

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

**03 December 2008**

A regular meeting of the Stonington Shellfish Commission was held on this date at the meeting room at the Human Service Building. Voting members present were Mr. Alan Banister, Mr. Don Raffo, Mr. John Swenarton, Mr. Alan Desbonnet, Secretary, and Mr. Donald Murphy, Chairman.

Mr. Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:03 PM.

A **motion** was made by Mr. Raffo to approve the 05 November 2008 minutes as presented. Mr. Banister provided a second to the motion, which was passed, Mr. Swenarton abstaining.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

1. A letter dated 01 December 2008 from CT Bureau of Aquaculture to Mr. Murphy re: permit renewal form for Barn Island site.
2. An email dated 03 December 2008 from Ken Petrini, DiCesare-Bentley Engineers to Mr. Murphy re: dock permit.

**BUSINESS**

- 1) *Conditional Shellfishing Areas*
  - a) Area A and Outer Quiambog Cove were open 01-24, closed 25-30 November. Area B was closed all of November as there was still one boat moored in the area.
  - b) Mr. Murphy reported that town waters were sampled by DA/BA and that meat samples had been collected for processing as part of the reopening procedure. Mr. Murphy will investigate why this is now being done and if this is indeed a permanent change and if so by what order(s).
- 2) *Review of Permit Sales*
  - a) Mr. Murphy provided a table of permit sales over time, noting that sales this year were slightly below average, and may have been due to high fuel prices keeping people from driving here to take shellfish.
  - b) Mr. Raffo provided a table of commission expenses for 2008 and summarized the data. Overall the commission about broke even between income and expenses, despite fewer permit sales [though at a slightly higher fee rate].
- 3) *Setting 2009 Permit Fees & Regulations*
  - a) There was a discussion regarding the seeding of oysters in town waters using those provided by Steve Plant as part of his aquaculture license. It was agreed that ½ bushel was an excessive amount, and Mr. Swenarton suggested 30 oysters per person per day which was consistent with Groton. It was agreed that no other regulations needed changing to implement oyster seeding; Mr. Raffo noted that the wording on the actual permit for 2009 would need to change slightly as well to reflect the 30 oyster limit. Mr. Murphy agreed to implement the required changes.
  - b) Mr. Raffo made a motion to maintain the fee structure for clams and oyster permits as they were for 2008, and to change the regulations to reflect a 30 oyster per person per day limit. Mr. Banister made a second to the motion, which was unanimously passed.

4) *Equipment & Enforcement*

- a) Mr. Murphy reported that the boat had been winterized and was to be moved into storage at Don's Dock; Mr. Murphy will cover the boat with a tarp this coming weekend.
- b) Mr. Murphy reported that the warden is patrolling by car and by foot on a limited basis.

5) *GIS Project*

- a) Mr. Murphy announced that there is a Q & A workshop taking place in Milford for those working on projects, but neither he nor Mr. Banister will attend as their project is moving along without problem.

6) *DEP "LEAN" Dock Application Process*

- a) Mr. Desbonnet reported that since the commission has 30 days to respond; 60 days if the application is submitted just before the meeting, there is not much opportunity to much more than the commission already does, and suggested not developing a new process to handle dock applications. He further reported that since CTDEP provides a required form, the commission should simply use that form as its official vehicle for application review and comment. The commission could request more time for review if the information were insufficient and/or a field visit was needed to adequately assess the proposed work. Mr. Swenarton suggested the commission simply proceed reviewing as it always has, using the new form, and if things become difficult or if expenses are incurred during the process then the commission can pause and rethink the process. All agreed this would be how the commission would proceed with dock applications.

7) *Scallop Rehabilitation Project*

- a) Mr. Murphy reported that about \$7,000 had been spent from the grant account; permits are all in order for 2009, except the DA/BA permit, which will be renewed without cost to the commission.
- b) Jon Mitchell, Project Coordinator for the commission, provided a summary and recap of the field season. There was lots of fouling on both the spat bags and the bottom cages and this was a challenge to remove on a regular basis from spat bags. However, spat were collected in October and so despite fouling and a late start to the project it did see some success. Furthermore, very good adult survival was found—about 15% mortality on average across all bottom bags containing adult bay scallops. All surviving adult scallops were released in town waters. There was higher mortality in the bags with 100 adults vs. 50 adults, but again, the mortality was low enough where this may not be worth changing during 2009 as it will mean nearly double the number of bags—and a lot more work—for only a very small increase in adult survival. Given that 10,000 adults were the original desired number, it would have been very difficult to handle with the number of volunteers engaged in the 2008 season; many more volunteers will be needed if 7,500 adults scallops are being considered for the project. It would be wise to consider engaging Steve Plant and use of his pontoon boat to set the cages in the spring, and to do so on a very low tide with people in water rather than setting them off a boat, which was difficult even with the limited number of cages used in the 2008 season. If 7,500 adults are being considered for 2009, inquiries need to start now to be sure to secure that many adults. Volunteers should also be engaged in the process right from the start, such as building gear—it was much easier to get those students who built the cages engaged in the field work than it was to attract students who had no history with

the project. It is likely that Jon will not be able to act as Project Coordinator in 2009 as he will be gone for a month or more during the summer, and so another coordinator should be looked for as soon as possible; perhaps Save The Bay or the Watch Hill Conservatory would be interested.

- c) Mr. Murphy agreed to look into the volunteer issue as he had some luck over the summer finding volunteers to seed clams into recreational waters. Mr. Murphy also agreed to contact the oceanography teacher at Stonington High School to see if his class might want to engage, or if there are some particular students who might want to volunteer some time and effort. Mr. Murphy will also check at CT Sea Grant to see if they have any ideas for a Project Coordinator.
- d) Mr. Desbonnet agreed to draft a 1-page summary of the project and 2008 field season for publication in "The Dredge," and will send it to Mr. Murphy and Jon Mitchell to read and edit. This needs to go to CT Sea Grant by mid-December. Mr. Desbonnet also agreed to put together a draft year end report to The Nature Conservancy that summarizes the 2008 effort and describes what will take place in 2009.
- e) Chris Littlefield suggested contacting the Milford Lab to see if they have any adult scallops to donate to the project; they have done so in the past to similar projects so it is worthwhile asking.

8) *Dock Application Review*

- a) Bescher Application—no impact noted and no comments will be issued.
- b) Savoie Application—no impact noted and no comments will be issued.
- c) Bam Application—no impact noted and no comments will be issued.
- d) Simon Application—no impact noted and no comments will be issued.

9) *Commercial Activities*

- a) None given.

NEW BUSINESS

---none---

There being no further business, Mr. Desbonnet made a **motion** to adjourn, with a second by Mr. Swenarton. The motion was unanimously approved and the meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Alan Desbonnet; Secretary