

Council Agenda Report

Date: April 10, 2017

Prepared by: Brandon Hesson, Associate Director, Economic Development

Submitted by: Odie Wheeler, Director, Public Works

SUBJECT: Cambridge Municipal Yacht Basin Transient Slip Rental Rates – May 2017

Recommendation that Council:

- A. Hear report from staff, and
- B. Approve a temporary waiver of transient slip rental fees for Friday and Saturday nights plus Sunday May 28th, throughout the month of May.

Discussion:

Since FY14, transient slip rentals at the Cambridge Municipal Yacht Basin have been in decline annually, falling 28% between then and the end of FY16.

The first half of FY17 does not tell a different story. During this period, gross revenues from transient slip rentals have declined nearly 21%.

Weather and other uncontrollable influences can obviously impact these totals, but trends exist. For instance, the month of May, shows steady decline, dipping each of the last two years.

By offering free transient slip rental to boaters during weekends throughout the month of May, we have an opportunity to survey boaters about where they see information to more effectively advertise. We would also can promote throughout the City for all of 2017 and entice boaters back.

Additionally, the City would have an opportunity to have pictures taken of the marina while full, to replace dated photos of a largely-empty marina prior to the release of the redesigned city website in August.

The month of May represents an exciting time throughout the city, with a series of events located within walking, cycling or boating distance of the marina. Some examples are:

1. Family Movie Night (May 5): The City of Cambridge will host its second Family Movie Night event at the Choptank River amphitheater from 8-10 p.m.
2. Picnic in the Park (May 6): The City of Cambridge will announce a monthly music series to take place at Memorial Park near the Marina, and kick off with a bluegrass show by Flatland Drive.
3. Cambridge Beer Festival (May 13): This annual tradition celebrates regional microbreweries, Cambridge eateries and live music on historic High Street.

4. Cambridge Classic Powerboat Regatta (May 13): This event will celebrate 107 years on the Choptank River.
5. Sail on the Skipjack Nathan (May 13): Cruises from the Long Wharf location begin on May 13.
6. The Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Conference (May 18-21): This event could see significant attendance because of the addition of the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor's Center.
7. Memorial Day Weekend (May 26-29)

This list of events does not include ongoing walking tours, Second Saturday art events, dining specials and live entertainment in bars and restaurants.

Fiscal Impact: Last season, the marina recorded \$2,478 in transient slip rental for the entire month of May. Lost revenue could be that same amount. However, if more boats come, fuel sales will increase.

However, the following should be considered:

1. There is no better advertising than word of mouth, and the ability to hand promotional material to boaters has value.
2. The City of Cambridge would not be discounting fuel sales on the weekends, so increased fuel revenue would also have net positive impact. (NOTE: Fuel sales, have increased over each of the last three years.)

Approved by: Sandra Tripp-Jones, City Manager. 