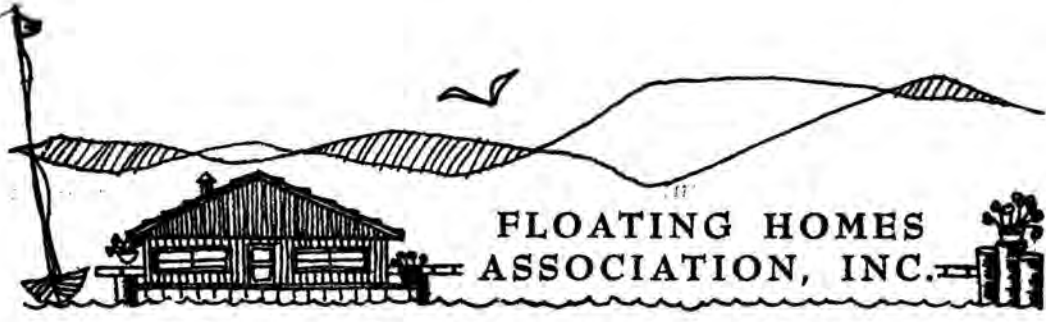


File



2329 Fairview East Seattle, Washington 98102 Phones: EA 5-1132 or EA 9-1517

NUMBER 9

NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2, 1964

ASSOCIATION ON COMMITTEE TO STUDY HOUSEBOAT PROPOSALS: Responding favorably to a request from our Association, (see NEWS LETTER No. 8, July 29, 1964) the City Council has unanimously adopted a resolution to establish a special committee "to review and recommend to the City Council possible ammdments to ordinances and/or codes regulating houseboats in the City of Seattle." The text of this important resolution follows:

RESOLUTION NO. 1958

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE:

That there is hereby established a special committee to review and recommend to the City Council possible amendments to ordinances and/or codes regulating houseboats in the City of Seattle which shall be composed of the Chairman of the City Council's Public Safety Committee; the Chairman of the City Council's Planning and Codes Committee; two representatives of the Floating Homes Association, Inc.; and a representative from and designated by the heads of each of the following departments: Engineering, Building, Health and Fire, and the City of Seattle's Code Research Director who shall be ex-officio Secretary to said Committee.

ADOPTED by the City Council the 31st day of August, 1964, and signed by me in open session in authentication of its passage this 31st day of August, 1964.

CLARENCE F. MASSART
President of the City Council

The Association's Executive Committee has named Terry Pettus, administrative secretary, and Mark Freeman as its representatives on the special committee with Howard Larson, a trustee, as alternate. Mr. Freeman's family is a co-owner of the largest houseboat moorage (50 units) in Seattle and he is the owner of the Fremont Boat Co. He is also a member of the Northwest Marine Industries and a trustee of the newly organized Lake Union Association. Councilman Wing Luke is chairman of the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Kaun Onodera is the newly appointed Code Research Director who will serve as committee secretary. As this issue of the NEWS LETTER went to press the four city departments had not yet named their representatives. All matters pertaining to houseboats will be considered by the committee, the most important of which will undoubtedly be sewage disposal. In line with Point 4 of our "Houseboat Program For 1964" it is the hope of the Association that the work of this Committee will result in the adoption by the City Council of a comprehensive ordinance, treating houseboats as a particular kind of dwelling. Such an approach has long been needed.

HERE ARE THE PRESENT REGULATIONS COVERING HOUSEBOATS: While present regulations leave much to be desired houseboats are a "legal" form of dwelling and any change in ordinances or codes covering them must be done by the City Council, the legislative branch of our municipal government. The man provisions affecting floating homes are to be found in Ordinance No. 82223, adopted on August 13, 1953 and the Zoning Code, adopted in 1957. Here are the pertinent provisions of these governing regulations.

Ordinance No. 82223 defines houseboats as structures "constructed on a float/and not equipped with motive power" which is used "in whole or in part for human habitation." Section 2 says "There shall be a minimum distance of 10 feet between the sides of houseboats (The Building Dept. interprets this as 10 feet "wall-to-wall") and a minimum distance of 10 feet between the ends or rows of houseboats." (This was drastically changed in the 1957 Zoning Code). Section 4 requires "a properly constructed and safe walk or walkway for ingress and egress to a lawfully located houseboat or a dock for such purpose," to be constructed under a permit from the Building Dept. Section 5 prohibits houseboats in "any waterway or fairway or in the public waters or in any street or street end." Section 7 requires that "all water pipes and connections serving houseboats shall be securely fastened and stabilized above the high water line to avoid contamination". Section 8 requires a suitable

garbage can for each houseboat and stipulates that "no garbage or refuse therefrom shall be thrown or dumped into the water". Violations of any provision of this Ordinance is punishable by a fine of not to exceed \$300 or a jail term of not more than 90 days or both.

This Ordinance was something of a compromise resulting from the efforts of two members of the City Council (neither are now serving) to impose some harsh restrictions which would in effect outlaw houseboats. To combat these efforts the HOUSEBOAT OWNERS' ASSOCIATION was organized - but with the adoption of the 1953 Ordinance members lost interest and it fell apart. There was no houseboat organization in 1957 when the Zoning Code was adopted which dealt houseboats two blows which came close to being fatal.

First off the 1957 Zoning Code zoned houseboats, as a conforming usage of property, off of 85 per cent of the Lake Union and Portage Bay Shorelands. This has been reversed in the "Lake Union Study" adopted by the City Council in April, 1964 as a guide and policy to future zoning. The 1957 Code then added these three requirements directly affecting houseboats: (1) "Each houseboat shall abut upon open water at least 40-feet wide and open continuously to navigable waters."(2) A lot size of at least 2,000 square feet for each houseboat and (3) One off-street parking space for each houseboat. It should be noted that these regulations cannot be made retro-active so that these provisions apply only to moorages established since 1957. There is still a dispute over how the 40-foot open water provisions got into the 1957 Code to replace the 10-foot requirement in the 1953 Ordinance. Literally applied it would in effect make it impossible to use high-priced shoreland property for houseboat moorage purposes. Since our Association came into being three years ago additional moorages have been established only because of variances approved by the City Council reducing the spacing requirement to 30 feet. It should also be noted that the Electrical Code is properly applied to houseboats. Old installations, which do not meet Code requirements, have not been disturbed but when a houseboat is moved it must go through two electrical inspections (Building Dept. and City Light) before a service hook-up is made.

NEWS BRIEFS FROM HERE AND THERE: Maida Jean Young (EA 5-8134) is chairman of the 1964 Holiday Decorating Committee. The first meeting will be held soon and she would like to hear from anyone interested in serving or who have suggestions. News that Seattle is a houseboat city certainly gets around. The Association has had requests for rentals from a geographer from Yale; a biologist from England and an anthropologist from Vienna. An illustration as to how landscaping beautifies a houseboat moorage is to be found at the Jeffrey Moorage, 2027 Fairview E. The Landscape Block Co. (ME 3-1830) is distributor for the "Hold-A-Hill" a novel development in planter blocks. They will be happy to send full information on request. That Lake Union and houseboats are a civic assets suffering from neglect is the theme of several programs by Herb Altschull on King TV & Radio. Seattle Magazine is preparing an article on the same subject. Sam Angeloff is the writer. Here's a thought from our Beautification Committee; "The inside of your home reflects what you think of yourself - the outside reflects what you think of your neighbors."... Now that summer is over organization is high on the activity agenda. We need the names of every non-member owner or occupant. Will you help by sending them in? We will do the rest.

FLOATING HOMES ASSOCIATION, INC.
2329 Fairview Avenue East
Seattle, Washington 98102