

TOWN OF IPSWICH
MASSACHUSETTS

Ipswich Shellfish Advisory Committee to the Select Board
May 5, 2020
Meeting Minutes

A meeting of the Shellfish Advisory Committee to the Select Board was held on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. Members participated remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

Members present were Chairperson Linda Alexson, Brenda Turner, Charlie Surpitski, Wayne Castonguay, Nishan Mootafian and Peter Soffron. Also present, Shellfish Constable LaPreste, and Recording Secretary Rodgers. Chief Nikas and Sandi Corning were not present. ICAM Video recorded.

Citizen queries: There were none.

Shellfish Constable's Report -

Constable LaPreste reported as of March 17, 2020, he and Steve Turner were deemed essential employees by the management of fisheries. The flats have remained open. The market is not great, but the demand is there.

The river is closed for the season and Fox Creek is closed until fall.

The Constable reviewed the May 1st rule changes, oyster season is over, and commercial clammers must now launch out of Eagle Hill when harvesting in N4. All flats are closed on Sundays.

The Constable did not have any updates on the Town Wharf reconstruction.

Green Crab update

The Constable reported that on April 6, 2020 the Select Board voted to appropriate \$12,000 from the Shellfish Enhancement Fund FY20 Budget to fund the Green Crab trapping program.

There is \$5,000 left over from the town for FY20 and \$17,000 available to spend by June 30th.

Green crab trapping contracts went out to Peter Iwic, Larry Moon, and Matt Gonet.

In response to Mr. Surpitski, the Constable hopes to spend all \$17,000 before the end of FY20.

Any funds not expended from the enhancement fund will roll back into the account. Currently, the enhancement fund has a balance close to \$30,000.

Discussion took place concerning budget cuts and the possibility of State funding being cut. No action was taken.

Discussion was held concerning locations for trapping. Mr. Castonguay noted there is little benefit for trapping in the river, trapping in N4 has a much greater benefit and he made an appeal to reduce trapping in the river.

Constable spoke to the logistics of green crab trapping and noted that N7 does not lend itself to trapping. He noted that access to the Castle Neck River launching out of TTOR is allowed.

Peter Soffron arrived 7:24 p.m.

Discussion continued regarding green crab trapping and it was suggested to send a letter, as shellfish commissioners, to shellfish commissioners in surrounding towns; to offer support and promote interest. It was suggested that Constable LaPreste reach out to constables in surrounding towns. Another regional meeting was proposed to be scheduled in January-February of 2021; this will be a future agenda item.

2020 Task Program

Constable reported that due to the pandemic, no spring tasks took place and he does not know when it would be safe to conduct tasks. He recommended suspending the task program just for this year. He noted that with the tasks conducted in the previous years, we could easily skip a year. The members agreed.

MOTION:

Mr. Castonguay moved to recommend the Select Board suspend the task program for this year 2020. Ms. Turner seconded. Constable LaPreste will draft a memo for the Select Board. The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

Commercial permit deadline appeal

Constable LaPreste explained two people came to him; they applied at the town clerk's office to renew their commercial licenses and were told to return at the end of March and missed the deadline. Both of these people are returning first time clammers, both did a task and he believes they were truthful. There was one opening and the second would be one over the cap of 125. He feels this is a logical action to take and would maintain the integrity of the cap.

Discussion took place how to better inform people about the regulations and procedural deadlines. When the deadline for commercial applications falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the cutoff date should be the next business day.

Constable noted that the task program mailing received good results. It was agreed to create a one page informational sheet to be mailed out outlining renewal procedures and encourage calling the shellfish recording on a daily basis.

Student permit update

The regulations cap student shellfish licenses at five. Three students applied for two openings. The Select Board allowed all three students to receive licenses. Discussion took place concerning extending the cap from five to six students; amending the regulations will be revisited at a future time.

Mr. Castonguay initiated discussion concerning the role of the Shellfish Advisory Board and expressed his dismay of people going directly to the Select Board and sidestepping this board. Discussion took place concerning lack of quorums to hold shellfish meetings, plus the cancellation of the last meeting due to the pandemic.

Survey for Commercial Permit Holders

There was a good response of surveys. Discussion was held concerning how to evaluate and synthesize the responses. Ms. Alexson will obtain them from Marie Rodgers and go from there.

Approval of minutes

Motion:

Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the February 2020 minutes. Ms. Turner seconded. Mr. Soffron suggested adding Mr. Murray’s comment “hoping the shellfish department to be the centerpiece of the harbor management plan.” Mr. Mootafian moved to amend the minutes as discussed. Ms. Turner seconded; the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

New Business:

MOTION:

Mr. Castonguay moved to accept the December minutes. Ms. Turner seconded and the motion passed with a roll call vote. Castonguay, yes; Mootafian, yes; Turner, yes; and Alexson, yes.

Old Business:

The letter to DMF concerning commercial permit transaction cards was signed and sent from the Select Board. There has been no response to date.

The hearing date for the oyster aquaculture farm in Rowley was changed to May 11, 2020.

Old Business:

Mr. Castonguay and Mr. Soffron reviewed their recent work on information gathering and their approach to fill in the outline for the Harbor Management Plan. They discussed reaching out to DMF and deducing information for economic analysis and historic significance.

► **Clark Beach** open on Sundays for recreational clamming

The past two years members have voted to open Clark Beach on Sundays for recreational clamming;

Lengthy discussion was held regarding the town being required to have a designated clam flat for recreational diggers, the productivity of the flat, without commercial diggers the flat is not turned over, the flat was hit hard and die-off from Neoplasia; the options were discussed. The Constable felt that rotating the location of recreational flats can cause confusion. Constable recommended Clark Beach to open for recreational diggers on Sundays.

MOTION:

Mr. Mootafian moved to recommend only Clark Beach be open on Sundays this summer for recreational clambers. Mr. Soffron seconded. Discussion ensued regarding options. Mr. Castonguay voiced his support and revisit in the long term management plan. The motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

Next Meeting – June 2, 2020 @ 7:00 p.m. via Zoom Video Conference.

Adjourn - It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
~Marie Rodgers

These minutes were approved as revised on June 2, 2020

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law' the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting; the members present or absent; the findings made and actions taken. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion on any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.