

## CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT AUGUST GENERAL MEETING

### MARINE FACILITIES

Council member Lewis met with the Marine Facilities Coordinator (MFC) to discuss issues with fish and wildlife at the harbor and dock. Both situations involve intentional and unintentional feeding of wildlife that pose serious danger for citizens and visitors to Gustavus.

During the July Council meetings, the MFC commented on brown bears looking for fish carcasses at the boat launch and even getting onto boats tied up to floats. On Thursday, July 22, at low tide Council member Lewis observed piles of halibut skins and bones directly to the left and right of the boat ramp and by Friday they were all gone. Paul had seen eagles flying over the landfill with halibut skins on Thursday, so it is not just the bears that are keying into this human food source. Meanwhile we are hearing reports of subadult brown bears approaching anglers for fish and carcasses just a few hundred yards upstream. As you all know, brown bears are still relatively new to Gustavus, and people are pretty nervous about them especially if they are learning that anglers are a source of food which increases risk for everyone.

On Monday, July 19 at 4:30 pm several fishing boats were observed feeding at least 3 large sea lions. The sea lions had their own paparazzi of photographers following the action. One local captain was asked why they were feeding the sea lions and he said they were not. He was then asked if he noticed that the sea lions were taking the halibut carcasses off their swim step, and he basically said it was not his problem. A NOAA enforcement officer was notified and stated even "unintentional" feeding of sea lions is a violation, and that this situation will undoubtedly get worse because:

- mother sea lions will start teaching their pups of this food source
- the sea lions will get bolder and start jumping on boats (which is already happening) and can and do actually sink skiffs
- they may start hauling out on the dock in which case we will have no power to deter them because they are federally protected
- if someone falls into the water during the charter fleet feeding frenzy, especially a child, they are in serious danger of injury from these fish carcass-conditioned animals.

The officer suggested the city create an ordinance, monitor, and fine and report violators to NOAA.

We already have an ordinance, Section 8.04.010 - Conduct in harbor facilities—General Rules that prohibits dumping any fish carcasses off the dock or boat ramp. Anglers at the dock should dump carcasses mid channel as directed, and at the harbor can take carcasses to the landfill. As we all know enforcement is tricky, some options are provided below:

1. First let the charter fleet and other anglers know that these carcasses are creating a serious safety risk for our community, and we will no longer tolerate and will begin citing violators starting on a certain date.
2. Move forward with installing bear-proof fish carcass bins at the harbor that will be composted at the landfill.
3. Develop a monitoring method which could be a combo of observers and a camera at the top of the dock facing the floats. We can work with the state who already has monitoring cameras on the dock. As a bonus, live camera footage could be accessible online so boaters can check dock and sea conditions, similar to the cams at the Bartlett Cove dock.
4. Begin fining and reporting violators to NOAA.

In response, at the Council's direction, we may provide information/training to users of the City's Marine Facilities that may include a Marine Facilities Use Agreement (MFUA) outlining

consequences for violations of the terms of the MFUA which could include prohibition of the use of the Marine Facilities. Also, the City will be working on the fish composting project to be located at the Salmon River Small Boat Harbor that will provide a method to discard fish carcasses.

#### **CONTINUED COVID TESTING AT THE AIRPORT**

There has been interest in continuing the COVID testing at the airport until the end of September as long as the funding continues. The Council has given staff direction to continue the program until September 30, 2021, or until the funding has been used.

#### **GVFD NEEDS DISPATCHERS**

The GVFD is looking for volunteers for dispatching. With the busy summer, the existing load results in times where there are empty slots on the schedule. Please consider volunteering, training will be provided. If you are interested, contact Jeff Jarvis or City Hall.