

**Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Jan. 17, 2017 at 5:00 p.m.
Community Room, 4 Fairgrounds Road**

Members present: Kenneth Kuntz, Kenneth Gullicksen, Joe LiPuma. Andy Lowell, Peter Brace

Members Absent: Fritz McClure, Bill Blount

Marine Dept:

Natural Resources Dept: Tara Riley

Others:

CALL TO ORDER

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Unanimously approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Jan. 3, 2017 unanimously approved, Mr. Gullicksen abstained

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Brace reminded the board that when board members are speaking, they need to do so by speaking closer to their microphones because HSAB meetings are video/audio streamed live. Mr. Brace also noted that members of the public and staff who need to speak must do so at the microphones on either side of the room.

MARINE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

No report.

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

Town shellfish biologist Tara Riley reported that the NRD is continuing to work on the hatchery's renovation and has completed close to 90 percent of the work including completing the algae

system, half of shellfish brood stock done including oysters and scallops with spawning to begin in six weeks. Hatchery tours and educational program are starting. Ms. Riley also reported that currently there are around 12 boats out scalloping.

Mr. Kuntz asked Ms. Riley why the harvest is so low. Ms. Riley replied that last summer's cholerydium bloom last longer than usual creating feeding problem with the scallops.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

OLD BUSINESS

Shellfish regulation change idea: requiring set number of hours shellfishers must work with the Natural Resources Department on such things as moving scallop seed, helping during seed strandings, propagation lab help and other tasks – Discussion only – HSAB

Ms. Riley presented her proposal to amend the town's shellfish regulations as detailed above after distributing a hardcopy of her proposal to the board. She added that enforcement could include denying shellfishers the right to fish in the first two weeks of their given season if they hadn't completed their minimum NRD work requirement.

She said the NRD would provide plenty of work opportunities to get their eight hours in including serving on either the HSAB or the Shellfish Plan Implementation Committee. Ms. Riley said she took input from members of the Nantucket Shellfish Association and fishermen who regularly work to help with hers' and the hatchery's efforts and that their comments were all positive. Ms. Riley explained that the proposed change would come from the Natural Resources Department and that she is seeking a letter of support from the HSAB.

Ms. Riley offered this amendment, should it be approved by the Board of Selectmen, would be a great way for the NRD and the hatchery to remain engaged with all shellfishermen.

Mr. Brace indicated that this proposal is great idea. Mr. LiPuma said Ms. Riley's ideas was well outlined and offered plenty of opportunities for contributing to the health of the fishery. Mr. Brace asked how the NRD arrived at eight hours of work. Ms. Riley indicated that she and the NRD based the hours on the number of shellfishermen and the amount of work needed to be completed. Mr. Brace urged Ms. Riley to really push for shellfishermen to serve on the SMP committee.

Mr. Gullicksen suggested the work year start with Nov. 1 and end with Oct. 1, so fishermen could get work done during their seasons. He also suggested a system of pre-approval to keep tabs on who did what work when and that the list of work items is just for starters, others can be added as time goes on. Mr. Gullicksen also suggested making other non-related enforcement changes in the shellfish regulations at the same as this change.

Mr. Lowell praised Ms. Riley and the NRD for this proposal. He asked that Ms. Riley and town counsel work out any liability issues. Mr. Brace, in response to Mr. Lowell's related question said he would endeavor to get the Inquirer & Mirror to publicize the Feb. 7, 2017 meeting of the HSAB when the board expected to discuss this proposal again to get fishermen to the meeting to get their input.

Mr. Brace recommended that recreational shellfishers could be conscripted for helping the hatchery with its tasks.

Mr. Lowell recommended diver-specific work tasks.

Mr. Kuntz cautioned that making the work a requirement might cause some fishermen to challenge this proposal.

Mr. Gullicksen suggested an option in which fishermen might pay a higher fee for their license in lieu of doing the work.

Mr. Lowell noted that tradesmen are required to complete various types of refresher coursework annually and suggested compensation for gasoline use and oxygen used by divers.

NEW BUSINESS

Dredging practices and harbor bottom-friendly dredges –
Discussion – HSAB

Mr. Kuntz didn't get the information he needed in time to report on this subject for this meeting. Mr. Kuntz asked if Ms. Riley knew of other dredge designs and replied that Martha's Vineyard scallopers use a different kind of dredge and that the only change Nantucket made to its dredges was to decrease the weight from 40 to 35 pounds. Mr. Brace recalled that Nantucket scalloper Steve Scannell used narrow dredges with fishing net mesh instead metal rings.

Mr. Kuntz asked for this issue to be put on the Feb. 7 agenda.

Mr. Lowell suggested reaching out to the shellfish association for alternative design ideas such as wooden skids on the dredges.

Mr. Brace suggested closing a certain area of the harbor to dredging to see how not dredging for scallops helps or hinders eelgrass growth. Ms. Riley said that one year, Second Bend was closed to fishing as a seed sanctuary. The town released seed in there, but at the end of the season, but the eelgrass didn't do well because, according to scallopers, it wasn't "aerated" by dredging. Mr. LiPuma said the board needed to learn the science of eelgrass growth before making any decisions on recommendations to the selectmen. Mr. LiPuma said he would research the eelgrass studies that Charles T. Costello did for the state and then report back to the board.

Mr. Gullicksen said we need to test several alternative plans and that scallopers have been dredging the harbors for decades, currently with lighter dredges, and there is still eelgrass in the harbor.

Mr. Brace said he's hoping the reconstructed jetties will, over the long term, increase flushing of pollutants from the harbor, which could help eelgrass growth.

Ms. Riley said she "really liked" Mr. Lowell's idea of modifying dredges and added that having a dredging best management practices would help as well.

Mr. Lowell questioned whether Second Bend was a good example for eelgrass survivability because he said not much has ever grown

in there. He added that he'd heard green crabs could cut eelgrass to get to scallops. Mr. Kuntz asked if there'd been an increase in green crabs over time and Ms. Riley said that there probably has. Mr. Lowell and Mr. Kuntz requested information on re-dredging the channel into the Head of the Harbor. Mr. LiPuma agreed that the rebuilding of the jetties would probably increase the flushing of the harbor.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Mr. Kuntz suggested a possible motion for reformatting the HSAB agenda to allow board members talk on any topic that they felt needed discussing. Mr. Brace reminded Mr. Kuntz that he could request additions of topic(s) to that meeting's agenda.

ADJOURN

Future Meetings:

Feb. 7 and Feb. 21

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Chairman and secretary pro tem