

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Nov. 5, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
Via Zoom
***HSAB meeting are video-recorded**

Members present: Andy Lowell, Scott Anderson, Jim Sjolund, Bobby DeCosta, Peter Brace

Members Absent: Dave Fronzuto, Dave Bossi

Marine Dept:

Natural Resources Dept: Tara Riley

Others: Kona Hosier, Jason Graziadei

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lowell called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Sjolund seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 5-0 to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Sept. 3 and Oct. 15

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to approve both sets of minutes. Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the Sept. 3, 2024 and the Oct. 15, 2024 minutes. Mr. Sjolund seconded that motion. The HSAB approved both sets of minutes 5-0. The HSAB agreed to have Mr. Brace send out the July 16, 2024 and Oct. 1, 2024 minutes prior to the next meeting so the board could vote on them.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Lowell reported on how informative the eelgrass presentation was that he went to at the Great Harbor Yacht Club (GHYC) on Nov. 1, 2024.

MARINE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

General Marine Department report – Sheila Lucey

No report.

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

General Natural Resources Department report – NRD staff

Ms. Riley reported that she and shellfish warden JC Johnson are testing an online bushel counting system that operates in real time. She reported that it appears to be working well, that as of this meeting, 231 bushels have been harvested, that the per-bushel weights are 6.5 to 7 pounds each and that 21 boats are scalloping in both harbors.

Mr. DeCosta said that Mr. Johnson is enforcing the level-box rule of not allowing scallopers to mound over their boxes. He added that he's finding a lot of suspected third-year scallops with a little black dot in the meat. He further reported that there a lot of scallops on Hussey Shoal within healthy eelgrass.

Mr. Riley reported that the Natural Resources Department (NRD) recently purchased a supply of new, red bushel boxes for commercial scallopers to buy as needed. Ms. Riley reported that the GHYC foundation is going to be founding the creation of the Town's eelgrass management plan, which could be completed by July 2025.

Ms. Riley reported that she and her staff brought in the last of the spat lines from the harbor. She also reported that she still doesn't have a date set for when the Town will open Sesachacha and Hummock ponds to the ocean because getting a contractor to do so is challenging this fall.

Mr. Lowell noted anticipated difficulties of enforcing the bushel box crowning rule.

The HSAB engaged in a discussion on the low boat price currently being paid to commercial scallopers. Mr. DeCosta said this is an issue to be worked out by the fishermen and the Nantucket

Shellfish Association (NSA) and there isn't much the HSAB can do. He added that this won't get solved this season. The HSAB engaged in a discussion on shortage of local seafood buyers, how the market and demand for bay scallops is evolving while the HSAB worked on possible solutions.

Mr. Lowell asked the board if the HSAB can talk about and rule on the economics of the bay scallop fishery.

Mr. DeCosta said he's worried about there not being a market for scallops in January, February and March with more scallops in the harbors than the few fishermen still scalloping can harvest. Mr. Lowell asked how many scallopers are not fishing this year. Mr. DeCosta said he thought it was about the same. He reiterated that these topics are much more in the realm of the NSA.

The HSAB discussed a co-op-like facility that could buy scallops from the fishermen to get them consistently better boat prices for their catch.

Mr. Lowell said he would raise these issues at the next NSA meeting. Mr. Sjolund said the NSA needs to revive the Nantucket bay scallop stickers that used to be put on all containers of scallops from Nantucket. He added that people have been asking him about this lately.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

No public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

Continued review and update of shellfish regulations - Tara Riley

Mr. Sjolund asked how the discussion of increasing the number of bushels should work. Ms. Riley said it would have to include the NRD, the fishermen and the HSAB. Mr. Sjolund and Mr. DeCosta agreed that reaching out to every commercial scalloper to get their thoughts on the proposal is key to proceeding with this. Ms. Riley

asked if the limit went up, would scallopers who don't usually fish during this part of the season start fishing then.

Advisory to Select Board on Vineyard Wind and offshore wind in general - Discussion

The HSAB discussed how to go about writing this advisory letter to the Select Board. Mr. Lowell said he wanted the whole board present to approve such a letter.

Draft letter to Select Board requesting participation in HSAB-related matters – Appointment

The HSAB members offered edits for this letter written by Mr. Brace and discussed how to modify the letter to the advantage of the HSAB. Mr. DeCosta suggested some language changes, which Mr. Brace noted for revisions. The HSAB agreed that Mr. Brace would revise the letter in time for the Nov. 19 meeting at which the HSAB would vote on it.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

Mr. Anderson requested that Ms. Lucey attend the Nov. 19 meeting to give the HSAB an end of the season report. Mr. Lowell said he'd text Sheila to get her to attend this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

No public comments or questions.

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Mr. DeCosta asked which entity had placed a data collection buoy in the channel. Ms. Riley reported that the Maria Mitchell Association (MMA) put this buoy in the channel. Ms. Riley said there is a link on the MMA's website where the data is available. Mr. DeCosta asked what the status of the red flag for days too cold to fish was and suggested that Mr. Johnson acquire all of the

commercial scallopers' cell numbers so he could text them if he needed to. The HSAB briefly rehashed this past winter's discussion on what weather app and process for determining air temperature and what the HSAB and Mr. Johnson agreed on.

ADJOURN

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DeCosta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 5-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 p.m.

YOUTUBE LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFWbinHqGeM&list=PL49sKqpy7VAj6nJnAlrlKlxWm6VQTfuXg&index=2>

Future Meetings:

Nov. 19 and Dec. 3

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary