

Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, October 18, 2022, 4:30pm
Via Zoom

Present: David Faber, Madeline Fisher, Ryan Smith
Shellfish Dept. Rob Morrison, Warren Gaines
Others: Juliet Mulinare (Recorder)

The meeting of the Edgartown Shellfish Committee was called to order at 4:30pm. Ryan will serve as acting Chair.

SHELLFISH PERMITS & AQUACULTURE LICENSES

Rob presented two commercial shell fishing applications for approval: Gibson and Laderout. Both applications are complete.

Motion placed on the floor by Ryan to approve both commercial shell fishing applications. David seconds, no further discussion, vote taken and approved unanimously, 3-0.

MINUTES

David made a motion to approve the 9/20/22 draft minutes, seconded by Madeline. No further discussion, vote taken and approved unanimously, 3-0.

CONSTABLE'S AND DEPUTIES' REPORT

This is the first meeting since scallop season opened; Warren reported that dip-netting is good in both Cape Pogue and Sengecontacket. Rob said the word is out that there are scallops but the opening of the commercial season will provide more information.

PROPOGATION EFFORT & RECREATIONAL SCALLOP SEASON UPDATE

Rob said he is hopeful that the success in Sengecontacket is, at least partially, the result of the scallop propagation efforts, including over-wintering the seed and the use of upwellers.

TTOR STAKEHOLDER WORKING GROUP – BEACH MANAGEMENT PLAN

None.

REVIEW OF SHELLFISH REGULATIONS

Rob told the Committee that the last time the regulations were updated was in 2017 and this is something that should happen from time to time. Rob presented a couple of ideas for updates to the regulations. The first would be to review and consider a loophole in the existing regulations that allow people who hold commercial licenses in other towns to purchase a recreational license in Edgartown. He said it's not a huge problem but it could get worse as online permitting is implemented and the permits are much easier to obtain. The Committee briefly discussed this and asked Rob to find out what the regulations are in other towns and report back.

The second idea Rob presented is to impose a bond, to serve as a security deposit, on the aquaculture leaseholders. This money would be held in escrow during the lease term and would give the town some recourse and protection should an oyster farmer abandon their equipment at the end of their lease, forcing the town to clean it up. This has happened before, and it was expensive to deal with. The Committee discussed whether, if imposed, this would be retroactive for the current leaseholders or applied at a lease renewal. The Committee asked Rob to speak with the Town Administrator and the Town Accountant about the legality and logistics of this idea.

The Committee will continue to discuss these, and other ideas for updates to the regulations, at the next meeting.

SHELLFISH DEPARTMENT OUTREACH

Rob informed the Committee that he is having trouble reaching one of the aquaculture farm leaseholders. He has been trying to get in touch with him regarding a float that got loose and was sitting on the beach for weeks. After not being able to reach the party, Rob and Warren removed the float themselves; this is not the first-time this has happened. Rob said a fine would not be effective so he would like to invite the leaseholder to a Committee meeting to see if he wants to continue with his lease. Rob said that if there continues to be issues with poorly maintained equipment getting loose and floating around in areas where it can cause damage to other private property, people may not continue to be so supportive of the aquaculture programs. David commented that there is a waiting list for the leases because these are coveted locations, if someone is not utilizing the opportunity, it should go to someone else who will. Rob said he will try reaching out one more time and then will send a certified letter asking him to come to a meeting.

The Committee discussed meeting in person versus meeting on zoom. Rob suggested one live meeting and one zoom meeting each month.

At 5:03pm, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. No further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously, 3-0

The next meeting will be held on November 1, 2022.
Minutes submitted by Juliet Mulinare.