

Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, November 19, 2013 7:00PM
Edgartown Town Hall

Present: Acting Chair - Ryan Smith, Les Baynes,, Cooper Gilkes,
Shellfish Dept. Warren Gaines, Rob Morrison,

NOTES

MINUTES

- The November 5, 2013 Minutes were reviewed and there was consensus to accept them as written.

DEPUTIES/CONSTABLE'S REPORT

- The Community Innovation grant application had been submitted with approval from all the Island Towns.
- The Chappaquiddick Nursery had to be repaired whether the application was successful or not but its future would be dictated by what could be spent. At the moment the repairs were of the "bandaid" variety, to keep the building from collapsing: fix the failing wall, patch the roof, etc.
- The change to a hatchery would require: conformance with State law, permitting, and extensive renovation.

OLD BUSINESS

FY15 Budget - Major's Cove Oyster Project

There was a long discussion on the financial and shellfish ramifications of the Major's Cove Oyster Project.

- The project was proposed to reduce nitrogen loading and if successful would improve the habitat for other wildlife including, scallops, quahogs, etc. (see below: Actions).
- When oysters were harvested and transferred to Cape Pogue, Katama or other sites in Sengekontacket the areas should be posted (as the quahog relays were) for recreational use.
- Start up costs (bags, cages, upweller, labor) were complete with likely equipment life of five to 10 years. However ongoing labor costs had been underestimated.
- To give a scale to the task:
 - in June 500,000 oysters weighed 4 lbs; currently they weighed about 30,000 lbs. and would be as much as 70-80,000 lbs. (i.e. enough to fill a semitruck) when ready for harvest or transfer.
 - if laid end to end the propagation bags would be almost a mile long,
- There was clearly a need for an extra position.
 - Aquaculture farmer Ryan Smith noted that his work was a full time job, whereas the staff were handling the Majors Cove Project in addition to the rest of their Department work with enforcement, quahog and scallop propagation, administrative work, etc.
 - Next year work would increase as the Department would be emptying the cages and transporting the oysters as well as starting the new crop.

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- The current worker had been hired at the prevailing summer temporary wage of \$12 per hour but the job ended in September and its future was unreliable. He was currently contract labor.
- A viable propagation project required a skilled and experienced worker.
- The financial impact to the Town would include benefits (health insurance, etc.).
- On the other hand 500,000 oysters for commercial or recreational culling, as well as improved Sengkontacket water quality was a reasonable return on \$50,000.
- Labor costs should be balanced against the cost of sewerage the watershed—\$300,000 for preliminary engineering studies alone.
- The procedure was to submit the request (including total hours, job description, cost, etc.) to the Personnel Board (see below: Meetings and Actions), and then to the Board of Selectmen.
- It was suggested the Department start a Facebook page for public education, interest and convenience.
- It could show photographs of propagation stages: what a full bag or cage looked like, and what oysters, scallops and quahogs looked like in various stages of growth.
- Season opening and closing dates, warnings, maps, sanctuary delineations, etc. could also be posted and accessed on a timely basis.

Meetings/Events

- Personnel Board – 12:00PM Wednesday, November 20, 2013 at Town Hall
- Edgartown Shellfish – 7:00PM Tuesdays, December 3 & 17, 2013 at Town Hall
- FOS – 9:30AM Wednesday, December 11, 2013 at the MVC

ADJOURNMENT

- The meeting closed about 8PM.

Actions To Be Done:

- All – attend Personnel Board meeting 12N- 11/20/13
- Paul– consider monitoring/researching Major's Cove oyster project nitrogen reduction/intake.
- Paul/Warren/Rob – consider posting a Department Facebook page.

Ongoing Actions

- Paul/Jack – apply for CPA grant for Chappaquiddick Nursery in August/September.
- Paul/Warren/Rob – plant next Katama relay area closer to the boat ramp.
- Paul– attend Dredge Committee meetings as possible.
- Paul/Warren/Rob – post recreational harvest areas for Major's Cove oysters.