



has been mayor since 2009.

He agreed with Marina Manager Brian Berrigan that the renovations at the marina, purchased by the city from the Finch family in 1999, are necessary.

“The underlying problem is that the town has owned the marina for almost 20 years and has put very little into structural improvements,” Cronin explained.

“Some of the docks were there in the early 1980s, even before Hugo,” Berrigan added. “They needed to be replaced when the city purchased the property in 1999. We’ve kind of been throwing band-aids on them ever since. The docks have outlived their life expectancy by several years. We’re just throwing money at them every year to keep them floating. They are in dire need of being replaced.”

The purchase price for the marina in 1999 was \$4,106,786. Cronin pointed out that the city is about to pay off that debt.

“In recent years, the leases paid more than the debt on the marina,” the mayor said, adding that the town has shouldered other costs, including insurance and replacing the wooden bulkhead. “A small part of the Tourism Fund will be used to pay off the new bonds. In fact, it’s reasonable to think that the lease income will pay off the bonds.”

Over a two-and-a-half-year period, city officials received input from local residents and members of the City Council and the Planning Commission before coming up with the plan that will be presented to voters in November. According to Cronin, IOP intends to spend \$2.2 million on the water side to replace the floating docks, the marina’s fuel system and utilities, and another \$1.9 million on land for the boardwalk, to pave the parking lot, for utilities and for storm water management. He said the remainder of the \$5.5 million will cover engineering, permitting and contingency – \$700,000 that would pay for any unexpected costs that might arise as the project progresses.

The plan includes a parking area for golf carts and for boats with trailers, along with a dedicated kayak dock. Under the current arrangements, kayaks must enter the water at the boat ramp.

“We’re going to improve access and egress,” Cronin said. “The docks will soon be unsafe, and the arrangement now is chaotic and unsafe in some cases. This will be a first-class marina.”

If the referendum passes, work is expected to begin late in 2018 or in early 2019.

Businesses currently located at the marina include Morgan Creek Grill, Marina Market, Barrier Island