



## VINCENT ISLAND STAMFORD LLC

June 16, 2026

To: Stamford Harbor Master  
Stamford Harbor Management Commission

### Westcott Cove Safety Enhancements

Dear Stamford Harbor Master and SHMC Commissioners,

Thank you for the support you previously gave our Harbor Unit's SeaDoo initiative. That financial support and vision has contributed to safer and more harmonious waters in Stamford, especially near the public beaches.

In continued advocacy for safety in the Westcott Cove, I am writing to request the Commission's advice and support for a collection of three related safety improvements. I believe these measures will benefit all recreational users, particularly swimmers and those operating small craft, kayaks, and paddleboards.

I respectfully ask the Stamford Harbor Management Commission these separable actions:

- CT DEEP marker-permit process for two charted rock hazards in Westcott Cove
- Support City-reviewed PWC safety signage at the West Beach Boat Ramp
- Begin review of a fixed-boundary Slow-No-Wake expansion for Westcott Cove

I have prepared the following combined report with details on all three items. I plan to attend June's SHMC meeting and am happy to discuss these proposals and answer questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Evan Wies  
Managing Member  
Vincent Island Stamford LLC  
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# Westcott Cove Safety Enhancements:

Hazard Markers \* Boat Ramp Signage  
Slow-No-Wake Expansion

## Proposal for the Stamford Harbor Management Commission June 2026

### Introduction

Westcott Cove is an active recreational area on the coastline of Stamford, CT. In recent history, the City has improved the quality of the area through active management:

In 2009, the Stamford Board of Reps adopted the Harbor Management Plan to strengthen local control of the Harbor Management Area. In 2013, Slow-No-Wake rules for the Shippan area of Westcott Cove improved safety, especially near West Beach, and quality of life for the Shippan Residents; this was part of specific safety enhancements post-Sandy. In 2017, Stamford amended regulations in Cove Island Park, notably restricting public PWC launching at its ramp. In 2024, Stamford upgraded the West Beach boat ramp to improve safety and increase capacity. In 2025, the Stamford community and the Harbor Commission donated a rescue SeaDoo to the Stamford Police Harbor Unit.

As manager of Vincent Island in Westcott Cove, we have become a regular point of contact for residents and recreational users who raise concerns about the Cove. While Vincent Island is private property, the low-tide structure allows for public congregation of recreational activity: small boaters, swimmers, kayakers, and Personal Water Craft (PWC).

I speak with the public there to understand their intentions. I also meet with the residents of the various communities, after they reach out to me with their concerns. I also meet with elected representatives, the Harbor Unit, and attend (or watch videos of) Harbor Commission Meetings.

From these interactions, I propose three specific actions that can help maintain safety and harmony in the Cove:

1. Markers for two rock hazards near Vincent Island
2. PWC Safety Signage at West Beach Boat Ramp
3. Expand Slow-No-Wake protections in Westcott Cove

The proposals below are designed to work together as a cohesive safety package. There is will within the communities and the municipal apparatus for these measures.

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## Section 1: Westcott Cove New Hazard Markers

## Summary

There are two rocks in Westcott Cove that are NOAA hazards. While clearly visible at low tides, they are hidden through the high tide cycle. While shown as shallow areas on navigational charts, these rocks are not currently physically marked. These are a particular risk for the small-craft boaters and PWCs – they typically do not have live NOAA charts. These hazards also affect public safety units which must pay extra attention during operations in the area.

These hazards have often been pointed out to me, with the quote “it is only a matter of time” until there is some accident there. Some vessels cruise this area at speed, and operators unfamiliar with the Cove may not appreciate how quickly these hazards become hidden by tide. Over the years, locals have placed informal markers there, in an attempt to quell incidents.

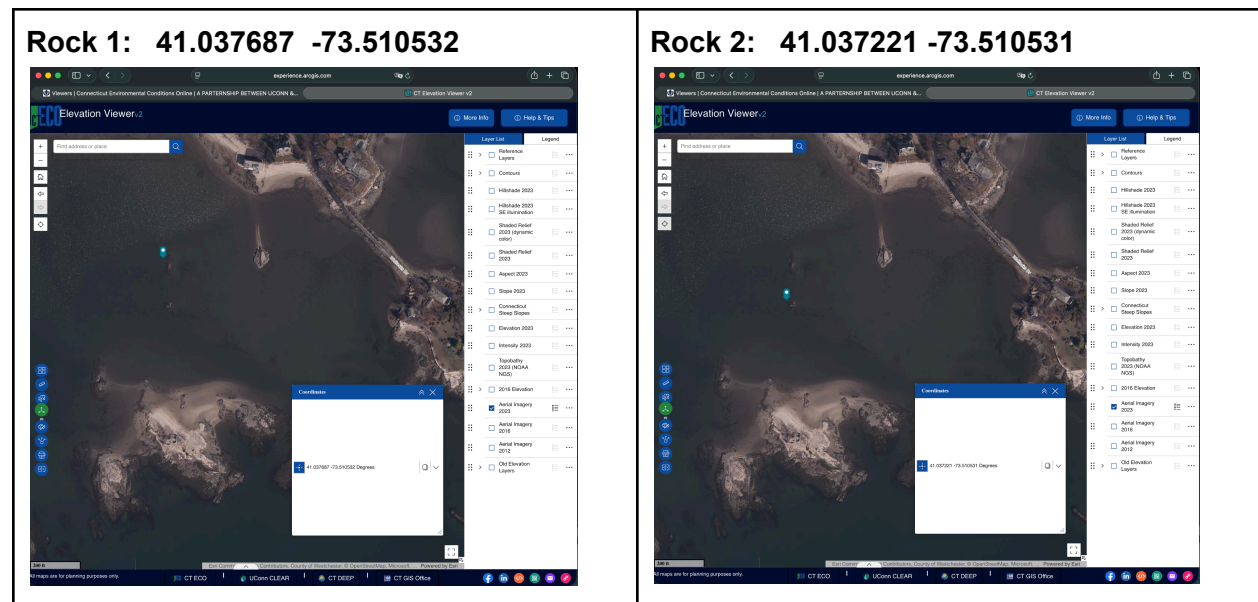
I am requesting the Commission's support for installation of appropriate navigational markers at one or both of these locations.

## Description of the Hazards

- Two distinct rock formations located in areas frequently used by recreational boaters.
- Exposed only during lower tidal stages.
- Marked on current navigational charts, but no buoys
- Present a collision risk, especially for fast vessels and those less familiar with the Cove.

## Proposed Locations

### ***GPS Location***



**Source:** CT ECO <https://maps.cteco.uconn.edu/viewers/>

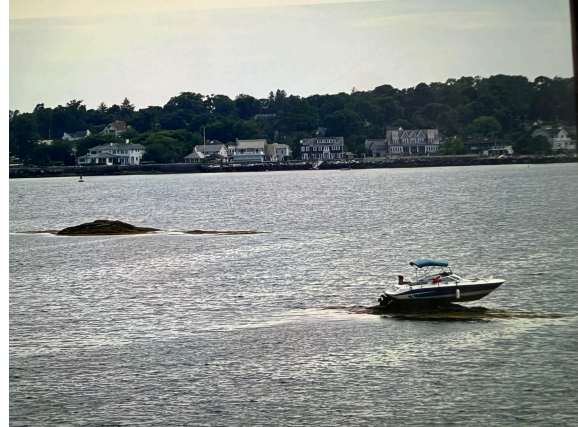
## Photographs

Highlighted rocks are not visible at higher tides. The left poses more danger.



Source: Author, low-tide June 12, 2026 3:27pm

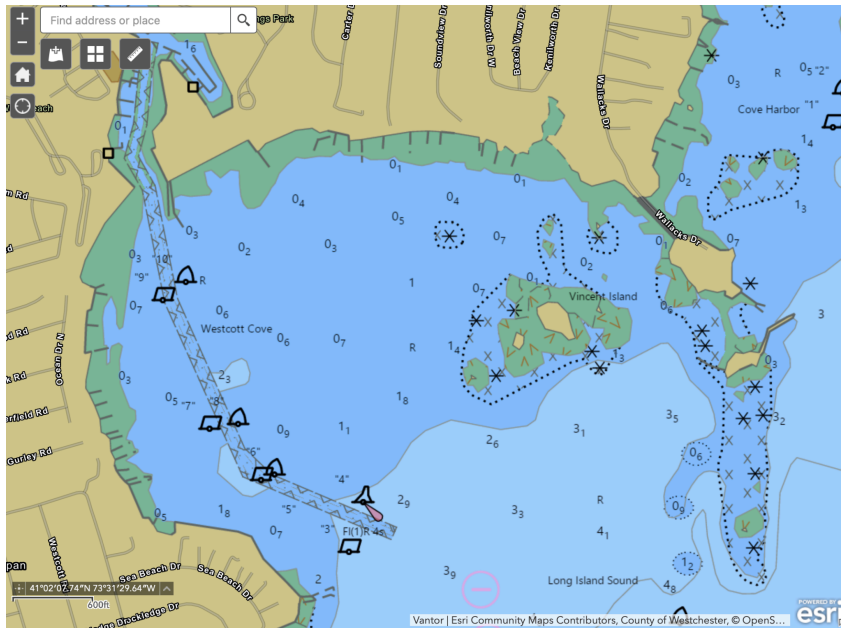
Small boat caught on rock, as it was just hidden by tide



Source: Westcott neighbor, July 28, 2022

## Current Nautical Map of Westcott Cove

The hazards are shown in green on the North side of Vincent Island



Source: NOAA <https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/enconline/enconline.html>

<https://uconnclear.maps.arcgis.com/home/webscene/viewer.html?webscene=788d121c4a1f4980b529f914c8df19f4&viewpoint=cam:-72.59232704,38.9122347,175641.36;0.457,58.657>

- Commission support
- CT DEEP Marker Permit Application
- Coordination with the Harbor Master for installation and maintenance

I respectfully ask the Commission to support the placement of navigational markers for these two rock hazards and to provide guidance on moving forward. I volunteer to assist in the process as needed.

## Section 2: PWC Rule Signage At West Beach Ramp

### Summary

The West Beach Boat Ramp is the only public PWC launch in Stamford. The channel feeds directly into Westcott Cove. This area has shallow waters, with close proximity to two public beaches with open water swimmers. Kayaks launch from there, along with windsurfers, small sailboats.

There is currently no signage at the West Beach Boat Ramp regarding PWC operation.

While PWC riders should know the rules, they may not know the local terrain or may need reminders. Safe Boating Certificates and Certificate of Personal Watercraft Operation (CPWO) are ***good for life once issued***. In conversations with Harbor Unit, officers said many of the citations involved significant education of riders.

Privately, Vincent Island is preparing signs which clearly display PWC rules and the local hazards and the slow-no-wake zones. We intend to display them at Vincent Island and the West Beach Boat Ramp. We will be submitting them to Stamford Parks and Recreation after the Harbor Unit reviews them as we would like Stamford's Seal on them

### Request

Since this is another private-public affair, we seek the Commission's support in this project, both in ideas and will. The signs are not expensive, but the content must be moderated as we seek Stamford's blessing and public placement.

## Section 3: Westcott Cove Slow-No-Wake Expansion

### Summary

The current Slow-No-Wake area in Westcott Cove was established in 2013 and covers the Western portion and main channels. The Eastern side was left out, and as the cove's use patterns have shifted, that gap has become its main source of conflict.

I am requesting the Commission's support to extend these protections eastward so the whole cove operates under one consistent, enforceable standard — improving safety for all users and giving the Harbor Unit a clear line to patrol.

### Background

Westcott Cove is an active body of water, with a variety of recreational uses. There are two public beaches and a public fishing pier. Multiple marinas feed the navigation channel for boaters to reach the Long Island Sound. The West Beach Boat Ramp allows the general public to access the Cove with kayaks, boats, and Personal Water Craft (PWC). There are open-water swimmers, windsurfers, and sailors.

In 2013, Stamford recognized the safety and harmony of a Slow-No-Wake zone and approved it. High-speed boating and PWC brings danger to swimmers and other boaters, erosion to the landscape, and noise to the community. That legislation was born specifically out of a post-Hurricane Sandy safety and ecology effort.

The Eastern side of the Cove did not receive the same legislation. At first, it was not entirely noticeable to the community, but over time the structure changed. In 2017, the Cove Island Beach ramp restricted launch of PWC, leaving West Beach Ramp as the only PWC access. COVID-19 brought significantly more visitors to Westcott Cove, as people sought outdoor relief from confinement.

Westcott Cove is challenging for public safety to access, for rescue or patrol. It is shallow and has many hazards. To support safety, the Stamford community and Harbor Commission funded a rescue SeaDoo, deployed in 2025.

It has come to a point where PWC activity is the primary concern of multiple communities. I receive many emails and have attended community meetings with local representatives. They seek mitigation of this increased PWC impact – it affects their quality of life at multiple levels.

Today's Slow-No-Wake standard is 200 feet from shore – but the shoreline moves with every tide. That makes it hard for a rider to know whether they're complying, just as hard for a Harbor Unit officer to judge a violation, and nearly impossible to post on a sign. A defined Slow-No-Wake zone with fixed boundaries solves all three at once: a bright line for riders, an enforceable line for the Harbor Unit, and a boundary you can actually sign and chart. In that sense this expansion is as much an enforcement tool as it is a protection.

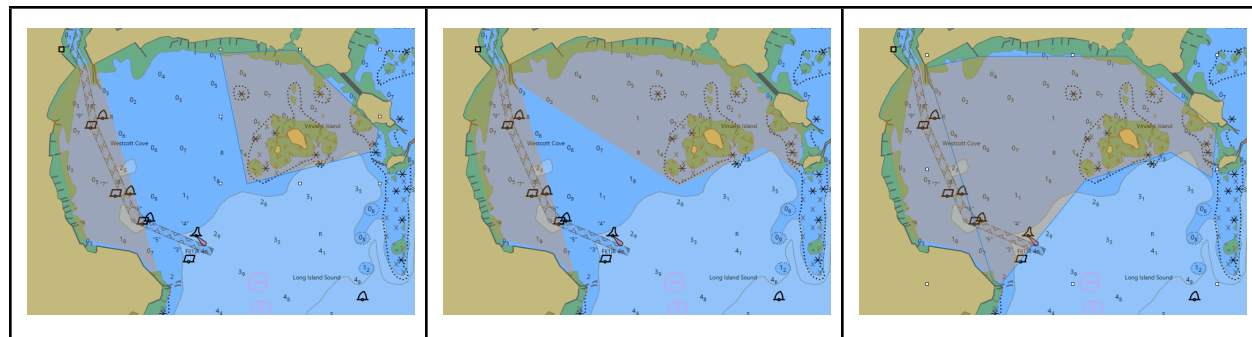
Over a dozen PWC near Vincent Island



**Source:** Neighbor, May 20 2026

## Proposed Expansion

I propose extending the Westcott Cove Slow-No-Wake rules beyond its Shippan border. I have visualized three possibilities, from protecting just the far Eastern side of the Cove through the full Cove. This would create more consistent and safer conditions throughout Westcott Cove.



## Specific Issues

To be clear, this is not about pushing personal watercraft out of Westcott Cove. PWC and small craft can still launch, transit, and enjoy the Sound. A Slow-No-Wake zone simply governs speed inside a shallow, crowded, residential cove where everyone, riders included, is safer at low wake. The goal is clearer shared expectations, not exclusion.

## Safety

Safety is the primary issue. There are kayakers and open water swimmers who are afraid to go on the water because of the PWC presence. At speed, a SeaDoo could easily miss an open

water swimmer's buoy. While the Shippan side has a handful of homes with docks along cliffs, the Eastern side has many neighborhoods all with beach access. They want to enjoy their beach, swimming and kayaking safely. As noted, the area is very dynamic and it is hard for the Harbor Unit to patrol, even with an agile Sea Doo.

Compared to small boats, PWC can quickly accelerate from still to 40mph in seconds and can max out at 75mph. Under current rules they can do this in close proximity to community beachfronts (with swimmers and children) and island areas (with kayakers and paddleboarders). The concentration of PWCs in the eastern portion of the Cove then becomes intimidating for the greater community to access.

## Noise

Stamford has already recognized noise pollution as a legitimate basis for municipal action. In 2025, the Board of Representatives moved to phase out gas-powered leaf blowers, finding that they generate significant noise that disturbs neighborhoods and wildlife, contributes to hearing damage, stress, hypertension, and sleep disruption, and carries more than 800 meters beyond its source — at levels the ordinance compared to a plane taking off. (Source: Chapter 211, Transition to Electric Landscaping Equipment, City of Stamford<sup>1</sup>)

Personal watercraft raise the same concern in the water, with two factors that make it worse. First, sound carries farther and with less obstruction across open water than across a residential yard. Second, the noise spikes each time a craft leaves the surface and lands. Published figures place PWC engine noise in the same range as those leaf blowers and higher — roughly 75 to over 115 decibels, with a further jump when the hull clears the water (Source: Drowning in Noise<sup>2</sup>).

The riders themselves often wear hearing protection. The surrounding community does not. Picture ten to twenty of these operating off a residential beach for hours at a time — and because the activity concentrates on weekend and afternoon hours, it lands precisely when families are most likely to be out trying to enjoy the same water. At slow-no-wake speed, that same fleet is dramatically quieter.

## Ecology

The 2013 Slow-No-Wake restriction was partially motivated by ecology, and that holds here. Noise affects wildlife; wakes accelerate erosion and disturb habitats. The Stamford Comprehensive Plan 2035 recognizes much of the Eastern Westcott Cove as OS2 Open Space Conservation, where “permanent protection of these lands are encouraged”. Further, the Plan intends to maintain Vincent Island as a “passive, marine-oriented recreational area and wildlife habitat”. Another data source, the CT Coastal Hazards Viewer, shows Eastern Shippan and Vincent Island as “Erosion Susceptibility” regions.

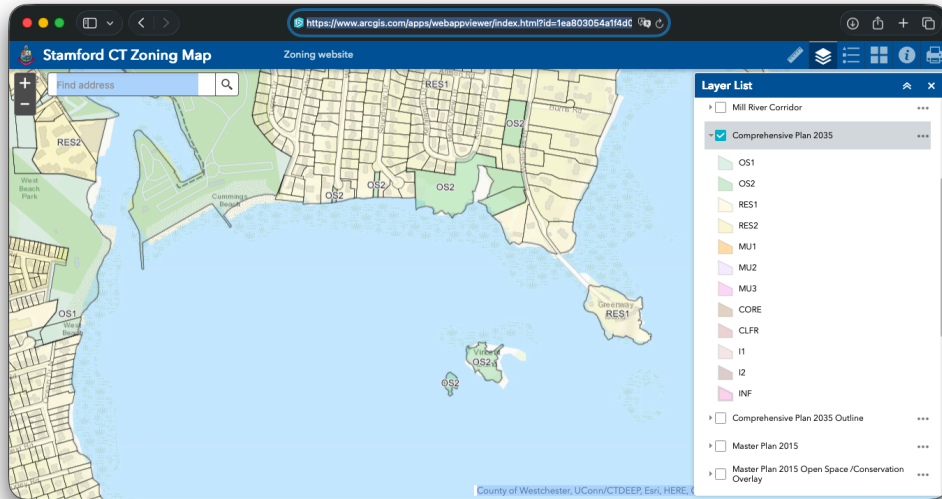
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<sup>1</sup>[https://boardofreps.org/Data/Sites/43/userfiles/committees/legrules/items/2025/lr31100/lr31.100\\_clean\\_250826\\_corrected\\_amended-gas-powered-landscaping-equipment-ordinance.pdf](https://boardofreps.org/Data/Sites/43/userfiles/committees/legrules/items/2025/lr31100/lr31.100_clean_250826_corrected_amended-gas-powered-landscaping-equipment-ordinance.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> albeit dated the physics persist <https://www.nonoise.org/library/drowning/drowning.htm#12.Jet>

With respect to conservation and oversight, I want to clarify one point. There is “Vincent Island”, the private property owned by Vincent Island Stamford LLC. Below the high-tide line, the exposed flats, lagoons, tide pools, and shellfish areas are part of the public coastal resource environment and are relevant to the Commission’s harbor-management and stewardship interests.

Eastern Westcott Inlets and Vincent Island are OS2 Open Space Conservation areas



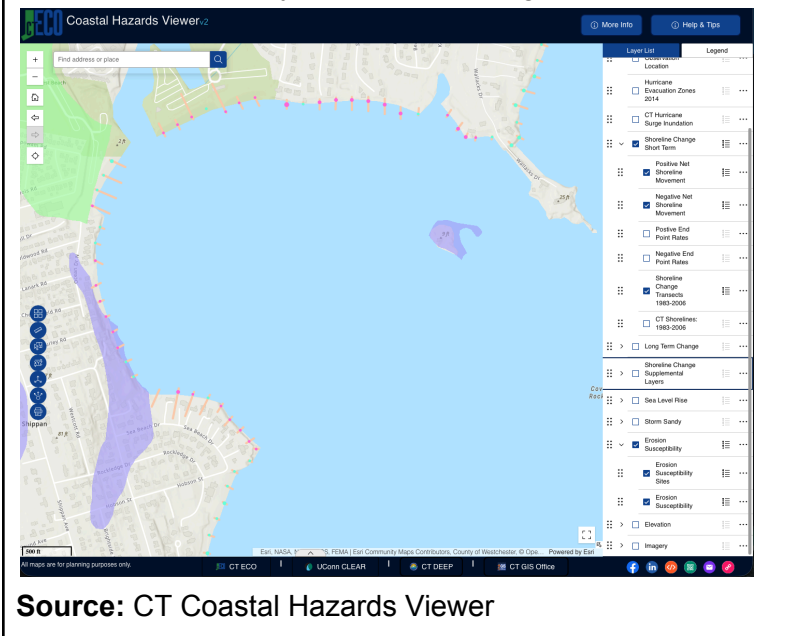
**Source:** Stamford Zoning Map on [arcgis.com](https://www.arcgis.com)

|          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |         |          |               |  |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|----------|---------------|--|
| OS2      | Open Space Conservation                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Natural areas such as forests, wetlands, land trusts, and other open spaces preserved for their ecological, scenic, or resource values. Permanent protection of these lands are encouraged to promote biodiversity, long-term environmental resilience, and natural resource protection. |         |          |               |  |
| ST-13.10 | Maintain Jacks and Grass Islands exclusively as conservation and natural habitat areas for water-dependent activities only; maintain Vincent Island as a passive, marine-oriented recreational area and wildlife habitat. | Programs & operations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Ongoing | Expanded | LUB, EPB, HMC |  |

**Source:** Stamford 2035 Comprehensive Plan, p55, p113

<https://www.stamfordct.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/46595/638967280348300000>

## Erosion Susceptibility ; Shoreline Change 1983-2006



**Source:** CT Coastal Hazards Viewer

## Benefits

- Improved safety for kayakers, paddleboarders, swimmers, and small boats
- Reduced wake-related erosion along shorelines and around Vincent Island
- More reaction time near the proposed new hazard markers
- Builds directly on the successful 2013 improvements already supported by the Commission
- Creates a more family-friendly and low-impact environment in the cove

## Process

- Commission review and recommendation
- Possible update to the Harbor Management Plan or local ordinance
- Coordination with the Harbor Master and CT DEEP as needed
- Board of Representatives consideration if an ordinance change is required

I am prepared to assist with any supporting materials or presentations. Per discussions with local representatives and the Harbor Unit, they are willing to advocate for these approaches.

## Request

I have sketched three possible boundaries for Slow-No-Wake, from a modest Eastern-side zone through full-Cove coverage. I respectfully ask the Commission to review the material and guide the approach of the Slow-No-Wake strategy. I will be available to help carry this through the required next steps.

## Combined Benefits of the Proposals

Placing markers on the rocks will improve hazard awareness and calm some speed.

Providing signage to clearly identify rules and hazards will improve safety and harmony through education.

Expanding the slow-no-wake improves safety, while reducing noise and environmental impact.

The PWC and small craft can enjoy the Sound and rest in the shallow waters, but we seek to continually inform the public with buoys and signage and establish zones for safer shared use with all recreational activity.

Together, these three measures create a safer and more consistent environment for everyone who uses Westcott Cove.

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## Next Steps & Offer to Help

I am happy to:

- Attend June's SHMC meeting and present these items
- Assist with the CT DEEP and U.S. Coast Guard permit applications
- Work with the Harbor Master on implementation details

Thank you again for your time and for the support the Commission has already shown for safety initiatives in Westcott Cove.

I recognize that two of these proposals – the hazard markers and the ramp signage – are straightforward, low-cost steps that can move forward quickly, while the Slow-No-Wake expansion is a larger policy question that will take more deliberation. I'd welcome the Commission advancing the first two on their own track rather than waiting on the third.

Many community and municipal interactions influenced this proposal. Multiple Cummings-adjacent neighborhood associations share with and support it. I look forward to discussing these proposals with you.

Evan Wies  
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