

April 20, 2023

A public hearing on proposed Ordinance #584, amending Article II, Slow-no-wake zone, Section 102-33(a) Delineated, extending the slow-no-wake zone on the Eagle River from the existing point 700' east of the Hwy 45 bridge, to the area known as the T-docks, was called to order at 5:00PM by Mayor Hyslop.

Roll Call: Ron Kressin, Kim Schaffer, Diane Marquardt and Jerry Burkett. Also in attendance: Becky Bolte, Robin Ginner, Chris Dobbs, Mike Adamovich and Jared Adamovich.

Mayor Hyslop addressed the audience reminding all in attendance that the Public Hearing was for the slow-no-wake zone extension on the Eagle River was not about the wake boat debate that had also made local headlines.

Vic Washelesky, of 173 River Street, spoke on behalf of the original petitioners. A petition was signed by 44 residents of the City of Eagle River and presented to the audience. A map was shown on the big screen to assist his presentation. Washelesky addressed the audience with the petitioners concerns. The third paragraph of the petition was referenced by Washelesky, that read; *"Wisconsin State Statutes allow the City of Eagle River to enact local boating regulations in the interest of public health, safety, and preservation of natural resources. Because statutes regulate watercraft on lakes but not rivers, the current conditions create safety hazards and unnecessary erosion of the riverbank. On a lake, boats and PWC's (personal watercrafts) must be at no wake speed within 100 feet of a swimmer or a pier. No such requirements exist on a river. The only process to remove this safety hazard is to enact a no-wake-zone"*. Washelesky stressed the petitioners safety concerns and discussed two possible options; Option #1 to extend the slow no wake from it's current point of 700' East of the Hwy 45 bridge to a line at 328 E McKinley on the north shore and Trees for Tomorrow on the south shore, and Option #2 to extend the slow no wake from it's current point 700' East of the Hwy 45 bridge down to the City limit near the T-docks. Washelesky stating he believed Option #1 was critical, and the reason for needing this change now was due to the area being built up, more congestion the past few years, bigger boats, personal watercrafts that can go 40 mph, and having a couple of boat rental businesses in the area leading to less experienced boaters on the River. Commitment to pay for the buoys and signs was presented by Washelesky and he stated that the Sheriffs department already patrols the area. The upside in enacting the extension would be for safety and for silent water sport enthusiasts to use the river for kayaking, canoeing, and for smaller boats. Washelesky ended his presentation at 5:15PM

Hyslop asked attendees to remain respectful of one another and stay on the topic being presented, with comments to address only what was within the City jurisdiction. To keep things moving along, it was requested that those who wish to address the Council, try to keep their comments to two minutes. Burkett requested that City of Eagle River residents were allowed to address the Council first.

The audience was allowed to address the Council, uninterrupted, by a show of hand to speak. Nineteen people verbally addressed Council and an additional ten written comments were received and supplied to all Council members. Those who spoke in favor of the change: John Wilhelm, Howard Wolf, Ken Delaney, Bill Morgan, Marvin and Carol Radloff, Robert Dow, Joe Orlovsky, Ted Wydeven (in favor only for option #1), Tina Aiello, (in favor only for option #1). Those that spoke in opposition: Jim Tidball (concerns of SNW by T-docks) Dean Winger, Todd Achterberg, Jack Stoskopf, Ken Anderson, Dan Krause, Jared Adamovich. Rob Hicks spoke stating in his experience, nobody seemed to obey the SNW zones and felt enforcement was the bigger concern. A letter from DNR Recreational Warden, Northern Region, Robin Miller was recited by the Clerk as a response to a question that arose by Jack Stoskopf. The DNR letter summarized why the WDNR did not support extending slow no wake on the Eagle River to the T-docks, also stating the DNR did not have jurisdictional control. The original petition requesting the SNW extension was signed by 44 City of Eagle River residents. The public hearing sign-in sheet, recording 40 attendees, with some having also supplied written comments, was supplied to Hyslop at the beginning of the hearing.

At 6:03PM, Mayor Hyslop confirmed with the audience that everyone who wished to address the Council had been given the opportunity to speak.

Mayor gave the floor to City Police Chief, Chris Dobbs. Dobbs stated she agreed with Tidball's concerns about the T-docks. Dobbs stated that she had created mapping overlays from multiple years, and with her eye, she could not see where erosion was apparent. Dobbs went on to explain to the audience that although she agreed with the need for additional enforcement staffing on the river, shortages of law enforcement officers and budget constraints prohibit it from happening. Dobbs stressed that law enforcement must prioritize the needs of the community to stay within the confines of staffing shortages and budget shortfalls, stating that there will not be an immediate response to complaints on slow-no-wake complaints.

Kressin, Alderman for District 4, disclosed that he lived on the Eagle River, 320 McKinley, and that he had signed the original petition. He reported his experiences with more traffic on the River and bigger, faster boats, including boats with 200 or 300hp motors. Kressin shared a close call experience with another boat flying past and coming within a foot of his pontoon while trying get his boat into his lift with grandkids on his pontoon. Although he understands the buoys will not be a complete fix, his experience on the Chain is that the vast majority of people will obey a slow-no-wake area. Kressin stated he now sees the argument not to extend the slow-no-wake zone down to the launching area at the T-docks but extending the buoy down to the area around Tree's for Tomorrow was a yes for him. *Clerk note: Ginner confirmed with the League of Wisconsin Municipalities legal counsel, Claire Silverman, Kressin did not need to recuse himself from voting as there was not a financial gain/loss associated with the vote.*

Schaffer, Alderperson for District 3, 220 Spruce Street, stated that although she did not own a boat, she grew up on Anvil Lake, stating that the safety concerns addressed happen everywhere. Schaffer pointed out the influx of people due to Covid, questioning if we will continue to have such an influx. The noise of boats in the late hours can be heard as far as her office on 3rd Street. There is a high concentration of people on the chain and her concerns lie in not only protecting the safety of the users but also in not being detrimental to people heading west. Although Schaffer agrees that the river to the west, towards Watersmeet Lake end, may be affected, the City cannot control that and residents would have to take it up with the Town of Lincoln to address it. Schaffer stated she would not support extending the slow-no-wake to the T-docks but would support extending to Trees for Tomorrow, hoping it would help with safety and not be detrimental to the area, stressing it is her job to be responsible to the taxpayers.

Marquart, Alderperson for District 1, 1st Street and Maple St, stated she also hears the loud boats from her house. Her concern was safety, stating that rentals, especially personal watercrafts, often have uneducated drivers. Marquardt sees the point of a no on the extension down to the T-docks. Marquardt suggested trying the extension to Trees for Tomorrow area for the season and reassess to see if the situation needs to be adjusted.

Burkett, Alderman for District 2, stated he has had 29 years on Council, and that he was currently the Chair for Vilas County and the Chair of Law Enforcement. Levy limit restraints prevent him from hiring anybody. Burkett reported that a resolution is being brought to Vilas County to add two school resource officers, ensuring every school in Vilas County is protected. School safety is a bigger priority than slow-no-wake. The County will be able to use those two officers during the summer months, which will increase the boat patrol presence. Vilas County has 1326 lakes and every one of them want a cop. Burkett summarized the problem at hand as trying to come up with a solution for the bottom 2% of rude boaters. He noted that of the initial speakers that live on the stretch of the Eagle River in question, no one was against the slow-no-wake extension on the premise of safety. The extension may be an inconvenience but is a worthwhile inconvenience for safety. Burkett asked, that in this neighborly situation, if all present could live with the slow-no-wake being extended from the current point, 700' East of the Hwy 45 bridge, to Trees for Tomorrow, for one year only and re-assess, asking for a show of hands in

support, with many hands in the crowd raising. Burkett stated people should report to Council, the Eagle River Police Department, or the Vilas County Sheriff's Department to compile records supporting/or disproving the effectiveness of the slow-no-wake zone extension solution. Burkett asked how many feet would be involved in the extension to Trees with Ginner supplying 1900'. Burkett stated that an increase of approximately 1900' of slow-no-wake is an amount he could live with, stating that this was government at its finest, coming together to find a solution to a problem.

Jared Adamovich, City Public Works and Parks Department, stated that he was one in charge of putting the buoys in and suggested the need for four buoys to mark the area, adding conditions will probably lead to the first buoy being damaged each year and would need to be replaced annually.

Mayor Hyslop summarized with, "If you make a decision, and it turns out to be the wrong decision, you can make another decision". Mayor commended the crowd for the respectful manner displayed during the hearing.

Motion by Kressin, 2nd by Marquardt to adopt slow-no-wake ordinance #584, extending the slow-no-wake zone from the current point 700' east of the Hwy 45 bridge, to the area at Trees for Tomorrow on the south shore and the area at 328 E McKinley on the north shore, and a minimum of four buoys to mark the area, and having a sunset clause to reassess after one year. Carried on a roll call vote, all.

Motion by Burkett, 2nd by Schaffer to adjourn the meeting at 6:30 pm. Carried all.

Becky J Bolte – Clerk