

APPROVED 2/5/2019

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TOWN OF IPSWICH - MASSACHUSETTS

Ipswich Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee to the Board of Selectmen
Meeting Minutes
January 8, 2019

A meeting of the Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee to the Select Board was held on Wednesday, January 8, 2019 in room C of the Ipswich Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Chair Linda Alexson, Michael Lambros, Wayne Castonguay, Brenda Turner, David Swicker, and Nishan Mootafian. Also, present were, Shellfish Constable Scott LaPreste and Recording Secretary Marie Rodgers.

Chief Paul Nikas were not present. This meeting was video recorded by ICAM.

Citizen's Queries: There were none.

Chair Linda Alexson tabled the Constable's report. Constable LaPreste welcomed and introduced Jeff Kennedy, Gloucester Regional Shellfish Supervisor, and Devon Winkler, both of the MA Division of Marine Fisheries, who were present to discuss neoplasia affecting soft shell clams and answer questions. (12 page presentation was submitted)

Neoplasia is a contagious, leukemia-like cancer that spreads among different species of marine bivalves, which have tested positive locally. Although not harmful to humans, the mortality rate for the shellfish is high. Mr. Kennedy reported the neoplasia is a veterinarian shellfish disease and not a real concern to humans. There is no cure, there is no preventing or controlling it; for that reason there will be no additional resources devoted to it. The next testing in Ipswich will take place in April.

He reviewed the history of the disease; found over thirty years ago in the Boston Harbor. He described the pathology and theories pertaining to the die-offs. It is direct transmission from one clam to another; proximity is a problem, there no way to clean the water; it's found everywhere along the East Coast. Summer weather can exacerbate the problem because of the low oxygen levels in the water.

Shellfish landing data shows a trend with 88% of total clams harvested are from the North Shore. He referenced the 147 state permits for harvest and unique permits. Discussion took place concerning the additional permits above the 125 cap that Ipswich enforces. Mr. Kennedy said he would look into it.

Samples from Ipswich, Essex are sent to Pennsylvania where Dr. Anne Boettger, Assistant Professor; B.S., Ph.D. Pennsylvania State University, volunteers her time. Results are back within one day or two. Discussion took place regarding the possibility of collecting data and test locally. There is another lab in Maine.

David MacDougall, 88 High St., suggested to wipe out all the rules, "there are too many and we don't need them". He has harvested clams for thirty years and opined that clamming is finished, and clammers are done. He predicted by next summer, not one of us will be making a living; he suggested digging all the clams out because they will all die; we can't do anything about the disease he suggested everyone is ignoring the issue.

Ms. Alexson replied that the issue is not being ignored and stressed the importance of knowledge in order to take action, which is the reason DMF is here to answer questions.

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Mr. Kennedy spoke to closures after rainfalls; the rules and state laws were created for public health reasons after years of research.

Mr. Kennedy submitted one copy of an 11 page research paper, which Dr. Anne Boettger co-authored.

The Committee thanked Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Winkler for their presentation and time.

Documents used by the Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee: presentation titled Haemic Neoplasia in Softshell Clams in Massachusetts from DMF author Jeff Kennedy Gloucester Regional Shellfish Supervisor Mass Division of Marine Fisheries.

Constable Report

The Ipswich River is currently open; winter rain rules are in effect as of December 15th. Constable reported that ten people did not do tasks for 2018. There are 13 new commercial permit applications, and lottery will take place at the February meeting.

A meeting took place with Roger Warner discussing green crabs in late November. He opined that it is the largest green crab working group in the U.S. He encouraged viewing Mr. Warner's website.

Ms. Turner related a TV report about using shells of shrimp and green crabs to create bio-degradable bags in England.

Green crab funding

As of April 1st \$5000 from 20,000 in FY19, \$12,500 from State. Will submit for the state money next week.

Have \$17,500 to spend starting April 1st through June 30th.

The State \$12,500 could change.

Enhancement Fund

The Committee can spend up to \$15,000; theoretically could fund FY20 green crabs trapping program.

Chief puts funding for the green crab trapping program in the budget; there's no guarantee the town will fund it.

If the State \$12,500 is delayed, \$12,500 could be appropriated from the Enhancement Fund.

Old Business

Ms. Alexson re-addressed the idea of sending out surveys to commercial clammers. It would be a way to gather more information, in addition to "data sets". After a short discussion, it was suggested to provide the reason for the survey.

This survey would be totally anonymous and voluntary, no personal or financial information, only generalities about timing, weights, etc.

Discussion ensued regarding the rate of success; data collected by DMF. Mr. Castonguay offered to help with creation. It will be discussed at future meetings. General consensus was not to send out with license renewals.

► Approval of minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Castonguay moved to approve the meeting minutes from the November meeting. Mr. Lambros seconded. The vote was unanimously in favor. Mr. Mootafian recused himself.

► Next Meeting –Tuesday February 5, 2019 @ 7:00 PM in Room A.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously vote to adjourn at 8:10 p.m. Respectfully Submitted, M. Rodgers
These minutes were approved on 2/5/2019