Town of Stonington
Shellfish Commission

152 Elm Street Stonington, CT 06378

SPECIAL MEETING
April 17, 2023
6:30 PM

A Special 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; Mr. John Swenarton; 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.

3) Review and approval of the regular meeting minutes of March 2nd, 2023. The Chair and Commissioner Banister had clarification comments and suggested changes and the minutes were then approved as amended (Banister / Raffo) Voted 5 - 0

4) Correspondence

a) The Chair mentioned to the Commission that the Town was hosting a Freedom of Information update on May 1st. The guest speaker will be Thomas Hennick the Public Education Officer. Both the Chair and Secretary are planning on attending and an invitation was extended to the other Commission members.

b) As in the past, the Harbor Management Commission issues its newsletter and has space for the Shellfish Commission to promote its activities. There is a short fuse on the deadline so the Chair and Secretary will work on the article and submit it.

c) In the monthly meeting packet there were copies of several e-mails and a letter concerning the proposed commercial mooring field in Wequetequock Cove. The Chair mentioned that he attended the Stonington Harbor Management's monthly meeting where this item was on the agenda.

d) Alissa Dragon from the State DA / BA sent a letter to the Chair inquiring about the history and situation of the groundwater contamination at the Kellems site in Lords Point. The State was looking to see if tissue sampling would be needed or necessary.

e) The Chair received and e-mail from Caleb Rose, a Harbor Management Commission member inquiring about the recycling of oyster shells. The Chair replied with information about a program that is being studied by Groton.

5) Business

a) The Chair provided the water quality results for the month of March. The samples all show good results. After a continuous rainfall event of 1.65 inches the recreational beds were closed for nine days, but were open for the remainder of the month.

In the monthly packet was the sheet of general information for shellfish permit vendors. Contained was the new

category of Youth permit for both resident and non-resident youth aged 13 to 15.

b) A request that was made by Harmony Sea Farm that the Shellfish Commission consent to the activities associated with the CT Department of Agriculture Farm Transition Grant. A discussion was held principally to determine if the Commission was the correct body and had the authority to sign the Landlord Consent Form that was required by the State in regard to the grant. It was moved and seconded that the Shellfish Commission was the appropriate body and had the authority to sign the consent form and the Chair should sign.
(Clark / Swenarton) Voted 5 – 0.

c) Commercial Shellfish Reports

It was noted that the Lower Mystic River conditional area was closed on May 1st in anticipation of the coming boat mooring season. Kris Simonds reported that he was waiting for the water temperature to reach 50 degrees.

d) Review for completeness of an application of Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc. to conduct aquaculture on 9.16 acres of Stonington waters east of Murphy Point. A lengthy discussion was held regarding this application, as it was changed from the original intent to use bottom gear, and now no gear is contemplated to be used. The subject of verifying the extent, if any, of the existence of eel grass was raised, with the hope that a more official verification could be presented. The map of the subject area still showed gear lines, so it was determined that the review would be continued to the May meeting while the applicant provided updated information.

e) Review for completeness of an application of Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc. to conduct aquaculture on 6.93 acres of Stonington waters south of Ram Point. A lengthy discussion was held regarding this application and it was noted that one of the latitude corners may need to be corrected. The applicant agreed to update his map and verify the points and this application's review will be continued at the May monthly meeting.

f) Review for completeness of an application of Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc. to conduct aquaculture on 4.75 acres of Stonington waters west of Mason's Point on Mason's Island. A lengthy discussion was held regarding this application. The Chair mentioned to the applicant that the location of the private docks that exist should be noted on his application and that any boundary or marking buoys might be cause for concern of the residents in the area. It was agreed to continue the review during the May monthly meeting.

g) Financial Review

The Chair provided the details of the deposits from Town Hall from the last period. The Chair noted that the Commission boat is in the water and our Warden has started his duties.

6) Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn at 8:14pm. (Raffo / Swenarton) Voted 5 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin P. Clark

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Secretary