



Town of Stonington
Shellfish Commission
152 Elm Street Stonington, CT 06378

REGULAR MEETING

September 1st, 2022
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; Mr. John Swenarton; Secretary Mr. Austin Clark. There is a quorum present.

- 1) Call to order – Meeting called to order at 6:31 pm.

Prior to the discussing tonight's agenda, the Chair asked that the Commission observe a moment of silence in remembrance of alternate member Bob Hollis who passed away from complications of melanoma and the most tragic and untimely passing of David Motherway, Jr. son of the Commission's former Chair and warden, David Motherway, Sr. Both will be remembered for their work for the Stonington Shellfish Commission.

- 2) Comments from the public – The Commission welcomed Mr. Brendan Breen, Principal of Mercenaria Pearl who has developed and patented a method for growing pearls in clams. He stated his desire to acquire a plot of bottom for this aquaculture application. The Commission explained its review and approval process and suggested Mr. Breen contact David Carey at the State DA / BA Bureau for any unique elements as this intent is not for food marketing but for the pearls his process produces. Mr. Breen explained that it takes 3 to 6 years to develop a pearl of the most marketable size of 7mm to 9 mm. His ideal stock size would be cherrystones.

- 3) Review and approval of the regular meeting minutes of August 4th, 2022. The Chair added his action plan to the approved Stonington Farms Shellfish, Inc.'s completed application. A motion was made and seconded (Banister / Raffo) to accept the minutes as amended. Voted 4-0 with one abstention.

- 4) Correspondence: There was no correspondence in this month's meeting packet.

- 5) Business

- a) The Chair presented the water quality sampling results for the month and had also included the Lower Mystic Harbor area sampling done by both Stonington and Groton.

- b) In preparation for the consideration of creating a budget line item to purchase clam stock or seed, the Chair asked Commissioner Clark to report on the Chair and his meeting with Commercial shellfish harvester Fred Emery. Fred showed us his hydraulic power clam dredge and his sorting and bagging machine. Currently, Fred is not working his grounds regularly, but when he goes out he typically has 15 bags of assorted size clams from quahogs to cherrystones and littlenecks. He is selling the quahogs to the Portuguese American Club in the Boro, and during the Blessing of the Fleet he sold his little necks to the festival attendees. When Fred quizzed us as to what the market was for clams now, we told Fred that would confirm and get back to him. Some of Fred's reluctance to fish on a regular basis, is that his one outlet for clams that he cannot place with the PA Club is located in Warwick, RI and he has to truck them to RI. Fred mentioned that he wasn't really interested in operating his clam dredge in the

deeper areas of our recreational beds for transplanting into our shallow waters. The Chair mentioned to Fred that we would be interested and willing to buy his cherrystone sized catch when he lands his next catch. After a lengthy discussion on the financial aspects of purchasing clam stock, it was decided to allocate \$2,000 over the next two years to purchase clam stock for the purpose of seeding the recreational areas in Town. A motion was made and seconded to that effect (Clark / Banister) and voted 5 – 0.

c) Commercial Shellfish report

In the absence of any of the commercial harvesters in attendance, the Chair included in the packet a summary from Garrett Timmons. Notable was his comment that in his dredges, he is seeing a few scallops.

d) Scallop season opening dates. The Commission discussed the dates for the opening and closing of scallop season. It was chosen to have Saturday October 8, 2022 to open and March 31, 2023 to close the season with the regulations to be the same as in previous years'. A suggestion was made to leave the date space vacant on the permit printing, to allow for multiple year use of the scallop permits, with the vendor needing to fill in the dtes as is done with clam permits.

e) Enforcement - The Chair reported on a letter inquiry as to the limits per person when shellfishing for both clams and oysters. The consensus was that the limit was 30 oysters and a half bushel for clams could be harvested in total by one permit holder.

f) Equipment – A brief discussion was held again comparing the results of the Davis rain gauge versus the plastic gauge situated in the same area. With the State leaning towards using the Davis gauge and our tests and comparisons now show a difference of approximately 10%, it was decided to accept the Davis gauge and the Chair will now be looking to get the gauge reinstalled back at the water treatment plant in Mystic.

g) Financial – Commissioner Raffo discussed the recent collections and effect those had on the budget and the actual expenditures. With some financial figures not available, an updated budget will be presented at a future time. It is likely that this year's boat operation will be slightly over budget and payroll slightly under.

6) New Business – There was no new business.

7) Adjournment – A motion was made to adjourn at 7:35pm (Banister / Raffo) voted 4 - 0

Respectfully submitted,



Austin P. Clark
Secretary