A meeting of the Shellfish Advisory Committee to the Select Board was held on Tuesday, October 6, 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, Wayne Castonguay, Nishan Mootafian, Sandi Corning and Peter Soffron. Also present were Shellfish Constable LaPreste, and Recording Secretary Rodgers. Not attending were Chief Nikas and Charlie Surpitski. This meeting was video recorded by ICAM.

Citizen’s Queries: There were none.

Constables report:  
Constable LaPreste indicated that not much has changed from last month’s report. He noted the drought conditions keep the flats open. Five data sets were collected in October and continue to be collected. Additionally, double tides are allowed in October.

Old Business/New Business:  
Ms. Alexson initiated discussion concerning proposed changes to the regulations. She said Town Counsel did not have any concerns. She asked the members to consider streamlining the process and eliminate the requirement for “over 70” recreational permits requiring Select Board approval. Instead, residents could simply provide proof of residency and age to the town clerk with their permit application. Members voiced their agreement.

Next, Ms. Alexson suggested removing the parenthetical references of dates regulations were changed. Instead, at the beginning of the regulations, place the date adopted.

MOTION:  
Mr. Castonguay moved to recommend the Select Board revise the “over 70” recreational permits and remove the requirement of Select Board approval; and to remove the parentheticals references of dates regulations were changed and replace with the wording “adopted through date” at the beginning of the regulations. Seconded by Ms. Turner, the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

► Approval of minutes:  

MOTION: Mr. Mootafian moved to approve the September 15, 2020 meeting minutes. Mr. Soffron seconded, the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

Harbor Management Plan Update  
Mr. Soffron began the review with the vision statement. It was suggested to list the goals of preservation, conservation, education and maintenance of the shellfish industry and recreational uses.
Discussion of **Identify Waterway Characteristics** - it was suggested, instead of “inventory of matrix”, provide an inventory of channels, beaches and shellfish beds. Discussion was held concerning the importance of a survey response and the best way to capture as much of the community as possible.

Discussion took place concerning commercial use versus recreational use. Where there is a conflict, commercial supersedes recreational. Conflicts include location of moorings; landings; uneducated recreational diggers and dogs not allowed on clam flats. Constable agreed. Ms. Alexson disagreed and opined that a balance needs to be maintained. All members agreed about the importance of the commercial industry for the town. All agreed a campaign of education and awareness is essential. Mr. Castonguay spoke to the **Water Quality Report** developed in 1990’s. The Selectmen at that time voted to implement all recommendations from the report.

Mooring Fields were discussed: enforcement laws are on the books and it was suggested to tweak a better system of accountability and don’t add more mooring fields.

Point Source Pollution- it was suggested to revisit existing work. Main objectives were discussed; advocate for the protection of the marsh, clean up the river, promote education and awareness.

Dredging -members raised concerns about the potential impacts, the lack of plans and the cost. It’s difficult to make any decisions when numerous concerns need to be addressed.

Green Crab Eradication program was discussed. Ipswich has been successful and with receiving funding from the State, but State funding is not likely to continue. The objective is to continue trapping green crabs and urge surrounding towns to do the same.

Commercial Waterway Access was discussed at length concerning locations and use. It was suggested to list the positives for each landing, along with the negatives for each landing. Discussion continued regarding the idea of restricting Eagle Hill Landing to commercial permits only. Constable raised issues of enforcement and opined it would devalue the recreational permit and it may not be legal.

Aquaculture was discussed. The town has developed a strong set of regulations for soft shell clams, but there are limited public lands available.

Waterways Boundaries remains controversial. Mr. Castonguay opined that the plan should provide resolution. The Constable spoke to the complex issues of boundaries and difficulty of managing town lines. The Constable goes out with the town employees and they survey/mark the boundaries; two weeks later the markers are gone. Mr. Castonguay remembered back in the 1990’s the lines held up pretty good. The Constable referred to them as “helter skelter boundary lines” and everyone knows it.

The time line for the draft plan was discussed; finalize in January 2121, to be presented at the spring town meeting. Members would like to see the pre-draft.

Water Monitoring – there is a need for the Town to develop its own program to monitor water quality. Teachers at the high school continue to work with students to test water quality. The Constable will reach out them.

► **Next Meeting** –Tuesday December 8, 2020 @ 7:00 PM

It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed with a roll call vote to adjourn at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Rodgers
These minutes were approved on 12.8.2020.
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.