



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

SPECIAL MEETING
May 9, 2019
6:30 PM

A Special Meeting of the Stonington Shellfish Commission (SSC) was held on this date at Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Avenue, Mystic, CT. Members present were Mr. Alan Banister, Mr. Donald Raffo, Mr. Peter Moore, Mr. Dan Barrett (alternate), Mr. Donald Murphy, Chairman, and Mr. John Swenarton, Secretary.

- 1) Call to order – Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:30pm
- 2) Comments from the public (comments on specific applications will not be allowed) – None.
- 3) Review and approval of the minutes of the regular meeting of April 4, 2019. – A motion (Raffo/Banister) to accept the minutes as written was approved unanimously with one abstention (Mr. Murphy).
- 4) Correspondence
 - a) An email dated April 24, 2019 from Alissa Dragan, CT Bureau of Aquaculture and Laboratory RE: Outer Stonington Harbor.
- 5) Business
 - a) Discuss the water quality testing and status of Stonington's conditional recreational shellfishing areas - Outer Quiambaug Cove and East Mason's Island (Area A and Area B) – April had near record rainfall and due to that, recreational areas were shut down on April 13 for most of the rest of the month. Results from sample testing on April 17 were very good. Similar results were received from May 6 samples and beds were reopened on May 8.
 - b) Discuss the progress toward upgrading the Lower Mystic Harbor shellfish growing waters to Seasonal Conditionally Open – A notice has been published in the paper. WPCA is reviewing the Memorandum of Understanding. DABA has agreed to provide funding to establish an official rain gauge at the Mystic Plant.

A **motion** to recess the special meeting and move to the scheduled public hearing (Banister/Murphy) was approved unanimously.

- 6) 7:00 PM: PUBLIC HEARING ON THE REVISED COMMERCIAL AQUACULTURE LICENSE INFORMATION PACKAGE AND APPLICATION – Chairman Murphy opened the public hearing at 7:00 pm and explained the process used in developing the package and application.
Public comment:

Jim Carlton – Dr. Carlton provided a letter and read it aloud. His primary concern was that a comprehensive independent Environmental Impact Report be required for all aquaculture applications.

Dave Motherway – He offered verbal and written suggestions to Appendix 1 (License Evaluation Criteria), specifically to separate Item d into two parts, one for oysters and clams, the other for scallops due to differences in harvesting procedures. He also brought up potential conflicts with commercial aquaculture and waterfowl hunting.

Debby Carlton – Ms. Carlton read and submitted a letter with comments of her concerns for impacts associated with aquaculture projects such as uncaged shellfish movement, alteration of sea bed characteristics, spread and expansion of invasive biofouling species, and post-license clean-up.

Lynn Conway – She felt the application should provide more protection of the environment and had concerns for lack of professional third party environmental assessment. Another concern was that current expertise on SSC may not be there 5 years from now.

Tamara Gorski – She agreed with other speakers that there should be a third party environmental assessment. She also said that we should consider what other activities are going on in the areas we are considering for aquaculture.

Steven Grob – Mr. Grob felt a baseline bathymetric study should be required with follow-up studies to determine impacts. He also suggested bonding should be required.

Matthew Behan – He spoke in favor of the application package and noted that applicants will typically be serious aquaculturists with well-prepared plans.

Rosanne Smyle – She pointed to lack of professional baseline assessments, no independent annual monitoring, and no requirement for a waiting period after public notices.

Steven Plant – He spoke about ecosystem services, nitrogen removal and other positive environmental impacts associated with aquaculture projects, along with economic benefits.

Wick York – He asked for clarification about the discussion and voting process, and if an appeal is possible.

James Coehlo – Stated he wants more accountability for licensees.

Thaler Hefel – A letter was received supporting local marine farmers and harvesters.

Alan Desbonnet – An email with an attached application package mark-up was received providing suggestions to improve clarity and consistency.

Special meeting was called back to order at 7:35.

5) Business

- c) Commercial shellfishing reports – Will MacKay hosted a class from Pine Point School at his license grounds. Steve Plant reported receiving and distributing 300,000 seed oysters.
- d) Update on Amtrak's 2019 Vegetation Management Plan – Application of herbicide is planned for some time in May at night or on weekends depending on rainfall. There has been no response to SSC request to observe the application.
- e) Review of finances; collections, bills, and remuneration – Public notices for the Aquaculture Application public hearing cost \$638.70. A motion to allot SSC funding for this expenditure (Raffo/Murphy) was approved unanimously.

- 6) Discuss the results of the public hearing and the adoption of the Revised Information Package and Application form – There was discussion on comments received including bonding, environmental assessments, and Mr. Motherway's suggestions. Some members requested more time to review public comments. A motion to table discussion until next meeting (Moore/Banister) was approved unanimously

- 7) Adjournment – Motion to adjourn (Banister/Raffo) Approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



John Swenarton
Secretary