

**STONINGTON SHELLFISH COMMISSION
MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING**

20 December 2007

A special meeting of the Stonington Shellfish Commission was held on this date at the Human Resource Building. Voting members present were Mr. Alan Banister, Ms. Tessa Getchis, Mr. Don Raffo, Mr. Alan Banister, Mr. Alan Desbonnet, Secretary and Mr. Donald Murphy, Chairman.

Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Banister to accept the 07 November 2007 minutes as presented. Mr. Raffo made a second to the motion which was unanimously approved.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Announcement of the 12 January 2008 "4th Annual Gathering of Shellfish Commissions" in New Haven, CT.
2. A letter dated 08 November 2007 from Mr. Murphy to Mr. Grzywinski, OLISP, re: comments on dock application no. 200003372-MG (McCagg).
3. A letter dated 12 November 2007 from Mr. Murphy to Mr. Grzywinski, OLISP, re: comments on dock application no. 200103468-MG (Elesh).
4. A letter dated 18 November 2007 from Mr. Murphy to Mr. Grzywinski, OLISP, re: comments on dock application no. 200602667-DL (Mason Island Yacht).
5. A letter dated 02 December 2007 from Paul Watts to Mr. Murphy re: 2007 Clamming Activity Report.
6. A letter dated 20 December 2007 from Mr. Murphy to Steve Plant, Connecticut Cultured Oysters re: fees owed for 11 October 2007 Public Hearing.
7. A letter dated 20 December 2007 from Mr. Murphy to Kevin Blados, Stonington Farms Shellfish re: fees owed for 07 November 2007 Public Hearing.
8. Copy of CT Dept. of Agriculture "Agriculture Viability Grant" submitted to the Shellfish Commission for consideration for funding.

BUSINESS

- 1) *Conditional Shellfishing Areas*
 - a) Area A and Outer Quiambog Cove were open 01-26 November, closed 27-30 November. Area B opened on 10 November and remained open until the 27th when it closed with other conditional areas due to rainfall.
- 2) *Equipment*
 - a) Mr. Murphy reported that the boat is out of the water, winterized and shrink wrapped.
 - b) Ms. Getchis made a **motion** to approve \$936.35 to winterize and store the boat. Mr. Raffo provided a second to the motion which was unanimously approved.
- 3) *Financial Review for 2007*
 - a) Mr. Raffo provided a summary of commission income and expenses for the previous year. In short, the commission experienced about a \$5,000 loss, which was due to the purchase of the outboard engine for the boat this past summer. Mr. Raffo pointed out that expenses have been consistently increasing on an annual basis over time, while

income has remained essentially flat, suggesting the commission consider this as it reviews recreational permit fee structure for 2008.

- b) Mr. Murphy agreed to pick up on earlier actions regarding investing savings in a CD or other type of account that would provide greater return than simple savings account interest. Mr. Raffo agreed to assist, and will provide a report to the commission on options at the February meeting.
- c) Mr. Raffo made a **motion** to submit a \$50.00 line item budget for FY 08/09 to the Town of Stonington budget. Ms. Getchis provided a second to the motion, which was unanimously approved.

4) *Review of 2008 Fees & Regulations*

- a) Mr. Raffo suggested the commission consider increasing fees to help balance the books and keep the commission fiscally independent as it always has been. Mr. Raffo also suggested that the commission consider issuing the Warden a pay raise, as service has been excellent and no salary increase has been provided in several years. Mr. Banister suggested holding the fees at current levels for another year because 2008 may be a fiscally challenging year for many. Mr. Desbonnet supported an increase in fees, noting that Stonington fees are the lowest in the state, by far, and that the commission has not increased permit fees for quite a long time; raising fees by \$5.00 should not create hardship.
- b) Mr. Raffo made a **motion** to increase recreational shellfishing annual permit fees to \$15.00 for residents, \$20.00 for non-residents, seniors 65 years and older free; and no change to existing regulations for shellfish harvest in Stonington waters. Mr. Desbonnet provided a second to the motion, which was unanimously approved.

5) *Scallop Project Update*

- a) Mr. Murphy reported that he sent permit fees to CTDEP but has not heard back from them yet. He also reported that he will have a letter out the end of the month to CTDEP addressing the few minor concerns and questions they had regarding the application. Ms. Getchis agreed to assist in drafting the response letter.

6) *Meeting with The Nature Conservancy*

- a) Mr. Desbonnet reported on a meeting with Connecticut and Rhode Island representatives of The Nature Conservancy regarding bottom lands in Stonington. In summary, TNC is very interested in working with the commission in an attempt to gain ownership of privately owned bottom, and that TNC is not against ideas for limited use of bottom were ownership to revert to TNC. Use as a spawning sanctuary would be a primary TNC goal for any bottom they owned, but would be open to co-management for recreational harvest, and/or limited commercial harvest or aquaculture operations. Mr. Desbonnet agreed to make copies of the bottom lands file the commission keeps and provide that to TNC for review and consideration, and if their interest level remains strong after that review then a meeting with the full commission would be in order to work out a plan and strategy.

7) *Dock Application No. 200402241-SB (Lobdell)*

- a) This item was tabled for consideration at a future meeting, if needed.

8) *Commercial Activities*

- a) Kevin Blados reported he has put some seed stock on the bottom at his Mason Island site; this is a first test to see how the oysters over winter at that site.
- b) Steve Plant reported that he continues to harvest stock, weather permitting.

9) *Application for Aquaculture License No. AQP-07-2008-2018—Connecticut Cultured Oysters*

- a) Steve Plant provided a quick summary of the application, noting that it was part of his original co-management agreement with the commission.
- b) The commission requested the following minor corrections to the application be made:
 - i) Correct the end date to read “2018” if desired;
 - ii) Insert buoy number in “2. Culture/Growout Grounds” description as this bit of information is missing.
- c) Mr. Murphy noted that he will submit the corrected application to the Mystic River Harbor Management Commission for consideration, and that a March or April Public Hearing will be set, depending upon response time of the harbor commission.

NEW BUSINESS

---NONE---

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Banister made a **motion** to adjourn, with a second by Ms. Getchis. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:23 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Desbonnet; Secretary