

**TOWN OF SCITUATE, MASSACHUSETTS
SHELLFISH ADVISORY COMMISSION**



**MEETING MINUTES
Shellfish Advisory Committee
Wednesday, February 16, 2022
7:30 pm
ZOOM/Remote Participation**

Committee Members In Attendance: Chairperson; Susan Harrison, Vice Chairperson; Jeff Palmer, Waterways Liaison; Dave Friedman, Scott Connelly, Adam Bisol, Susan Bryant of CSCR, Shellfish Constable; Mike Dimeo

Chairperson Harrison made a motion to call the meeting to order at 7:37 p.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Dave Friedman (yes)

Scott Connelly (yes)

Jeff Palmer (yes)

Adam Bisol (yes)

Chairperson Susan Harrison (yes)

Chairperson Harrison asked for a motion to be made to approve the December 14, 2021 meeting minutes. Jeff Palmer made a motion which was seconded by Dave Friedman and voted majority in favor (5-0) by roll call vote.

Roll Call Vote:

Dave Friedman (yes)

Scott Connelly (yes)

Jeff Palmer (yes)

Adam Bisol (yes)

Chairperson Susan Harrison (yes)

Update and Discussion of Aquaculture Pilot Program:

Chairperson Harrison reminded the board that their last meeting was left with the action item to get a stamped survey on the mean-low tideline. Ms. Harrison then stated that they were able to get the survey done from Merrill Engineering. A copy with the eelgrass date overlying that survey was also completed. Ms. Harrison also mentioned that all documents, presentations, and water quality results have been kept up with being posted to the Shellfish Advisory Commission's web page on the town's site.

Susan Bryant of CSCR then shared and presented both surveys, specifically pointing out locations where the eelgrass sits. Ms. Bryant reminded the board that the Mass DEP is going to start their flyovers in May or June of this spring and mentioned that there may be other research being done out there toward the end of May. She also stated that the CSCR students will try to get out there as well prior to the start of summer.

Waterways Commission Liaison; Dave Friedman asked if it were possible to use the stamped survey to locate where the proposed farms are as well as how many are within the mean-low versus how many are not. Chairperson Harrison replied to Mr. Friedman stating that during this first round there weren't any other than just corners. She went on to say that they should think about proposing farms between the eel grass and the mean-low during their second round.

Waterways Liaison, Dave Friedman asked how big as well as the distance the area running along the mean-low tide was. This question was answered with the response of the area between the two outlines along the mean-low tide, called outliers, and closest to Scituate land, is 381 feet.

Going on to say that the tideline is close, and averaged to 2 acres, with another measuring 1300 feet. Mr. Friedman stated that this gives a good idea of where to propose for a round-two spot. It was then said that the disputed area would be the mark of the mean-low to the flats.

Chairperson Harrison brought up the possibility of proposing the areas in between the eelgrass spots and the mean-low, which are about 2 acres in width. She went on to say that the DMF Scientists will come out at the end of this process and do a survey on the eel grass and other aquatic life.

Next Steps Aquaculture Program

Constable Dimeo spoke on the commission's next steps. He stated that he spoke with Jeff Kennedy of Marine Fisheries today. Mr. Kennedy informed Constable Dimeo that he has no issues with the commission moving forward. It was said that it is ultimately going to come down to Marine Fisheries walking the area to look at where the eelgrass is. From there Marine Fisheries will answer all questions. Constable Dimeo stated that he requested this be done as soon as possible versus waiting until the Spring. Chairperson Harrison asked if the board should communicate proposed spots to Marine Fisheries ahead of time. It was discussed that the next steps should be to contact the original applicants, gage their interest, and then find the plots that will be available. The possibility of opening up more spots may be an option. Chairperson Harrison offered to take this action item of sending the original applicants the updated map and asking of interest in the proposed area. Waterways Liaison, Dave Friedman suggested highlighting the area that is being proposed. He then asked who gives final approval.

Chairperson Harrison informed Mr. Friedman that the DMF biologists would be the ones.

Constable Dimeo then stated that this map needs to go to the state for their comments, while the commission reaches out to the original applicants to see if there is still interest. He went on to say that they can possibly open up the pool a little further if there isn't interest. Mr. Friedman spoke up saying that this is a very "pilot" program so if there are only three applicants interested then there is only three to be ranked. He then stated that he feels that applicants will not want to go through the application process yet again. Constable Dimeo said there may not be a need to rank the applicants again. He stated that the town should have a half acre set aside for Scituate and Cohasset to utilize for educational purposes. Mr. Friedman suggested that the next step be to engage the applicants to move forward with less challenge. Chairperson Harrison stated that the

only effort at this time will be asking the applicants whether they are interested or not through an email. She went on to say that even a non-response would show a non-interest and that she thinks that this can happen about the same time as the other stuff going on. Scituate Resident, Mr. Jamie Davenport of 16 Booth Hill Road, stated that he it should be decided whether to email the applicants before or after consulting the DMF. He also added that adding another line that the proposed area is at least 25 feet from eelgrass to the email if it goes out prior. Chairperson Harrison stated that she thinks that is a good idea and that they can try to do it, despite it being up close with it zoomed in. Ms. Bryant suggested that this is something to ask DMF.

It was then discussed the need to start meeting more regularly to engage the community further in this discussion. Chairperson Harrison stated that the March Meeting will be scheduled to begin this accommodation.

Update Recreational Shellfish Closure

Constable Dimeo shared additional maps and stated that last Wednesday he had Marine Fisheries out to look at this area and explained to them how the water moves. He stated that he also showed them the outgoing tide and how all of the water comes out of the North River. He explained further to the Marine Fisheries representatives that nothing from the North River goes down the South River because its stronger than the South River due to the tidal flow. Constable Dimeo stated that he thinks this was good for them to see this. He also provided information as to why this area should be open; the amount of waters that come out and the depths of it comes from 24 feet, then opening up for tidal flow coming out. Constable Dimeo stated that while he was showing this in action, it wasn't a big low tide, displaying that the current line coming out of the North River and South River, making it clear to see how the North River was pushing back against the South River flowing out. He mentioned that to him this indicates that nothing out of the sewer plant is getting down the South River. Constable Dimeo stated that although he is trying to advocate getting something out of this, this study is going to take a little more time. He went on to say that they're hoping to have it complete by July 1st - meaning another year of shellfishing lost.

Constable Dimeo explained that the presented study was the "S" Map done by UMASS Dartmouth that was started November 1, 2021 as originally planned. He went on to say that he is thankful that the local constituents received these funds money for Marine Fisheries to do this study as it would've cost \$80,000 to complete all of this. Also pointing out the benefit of going forward, knowing where the Rivers are at.

Constable Dimeo then explained that the first of the two maps he presented, was a new grid being designed. Stating that it follows the shoreline more closely and covers the North and South Rivers, their creeks, tributaries, and marshes. He then shared that the second of the two map's grid didn't cover all of the tributaries and that the new grid is more intensive modeling. Mr. Friedman then asked if there was acceptance of any of the North and South River Watershed tests to which Constable Dimeo replied that there never has been.

Constable Dimeo then stated that he also wanted to speak about the vessel that sunk off of the coast. He explained that a vessel out of Gloucester sunk just south of Fourth Cliff two weeks ago in about 36 or 40 feet of water. Constable Dimeo stated that the vessel went down pretty quickly and all persons on board were received. He went on to say that Marine Fisheries now

some concerns that have come from this. The shellfish that were onboard estimated to be approximately 1500 pounds of surf clams that were also in the dredge. Constable Dimeo explained that Marine Fisheries is requesting that these are all removed for potential contamination from the diesel fuel. Constable Dimeo was told by Marine Fisheries that if the clams are not removed from the boat they will close the area for more commercial fishing. He also explained that Marine Fisheries is also worried that people could come back in the area and re-dredge, potentially selling contaminated clams. He stated that he was under the impression that they would purge within 30 days. Also, noting that he feels that it would be easier and safer to disclose the area for a couple of more weeks to let the area sit and have those clams purged. Constable Dimeo said that they're pretty adamant to get the shellfish out of there so removing and properly disposing of the clams, has now been added to the solvent stretch plan. The Coast Guard has a plan of vessel removal in place, weather dependent.

Chairperson Harrison stated that she will post all maps that were discussed at this evening's meeting as well as email them to the applicants. The board then discussed what would be written to the original applicants when the maps were sent, also noting that they would be given two weeks to voice their interest. The commission will plan to meet closely following that deadline with the invitation for the applicants to join. It was also discussed that the board would meet bi-weekly from there.

The board brought up the possibility of reviewing regulations and proposing amendments in the near future.

Mr. Friedman asked Constable Dimeo how the shellfish closure is affecting the discussed process, to which Mr. Dimeo stated that it isn't as the area as it is open.

Public Questions & Comments

There were no public questions or comments.

Chairperson Harrison asked for a motion be made to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. Jeff Palmer made the motion, which was seconded by Adam Bisol, and voted unanimously in favor (6-0) by roll call vote.

Roll Call:

Dave Friedman (yes)

Scott Connelly (yes)

Jeff Palmer (yes)

Adam Bisol (yes)

Constable Mike Dimeo (yes)

Chairperson Susan Harrison (yes)

Respectfully Submitted by Alicia Anthony, Recording Secretary