

TOWN OF IPSWICH
MASSACHUSETTS

Ipswich Shellfish Advisory Committee to the Select Board
February 12, 2020
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Shellfish Advisory Committee to the Select Board was held on Tuesday, February 12, 2020 in room A of the Ipswich Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Chairperson Linda Alexson, Brenda Turner, Charlie Surpitski, Sandi Corning and new member Peter Soffron. Also present, Shellfish Constable LaPreste, Chief Nikas and Recording Secretary Rodgers.

Wayne Castonguay and Nishan Mootafian were not present.

ICAM Video recorded.

Citizen queries: There were none.

Announcements:

Ms. Alexson announced the deadline for shellfish applications of March 1st has been extended by the Select Board to Monday, March 2, 2020.

Ms. Alexson welcomed new member Peter Soffron, long time clammer.

Town Wharf Reconstruction

The Ipswich Wastewater Department is in the process of evaluating the Town Wharf Pump Station located at the Ipswich Town Wharf on East Street. The goal of this project is to upgrade or replace the station to ensure reliable operation for future decades.

Chief Nikas provided an overview of the timeline for reconstruction of the Town Wharf. Construction will begin March 1st and final phase is anticipated to be completed by June 1st.

He announced the ramp will be out of service in May, including Memorial Day weekend, and suggested folks plan accordingly.

Shellfish Constable's Report -

The Enhancement Task Plan was implemented in April 2010 by Constable LaPreste; in lieu of a task, \$100 for the Enhancement Fund is expected to be paid with the fee for a commercial clamming permit. Constable LaPreste reported there were twelve (12) commercial permit holders who did not do a task; he opined that the letter, sent out last fall, provided better communication.

The green crab trapping program provides for five trappers; the applications go out next month and five will be chosen to start April 1st. There is \$5,000 left from the State funding from last fall. As of July 1st \$20,000 will be appropriated in the general fund. Currently, the balance in the enhancement fund is \$31,763. This amount will increase with new commercial/recreational permits.

Discussion was held regarding enhancement funds available for repairs at Eagle Hill. At the next meeting the agenda will have a vote to appropriate \$12,000 from the enhancement fund for the remainder of FY20 for green crab trapping.

Student License Lottery and Full Time Commercial License Lottery

The Constable explained the lottery process and Chief Nikas picked the names randomly and hereby incorporated and attached to these minutes.

The Constable will submit these names to the Town Clerk tomorrow.

Survey for Commercial Permit Holders

Members reviewed the draft cover letter and two page survey. The proposed survey was compiled for research purposes; the intention is to identify concerns and issues from the current commercial clambers. The survey is completely voluntary and anonymous; return deadline is March 15, 2020.

A brief discussion took place concerning the purpose and later in the meeting one more question was added regarding digging on Sundays.

MOTION:

Mr. Surpitski moved to send the survey out to commercial permit holders. Ms. Turner seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Members reviewed the draft letter to DMF concerning commercial permit transaction card (or “bed certificate”) issued by the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) and the ability of recreational harvesters to obtain a transaction card, enabling them to sell their catch, which is in violation of local regulations.

Discussion took place, the letter was well-received and it was agreed to include Representative Bradford Hill and neighboring communities of Rowley, Essex and Gloucester. It will be signed by the Select Board.

New Business

► Chief Nikas initiated discussion regarding a proposed Oyster Farm in Rowley located in the Rowley River. Members expressed concern for the source of the oyster seed. Chief indicated that he asked the question, but hasn’t received an answer yet. All seeds are required to come from an approved source.

The proposal still has to be approved by the Rowley Select Board and Conservation Commission and DMF. It was noted that this will be the first oyster farm in the estuary. MEPA reviews the process and Ipswich will be noticed for the public comment period.

► Ms. Turner initiated discussion regarding the management plan and rules contained therein.

Chief noted the plan was updated three or four years ago; when the River is closed for a period of time, the State requires a management plan when it is reopened. Chief Nikas suggested incorporating the River Management Plan into the regulations as an Appendix.

► Ms. Alexson mentioned a few issues to consider for upcoming meetings.

When the deadline for Commercial applications falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the cutoff date should be the next business day.

Rowley and Essex have late fees for commercial permits; should we follow suit?

The past two summers members voted to open Clark Beach on Sundays for recreational clamming; do the members want to keep it a yearly consideration or change the regulations and make it a permanent rule? Ms. Turner suggested adding that question on the survey. Mr. Surpitski moved to amend the motion made earlier in the meeting to amend the survey. Ms. Turner seconded the amendment to the main motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Surpitski offered another issue to for members to consider; raising the permit fees for commercial licenses at the suggestion of the Finance Committee; reasoning that it hasn't been raised since 2005. This will be placed on a future agenda.

Ipswich Harbor and Waterways Management Plan Survey

Chris Murray, Chair of the Waterways Advisory Board for the Town of Ipswich presented a brief overview of the Harbor Management Plan. The town is working with the Urban Harbors Institute at UMass Boston to develop a Harbor and Waterways Management Plan in order to ensure that activity on, around, or impacting the waterways and shoreline is aligned with the community's interests. As part of the initial planning process, the town is seeking input on the issues and topics that should be addressed in the plan.

Discussion took place concerning moorings vs marina and the impacts on the shellfish habitat; and feasibility study conducted by the N.E. Coastal Coalition for the proposed dredging of the river. Mr. Soffron raised the issue of public safety concerning the pipe buoys and swift water buoys placed to mark the channels.

Mr. Murray urged the Committee to provide recommendations and visions/goals for the future and including economic overview, historical importance.

Approval of minutes:

Approval of the December minutes was tabled due to lack of members who were at that meeting.

Next Meeting –Tuesday April 7, 2020 @ 7:00 PM in Room A.

Adjourn - It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn at 9:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
~Marie Rodgers

These minutes were approved on May 5, 2020