

**Edgartown Shellfish Committee
Tuesday, March 7, 2023, 4:30pm
Via Zoom Teleconference**

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

The meeting of the Edgartown Shellfish Committee was called to order at 4:33pm. David will serve as Acting Chair.

SHELLFISH PERMITS & AQUACULTURE LICENSES

None.

MINUTES

The Committee reviewed the 2/21/23 draft minutes.

Motion placed on the floor by Nic to approve the 2/21/23 draft minutes, seconded by Madeline. No further discussion, vote taken and approved (3-0-1). Ryan abstains.

DEPUTY/CONSTABLE REPORT & SCALLOP SEASON UPDATE

Warren reported that there were 8 scallopers out today and they all did well, however the interest is dropping off. Warren said he asked the fishermen about extending the scallop season into April and all but one were in favor of an extension. Rob said he agreed with extending the season, but in order to do so, DMF will have to come do a survey. If DMF determines there is still a resource to harvest, they will allow the extension. Rob encouraged the Committee to vote on the extension so there is ample time for the surveys to be completed and for the Selectboard to approve the extension as well. Rob stated that a two-week extension, rather than the whole month of April, would leave some scallops behind to spawn. The Committee was in favor of the two-week extension, which would be for Cape Pogue and the Outer Harbor only.

Motion placed on the floor by Nic to extend the scalloping season in Cape Pogue Bay and the Outer Harbor from Saturday, April 1st through Friday, April 15th, 2023. Ryan seconds the motion.

Discussion: Madeline asked why the season would not be extended in Sengekontacket also. Rob responded that it was a good season in Sengekontacket and won't hurt to leave some scallops behind. This more conservative approach will hopefully set the pond up for another successful season next year. *No further discussion, vote taken and approved unanimously (4-0).*

SENGEKONTACKET OYSTER SEASON

The season is going well. There were 55,000 oysters harvested in February, which is a good return on investment for the seed.

SHELLFISH REGULATIONS REVIEW

Rob sent out a summary of the changes being proposed. He said he spoke with DMF about the change to prohibit out-of-town commercial license holders from obtaining a recreational permit in Edgartown. DMF had some concerns about the legality of this so Rob is working with the Town Administrator and Town Counsel on how to move forward.

EDGARTOWN GREAT POND COMMERCIAL OYSTER SEASON

Rob informed the Committee that someone had requested a commercial oyster season in the Great Pond. He continued that there is a good crop of oysters due to multiple restoration programs over the past few years and does not see any harm in opening the pond for oyster harvest during the month of April as it provides more access and options for fishermen. The rules and regulations will be the same as in Senge:

rakes and poles only, no dredging; and the limit is 10 bags of 100 oysters per day, Monday – Friday. Also, the Slough Cove oyster sanctuary will be off limits, but all other areas of the pond are open. The town dredge has been hauled from the Great Pond which will be cut this coming weekend.

Motion placed on the floor by Ryan to open the Great Pond for commercial oyster season from Monday, April 3rd through Friday, April 28th, 2023. Hours will be Monday – Friday from 7am – 4pm, in all areas except the Slough Cove oyster sanctuary, and fishermen can bring in 10 bags each with 100 count oysters. Harvest to be by rake and pole only and all other shellfishing regulations apply. Nic seconds the motion, no further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously (4-0).

CALL FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS FROM COMMITTEE

Rob encouraged Committee members to bring up issues for discussion that are important to them.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David gave an overview of the Harbor Plan update process thus far and stated that the existing Harbor Plan does not mention aquaculture. Ms. Durkee explained that one of the goals for the update is to include aquaculture and shellfishing data and also to provide a context for balancing recreation with protection of natural resources. The Committee discussed other considerations for the Harbor Plan such as protecting and expanding public access, including access for commercial fishermen. Ms. Durkee stated that the updated plan will also consider the effects of climate change, including sea level rise, warming waters and more frequent and intense storms.

Warren announced his retirement to the Committee; his last day with the Department will be April 23rd, after approximately 35 years of service. The Committee thanked Warren for his dedication to the Department. Rob will advertise for the position next week and requested the help of two Committee members to interview applicants.

At 5:20pm, a motion to adjourn was made and seconded. No further discussion, vote taken and passed unanimously, 4-0.

Minutes submitted by Juliet Mulinare.