

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Feb. 18, 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: Jeff Carlson

Others: Kona Hosier, Adam Spencer

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lowell called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Lowell did not call for a motion to approve the agenda. The agenda was not approved.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Feb. 4, 2025

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Bossi made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Anderson seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 6-0 with Mr. DeCosta abstaining.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

MARINE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

General Marine Department report – Sheila Lucey

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

General Natural Resources Department report – NRD staff

Mr. Carlson updated the HSAB on shellfish hatchery getting going for the season. He reported that the Natural Resources Department (NRD) started the process of finding a contractor to open the ponds.

Mr. Lowell asked for an update on the dredging of Miacomet Pond. Mr. Carlson reported that they still need one more permit to do this project from the Army Corps of Engineers. He added that the work would be done next fall/winter. Mr. DeCosta asked what happens to the dredging spoils and what happens to the eels in the pond during the dredging. Mr. Carlson said traps could be set in the pond to assess the eel population in the pond. Mr. Sjolund asked about the recent dredging done in the Hyline slip off Straight Wharf. Mr. Carlson reported that Hyline ferries grounded in the slip. He said the spoils from the dredging would be transported off island or kept on island for later use. Mr. Carlson said the spoils from Miacomet Pond's dredging will be pumped as a slurry over to the Surfside Wastewater Treatment Plant for dewatering.

Mr. Lowell asked about the harbor dredging plan. Mr. Carlson said the Polpis Harbor channel, the Easy Street basin and the Pocomo channel are the high priorities right now.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

No public comments or questions.

OLD BUSINESS

Submerged boat wreckage/hazard off Monomoy – Discussion

Mr. Lowell asked if Mr. Sjolund would be making a map of the location of the wreck with Bruce Cowan. Mr. Sjolund indicated that he would.

Amendments to Town shellfish regulations – Continued review and discussion

Mr. Carlson, speaking for Ms. Riley, commented on fishing on Saturdays and extending the commercial bay scalloping season. he said the NRD's stance is that instead of having it be Saturdays, making the language something to the effect of "a date to be decided later".

To solve the issue of fishermen not getting definitive harbor air temperature readings from the NRD, Mr. Carlson said the NRD is in the process of installing a weather station at the hatchery to will be official temperature gauge. Mr. Brace asked if the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) would continue to be the source of the temperature for the harbors. Mr. DeCosta agreed this should be location of the official NRD weather station with temperature gauge. He added that his app idea would include this data. Mr. Fronzuto agreed with app idea and an air temperature gauge at the hatchery. Mr. Carlson with the HSAB's approval, moved to the app item under New Business.

Mr. Carlson said that the Town doesn't have regulations for the taking of eels, blue crabs and green crabs, which are all state-regulated, so this will be mentioned in the revised shellfish regulations.

Mr. Carlson said the NRD is overhauling the commercial bay scalloping apprentice program including a logging system to keep track of apprentices' days with their respective commercial fishermen working toward their required 20 days of fishing to be able to get their commercial shellfish license.

Mr. Carlson said in response to Mr. DeCosta's requests that conch gets fished every season, there would be a deadline for deciding which of the three permitted conch fishermen would have to decide to set pots in the harbors for a given season. Mr. DeCosta reported that one of the three wants to sell his permit but is unable to do so because he doesn't have recent catch data to report. Mr. Sjolund asked if all three permit holders have also been regularly getting their Town conch permits. Mr. Carlson said yes.

Mr. Fronzuto left the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Shellfish warden notifications to commercial bay scallopers regarding red flag days and other vital communications – Discussion

Mr. Carlson said he is aware of this issue and is working on a solution.

Possible extension of the commercial bay scallop season due to missed fishing days – Discussion

Mr. Carlson reported that the NRD informed the Select Board and the state's Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) that the Town is considering extending the season. Mr. Bossi agreed with extending the season. Mr. Brace said he support both extending the season and increasing the bushel limit to seven bushels from six. Mr. Sjolund recommended the extension along with the option to fish on Saturdays if days are missed due to inclement weather. Mr. Lowell detailed buyer Ted Jennison's concerns on extending the season. Mr. DeCosta said Saturday fishing should be opened up for the remainder of the season without extending the season.

Mr. Lowell asked for comments from scallopers Kona Hosier and Adam Spencer. Mr. Hosier suggested starting 2025/2026 season on Oct. 15. Mr. DeCosta explained that the scallop the scallopers are trying to harvest now will be dead in October. Mr. Bossi added Saturday fishing for the rest of the season should be allowed. Mr. Sjolund noted that the season was extended in 2018 because a lot of missed fishing days and an abundance of scallops. Mr. DeCosta reiterated his motion to recommend that the Select Board extend the season to April 11 with no fishing on Saturdays. Mr. Bossi seconded that motion. Mr. DeCosta amended his motion, saying that if the temperature goes above 50 degrees Fahrenheit in the harbors, the season will be closed. The HSAB voted 6-0 to recommend to the Select Board that it extend the 2024/2025 commercial bay scallop season.

Possible commercial bay scalloping bushel limit increase to seven bushels - Discussion

No discussion.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

NEW BUSINESS

Creation of an app for Nantucket weather reports and for reporting daily shellfish catch totals, commercial and recreational, to state and local biologists – Discussion

Mr. Carlson reported that such apps that could be used for Nantucket's commercial and recreational shellfishing catch report, licensing and weather needs already exist. He added that he's fairly certain that such an app could be set up and deployed by the start of the fall 2025 shellfish seasons. Mr. Carlson said use of the app wouldn't be mandatory; people could still do catch reports on paper, check weather websites and get their permits in person locally.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

No comments or questions.

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Mr. Lowell suggested an agenda item for the March 4 meeting to discuss a current Town Council Study Committee proposal to change the HSAB to an appointed board. Mr. Carlson gave a brief explanation of this idea.

ADJOURN

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Bossi made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson seconded that motion. The HDSAB voted 6-0 to adjourn the meeting at 6:33 p.m.

YOUTUBE LINK

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkp8B_6p2qs&list=PL49sKqpy7VAj6nJnAlrlKlxWm6VQTfuXg&index=1

Future Meetings:

March 4 and March 18

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary