

Boats in harbor

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Mayor Zack Mullock said.

He noted Carroll was a former U.S. Coast Guard officer and Lord has been a lifelong boater.

Lord said he has taken photos of abandoned boats in the harbor over the past few years. He said in most cases, boat owners remove their vessels.

"What's unfortunate is there are a handful that do not, and they're the ones that we are really here to talk about today," he said.

Often, a derelict boat will wash up onto a beach on the harbor and stay there for a long period of time, Lord said. The harbor currently has three abandoned boats.

Lord said about three

years ago, a 32-foot fiberglass sailboat sunk off the Coast Guard base. He said another boat is at anchor off the Nature Center of Cape May.

"Remarkably that boat has survived at least two winters if not three," Lord said. "It's just a matter of time before that anchor line deteriorates and it washes up onto our beaches."

A third boat, a white hulled sailboat, was beached off the Nature Center and washed over to Lower Township, coming to rest at the bulkhead at the Canyon Club Marina, he said.

Cape May Harbor has two submerged boats and one afloat.

Lord said the proposed

ordinance would allow action on anchored or beached boats. He said submerged boats are a more complicated issue.

Carroll said harbor masters are rare in New Jersey. He said he communicated with harbor masters in Newport, R.I., Marblehead and Newberry Port, Mass.

The harbor masters are not deputized to board boats and get into arguments with boat owners.

"We are the eyes and ears and maybe even the brains of putting this together, so that we have tools to work with, and that's what this ordinance is all about," Carroll said.

He said the proposed ordinance was not aimed at

the transient boat fleet but boats that were "dumped" in the harbor. Carroll said Cape May is one of the few harbors between New York and Norfolk, Va.

"We are trying to make sure that no boats stay moored in our harbor over the winter months," Carroll said.

He said a meeting needs to take place with the Cape May Police Department, code enforcement and city manager to discuss how responsibilities would be assigned.

Carroll said the harbor masters were opening communication with Coast Guard Station Cape May and state Marine Police. The city has the ability to assess fines of as much as \$1,250 per day for the first offense, he said.

Newport's municipal website provides full information for boaters, Carroll said. He said anyone who is moving a boat to a port for 90 days will probably Google the port.

"I'm sure the marinas around us are certainly going to want to participate because a lot of them have had small boats, in particular, left in their marinas," Carroll said.

He said the Bree-Zee-Lee Marina had more than 30 "dog" boats taking up space. Lord said marinas cannot take title to dismantle, remove or sell abandoned boats.

Lord said when a boat is seen moored in the harbor

during winter, it's a red flag.

The boundary line with Lower Township is in the middle of the channel. Carroll said he and Lord will meet with Lower Township officials and suggest they pass a similar ordinance so that enforcement would be uniform in the harbor.

Councilman Mike Yeager asked if a boat owner is given notice, whom would they communicate with at the city. Carroll said the boat owner would contact code enforcement, the city manager or the police department but not the harbor masters.

"We're not enforcement people," Carroll said.

The proposed ordinance would require a boat owner to register with the police department if they intended to moor in the harbor for more than 30 days.

Cost to the city to impound a boat would be paid by the boat owner, Lord said.

Carroll said retrieving a sunken boat is expensive. He said he hopes the state would create a fund available to municipalities to get derelict boats out of harbors.

"I really feel if we adopt this and we're keeping an eye on what's happening in our harbor, we're going to reduce the likelihood of sunken boats as close to 100 percent as we can," Carroll said.

If an unregistered boat remains in the harbor fol-

lowing notification, the owner can be fined with the option of impounding, according to Lord.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said council previously adopted an abandoned boat ordinance giving the city two provisions to enforce.

Carroll said ideally the city could contact the state Motor Vehicle Commission to obtain ownership information on any boat left in the harbor.

Gillin-Schwartz said it would be council's decision if the city would charge a fee to register a boat for a stay in the harbor beyond 30 days. Carroll said most other towns charge a registration fee of about \$50. He said charging the fee may be more of a hassle that it is worth.

Used fiberglass boats have very little resale value, particularly older vessels that may cause some owners to abandon the craft in a harbor, Carroll said. The problem is taking place at many seaport cities, he said.

City Clerk Erin Burke noted the ordinance stated no registrations would be issued between Nov. 1 and March 31, which meant by the time the ordinance took effect, it would be too late to register a boat.

A second reading and public hearing of the ordinance is scheduled for Oct. 18. If adopted, the ordinance would take effect Nov. 15.

Crawford

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Property.

During public comment, resident Judy Smith referenced discussion at Borough Commission's last meeting of a report of two homeless persons living in Wilbraham Park. She asked if a background check could be run on persons in the park.

Sabo asked borough solicitor Frank Corrado if running a background check would be legal. He said he did not recall any discussion by commissioners of conducting background checks of persons seen in the park.

Corrado said he would have some problems with such a move.

Kurkowski said he been driving past the park, and he has not seen signs of someone living in the park.

Smith said a number of single women lived in West Cape May and they had concern of someone living in the park.

"I used to feel very safe

here, maybe not so safe anymore," she said.

Sabo advised Smith to report any criminal activity she witnesses to the police department.

"Are we going to wait for the criminal activity to occur?" Smith replied.

The mayor said she did not know what sort of criminal activity Smith was suggesting. Smith said she did not know of any criminal activity, but she wanted to know how the homeless persons were disposing of the contents of a bucket they were using for a toilet.

Sabo said she did not know who was doing such an activity in the park. Smith said it was observed by a gardener in the park and it was not something to be taken lightly.

"I know you're a very compassionate and the community is compassionate but if we allow two people to live there, I don't know what's going to occur in a couple of weeks, there could be more..." Smith said.

The mayor said she was not aware of anyone living in the park. She said an unsheltered person sitting in the park was not a problem.

Kurkowski said anyone who sees someone using a bucket as toilet in a public park, should call the police. He said a report of such an activity was hearsay.

Sabo said she has a friend who walks her dog each night in Wilbraham Park at 9 p.m. and has not observed anyone in the park.

Resident Susan Hoffman said she witnessed two people living in the park or staying in the park for an extended period of time. She said one person was sleeping there and another was in a car.

"It's not a figment of someone's imagination, it is happening," Hoffman said.

She said the borough should make services available to the people in the park if possible.

Sabo said it was a topic for discussion for the borough's Board of Health.

Labor

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said. "This beach safety initiative was a vast and critical undertaking, and as a result, our Jersey shore destinations are now more aware and better equipped to address boating and lightning safety issues."

PEOSH, which is responsible for inspecting, investigating and educating

workers and employers on workplace safety matters to ensure the safety and health of employees, performed a total of 58 inspections of beach patrols employing public employees in Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May counties.

Compliance officers found violations relating to boat hazard assessments, boat hazard assessment certi-

fications, lightning policies, and record keeping, but no penalties will be assessed if proper steps are taken by the municipalities to abate the identified issues.

PEOSH will release statewide safety alerts on boat and lightning safety in the near future.

To view all health and safety Alerts issued by PEOSH, visit nj.gov/labor.

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