



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

SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2017

6:30 PM

A special meeting of the Stonington Shellfish Commission (SSC) was held on this date at the Mystic Middle School, 204 Mistuxet Ave., Mystic, CT. Voting members present were Mr. Don Raffo, Mr. Alan Banister, Ms. Tessa Getchis (alternate), Mr. Peter Moore (alternate), Mr. Don Murphy; Chairman.

- 1) **Call to order:** Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 6:31 P.M. The Commission members welcomed Peter Moore as an alternate member.
- 2) **Comments from the public:** None.
- 3) **Review and approval of the minutes:**
 - a) The review and approval of the minutes for September 7, 2017 was tabled.
 - b) A motion was made by Mr. Raffo and seconded by Ms. Getchis to approve the meeting minutes for October 19, 2017. The motion was approved with one abstention by Mr. Moore.
 - c) A necessary correction to the minutes of the November 9, 2017 meeting was noted by Mr. Banister. Section Business 5F1 should read: "and the lower unit fluids". There should be no mention of the engine.
 - d) A motion was made by Mr. Raffo and seconded by Ms. Getchis to approve the meeting minutes for November 9, 2017 as amended. The motion was approved with one abstention by Mr. Moore.
- 4) **Correspondence:**
 - a) A letter dated November 10, 2017 from Ben Kitrell in support of the now unaccepted application of Dana Lewis.
 - b) A letter dated November 10, 2017 from Michael P. Carey withdrawing the request for public records from the Stonington Shellfish Commission.
 - c) A letter dated November 11, 2017 from Robert/Carolyn Martus in support of the now unaccepted application of Dana Lewis.
 - d) An email dated November 13, 2017 from Ben/Cathy Berte objecting to how the Commission dealt with the now unaccepted application of Dana Lewis.
 - e) A letter dated November 27, 2017 from Tara Galbo presenting questions from Dana Lewis about how to improve his application.
 - f) An email dated November 5, 2017 from Tracy M. Collins representing the Friends of Masons Island Cove objecting to the wording of the present Commission agenda with respect to conditional area.
- 5) **Business:**
 - a) **Conditional Shellfishing Areas:** Mr. Murphy noted that it took a long time to re-open after heavy rainfall over a two-day period in October. The Commission was unable to take samples because of CT DA/BA lab availability during this timeframe, and instead relied upon a 14-day automatic re-opening procedure and reopened the conditional and approved areas on November 14, 2017. On November 22, 2017 Areas A, B, and Outer Quiambug were closed due to 1.6" of rain. Mr. Murphy sampled the area on November 29th and was

able to open ground due to good samples. The Commission was unable to get a November "open" sample so two will have to be taken in December.

- b) **Discuss the transplanting of oysters into Conditional Area A:** The Commission, with the help of commercial shellfish growers, transplanted approximately 2000 market size oysters from Harmony Sea Farms, Connecticut Cultured Oysters, and Stonington Farms into recreational harvest Area A. This is a pilot program, and the Commission hopes to continue this in the future and develop a specific permit for oyster harvest.
- c) **Discuss the Shellfish Commission's budget submission for the 2018-2019 fiscal year:** Since 1983 the Commission has relied on permit sales alone to sustain its activities. There is still good cash flow from permit fees. The Commission is likely to need legal assistance and does not know what costs would be. Absent legal fees, the Commission can still cover all expenses. The old patrol boat was sold for \$3,251 and those funds were deposited into the Commission's account. There are seven active aquaculture license agreements in 2017. Those operations provide shellfish and services to support recreational shellfishing.
- d) **Discuss plans to update the Shellfish Commission's website:** The Commission will be reviewing its website to update, improve, and make it easier to navigate. Mr. Murphy noted that the Aquaculture Operations section needs to be updated. He is assigning sections for Commission members to review. Mr. Banister is working on flow diagram for the aquaculture application and review process. Mr. Murphy is working on maps. Mr. Moore will review the Application Form, and make a checklist that applicants/ Commission can use, and provide comments on the flow chart. Mr. Raffo will review the Aquaculture Guidance, and provide comments on flow chart.

Ms. Getchis noted that the CT DA/BA and CT Sea Grant are facilitating the updating of town Shellfish Management Plans so that are more consistent in format. They have developed a template and will present it at the upcoming Gathering of Shellfish Commissions on January 13, 2018. She will share the draft aquaculture regulatory review diagram with the Commission.

A member of the public asked how can the public be involved in contributing suggestions to improve the aquaculture application form. Mr. Murphy emphasized that the process the Commission was engaged in was to update existing maps and guidance, not to change the regulatory process.

There was a question from a member of the public regarding the maps on the website and about areas unavailable for aquaculture. Mr. Murphy noted that the map was outdated and the Commission plans to update it.

Ms. Getchis noted that it is quite confusing unless the public is informed about the different types of shellfish grounds (e.g. grants, deeds, license agreements, leases), and are able to see these on the map. She suggested that this could be discussed at the Economic Development Commission forum in January.

- e) **Enforcement:** David Carey of CT DA/BA received a call from a CT DEEP Conservation Officer who questioned why someone was harvesting scallops in a restricted-relay area. Mr. Carey explained why this was possible and called Mr. Murphy who reached out and put the officer in contact with the shellfish warden.
- f) **Equipment:** The Commission is coordinating with Groton and Waterford-East Lyme Shellfish Commission to sample next week. After the water samples are taken the

Commission's patrol boat will be removed from the water, winterized, and stored for the winter.

- g) **Discuss the Economic Development Commission's plans to hold a public forum on shellfish aquaculture in Stonington waters:** The Economic Development Commission is planning a forum to be held on January 29, 2018 from 7:00 - 9:00 PM at LaGrua Center in Stonington. Connecticut Sea Grant is providing an overview on aquaculture and the regulatory process, and the Stonington Town Planner is facilitating a question and answer session.
- h) **Discuss the request by Stonington Farms to renew its aquaculture license agreement for the use of the South Ram 1 plot (AQP-06-2007-2017):** The Commission discussed the request by Stonington Farms to renew its aquaculture license agreement. This has been an aquaculture location for 10 years (since 2007). There have been no complaints and they have paid their fees. A motion was made by Mr. Raffo and seconded by Mr. Banister to renew license agreement with Stonington Farms for a period of ten years based on past relationship. The motion was approved with one abstention. Ms. Getchis recused herself from the discussion and voting process as in her position with Connecticut Sea Grant she has consulted with the new owners of Stonington Farms.
- i) **Review of finances; collections, bills, and remuneration:** Mr. Murphy has been working to update the remuneration spreadsheet following the transplanting activity last week.
- j) **Commercial shellfishing:** Kris Simonds said that Stonington Farms is getting ready to wrap things up for the season. Will McKay is working at a new hatchery operation.

6) Adjournment:

A motion was made by Mr. Banister and seconded by Mr. Raffo and approved unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Tessa L. Getchis
Alternate Member