

Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, February 6, 2018, 4:30PM
Edgartown Public Library

Present: Chair - Christian Thornton, Madeline Fisher, Nick Turner,
Shellfish Dept. Paul Bagnall, Warren Gaines, Rob Morrison,
Others: Dave Berube, Levi Flanders, Chris Townsennd, Nick Viera,
John Conlon,
Recorder - Marni Lipke

The meeting was called to order at 4:37PM.

COMMERCIAL, FAMILY, AQUACULTURE LICENSE APPLICATIONS

- IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE EDGARTOWN SHELLFISH COMMITTEE TO AUTHORIZE ACTING CHAIR RYAN SMITH TO SIGN THE COMMERCIAL SHELLFISH APPLICATION FOR CHRIS TOWNSEND.

OLD BUSINESS

Bay Scallop Season (See 1/16/18 Minutes p.2.)

As a follow up to the extra scalloping day the Committee considered increasing the daily limit.

- Cold weather had curtailed fishing so that there had not yet been a six-day scalloping week. 20 to 25 Fishermen were getting limits in about 3 or 4 hours.
- Staff reported that fishermen opinion leaned towards leaving the limit as it was, although opinion varied by whether the fishermen did their own cutting or contracted it out.
- Dave Berube, initially in favor of an increase, found his buyer unenthusiastic and was now undecided. Wholesale price was only about \$13 per pound.
- Levi Flanders was in favor of whatever was best for the scallop environment.
- Others were not inclined to work an extra hour and get paid the same amount of money for 4 bushels as they did for three.
- Fishermen were starting to see some die-off in the loads, which was normal for this time of year.

IT WAS THE CONSENSUS OF THE MEETING TO REMAIN AT THE CURRENT LEVEL AND REVISIT THE ISSUE AT THE NEXT MEETING.

NEW BUSINESS

- John Conlon was interested in opening the wild oyster season earlier this year.
- He also proposed a change in oyster limit protocol from 2 level washbaskets (about 1,000 animals) to by count packed in 100 count bags (i.e. limit 1,200 animals). This would encourage taking larger oysters, (more marketable), while fostering the oyster set and the ponds by discouraging small oyster takings. West Tisbury changed to this method 3 years ago.

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- The Committee and staff were interested in the idea. The biggest issue being enforcement, since 100 counts were more labor intensive than washbaskets. Fishermen tended to put about 102-103 in the bags to account for one or two bad oysters. Counting bags was easy, but judging what was in it was trickier. However, product improvement was an important factor.
- Also fishermen might be reluctant to bag and count oysters on the boat.
- There was a discussion on which sizes were popular on the market.
- Fishermen were invited to the next meeting and everyone left to get back to scallop cutting.
 - Staff recommended reserving the Sengekontaktet commercial oyster season until next year, as a bonus in a possibly scarce scallop year.

CONSTABLE'S /DEPUTIES' REPORT

- Staff was working on maintenance, buying new oyster screens, scraping floats and keeping up boats. Repairs to the Fire Dept. boat (probably to be used in Great Pond) would be on Special Meeting Town warrant so it would be ready by May.
- Shellfish Constable Paul Bagnall reported the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) was in the process of moving its New Bedford office, and so was more difficult to contact than usual.

MINUTES

- **MADLINE FISHER MOVED TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 16, 2018 MINUTES: NICK TURNER SECONDED: MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.**

Meetings/Events

- Edg. Shellfish - 4:30PM, Tuesdays, February 20, & March 6, 2018 2017 at the Library
- Annual Town Meeting - Tuesday, April 10, 2017

ADJOURNMENT

- **RYAN SMITH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 5:02PM; MADLINE FISHER SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Actions To Be Done:

- Paul - Agenda Items:
 - Dredge Committee Representation
 - Scallop Season Limits and Extension
 - Oyster Season
- Staff - consider changing oyster limit protocol

Documents on File:

- Agenda 2/6/18