

Life-vest kiosk to be installed in marina

Written by KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM
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A kiosk offering loaner life vests will be installed in the Port Washington marina.

On Tuesday, aldermen gave their nod of approval to the kiosk, which will be installed by Boy Scout Josh Schaefer as his Eagle project.

Funding for the project will come through the Department of Natural Resources, Schaefer said, adding the DNR will also provide 32 life jackets for the station.

The program started in Alaska in 1996, Schaefer said, and since then more than 2,100 life vest loaner stations have been installed throughout the U.S.

Some aldermen questioned why the station would be placed in the marina, noting that it may be more practical to place it closer to the beach.

The DNR requires it be in the marina, Schaefer said.



“The intention is to provide them for the boaters,” said Ald. Kevin Rudser, a member of the city’s Waterfront Safety Advisory Committee, who noted that the vests are intended for boaters who don’t have enough of the safety devices for all their passengers.

“That doesn’t mean they can’t be used on the beach,” Rudser added.

Signs could be placed on the beach so people know the vests are available, officials said.

City Attorney Eric Eberhardt told aldermen that if they agree to the kiosk, they also need to create a daily inspection program to ensure the devices are available. That will help limit the city’s liability, he said.

“When you offer these things, you can’t be negligent,” he said.

Eberhardt also noted that the city does not allow swimming in the marina, and asked that

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Schaefer incorporate a sign stating this with his kiosk.