

Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, August 5, 2014, 4:30PM
Edgartown Town Hall

Present: Chair - Ryan Smith Les Baynes, Coop Gilkes,
Christian Thornton,
Shellfish Dept. Paul Bagnall, Warren Gaines, Rob Morrison,
Others Marni Lipke - Recorder

The meeting was called to order at 4:36PM.

MINUTES

• RYAN SMITH MOVED TO APPROVE THE MAY 20, 2014, AND JUNE 3, 2014 MINUTES AS AMENDED; COOP GILKES SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY: 3 AYES, 0 NAYS, WITH ABSTENTIONS AS ABSENT.

DEPUTIES' & CONSTABLE'S REPORT

- Deputy Constables Warren Gaines and Rob Morrison reported last year's Major's Cove oysters were now 3 or 4 in. and they were being moved to the family area along Beach Rd. and to Eel Pond. There was plenty of flow through the cages and bags so the oysters were fairly clean and the equipment was air-dried empty. This year's seed were now about half an inch. Constable Paul Bagnall acknowledged the complimentary email on the project from Friends of Sengekontacket.
- At the end of the meeting the nitrogen remediation portion of the project was reviewed; explaining how oysters filtered nitrogen out of the water but then needed to be removed (by harvest, or moving) in order to take the nitrogen out of Sengekontacket and thus gaining Mass. Estuary Program nitrogen credits from the two sentinel stations.
- Oak Bluffs may have started a Floating Upwelling System (Flupsy) on one of the docks.
- The scallops, steamers and quahogs from the Chappaquiddick hatchery doing well and scallop propagation was also successful.
- About five fishermen were out catching and selling.
- Chair Ryan Smith signed a new fishermen's application so that they would not miss the season (see below: Actions).
- The family areas in Katama and Sengekontacket were busy when open. The seed was growing and there were still some quahogs available from last year's Relay since this year's was delayed (see 5/20/14 Minutes p. 2).
- Deputies reported two seeds and some eel grass patches, along with some other signs of next year's wild set. Cormorant numbers were down this year.

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OLD BUSINESS

Chappaquiddick Nursery

All quahogs were cleared by July 1st when scallop spawning started, successfully releasing 15 to 25 million per spawning event. Pete Jackson had been checking the Nursery for at least an hour every morning to make sure all drains, hoses, etc. had not become clogged. Consequently, as Edgartown was doing a lot of the upkeep, they were able to keep the bulk of the shellfish. The new floor was doing great.

Leland Shifter Water Sampling Agreement – See below: Actions.

Due to lack of action the matter was placed on the agenda of the Board of Selectmen, which seemed to have finally generated a response. The Woods Hole Group estimate for the requested testing was \$29,000 for twice monthly testing, which could be done every other year for six years to establish any trending (analysis might add another \$6,000). There was controversy over whether the Shifter/Leland party was allowed to retain some of the funds or the amount could be completely spent as a fine for the previous non-compliance. At any rate, once again it was likely that testing was not going to be done this year. The Committee again discussed the possibility of going to the press.

Middle Flats Aquaculture Area

The Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) would be on the Island August 8th to survey Jeremy and Roy Scheffer's plots. The DMF seemed to be doing the lots a few at a time (see below: Actions).

NEW BUSINESS

Vibrio Update (See documents on file.)

The first case of Vibrio was reported by the Hospital on July 2nd and was traced to oysters sold in Menemsha June 30th. The oysters had been properly iced and handled throughout their route from farm to table. There were now unsubstantiated rumors of a second case and the Department of Public Health (DPH) would be on Island tomorrow Wednesday, August 6th. A second case from the same area would trigger a seven day closure. The discussion centered on faster communication to allow for timely remediation:

- The official notification letter on the first case was dated July 24th, and DMF officials denied or refused comment on the matter despite all Martha's Vineyard fishermen's knowledge of it from local sources.
- = Lease holder/oyster farmers were likely to prefer voluntary and proactive shut downs after immediate notification, rather than notification 20 days after the event when the prevailing conditions no longer applied and/or a recall became inevitable.
- This year's water temperature was 72°F higher than last year's warm water.
- Sometimes restaurateurs mixed oysters from several farms on one plate, making exact origin difficult to trace.

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- Recalls were damaging to the finances and reputation of the farmers. But it was agreed that returning the recalled oysters to the ponds was unproductive and dangerous. Paul Bagnall stated he would refuse any returned recalls.
- Farmers were starting to buy temperature guns to prove / determine oyster temperature because unpacking them to prove the correct inches of ice was messy and often impractical, the levels collapsing into the center as the oysters were removed.
- Ryan Smith stated he had stopped harvesting oysters and would resume in September when the water temperature was better and the market still active.

End of Fiscal Year 2014 (FY14) Start of FY15 Financial Update

Paul Bagnall reported that due to a software glitch, he had overspent the FY14 Budget by \$1,000. This could have been remediated by \$900 carried over from the Major's Cove Oyster Project funds, but that account was already closed, so it was covered under the Town Manager's account. This left the FY15 funding with the normal \$44,000 of the usual funds (Department, Propagation, Committee), and \$20,000 in Major's Cove Oyster Project funding (see below: Actions).

- It looked like the Katama cut would close this winter, barring any big storms, possibly leaving a new small pond and almost half a mile of eroded beach.
- Coop Gilkes reported fishermen were unhappy with interference from ongoing Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) research to monitor flow, water temperature, etc. Also large portions of Norton Point were closed for plover and shorebird second nests late in the season—complicated by chicks that had a tendency to shelter in beach car tracks.
- The next Edgartown Great Pond opening was scheduled for August 15th. The Committee compared notes on blue crabs in Edgartown Great Pond and Oyster Pond.
- The Committee commended this year's crew for all their hard work on the Chappaquiddick Nursery and the Major's Cove Project on top of their other duties.
- Paul Bagnall was considering the old or new library possible venues for fall, winter and spring meetings.

Meetings/Events

- Edg. Shellfish - 4:30 PM, Tuesday, September 2, 2014 at the Town Barn
- Edg. Shellfish - 4:30 PM, Tuesday, September 16, 2014 TBD

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ADJOURNMENT

- **RYAN SMITH MOVED TO ADJOURN AT 5:52PM; COOPER GILKES SECONDED; MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Actions To Be Done:

- Ryan – bring previous license/lease application paperwork for confirmatory vote.
- Ryan/Paul – ask Selectmen and Ed Handy to ask State (Jack Shephard) re: rebuilding Katama public access ramp, and moving 2 big rock obstacles.
- Paul -- **Call Donald Benefit for DMF Middle Flats survey(s).**

September Agenda

- Minutes: 8/5/14
- Confirmatory License/Lease Application Vote
- Edgartown Great Pond Opening Update
- September/October - budget/salary discussion on the Major's Cove Oyster Project position

Ongoing Actions

- Paul- attend Dredge Committee meetings as possible.

Documents on file:

- Agenda 8/5/14
- Schillaci/DMF cover email and letter re: Vibrio case from Katama Bay (2 p.) 7/24/14