but a flat edge to grab onto. I would reach up to it to help rest my legs but even that was at great physical expense to my torso and arms. After struggling for a while I realized that there were these square metal sheets on the top of the pier along the sides. They had nuts on each of the four corners and a hole in the middle. I was able to grab one of the nuts if I lifted myself out of the water but I was never able to get enough leverage to reach the hole in the middle. Had I been able to get my hand in the hole I would have been able to pull myself out. When a wave would crash over (even a small one) the water level would rise but the force of the wave would prevent a greater reach in spite of the higher waterline.

After a long time in the water (45+ minutes) I became completely exhausted. I was banged up from slamming against the pier and had swallowed what seemed like gallons of water. I quite literally accepted my death was inevitable and came to peace with it. I recall contemplating whether I should try to swim through the harbor (which would have been too rough without the wall) or just purposely breathing in water to get it over with. I decided in the end that attempting to swim would at least do some justice to my mother who had spent so much energy raising me; I knew she would be devastated if she knew I had given up.

I started swimming parallel to the pier and after a very short time (maybe 20 to 40 feet) I found a ladder "built in" to the side of the pier. It was a cut out section of the pier with metal bars cast into the concrete of the pier. This wasn't visible to me during my struggle because it was recessed into the pier rather than sticking out. It also wasn't a feature I had noticed when walking on the pier the few prior occasions I had visited. I rested on this ladder for 5 or so minutes before climbing back onto the pier and making my trek back to shore.

The journey back was as long and as perilous as the first 45 minutes. The waves were still crashing over the pier just moments apart and some of them were more than powerful enough to throw me back into the water. There were metal pipes with caps (mushroom shaped) sticking out of the pier that I was able to hold on to. If I was wrapped around one of these pipes with my arms and knees when a major wave hit, it was often powerful enough to leave me hanging by just my hands as the strength of the wave subsided. I had to carefully time my sprints from one pipe to the next by watching the waves until I felt I had an opening. Some of these sprints were very close, often leading to a "knee slide" to beat the crashing wave. The impact damage to my knees led to a year's worth of knee pain.

When I finally made it back to shore I probably threw up gallon of water. I was covered in bruises and road-rash from the harsh concrete on the pier. My knees were damaged and I was more physically exhausted than I had ever been my entire life. I relive that memory almost every time I come near a body of water. I have told this story countless times always warning that people MUST learn to respect the power that moving water can have over a person. I never officially reported the incident and although in hindsight I should have probably visited a hospital, I simply went home and slept the ordeal off.

My friend and a few bystanders that waited with him (also young) never called for help. They explained to me that they thought I was trapped on the harbor side of the lighthouse hiding from the waves. I believe my friend was embarrassed and probably didn't realize the danger that I was in. This happened late in the day (but still light out) and by the time I returned to shore it was completely dark. My friend told me that once he initially lost sight of me he never saw me again until shortly before I made it all the way back in.

I live in Florida now and haven't visited that pier in at least 8 years. I am still haunted by this event and am always searching the news for new incidents. Over the years I have followed several drownings at the piers. They are all so senseless and I am always heartbroken for the victims that weren't as lucky as I was. Those searches led me to this recent tragedy and the article. It sounds from the article that things have changed a bit in that some safety measures have been implemented. When this happened to me I don't even think the south pier was open to the public.

Now that you have an overview of my story I am hopeful you can take some of my suggestions to those leading the safety task force that has been commissioned. What follows are some thoughts that I think could help.

1. Although the lake was rough it didn't seem "unsafe" to a non-local when I first went out on the pier. Conditions changed and they did so abruptly. At the time there were no warning signs about the risks. I'm not sure I would have heeded them if I had seen them but I truly did not understand the strength of waves that lake could generate. Even if the signs hadn't convinced me not to go they could have convinced my friend or bystanders to call 911. Any signs should have ominous warning imagery, should warn of fast changing conditions and perhaps should also encourage bystanders to call for help. A flashing yellow light above the sign would probably have drawn my attention.
2. When this happened to me cell phones weren't very common and I don't think we had them. I also don't think any call boxes were available. Call boxes should be placed near the end of each pier; especially at the edge of where someone watching would feel safe.
3. One of the issues I had when in the water is that even when I got to the pier I had nothing to hold on too. Had there been some type of handles spaced evenly down the pier I might have been able to wait a long period of time for a rescue. My biggest issue while still in the water was that there was nothing to hold on to that I could grip well enough to resist the stronger waves. Instead I was consistently blown off the pier and into rougher water. Fighting the currents to get back to the pier was exhausting and each time it got harder.
4. The recessed ladder ultimately played a role in saving my life. The fact that it was recessed also nearly cost me my life. For 45 minutes I struggled to near death not knowing that 20ish feet away there was a grip to rest on that would become an exit when I was ready. I would suggest either replacing or building over these ladders (not sure how many there are) with ones that stick out and are visible. As a cheaper solution, maybe paint along the side of the pier with stencils "ladder this way" with an arrow. I can't overstate how much this would have increased my chances of survival. I would think that a couple of workers with a good flat boat, some spray paint and some stencils could do this in an afternoon.
5. Another thing that might have helped was something better than the pipes to hold onto once someone gets back on the pier. The pipes weren't the most ideal anchor for a person and were spaced way too far apart to facilitate safe movement if conditions abruptly change. I'm not sure what would be practical but anything would be better than those mushroom pipes.
6. One of the things I often think about when I hear about others drowning off the pier is that in some areas there are jagged rocks between feet and inches from the surface right off the side of the pier. When I went in I was near the end and in somewhat deep water. I often wonder if some of the others who are killed are blown off and onto these rocks. If that were to happen the victim wouldn't have a chance. Even if they remained conscious their body would probably be damaged in a way that they would be unable to fight the waves and currents. This may be totally impractical but clearing some of those rocks might also be a good idea.

I am hopeful that this note reaches someone who can take action and that my suggestions, born of my experience, are useful. I am a survivor of this killing machine only through the grace of God.

Every time I read about another tragedy near that harbor I am heartbroken. I am haunted by the futility of my experience. That no refuge from the waves was visible or available, that no help was coming, that my own death was inevitable. I don't want to see the piers closed but I am hopeful that action is taken to give people like me an opportunity to avoid this experience or at least a fighting chance of making it out alive.

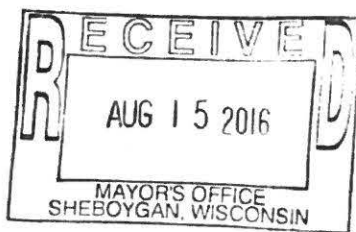
If you made it this far, thanks for reading....

Sincerely,
Craig Meyer
407-230-2154

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Connected to Microsoft Exchange



August 12, 2016

To Mayor Mike Vandersteen,

I am writing in response to the tragic drowning of two young men off Sheboygan's south pier on July 17th. As one of Kurt Ahonen's former teachers, my grief for his loss and empathy for both families compels me to get involved. I have spoken to you and learned a committee was taking suggestions to make the pier safer. I'm sure consulting other lakefront cities for safety suggestions is also wise. On August 6th, I went to the south pier to look at it myself.

The walking surface of the pier itself was bad. The cement was crumbled with large chunks of concrete missing. With every step there were broken, uneven surfaces- sometimes down to exposed steel rods. Major repairs need to be made to improve this walkway for pedestrian traffic.

Beyond any doubt, the lakefront safety provisions are greatly lacking. To imagine a different outcome could have been possible that day is heartbreaking. It's too late for Kurt and Adam. Don't allow it to be too late for anyone else. Determine whose jurisdiction it falls under and take action.

My first recommendation: Install a sign at the entrance to the pier as it leaves the channel. An example was created to the right. As I have told you on the phone, I will pay for this in Kurt's memory. Another sign entering the harbor is also necessary. Please keep me informed as to how I can help. I know other mourners want to do so, as well.



DANGER

A second recommendation: Install more emergency call boxes at regular intervals, such as every 100 feet. There was, and still is, only one call box on the pier. With a pier of this length this is utterly inadequate. Precious time was lost which could have made a difference in this tragedy. Quick access to emergency help is essential.

HIGH WAVES HAVE
THROWN PEOPLE
OFF PIER & CAUSED
DROWNINGS.
KEEP ALERT TO
CONDITIONS.

A third recommendation: Add a minimum of 10 more life rings. Having rings only at the start is meaningless. Install them the entire length of the pier. Paint the wooden boxes they are housed in bright orange so they are obvious and quickly visible. Aren't there Coast Guard regulations regarding some of these safety issues?

A fourth recommendation: If conditions turn unsafe, the Coast Guard boat should go out and announce to people to get off the pier. Shortly thereafter, the fishermen were swept into the water. The Coast Guard's job includes assessing people at risk and making contact with those people to avert accidents.

Your city's lakefront is a beautiful tourist attraction. As its steward, however, you carry the most solemn responsibility for the safety of your visitors. I implore you to move smartly and swiftly before one more precious life is lost and another family endures heartbreak for the rest of their lives.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Blaney
Green Bay, WI

Deland



Deland



North Point



Deland



North Pier



South Pier



Blue Harbor Beach



King



King



King



Lake View



South Beach, High Ave.





M E M O

DATE: July 28, 2016

TO: Mike Froh, Chairman of Board of Marina, Parks and Forestry Commissioners
Joe Kerlin, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry

FROM: Mike Vandersteen, Mayor of Sheboygan
Aldersperson Scott Lewandoske

SUBJECT: Formation of Sheboygan Lakefront Water Safety Task Group

Due to the recent Lake Michigan water rescue on July 11, 2016 at South Beach and the incident at South Pier on July 17, we request that the Board of Marina, Parks and Forestry Commissioners, at their August 2 meeting, consider the formation of a Sheboygan Lakefront Water Safety Task Group.

The mission of the group will be to:

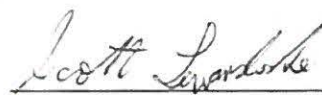
- Review the report of a similar committee that was completed in March of 2009.
- Study the water rescue events that have occurred since the recommendations of the last report were implemented.
- Investigate new and additional safety measures for both the North and South swimming beaches and pedestrian access of the North and South piers on the Sheboygan lakefront and river.
- Formulate a report with both short and long term recommendations to the Public Works Committee and the City Council that would reduce the potential for water-related loss of lives and the near drowning of our citizens and visitors.

The Sheboygan Lakefront Water Safety Task Group should be made up of the following: Public Works Committee Chair, Chair of the Board of Marina, Parks and Forestry, Superintendent of Parks and Forestry, member of the U.S. Coast Guard, member of the Sheboygan County Sheriff's Dept. Rescue team, representative from Community Recreation Department, member of the Sheboygan Police Department, member of the Sheboygan Fire Department, Sheboygan City Attorney, Director of City Development, representative from SEAS, representative from Army Corps of Engineers, and three citizen members.

A proposed roster is attached for your consideration. When the Committee holds their first meeting, an election of Chair and Vice-Chair should be the first item of business on the agenda.



Mayor Mike Vandersteen



Aldersperson Scott Lewandoske

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, November 11, 2008
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Members Present: B. Bittner, C. Bouck, P. Rengers (in place of M. Evans), K. Davis, T. Butts,
V. Yang, L. Freitag
Guests Present: See sign-in sheet
4. Remarks by the Mayor.
 - Indicated events of past summer (drowning/near drowning) made water safety high importance. The committee is made up of highly qualified individuals with significant experience in water safety. Looking forward to recommendations from the committee.
5. Review of Charge to Committee.
 - Chairman reviewed the Common Council resolution that established the committee.
6. Discussion:
 - A general discussion was held about the water safety problems at the lakefront, including a natural feature that makes water dangerous under certain weak conditions, issues for emergency response, the role of regulations and the need for considerable public education.
7. Election of Vice Chairperson.
 - Motion by T. Butts/V. Yang to elect Lawrence Freitag as Water Safety Task Force Vice Chairperson. All ayes.
8. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that life saving
Council No. 12-47 equipment is moved closer to the shore and most dangerous areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those who swim or observe swimming.
 - HOLD~~C. Bouck/V. Yang motion. All ayes.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, November 25
Municipal Service Building
5:30 pm

ADJOURNED: 7 pm

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, November 25, 2008
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
4. Discussed problem statement. Committee discussed draft Task Force assumptions and reached consensus on the following statements except as noted.
 - a. Lake Michigan is a wonderful natural feature that attracts residents and a variety of recreational users. The City of Sheboygan has invested in venues to enhance the use of the lake. With the use come inherent risks. It is the goal of the Task Force to develop strategies to reduce water front drowning risks.
Comments: There is an urgency to develop guidelines and recommendations. The citizen member's appointments will end 4/15/09.
 - b. The degree of drowning hazard varies with weather conditions and locations. The biggest problems exist in warm temperature (people present) when prevailing winds naturally create RIP currents.
Comments: The map of the lakefront was used to explain how problems can arise. Also were included the various sand bars could cause problems.
 - c. The most significant RIP currents for swimmers exist in the area of the power plant and North Pier.
 - d. There are a number of local resources that provide first response for water emergencies (Coast Guard, Police Dept., Fire Dept. Sheriff's Dept.) and other resources available for extended search/recovery. (no consensus reached)
Comments: Discussion of who is in charge. It is a matter of rescue or recovery. Need surface swimmers for immediate action. Is there adequate first response? Should the Coast Guard be the primary responder? When a call comes in, first goes to County, then City where dispatchers work together to get the information out. Also need assistance for ice fishermen on the river. The coast guard does have an operational ice rescue team. All agencies should be reviewing plans.
 - e. Lack of specific location delays water front emergency response.
Comments: Use of call boxes, have life saving buoys available. Problems with vandalism.

- f. Barriers and legal restrictions would have minimal effect because of difficulty implementing and enforcing and conflict with recreational uses.
Comments: Piers have been under the control of the Corps of Engineers. No longer signs in place. Again who is in charge?
- g. Regulations may be useful to enhance/reinforce informational program.
Comments: Must work with the Common Council on legislations and how to enforce.
- h. There are existing venues that can be utilized to enhance youth lakefront safety training.
Comments : Mainly swimming lessons are for the younger children both at the YMCA and the Recreation Dept. No emphasis on safety – use the Red Cross Program. Could include safety, but the emphasis has to be on the older group (early teens). Could also include the Sailing team and Boys/Girls Clubs, Boy/Girl Scouts.
- i. A significant public awareness campaign is needed to draw attention to Sheboygan hazards (multi-media).
Comments: Signage in particular.
- j. A real time warning/education system should be established at the beach front (flag system, etc.)
Comments: Should have high surf warning. Possible for the Park Department and the Coast Guard to coordinate.
- k. An on-site emergency communication system should be established (call boxes, etc.)
- l. An enhancement/modernization of the life-rings program should be considered.
- m. A traditional family swimming area, life guards watch over defined beach area, would not address most critical safety issues. (no consensus reached)

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, December 9
Municipal Service Building
5:30 pm

ADJOURNED

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, January 6, 2009
Municipal Service Building Training Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
Members Present: Bill Bittner, Vue Yang, Mark Evans, Tom Butts, Lawrence Freitag
Others Present: Patrick Rengers, Mary Butts, Larry Williams

4. Approval of minutes: Nov. 11, 2008
Nov. 25, 2008
Both minutes were approved.

5. Continued Discussion:
 - A. Problem Statement
 - B. Emergency Response
 - C. Public Education
 - D. Regulation
 - E. Beachfront Staffing

Discussion and consensus on two remaining water safety assumptions.

- There are a number of local resources that provide first response for water emergencies (Coast Guard, Police Dept., Fire Dept., Sheriff's Dept.), and other resources available for extended search/recovery. It is the role of Task Force to develop strategies that best interface with the professional services.
- A traditional family swimming area, life guards watch over defined beach area, would not address most critical safety issues.

Discussion and consensus on the following Task Force work elements.

- Develop public educational program including annual awareness campaigns and use of existing venues to educate.
- Develop waterfront warning system including risk information and a real time warning system.
- Develop incident system providing communication with emergency response and availability of life saving devices.

6. Assignments: M. Evans to review media material available.
W. Bittner to research warning and communication devices.

MATTERS HELD OVER

1. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that
Council No. 12-47 life saving equipment be moved closer to the shore and most dangerous
areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those
who swim or observe swimming.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, Jan. 27
Municipal Service Bldg. Training Rm.
5:30 pm

ADJOURN: 6:45pm

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, January 27, 2009
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
Members Present: Bill Bittner, Ald. Bouck, Mark Evans, Tom Butts, Lawrence Freitag
Others Present: Jay Lastusky, Larry Williams, Mary Butts, Brad Riddiough
4. Approval of minutes: January 6, 2009.~~No minutes were presented.
5. Continued Discussion Task Force Work Elements~~see attached discussion outline.
 - A. Public Education
 - B. Water Front Warning
 - C. Emergency Communication
6. Assignments:
 - Ald. Bouck to contact advertising company to develop media plan.
 - Marcus Evans to continue work on educational message.
 - Public Works Department to continue research of warning and communication equipment.
 - Ald. Bouck to ask City Attorney for summary of water front regulations.

MATTERS HELD OVER

1. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that
Council No. 12-47 life saving equipment be moved closer to the shore and most dangerous
areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those
who swim or observe swimming.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, February 10
Municipal Service Building
5:30 pm

ADJOURNED: 7 pm

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, February 10, 2009
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
Members Present: Bill Bittner, Vue Yang, Marc Evans, Tom Butts, Larry Freitag
Others Present: Brad Riddiough, Mary Butts
4. Approval of minutes: January 6, 2009
January 27, 2009
Evans/Freitag motioned to approve both minutes. All ayes.
5. Report Back.
 - Update from Bill Bittner on variable message board and efforts made to develop training materials.
6. Continued Discussion Task Force Work Elements
7. Assignments: assignment from the last meeting to continue.

MATTERS HELD OVER

1. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that
Council No. 12-47 life saving equipment be moved closer to the shore and most dangerous
areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those
who swim or observe swimming.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, February 24
Municipal Service Bldg, Training Rm.
5:30 pm

ADJOURNED

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, February 24, 2009
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
Members Present: Ald. Cory Bouck, Bill Bittner, Vue Yang, Tim Eirich, Tom Butts,
Larry Freitag, Patrick Rengers
Others Present: Larry Williams, Mary Butts
4. Approval of minutes: February 10, 2009~~minutes were not provided.
5. Report Back.
 - Update from Ald. Cory Bouck on information from City Attorney's office. A draft ordinance is recommended by City Attorney to protect warning and safety devices. We do not have authority to independently regulate piers under Federal jurisdiction.
 - Update from Ald. Cory Bouck on contacts made to develop training materials.
 - Update from Bill Bittner presenting draft of the introduction section of Task Force report.
6. Continued Discussion Task Force Work Elements
7. Assignments: Ald. Cory Bouck and Marcus Evans to continue efforts on training material.
Bill Bittner to send first draft of report to committee.

MATTERS HELD OVER

1. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that
Council No. 12-47 life saving equipment be moved closer to the shore and most dangerous areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those who swim or observe swimming.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 10
Municipal Service Bldg, Training Rm.
5:30 pm

ADJOURNED

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, March 10, 2009
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
Members Present: Bill Bittner, Vue Yang, Marcus Evans, Tim Eirich, Karen Davis,
Tom Butts, Larry Freitag
Others Present: Mary Butts, Larry Williams
4. Approval of minutes: February 10, 2009
February 24, 2009
 - Larry Freitag/Vue Yang motioned to approve the minutes. All ayes.
5. Report Back.
 - Marcus Evans reported on working to get media material for training and specialty training being planned.
6. Review of Draft Report.

MATTERS HELD OVER

1. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that
Council No. 12-47 life saving equipment be moved closer to the shore and most dangerous
areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those
who swim or observe swimming.

SET NEXT MEETING DATE: Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
5:30 pm

ADJOURNED

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, March 17, 2009
Municipal Service Building Conf. Rm.
2026 New Jersey Ave.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call Meeting to Order.
2. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call.
Members Present: Bill Bittner, Ald. Cory Bouck, Marcus Evans, Karen Davis, Thomas Butts,
Larry Freitag
Others Present: Mary Butts, Larry Williams
4. Approval of Minutes: March 10, 2009
A motion was made/seconded to approve the minutes. All ayes.
5. Report Back.
 - Marcus Evans will coordinate with Tryg Jacobson on videos for education. He will also distribute flyers talking about RIP.
 - Karen Davis reported it is National Water Safety in May. The Governor has issued a proclamation.
6. Discuss and Possible Action of Water Safety Task Force Report.
 - An R.C. will be sent to the Common Council/Committee of the Whole and other various Council committees. Bill Bittner will make a presentation to those committees.
7. Assignments:

MATTERS HELD OVER

1. **R.C. 239-08-09** Referral of R.O. 192-08-09 from Tijannia Miller-Garcia requesting that
Council No. 12-47 life saving equipment be moved closer to the shore and most dangerous areas along Lake Michigan as it will create a safer environment for those who swim or observe swimming.
 - Motion made/seconded to accept and file the R.C. All ayes.

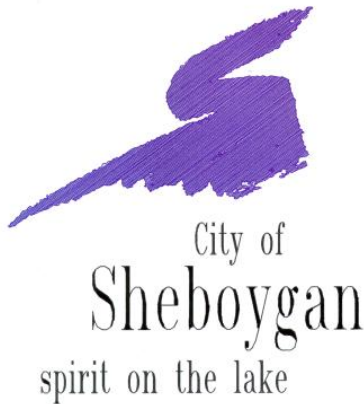
SET NEXT MEETING DATE

ADJOURNED: 6:15 pm

MINUTES
Water Safety Task Force
Tuesday, August 18, 2009
Deland Community Center
901 Broughton Dr.
5:30 p.m.

1. Call meeting to order.
2. Pledge of allegiance.
3. Roll call.
Members Present: Ald. Cory Bouck, Bill Bittner, Marcus Evans, Thomas Butts, Larry Freitag
Others Present: Mary Butts, Larry Williams, Vue Yang
4. Approval of minutes: March 17, 2009
 - No action.
5. Status report on projects.
 - Bill Bittner and Marcus Evans reviewed the work to date on physical improvements and educational programs.
6. Discuss and possible action on Task Force assignments.
 - Moved to recommend that the Water Safety Task Force be dissolved as primary charge has been completed.

ADJOURNED



Report of Water Safety Task Force

March 17, 2009

William Bittner, Public Works Department
Cory Bouck, Alderperson
Tim Eirich, Police Department
Marcus Evans, U. S. Coast Guard Station
Karen Davis, Community Recreation Department
Thomas Butts
Vue Yang
Lawrence Freitag

For the assistance provided the Task Force wishes to express appreciation to the U.S. Coast Guard Station, Sheboygan, Sheboygan Fire Department and Sheboygan Police Department. Individual thanks to Larry Williams and Mary Butts.

Introduction

On September 2, 2008, the Sheboygan City Council established the Water Safety Task Force “for the purpose of studying and recommending to the Common Council steps the City should consider implementing toward reducing, if not eliminating, the senseless water related loss of lives and near drowning of our citizens and visitors. “

The Task Force has met regularly since November to develop a plan to enhance water front safety. This report outlines the recommendations.

Background

Water front safety became a predominant issue due to a tragic drowning in August of 2008 along with other life threatening occurrences this past summer. The table below provided by the U.S. Coast Guard Station, Sheboygan, indicates the number of incidents experienced during the 2008 water front seasons.

PIWS (Persons in Water Saved) OFF SHEBOYGAN FOR FY 08

Date	# PIW's	M/F/Child	Location	Weather	Wind	Waves	Saved/Lost
6/26/08	1	CHILD	KINGS BEACH	SUNNY, HOT WATER TEMP 68	10-15 KTS	2 FT	LOST
8/05/08	1	CHILD	SHEBOYGAN HARBOR	WATER TEMP 72, SUNNY, HOT	10 KTS	1 FT	SAVED
8/08/08	1	CHILD	KINGS BEACH	WATER TEMP 72, SUNNY, HOT	5 KTS	2 FT	SAVED
8/09/08	1	MALE	NORTH BREAK WALL	WATER TEMP 72, SUNNY, HOT	13 KTS	2 FT	SAVED
8/10/08	1	MALE	DELAND BEACH	WATER TEMP 72, SUNNY, HOT	12 KTS	1-2 FT	SAVED
8/10/08	1	CHILD	DELAND BEACH	WATER TEMP 70, CLEAR	15-20 KTS	4-6 FT	LOST
8/10/08	2	CHILDREN	DELAND BEACH	WATER TEMP 70	10-15 KTS	2-4 FT	SAVED
8/26/08	1	MALE	NORTH POINT	WATER TEMP 70, CLEAR, SUNNY	15 KTS	4 FT	SAVED
9/14/08	1	MALE	KINGS BEACH	WATER TEMP 70, CLEAR, SUNNY	5-10 KTS	2-3 FT	SAVED

The Task Force members and the individuals that assisted provide a broad base of knowledge with collective experience in water rescue, swimming and life guard training, surfing, local weather, wave and current patterns, and emergency incident response. After deliberation of the wide variety of issues related to Lake Michigan water safety, the group formed consensus on the following assumptions.

1. Lake Michigan is a wondrous natural feature that attracts residents and a variety of recreational users. The City of Sheboygan has invested in venues to enhance the use of the lake. With the use comes inherent risks. It is the goal of the Task Force to develop strategies to reduce the risks of water front drowning.
2. The degree of drowning hazard varies with weather conditions and locations. The biggest problem exists when warm temperatures bring people to swim and the prevailing wind and hydrographics of the beach and pier structures combine to create RIP currents.
3. The most significant RIP currents for swimmers exist in the area of the power plant and North Pier.
4. There are a number of local resources that provide first response for water emergencies (U.S. Coast Guard, Police Dept., Fire Dept., Sheriff's Dept.), and other resources available for extended search/recovery. It is the role of Task Force to recommend strategies that best interface with the professional services.
5. Lack of specific site location information delays water front emergency response.
6. Barriers and legal restrictions would have minimal effect because of difficulty implementing and enforcing them; and they may conflict with recreational users who are generally competent in the local waters.
7. Regulations may be useful to enhance and reinforce informational programs.
8. There are existing venues that can be utilized to enhance lakefront safety training for youth.
9. A significant public awareness campaign is needed to draw attention to Sheboygan's lakefront hazards (multi-media).

10. A real time warning/education system should be established at the beach front (flag system, information signs, etc.).
11. An on-site emergency communication system should be established (call boxes, etc.).
12. An enhancement/modernization of the life-rings program should be considered.
13. A traditional family swimming area, with life guards watching over a defined beach area, would not address the most critical safety issues.

Based on these assumptions the Task Force developed the following work elements.

Develop a public educational program including annual awareness campaigns and use existing venues to education.

Develop a waterfront warning system including risk information and a real time warning/information system.

Develop an incident system providing communication with emergency responders and availability of life saving devices.

Enhance regulations to support risk reduction efforts.

Public Educational Program

It is apparent that hot weather and inviting waves have occasionally attracted individuals to a hazard they may not be aware of. Task Force members have expressed concern that life style and demographic changes have resulted in fewer residents with knowledge of RIP currents, therefore public education is a key to reducing drowning risk.

Awareness can be enhanced by providing general information to the public and by providing a targeted training for youth. The local Coast Guard station issues regular press announcements about water safety. It is intended that drowning concerns will be highlighted. The City Park Division will have a similar opportunity when announcing the beginning of the beach and swimming season. The safety recommendations in this report will also increase public awareness. In addition there

are opportunities for short public service announcements if the materials are developed.

Recent experience indicates that the most at risk groups are teens and young adults. A targeted program for youth is therefore a high priority. A number of venues exist to reach the youth; examples include school safety training, scouts, clubs, swimming lessons, etc. The desired audience is in place in these organizations. In addition utilizing long standing youth programs may help develop a training effort with longevity. Developing clear training materials that can be easily used by program leaders is a strategy to encourage existing youth programs to incorporate waterfront-specific safety instruction into their activities.

Developing the education program will be the primary focus of the Task Force in upcoming months. Members of the Task Force have been discussing the opportunities with a media company. It is anticipated that a program can be developed using some material that already exists. A long shelf life will be important.

Recommendation: Develop safety training program and professional support materials that can be utilized by organizations throughout the City.

Warning

REAL TIME ADVISORY: One of the major factors in Sheboygan water front risk is the occurrence of RIP currents. They occur under specific weather conditions. A real time advisory would directly address the risks.

A traditional means of providing information in warm weather coastal communities has been a flag system. At one time the Coast Guard provided a similar system for boaters. The system is labor intensive and requires public education. Keeping all informed about the flag system in a community with a very limited beach season may not be productive.

A practical alternative would be an informative sign. Options range from a single warning sign similar to those used at DNR stations indicating fire risk, to a LED variable message board. There are several advantages to a variable message board.

1. An LED sign would directly display warning and be very apparent making warnings more noticeable,
2. A message center at Deland Park would reach more individuals than a notice at the water, helping to provide general education about the risk of RIP currents,

3. The message board would have uses when there is not a risk or during the off season. Example of messages:

WARNING
RIP CURRENT

BEACH CLOSED
BACTERIA

SEASONS
GREETINGS

FIREWORKS
JULY 4, 9 PM

4. A modern LED sign is operated by computer and can be accessed through an online network.

It is anticipated a variable message sign would be designed to provide a simple message. No multicolor graphics. The sign would be located along Broughton Dr. or on the west side of the Deland Community Center. The estimated cost is \$30,000. Installation of an LED sign in Deland Park would require a special use permit through the City's zoning process.

The provision of safety advisories and warnings includes the responsibility that the messages are accurate and consistent. The Coast Guard has indicated that sufficient weather data is available to determine when a warning may be needed.

Recommendation: Install a variable message sign in Deland Park to provide RIP current warning.

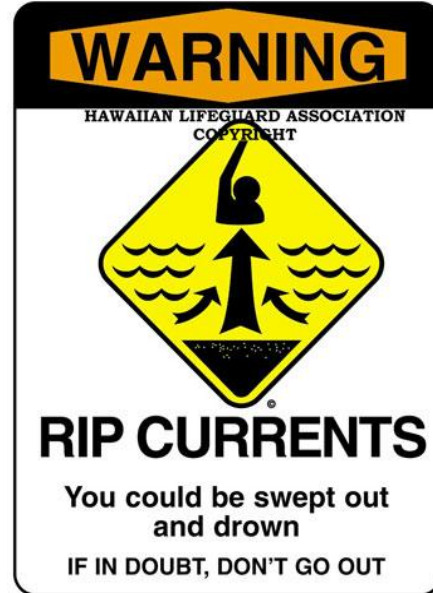


WARNING SIGNS: There are standard RIP current warning signs available. The Task Force is recommending the placement of the signs indicated below. One provides some basic information regarding RIP currents and would be installed in English and Spanish. The other is a more graphic warning sign. The sign can be produced by the Sheboygan Public Works Department.

Source: www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov



Source: Hawaiian Lifeguard Association



The new warning signs need to be coordinated with the existing signage along the water front. Care needs to be taken to avoid sign clutter and the appearance of over regulation. Where possible, sign kiosks can be used for multiple messages. Sign location will be determined in the field.

Recommendation: Install RIP current warning signs along the water front.

Emergency Response

COMMUNICATION: Rapid response is critical in a potential drowning incident. Both north and south piers are distant from communication systems. In addition the Police Department has indicated that identifying the location of a water front problem can be difficult when responding to a cell phone call.

There are several manufacturers of emergency call boxes. The most task focused would be a cell phone programmed to dial a single emergency number upon pressing a button. The box can be labeled in order for the caller to identify location. A solar powered unit would provide the most flexibility regarding location. A device is estimated to cost \$5,000.

Potential locations for emergency call boxes are indicated on the map on the following page. The Task Force identified criteria for the placement of the boxes:

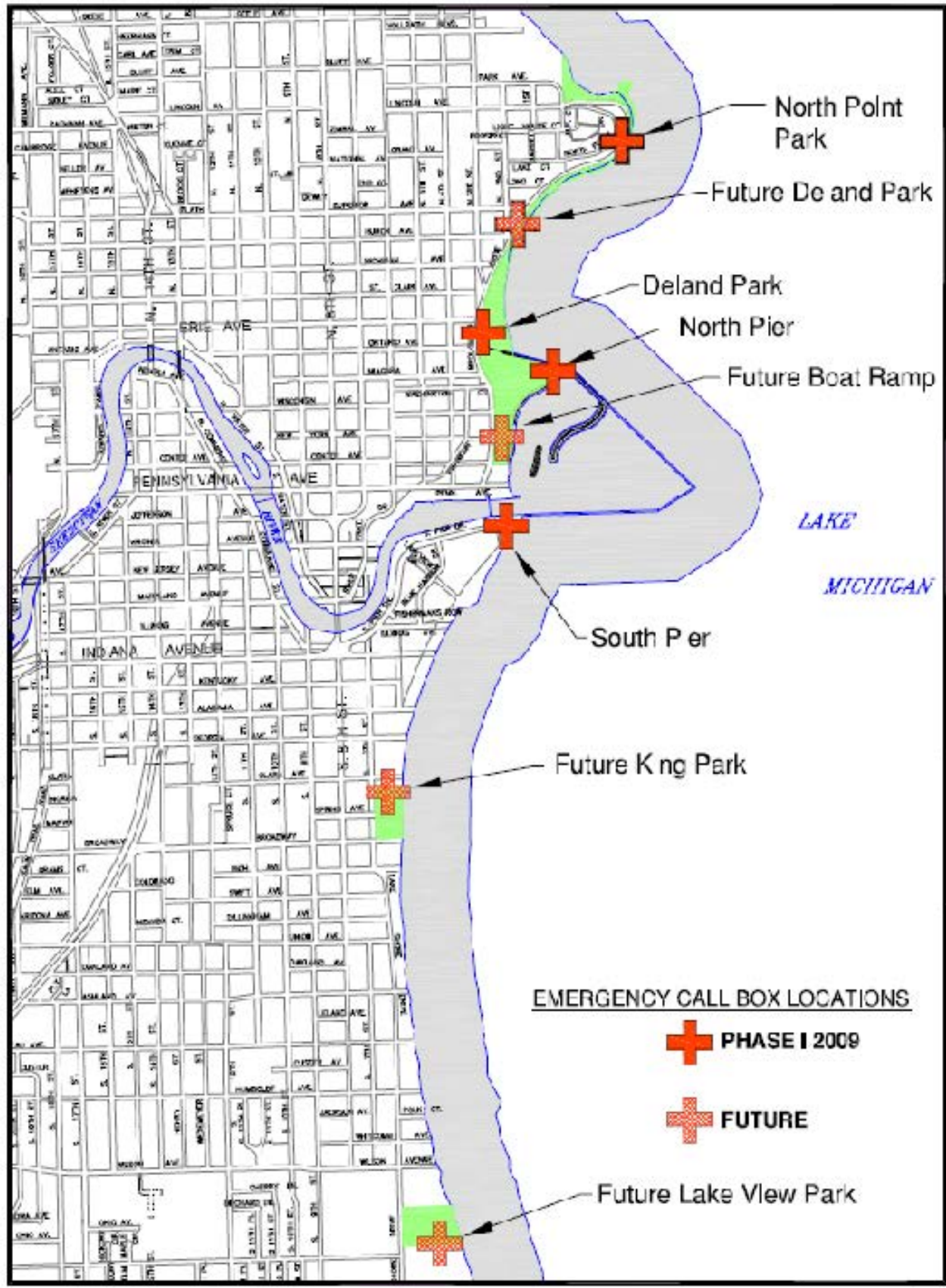
1. Reasonable proximity to the identified problem areas,
2. At locations where potential users will routinely pass and identify and note their function and,
3. At locations where communication alternatives are not generally available because the location is remote from businesses, public facilities, and boater activity.

The Task Force has identified four critical locations. Additional sites are not recommended at this time as issues regarding vandalism, misuse and the ability of the equipment to weather a Lake Michigan winter are uncertain. The potential for false alarms is a concern. Should the installations be deemed successful additional locations can be considered.

Recommendation: Install emergency call boxes (4 total) at North Point, South Pier, North Pier and at primary pedestrian entrance to Deland Park near Broughton Dr.

Source: Rath Microtech
www.rathmicrotech.com





UPDATE LIFE RINGS: The City has received a petition from citizens asking for additional life rings. The existing life rings have been provided for years by The Sheboygan Area Great Lakes Sportsfishermen, which purchased the rings, constructed cabinets and donated the equipment to the City for installation. Approximately 45 rings are in place along the lakefront and Sheboygan River. The Task Force wishes to express appreciation to the organization for their efforts.

Adding life saving rings is a relative low cost safety measure. In addition the Task Force suggests that the new rings be purchased with cabinets that are consistent with the design of the improvements along the river and marina area. Significant cost has been incurred by the City to develop walkways with high visibility railings and decorative lighting. Cabinets are available that would be consistent with the design. The existing cedar cabinet will be moved to a more remote location along the water front. Cabinets complete with life rings are estimated to cost \$250/each.



Recommendation: Purchase and install up to 40 new life rings along the water front.

Enhanced Regulation

PROTECTION OF SAFETY DEVICES: During discussion of the need for warning and safety devices there was uncertainty how the existing devices are protected from vandalism and misuse. After review of the issue with the City Attorney, he recommended the following ordinance be adopted:

“Lifesaving Equipment. No person shall make or create a false alarm concerning the saving of life along the beaches, boardwalks, public walkways or piers within the City, or remove, use or tamper with any lifesaving station equipment, lifesaving rings, lifesaving station

equipment boxes, or communication system provided therefore for public use, except in case of emergency.”

This language would be added as Section 70-221 of the Municipal Code, which would be part of Article VII, Offenses Against Public Safety, of Chapter 70, Offenses and Miscellaneous Provisions. The penalty section of Chapter 70 is contained in Section 70-5, entitled “Penalties for certain enumerated sections of this chapter”. Section 70-5 will also need to be amended as part of any ordinance creating the new Lifesaving Equipment section so as to establish the specific penalty for violation. It is recommended establishing the penalty at not less than \$50 nor more than \$250. This would make the penalty for this violation consistent with the general unlawful damage to property ordinance.

Recommendation: Adoption of the above reference ordinance.

SWIMMING FROM PIERS: The Task Force also discussed the high risk of entering the water off the extended piers that form the harbor. These structures are routinely used for walking along the water, fishing, access for surfers and on some occasions swimming. The rock structure is difficult to traverse and can be a barrier to exit the water. Under certain weather conditions RIP currents along the North pier can be external hazardous.

In general municipal jurisdiction extended 1700 feet into the lake. The piers are under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers and they are not currently posted. Agreement with the Army Corp would be required to establish the ability to restrict the use of the piers. The City by lease agreement does have the authority to regulate recreational uses of the pier area that was modified for the construction of the Marina.

Although the Task Force discussed the benefits of restricting swimming for the pier, no regulation is recommended because of enforcement difficulty, the potential conflict with access for surfing, and the jurisdiction issues.