

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.
Via Zoom
***HSAB meeting are video-recorded**

Members present: Andy Lowell, Bobby DeCosta, Dave Bossi, Dave Fronzuto, Peter Brace, Scott Anderson. Jim Sjolund

Members Absent:

Marine Dept:

Natural Resources Dept: Tara Riley, Jeff Carlson, JC Johnsen

Others: Bruce Beebe, John Logan, Taylor Cullen, Carl Sjolund, Adam ?, Beckstein ?

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The HSAB voted 7-0 to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Nov. 19, 2024

The HSAB voted 7-0 to approve the minutes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

No report.

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 her hatchery staff are working on wrapping up their summer research. Ms. Riley reported that she is still trying to find a contractor to open Sesachacha and Hummock ponds. Mr. Riley reported that she and her staff are already for the hatchery's 2025 season, which is going to include working with island nonprofits and doing a lot of collaborations. Ms. Riley reported that the scallop bushel count for November is estimated to be roughly 1,500 bushels, which is on par with November 2023. Mr. Sjolund asked if the pond opening contract is for one year. Mr. Carlson said the Natural Resources Department (NRD) will keep it as a one-year contract. He added that the NRD was fortunate to get a navy researcher, Faith Brooks, to model and study the opening of Sesachacha Pond in an effort to improve openings in the future. Mr. Carlson added that he's working with the Army Corps of Engineers to get more flexibility built into the Town's standing pond-opening permit from the Corps. Mr. Brace suggested that a permanent channel be dug leading to the pond opening area to help move more of the pond's water out into the ocean.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

No public comments.

OLD BUSINESS

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

Mr. Lowell reported he learned from town counsel through the Select Board that this request would not be granted. Mr. Bossi suggested dropping this idea. Mr. DeCosta said he still felt the HSAB should send the letter to the Select Board. Mr. Fronzuto agreed and added that he wants the HSAB to be included in all discussions on offshore wind turbine projects. Mr. DeCosta recommended removing "all executive sessions" and "other" and adding language saying the HSAB would like to attend current and

future discussions on wind turbine projects. Mr. Anderson recommended removing the last sentence about signing a non-disclosure agreement.

Mr. Fronzuto made a motion to send the letter as modified with the aforementioned recommendations. Mr. DeCosta seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 7-0 to direct Mr. Brace to revise the letter based on this discussion and send it to the Select Board.

Advisory to Select Board on Vineyard Wind and wind turbines in general – Discussion

Mr. Lowell said wanted this letter to speak to the HSAB's impact concerns within its jurisdiction on offshore wind turbine projects south of the island and not on other forms of energy generation. He asked for thoughts from the other HSAB members. Mr. Anderson said the HSAB needs to get its concerns to the Select Board ASAP. Mr. DeCosta noted that the transmission lines from the first phase of Vineyard Wind pass through the Muskeget Channel within the three-mile limit of Nantucket's jurisdiction and that despite no compensation coming to Nantucket for this, the HSAB and the Select Board need to closely monitor the installation of future transmission lines through this area. Mr. DeCosta also expressed concern about the proposed routing of transmission line from the other phases of Vineyard Wind to the east of Nantucket through the shoals that protect the island from storm waves.

Mr. Lowell asked if the board wanted to write a letter to the Select Board highlighting the HSAB's concerns. Mr. Bossi made this motion. Mr. Anderson seconded that motion. Discussion: Mr. Lowell said each member should send their points for the letter to Mr. Brace by Sunday, Nov. 24 so he can draft this letter for the Dec. 3 meeting. The HSAB voted 7-0 to direct Mr. Brace to write this letter.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

NEW BUSINESS

Commercial bay scalloping bushel limits – Discussion

Mr. Lowell said he's been informed that the HSAB needs to be more detailed in its agenda item descriptions.

Mr. Lowell explained basis for needing to have this discussion including the abundance of scallops in the harbors, the boat price, the shellfish warden leveling bushel boxes with a stick as the boxes are landed onto the docks, mounding of bushel boxes, the pounds-per-box yield and other issues. Mr. Sjolund (Jim) asked that the HSAB review what the protocol is for raising the bushel limit. Mr. Carlson explained that the HSAB discusses the issue. The NRD staff considers it with input and a positive vote from the HSAB. A recommendation for action is then sent to the Select Board for its consideration and vote. If the Select Board votes approval of increasing the bushel limit, Mr. Carlson said he would have the increase take effect on the following Monday to give everyone the chance to digest it. Mr. DeCosta said the demand for scallops is high at the time of this meeting. He said that the two buyers on island aren't paying scallopers enough for their catch. He estimated that 75 percent of the fishermen going right now are shipping their catch off island. Mr. DeCosta added that the market for bay scallops will cool down Jan. 1, the fleet may as well catch as many of the large number of scallops in the harbor in November and December as it can. Mr. Fronzuto asked if six boxes enough to catch all the scallops and make a living. Mr. Lowell said given that 20 boats are fishing now and roughly 30 people going, this would be a good thing to do keep people in this fishing industry. Mr. Fronzuto asked if the NRD is ready to support this increase recommendation to the Select Board at its Nov. 20 meeting. Ms. Riley said the bay scallop fisher can sustain an increase in the bushel limit. Mr. Fronzuto made a motion to recommend to the Select Board that it increase the commercial bay scallop limit to six boxes. Mr. Bossi seconded that motion for discussion. Mr. DeCosta said he spoke with Erika Mooney in Town Administration prior to the meeting and she told him that the HSAB could get its recommendation on this issue to the Select

Board as a time-sensitive request onto the Select Board's Nov. 20 agenda. Ms. Riley said that she'd like to leave the limit at six bushels all season with the caveat that it can always be lowered back to five bushels.

Mr. Lowell asked for comments from the public in attendance. Mr. Beebe said with the abundance of scallops in the harbors and a low boat price, it makes sense to him to increase to six bushels.

Mr. Lowell asked if Mr. Johnsen had anything to say. Mr. Johnsen said he did not.

Mr. Sjolund (Carl) said the abundance of scallops in the harbor this season should mean that the shellfish warden can be a bit more lenient on slightly mounded bushel boxes. He added that the demand for Nantucket bay scallops is high enough to continue through December and into the rest of the season. Mr. Lowell said Mr. Johnsen is doing his job enforcing the level boxes regulation. Mr. DeCosta agreed and said adding a sixth box should take care of the mounding issue. Mr. Bossi agreed with this.

Mr. Logan said he's in favor of increasing the bushel limit from five to six.

The HSAB voted 7-0 to approve Mr. Fronzuto's motion and to direct Mr. Brace write an email request to Town Administration that Mr. Lowell can then modify and send in himself.

Bay scallop dredge modifications – Discussion

Mr. Sjolund (Jim) explained how many rings the regulations allow in a dredge. Ms. Riley said it's important that the NRD look at the new dredges Mr. Sjolund (Jim) is using, which employs a chain sweep instead of a bar, reducing the damage to the harbor bottom. Mr. Sjolund (Jim) said the shellfish regulations need to better define dredges that can be used for scalloping. Mr. DeCosta said the legality of this modified dredge needs to be clarified. Mr. Sjolund (Jim) the regulation says as long as the dredge weighs no more than 35 pounds, it's legal.

Submerged boat wreckage/hazard off Monomoy – Discussion

Continued to a meeting when the harbormaster is in attendance. Mr. Fronzuto said the boat will be removed by court order and the owner charged for the removal.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

ADJOURN

Mr. Lowell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DeCosta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bossi seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 7-0 at 6:41 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

YOUTUBE LINK

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AqY9wF5aCg>

Future Meetings:

Dec. 17 and Jan. 7

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary