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Village tables Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours docking system proposal

BY JOSHUA MALONI

GM/Managing Editor

No decision was made Monday on a proposal from Whirlpool Jet Boat Tours President John Kinney to install a new docking system on the south waterfront seawall adjacent to his company's staging area. Upon hearing from residents and boaters – and deciding it's time to review WJBT's existing contract – the Village of Lewiston Board, instead, opted to table.



Elected leaders said the issue is the amount of docking space presently permitted under Kinney's 40-year lease – which Trustee Nick Conde said is 60 feet – versus the proposed 120 feet.

Trustee Dan Gibson said, "I'm not in favor of giving away real estate that belongs to the taxpayers. That's my problem with this."

Resident Chantal Tink said, "You're gaining double the frontage."

Kinney, who wants to use the space to parallel park three jet boats, replied, "It's an area that's not being used."

She suggested, "It doesn't matter. I don't use my front yard. Does that give anybody else the opportunity to come in and build in my front yard? No."

Tink added, "If someone came in tomorrow and donated \$2 million to build new docks, we wouldn't be able to."

Peter Coppins, who's married

to Trustee Tina Coppins, and a member of the village's Historic Preservation Commission, said, according to the New York State Office of General Services, "If you're a New York state resident, we own all that. We own all of that frontage. The OGS gives the opportunity to the village to lease it on 10-year notes, every 10 years, to use how they feel it should be done."

He explained, "Right now, according to the map, most all of Whirlpool Jet Boat's additions and whatever he builds off of there is on state property. It hangs over and is built on it. We're not getting anything for that. We should."

Mayor Anne Welch said, "He leases from the village. The village gets (rent)."

She later said, "He leases the 60 feet from the village. If we feel it's more beneficial to reconfigure it another way, that's why we're here."

Kinney was asked if WJBT could park boats perpendicular, instead of parallel, thus taking up less docking space. He said he would not feel comfortable with "the entire boat broadside to that current," as it could be "very difficult" and would require the installation of new slips.

"We don't dock at all perpendicular to the current," Kinney said.

As discussions turned into arguments in the board room, Welch said, "We are here tonight to listen to his proposal to extend that dock. He is coming to this village to ask for it. Nothing has been decided."

She added, "I think what we need to do is sit down and renegotiate; just discuss this further."

Trustees discussed setting a public meeting for 6 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 6, to review the WJBT contract. Ultimately, it was decided to make the gathering an

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