

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board

Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Via Zoom

***HSAB meeting are video-recorded**

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

Members Absent: Marine Dept:

Natural Resources Dept: Tara Riley, Jeff Carlson

Others: Kona Hosier, John Logan, Dylan Wallace, Kaie Quigley

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lowell called the meeting to order at 5:02 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. DeCosta seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 7-0 to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Dec. 3, 2024

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. DeCosta made a motion approve the agenda. Mr. Anderson seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 7-0 to approve the minutes.

CHAIRMAN'S 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 a few smaller seed strandings during the first week of January. She added that she and her hatchery staff moved stranded seed into deeper water last week. Ms. Riley reported that she got going on algae production for the 2025 shellfish production season. She added that they now have a “kelp line” up in the Head of the Harbor. Ms. Riley reported that the hatchery will be raising ribbed mussels in the harbor this year to aid in coastal resilience projects. Ms. Riley reported that she’s getting ready to start the eelgrass management plan creation process. Ms. Riley said she emailed letters to all commercial bay scallop permit holders to get their catch reports for November and December because the shellfish warden’s efforts toward this end are not working out. She added that she got six responses so far and will send out a second round of letters.

Mr. Logan asked where the seed is being moved to in the harbor. Ms. Riley said it's being distributed in First, Second and Third bends.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

OLD BUSINESS

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

Mr. Brace explained that after sending the letter to Town Administration, Town Manager Libby Gibson asked that the letter of bullet point be converted into proper letter form. Mr. DeCosta said he preferred the letter in bullet item form. He added that he felt Town Administration was “watering down” the HSAB’s letter.

Mr. Brace agreed. Mr. Bossi said he felt the letter had a negative tone to it, but Mr. Anderson disagreed, saying the letter is just basic facts. Mr. Brace agreed. Mr. Lowell asked where the letter would be sent.

Bay scallop dredge modifications – Discussion

Mr. Lowell asked how to confirm the legality of these dredges. Ms. Riley reported that as long as the weight is 35 pounds or under, it works for the shellfish warden. Mr. Lowell asked if the shellfish warden could be given a scale better than a hanging fish scale that he is using now to check the weight of dredges. Mr. DeCosta said another way to regulate these modified dredges is to ensure that the two middle rows of the dredge rings is no more than six each. Mr. DeCosta said these modified dredges are probably the future of the commercial bay scallop fishery, so this issue needs to be solved before the 2025/2026 season. Ms. Riley said she needs to understand why these dredges work so well in sand and if they work equally well in eelgrass. She just wants to understand the difference between these modified dredges and the original ones, and why Nantucket's commercial bay scallopers are switching to them. Mr. Sjolund said scallopers likely switched to the modified dredges because of decreasing eelgrass.

Mr. Wallace said a scale used by the shellfish warden can be certified by the state. The HSAB discussed the many variables of weighing dredges. Mr. Fronzuto said weighing dredges doesn't need to be so complicated. He added an average weight needs to be established and Ms. Riley needs to get the whys and hows on the modified dredges. He also added that HSAB is still reviewing proposed changes to the Town's shellfish regulations, so there is still time to work through this dredge issue. Mr. Brace said that the weighing of dredges is being over complicated and that only a dredge with no rope attached and with no eel and or other contents should be what is put on the scale.

Mr. Lowell, acknowledging that this item is not on this agenda, asked for clarification on the app being used for air temperature

pertaining to red flag days. Although the HSAB agreed with the NRD and shellfish warden last winter that air temperature gauge at Steamboat Wharf would be the gauge used for this purpose, Mr. Carlson said that due to the unreliability of this gauge, the shellfish warden had switched to Weather Underground's gauge at Mikas Pond on the island. Mr. Carlson added that a new gauge is in the works to be installed at the shellfish hatchery.

Mr. Logan asked that there be an item added to the Jan. 21 agenda on solving the shellfish warden's notification system on days too cold to scallop.

Submerged boat wreckage/hazard off Monomoy – Discussion
No discussion.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

NEW BUSINESS

Ideas for compensating commercial bay scallopers for moving scallop seed - Discussion

Mr. Sjolund explained his coupon proposal to the HSAB that included the shellfish warden putting a special tag on the extra box that each coupon would allow for each hour of seed moving by each commercial scalloper. Mr. Carlson said financial compensation would be the most challenging method. The extra box option works as long as how it works is detailed in the regulations. He added that this idea is a good start. He further added that he can work with Mr. Sjolund, Mr. DeCosta, Ms. Riley and the shellfish warden to come up with a program that works. The agreed upon coupon would be good for one extra box per hour worked moving bay scallop seed. Mr. Bossi said he was more in favor of cash payments from the Town than the proposed coupons for extra boxes.

Preparations for extending commercial bay scallop season – Discussion

Mr. Sjolund stressed that the NRD needs to be in contact with the state's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) so this entity knows ahead of time that Nantucket will probably try get permission to extend the season because of missed fishing days due to inclement weather. Ms. Riley said such an extension shouldn't go beyond April when water temperatures are going over 50 degrees when eelgrass is starting to flower. She added that an alternative might be raising the bushel limit again because this wouldn't require state approval. Mr. Fronzuto said the HSAB and NRD should wait until early February to see what the supply is like in the harbors and what the market is doing. Mr. Sjolund said using Saturdays as makeup days might be another option. Mr. Logan suggested making the bushel limit same as the state limit of 10 so scallopers have the flexibility of getting more scallops if they need to instead of waiting for the Town to bring the limit up incrementally. Ms. Riley said that before raising the limit to 10 bushels, she'd need to see the harvest numbers for November and December so she could gauge bay scallop populations in the harbors. Mr. DeCosta suggested that some students could create an app for logging daily catch reports.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Mr. DeCosta said he wanted to find a way for high school or college students to apprentice on scallop boats without paying for a commercial license. He added that this needs to be included in the continued review of the Town's shellfish regulations.

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 7-0 at 6:17 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

YOUTUBE LINK

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fodt2eO9_X8&list=PL49sKqpy7VAj6nJnAlrlKlxWm6VQTfuXg&index=1

Future Meetings:

Jan. 21 and Feb. 4.

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary