

COUNTY OF YORK

MEMORANDUM

DATE: May 8, 2023
TO: York County Board of Supervisors
FROM: Neil A. Morgan, County Administrator
SUBJECT: Home Ported Tall Ship Update



In my October 20, 2022 memo, I updated you about the sale and departure of the *Schooner Alliance* and advised that staff would immediately begin reviewing options for attracting alternative waterfront attractions. Since that time, Laura Lohse (the operator/owner of the Alliance) entered into an agreement to sell the existing business, Yorktown Sailing Charters, including the vessel *Schooner Serenity*, to her son Erik Lohse. Mr. Lohse is an experienced operator previously captaining the *Schooner Lynx* and *Schooner Virginia*.

The new company will operate under the name York River Charters LLC, offering day sails, pirate adventure cruises, sunset cruises, and private charters from the Riverwalk Landing Piers. Initially, Mr. Lohse was intending to launch *Serenity* operations in May 2023, but delays in receiving the intensive U.S. Coast Guard certifications restricts the *Schooner Serenity* from carrying more than six passengers until the fall of 2023. To meet the May start date and high tourist season, Mr. Lohse has recently purchased an additional vessel, the 75' *Schooner Grand Nellie*, which already has all of the required U.S. Coast Guard certifications and can start operating immediately, accommodating up to 48 passengers. The arrival and launch of the *Grand Nellie* returns a vital attraction/amenity to the Yorktown waterfront.

Staff is currently working on finalizing an assignment of the existing lease with Yorktown Sailing Charters to York River Charters LLC for the remaining 2023 season. The County and York River Charters LLC anticipate entering into a new agreement for the 2024 season and subsequent years.

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