Town of Stonington
Shellfish Commission

152 Elm Street Stonington, CT 06378

REGULAR MEETING
May 4th, 2023
6:30 PM

A Regular Meeting of the Stonington Shellfish Commission (SSC) was held on this date. Members present were Chairman, Mr. Donald Murphy; Mr. Alan Banister; Mr. Donald Raffo; Secretary Mr. Austin Clark. There is a quorum present.

1) Call to order – Meeting called to order at 6:33 pm.

2) Comments from the public – There were no comments from the public. Prior to beginning the meeting the Chair mentioned to the group that he and the Secretary attended a Freedom of Information seminar sponsored by the Town. The Chair received clarification on public comments while the Commissioners review applications.

3) Review and approval of the regular meeting minutes of April 7th, 2023. There were no comments, corrections or additions to the minutes as presented and a motion was made and seconded (Banister / Raffo) to approve the minutes as submitted. Voted 4-0.

4) Correspondence

a) The Chair shared an article for the upcoming Stonington Magazine issue and the Secretary will get it submitted for publication.

b) Following up on a request from the prior month's meeting whereby, Harmony Sea Farm was seeking a Landlord Consent form to be submitted to the State of CT for its grant funding, the Chair signed and sent a copy of the form to the proper parties.

c) Also in the monthly packet, were comments from David Carey regarding the Lockwood Coveside Marina proposed plan for a mooring field.

d) Contained in the monthly packet was an April 18th e-mail from Steve Plant regarding a request for seasonal cage storage in an existing license location.

e) The Chair included correspondence from the State DA / BA and a brief history the Chair had provided about the ground water contamination at the Kellems site in Lords Point.

f) Included in the packet was a May 2nd, 2023 e-mail from Caleb Rose of the New England Science & Sailing Foundation for information and support for a recycling of oyster shell program.

5) Business

a) The Chair shared the water quality results for the month of April. The recreational beds were open all month, but the Chair noted that on May 1st, 1.75" of rain fell, and he hoped to complete some sampling the next week. The State closed the Lower Mystic River and the Chair shared correspondence from Alissa Dragan explaining their methodology.

b) The Chair shared his historical data from testing he had conducted in lower Quiambaug Cove from 2020 to present. This is particularly meaningful in relation to the Kellems site concern. And noted that all the samples were during APC's.

c) Commercial Shellfish Report – Steve Plant mentioned that he is noticing a tightness in the spring oyster market. Kris Simonds agreed and noted that the water temperature is just now getting to 50 degrees.

d) Discussion re: CT Cultured Oysters, LLC request. Steve Plant explained his request to ask for an amendment to his license at site West Ram 1, to add storage of up to six cages for transitory winter storage. His application will have to be reviewed and approved by the Joint Agency. A motion was made and seconded (Raffo / Banister) to approve an amendment to CT Cultured Oysters, LLC license, pending approval by the Joint Agency, for seasonal storage of up to six cages at his West Ram 1 license location. Voted 4-0.

e) Continuation of review of Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc.'s application. Kris Simonds of Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc. submitted the previously requested information regarding eel grass and the exact acreage map of his requested site at Murphy Point. Also submitted was the original signature page from the Town Clerk. A motion was made and seconded (Banister / Raffo) that the application is considered complete. Voted 4-0. The Chair identified this application as 2023-02.

f) Continuation of the review of Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc.'s depuration ground application. As requested in the April 17th, 2023 special meeting, Kris Simonds submitted an eel grass verification statement and an accurate corner bounds map and identifying the total acreage for the depuration grounds requested in waters southwest of Ram Island. No bottom gear is being proposed and the application was judged to be complete. A motion was made and seconded (Banister / Raffo) to that effect. Voted 4-0. The Chair identified this application as 2023-03.

g) Continuing review of an application made by Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc. for grounds in water west of Mason's Point on Mason's Island. The applicant withdrew his application at the meeting and no further discussion was held.

In regard to items e) & f) a brief discussion was held regarding scheduling a public hearing and return receipt requests notifications. It was decided to schedule the public hearing in July 2023.

h) Financial Review: The Chair shared an invoice from Don's Dock in the amount of $600.14 representing the annual slip fee for the Commission boat and the annual locker fee. A motion was made to allocate those funds (Raffo / Banister) so as to be able to pay the invoice. Voted 4-0. An invoice for printing of the current shellfish regulations in tri-fold style and the new Shellfish permits was included in the financial review section of the packet. A motion to pay was made and seconded (Banister / Raffo) Voted 4-0.

6) New Business – None appearing

7) A motion to adjourn was made and seconded (Banister / Raffo) at 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin P. Clark

Austin P. Clark
Secretary