

Deer Isle Stonington Shellfish Conservation Committee Minutes

June 12th 2024

Deer Isle Town Hall

Committee Members in Attendance

Crystal Gove – Chair

Billy Gove Sr.

Phelps Brown – Evergreen Garden Club

George Powell

Raelene Pert – Shellfish Warden

Jacob McCarty – Island Heritage Trust

Emaly Piecuch – Biologist

Speaker in Attendance

Allison Melvin – Fish Creek Oysters

11 Guests were in attendance

1. Quorum met, meeting called to order at 6:04 pm.
2. May 8th minutes were unavailable. Reading and approval tabled until next meeting.

3. Report from Chair

a. May 29th's Shellfish Conservation of seed collection and distribution for our Seeding Initiative Project was postpone due to the Army Corp of Engineers permit not taking effect until June 5th. Instead we prepared the netting and created the green crab traps for the project. Seeding Initiative Project seed collection and distribution is scheduled for June 28th 2024, 7:30 am, meeting at the upper parking lot next to the Deer Isle Town Hall on the playground side. Volunteers are needed and word needs to be spread about volunteers being needed. Allison Melvin said she could post an ad for us on Greenhead's Facebook page. Jake McCarty said he could create & put out fliers for us.

b. There is going to be a sign up sheet at the end of the meeting this evening for volunteers to collect green crabs from the Seeding Initiative traps throughout the summer. This would consist of sizing, sexing and the color of the crabs.

c. No results yet for the Abby Barrows hearing back on May 28th. An overview of what was said by The Committee at the hearing was gone over. There was a member of the public who attended the hearing that was worried about what the "clammers" presented. The person spoke with Brian Beal and Dana Morse and did a write up for us entitled, "Some facts gathered for our clammers". That was read to the committee and guests along with an article Crystal Gove came across from April 10th 2021 written by the Bangor Daily News interviewing Brian Beal, Dana Morse & Chris Petersen making opposite statements then what was put in the letter to the diggers.

4. Report from Warden

a. Raelene was at court once this month and she has given one summons.

b. Merchants Point Road Association contacted Raelene to confirm to her there are 3 designated spots for clammers down that road. In a recent incident, a digger was parked in a designated spot and when he went clamming, someone from the area parked a vehicle directly behind them and left. The clammer pushed the vehicle out from behind them and left. The following day the same thing occurred except this time the digger rammed the vehicle out of the way. When police were called, but because the owner of the damaged vehicle had not registered, inspected or insured the vehicle, the police did

nothing about the indecent. The officer thought it was done intentionally so they are not looking into it any further. The Merchants Point Road Association said nothing is going to change and the diggers are still aloud to go to the designated spots. The 3 areas are 1. when pulling into Merchants Point, the area on the left hand side of the road big enough for 2 vehicles 2. when coming to the Y in the road go down to Merchants Point taking the right and there's 2 parking spots there and 3. if you go left at the Y there is a large pull off at the top of the hill on the left that accomodates 4 to 5 vehicles, no parking in the roadway. Otherwise you need permission to go anywhere else.

5. Guest speaker Allison Melvin

Allison had been to Abby Barrows hearing and that is what spurred her to want to come to the Shellfish Meeting. She told about her current LPA's (limited purpose aquaculture) near Fish Creek that they have to renew every year. What exactly they are and why they are different than Abby's Standard Lease plot in Long Cove. She made us aware of a Standard Lease Application her and her husband, Jesse Klein have into the DMR right now. She believes it still could take up to 2 years before their final lease hearing will come about. She explained where it is they applied for a standard lease. She said that their farm, being in 6 – 8 ft of water at low tide is not in the inter tidal zone and therefore they do NOT have to come to the Municipal Shellfish Conservation Committee for approval. Applicants are not required to go through the Municipal Shellfish Committee because their oyster farm will always be in the water. She would like to work with the Shellfish Committee on future experiments and surveys between how clams and oysters work with one another. Allison wants to be on the same page with the clam harvesters so that everyone can work together.

David Goding of Deer Isle stated his concern about the area in which Allison and Jesse are planning to place their oyster farm and the expansion of it. He sails through the channel in that area and it's already very tricky to maneuver through. He felt that it will be almost impassible if the farm goes in where it is "staked" out.

Allison said that she would continue to stay along the ledges off to the side of the channel and not go to the south of that where it would be into the channel. DMR has not done a site visit yet as it is the next step in there application.

Bill Gove asked what would happen if David ran into her oyster gear and damaged it. She did not know the answer to that at this time.

Allison expressed that it is hard to find an area to place an aquaculture farm site that isn't next to a home, that doesn't impede on navigation or existing uses like not near where clams are harvested. She said there is clamming all over there and she needs to do more research. George stated he has clammed on Campbell Island right next to where the oyster farm would be.

Desirable traits for an oyster farm are in shallow warmer bodies of water over a cooler body of water because the warmer waters speed up the growth of the oysters. The oysters also need a lot of good water flow.

Allison will look into buying Triploid oysters that are less likely to spawn rather than the Diploid oysters which would be a simple solution to the Committee's, harvester's and public's concern of farmed oysters taking over any clam flats.

6. Other Business

a. Jen Orchard brought up a concern of a recent article she read about "Oyster Disease". It was believed she could have been reading about Vibrio. She will send a link to the article to Crystal and she will read it over to see if it's something to bring up at an upcoming meeting.

b. Crystal made clear that water temperature rise is another big factor in the die off of the soft shell clam population. Not only is it helping the oysters reproduce, but it is getting too warm and acidic for clams. George suggested to get a hold of the DMR to get copies of salinity, acidity, temperature, etc records on studies they have done over the last few years. Raelene said in 2022 Butter Island,

Hardwood Island and Bradberry in the western bay measured in at 68.4 degrees F between July and August.

c. The licensing meetings start from June to May each year. There is no rollover.

d. Start a Facebook subgroup for people who want to volunteer for checking green crab traps over the summer.

7. Next meeting September 11th 6 pm Stonington Town Hall.

8. Meeting Adjourned 7:30 pm.

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