

PORT OF PORT TOWNSEND

INFORMATIONAL MEMO

DATE: 10/7/2021
TO: Port Townsend Port Commission
FROM: Jeannie McMacken, Port Contractor/Communications Consultant
SUBJECT: Herb Beck Marina, Quilcene - Community Outreach Project

Introduction & Project Background:

“If you could shape the future of the Herb Beck Marina (HBM) and adjacent uplands, what changes would you make?”

This is the central question posed to the Quilcene community five months ago. The community answered, with 107 responses, both in-person and on-line from the 98376 zip-code as well as other areas of Jefferson County and beyond. According to the latest American Community Survey, there are 259 households in Quilcene. With 100 responses received from those who use the marina properties, that’s a return rate of roughly 39 percent.

How did we accomplish this?

- Port Deputy Director Eric Toews and I met to discuss the questions that would garner the most important responses.
- We created a poster that was given to North Hood Canal Chamber members to post in their windows and blanket the town (thank you!). Posters were placed at the marina as well.
- We met with high school students during an assembly where Eric Toews and I explained the survey and the reasons for the questions, and we answered students’ questions.
- The school administration advertised our survey on its reader board throughout the summer.
- Press releases were published in the Port Townsend Leader and Peninsula Daily News.
- An ad was published in the Leader.
- We were interviewed by KPTZ.
- We posted information on Quilcene social media about the survey, as well as dates and times when the in-person listening chats would take place (Tuesday, July 20, noon to 7 p.m.; Thursday, July 22, noon to 7p.m.; and Saturday, July 31, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.).
- We partnered with the Quilcene Yacht Club – they were instrumental in getting the word out to their membership and the entire community.
- Word-of-mouth and personal connections helped generate the buzz.

The Written Questionnaire

The survey included 8 questions - asking if respondents use the marina, how often, what for, what they value about it, what they would like to see changed, what needs to be improved, what’s needed, and what they imagine will happen in 5-10-20 years. There was no limit on the number of words in the responses.

The One-On One Listening

The personal conversations asked these same questions but provided a setting that allowed a deeper dive into the respondents' concerns. People were eager to get their feelings out, with honesty and passion. Chats were about a half-hour long, most more, a few less. I interviewed, listened, asked follow-up questions, and took detailed notes to capture each person's comments. Every response was anonymous, identified only by a number. We did not ask for last names.

General Observations

On each visit to Quilcene I was made aware of the number of people that use the marina property. Coast Seafood and Penn Cove Shellfish were busy with business activities. The marina itself was generally quiet except for a few people launching boats for a day outing. Most of the action centered around the Yacht Club, a focal point for picnics, barbeques, and fellowship.

Key Take-Aways

The one major take-away from this process? Residents and visitors who were involved in the process are truly passionate about what the Herb Beck Marina and Port properties on Linger Longer Road mean to participants, their families, and their community's past and future.

There are seven response categories that create a common thread, with subsections that sharpened the focus. Other comments include personal reflections and a healthy dose of skepticism. People did not hold back their words, and frankly, some may sting.

I am responsible for faithfully reporting what I heard from those who chose to participate in this important project. The Port Commission wants to know how the community uses the facility, and what they desire for its future. The people responded. Here's what they had to say:

- There is skepticism as to whether community's concerns and ideas will be heard and that actions aligned with community input will be taken. Several felt their voices have been dismissed in the past, although they have made their concerns loud and clear.
- There is passion about what the Herb Beck Marina used to be - how it was traditionally used as a community gathering place. Nostalgic comments referenced the Linger Longer Lodge. Many want the area turned into a place for friends and families to gather and recreate with additional facilities for RV and camping.
- Environmental and ecological protection are a central concern. Many process participants worry that commercial activities may adversely affect the water quality in Quilcene Bay. There is a desire for continued testing, monitoring, and reporting.
- The facility should be made more visible. There are no signs on Route 101 informing people that there is a public marina, with a launch ramp and swimming beach at the end of Linger Longer Road. Additionally, the signs that do exist - speed limit signs - seem to be ignored by all types of vehicles.
- The largest number of comments focused on the general appearance and neglected repair and maintenance of the property. Many commenters believe these issues rise to the level of posing health and safety concerns.
- The Port is charged with economic development. There is a desire to add opportunities for locals to be part of the solution.

- Concerns remain that the Port is planning to sell the property to the private sector. There is general skepticism about the Port's connection to the community and the perceived lack of interest in the Herb Beck Marina, and Quilcene in general.

These common themes will be more fully reported and described in the Commission's October 13, 2021, Special Workshop Meeting. The input received from the community may help to inform future operating and capital budget decisions made by the Port. It may also aid in determining what additional community engagement may be appropriate in the future.

RECOMMENDATION: None. This memorandum, as well as the Special Workshop presentation on October 13, are informational only.

ATTACHMENTS: None.