



Waterford-East Lyme Shellfish Commission



Meeting Minutes
Thursday, Aug 20, 2020
Virtual meeting held via Zoom, 7:30 pm

Members present: Chair Peter Harris, J. Patrick Kelly, Eric Kanter, Tom Bowlen, Marcia Benvenuti, and Fred Wise
Members absent: Larry Tytla, Paul Spakowski
Guests: Chief Warden Chmiel

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm and a quorum established.
- 2) Review and approval of previous meeting minutes:
 - a. 16 Jul 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes – Approved following a motion by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Bowlen, vote 6-0.
 - b. 06 Aug 2020 Special Meeting Minutes - Approved following a motion by Mr. Kanter, seconded by Mr. Wise, vote 5-0, Mr. Bowlen abstained.
- 3) Review and approval of treasurer's report
Treasurer's report given by Mr. Kelly. Report approved on a motion by Mr. Wise, seconded by Mr. Bowlen, vote 6-0.
- 4) Chief Warden's Comments : Mr. Chmiel gave his report. The Niantic River is now open to shellfishing following approval of the MOU, boat is running well. The new warden, Mr. Keltonic, has been training with Mr. Chmiel and will soon be ready to patrol on his own.
- 5) Old business:
 - a. Discussion and potential action on purchase of shellfish stock from Commercial Aquaculture suppliers: Mr. Wise has contacted multiple commercial shellfish growers regarding purchase of shellfish stock for stocking/seeding purposes. Oysters are quite plentiful, clams are available but not from some commercial growers, scallops are only available from NBSF. Pricing for clams/oysters was variable dependent on size and quantity of stock to be purchased. Mr. Wise will discuss again with the commercial growers about quantity of mixed size clams that could be purchased with \$1500-\$3000. Mr. Wise will report his findings at the Sept meeting.
 - b. Update on recreational shellfishing area reclassification by DA/BA: The MOU between DA/BA and WELSCO is official and the Niantic River was re-opened to shellfishing soon after the final document was sent to DA/BA.
 - c. Discussion and potential action on transfer of financial responsibilities away from Town of Waterford. Mr. Kelly contacted Premier Accounting in East Lyme and confirmed the rates and fees for WELSCO payroll and bookkeeping were the same as the quote received in the spring of this year. Discussion ensued regarding the cost and the amount of work each month. Mr. Kelly explained the initial accounting may cost more due to the extra time needed to transfer the accounting and to complete the accounting which was not done for a few months when WELSCO was without a bookkeeper. The following motion was approved on a motion by Mr. Kanter, seconded by Mr. Mr. Wise, vote 6-0. Motion : WELSCO will hire Premier Accounting for up to \$350 per month with the understanding that if there is less work the rate/fee will be adjusted. Rates and fees may be higher initially.

- d. Discussion and purchase of supplies for the Warden boat. Discussion with the Commission and Chief Warden Chmiel regarding supplies needed to replace old or substandard equipment. Approved motion from previous meeting is in place approving Mr. Chmiel to spend up to \$500 for these supplies. Additional discussion regarding future expenses such as a new seat, helm, and steering were discussed. Mr. Chmiel will let the commission know when those items are in need of replacement.

6) New Business

Discussion on future shellfish seeding projects

.Commission discussed thoughts on future seeding / stocking projects that could provide both an increase in shellfish stock available for recreational shellfishing and improvement in water quality due to the filter feeding nature of shellfish. Clams and oysters were both viewed as favorable species given the success of these species in the Niantic River historically and at present. Scallops were thought to be a risky investment given that species sensitivity and the poor success from past stocking efforts. No decision was made and discussions will continue.

- 7) Ex-Officio comments : no comments, Ex-Officio absent

8) Correspondence

The commission discussed an e-mail forwarded to the commission by Mr. Harris from Ms. Winkler who was the project manager from last years oyster seeding effort. Ms. Winkler has been in communication with Mr. Markow (Mystic Oysters) and he had surveyed the oysters that Mystic Oysters seeded in the Niantic River and reported they were doing well, better than expected in his opinion.

- 9) Public Comment – Public comment was inadvertently not included in the original agenda. A Public Comment Agenda item was added on a motion by Mr. Kanter, seconded by Mr. Wise, motion passed 6-0. No public comment.

- 10) Meeting adjourned at 9:03 pm on a motion by Mr. Bowlen, seconded by Mr. Wise, motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Harris