

12 Hillside Street
Boston, Ma. 02120



December 14, 2012

Town of Chilmark, Board of Selectmen

Warren Doty

William Rossi

Jonathan E. Mayhew

Timothy R. Carroll, Executive Secretary ✓

Re: Harbormaster Duties

Gentlemen:

In June of 2012, I put my 18' Nauset Islander on its mooring in Menemsha Creek near the Homeport. We used it that week and then for several weekends during June while at our summer home at 78 Hammett Lane.

In July we also used the boat for a week, and my two sons then used our house with friends and used the boat. One of my sons accidentally dropped the "gull sweep" off the bow when he left, so on 29th & 30th of July, I went back to the Vineyard to replace it with a new one and do some fishing with friends. After using the boat it was replaced on the mooring. All instruments, horn, lights, radio and bilge were in perfect working order when I left. Bilge Pump was tested because I knew I would not be back for another two weeks. Batteries were also fully charged. One was new last year and the other one a year older.

On Sunday, August 12, at about 10:30 AM I got a call from Jim Policastro who told me that he was near the creek fishing and looked out at my boat and thought that it was riding a little low. He asked if I wanted him to contact Lev, who put in my mooring, to check on it. I said that I would contact Lev and sent him a text

message. Did not hear back so called both his cell phone and home and left urgent message. I called Jim back and Jim said that he would call Lev's father to try and reach him.

I then got a call from "Flip" Harrington who said that he was on the dock near the coast guard station and noticed that my boat was riding low. I told him that I had sent Lev an urgent text and call and asked if he knew anyone who was near that could help. He said that he would go immediately to Dennis, the Harbor Master, who could probably get one of the local boys to run out with a pump. This was around 11:30 AM.

At about 1:00 Flip called back and asked if anyone had been out to the boat. I said that I did not know, had not heard from anyone that they had. He asked what color the bottom of my boat was. I told him black. He replied that he saw a white nose with black bottom paint and was afraid the boat had sunk.

Looking at the picture that Jim sent me, the boat was riding lower than usual by about 6-7 inches I would guess. It is facing the incoming tide which is filling the pond. The last picture taken of her is attached. Jim said that there was a heavy tide and that the wind was coming from the south (stern). I think that with the heavy rains over the week, that the boat took on water and that either the bilge pump or the bilge flip sensor failed. With the weight of the water, she could not spin into the wind from the south and waves must have come over the stern and sank her.

Harbor Master called an hour later and said that he was sorry that he could not get to my boat in time – that he was dealing with "other issues". I would think that a notification of a possible sinking boat would be a priority for the harbormaster. There could be catastrophic ramifications to natural balance of Menemsha pond, fish, plants and shellfish from a fuel and oil spill.

BoatsUS towed the boat upside down out of the harbor within three hours. Luckily the gas tank and engine oil did not leak. There was no damage to the environment, but I think I lost a boat needlessly. I do not know what the harbormaster's duties are in priority, but I think that boat could have been saved

on a clear calm day in August. I am hoping as selectmen, you can clarify priorities for the harbormaster in the event of future emergencies.

Should you have any questions you can either write or call me on my cell phone(617) 216-0510.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Hauck', written in a cursive style.

John Hauck

