

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Aug. 5, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
Via Zoom
***HSAB meeting are video-recorded**

Members present: Andy Lowell, Ellen Mayo, Dave Fronzuto,
Peter Brace, Scott Anderson

Members Absent: Jim Sjolund, Bobby DeCosta

Marine Dept:

Natural Resources Dept: Tara Riley

Others: Kona Hosier

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lowell called the meeting to order at 5:16 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. Brace seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 5-0 to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of June 17, 2025

Mr. Brace did not complete the minutes in time for the meeting.

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 announced the presentation of the Nantucket and Madaket Harbors Action Plan Update on Aug. 14 at 5 p.m. in the Community Room at 4 Fairgrounds Road. She also reported that the Eelgrass Management Plan (EMP) will be formally accepted at the Sept. 10 Select Board meeting. She added that she'll be forming a workgroup to implement to the EMP. Ms. Riley reported that there will be a public hearing on the proposed revisions to the town's shellfish regulations at the Sept. 10 Select Board meeting. Ms. Riley reported that at the hatchery, she is doing her last release of scallop larva into the harbors; 30,000 million at the Horse Shed and 20,000 into Madaket Harbor, a total of 125,000 million released this season. Ms. Riley reported that after this last larva release, she'll be shutting down the hatchery's shellfish production. Ms. Riley reported abundant scallops on the hatchery's spat lines around the harbors. She added that on one test spat line in the Head of the Harbor near the oyster farms, she and her staff logged a third of all the baby scallops that she regularly records on her spat line in both harbors combined.

She reported that she has three hatchery tours left in the season.

Ms. Riley reported that her harbor bottom dive surveys will be Sept. 2-12 in Nantucket, Madaket and Tuckernuck harbors.

Ms. Riley reported that water temperatures in the harbor are up and down in the harbors this season.

Mr. Lowell asked what the number of adult scallops looked like now in the harbors. Ms. Lowell said there are tons of scallops out in the harbors.

Mr. Lowell asked whether the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) had lifted its ban on the taking of shellfish in Nantucket Harbor inside the mooring field. Ms. Riley said the USDA needs to gather more samples but that the samples "are trending in a positive direction".

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

No report.

OLD BUSINESS

Amendments to Town shellfish regulations: Harbor conch fishing clarification on harbors – Continued review and discussion

Ms. Riley said because this is a living document that can be changed at any time going forward. She added that she is trying to get revised regulations approved before the upcoming recreational and commercial bay scallop seasons. Ms. Riley said the review process for these revisions was more than a year, so the HSAB should let them be approved by the Select Board and then changes could be made if needed once the regulations are activated.

Madaket ditch dredging to enhance and improve herring runs – Discussion

Mr. Fronzuto said reported that this topic is in the form of a recommendation within the draft of the Nantucket and Madaket Harbors Action Plan Update. He added that the public comment period runs through Aug. 31. The HSAB discussed several possible funding sources for this project. Mr. Brace stressed that getting the permits would be the most challenging aspect of this project. Mr. Fronzuto said the Army Corps of Engineers wouldn't need to be involved, but Nantucket's Conservation Commission would need to review approve the project. Mr. Fronzuto said the updated harbor plan needs to be activated so this project gains stronger validity and purpose, giving it the momentum it needs to get going.

Recreational shellfish permit button – Preference in preserving the original design – Discussion

Mr. Anderson reported that he continues to work on restoring the button to its original design. Ms. Riley said changing back to the original design would have to be for the 2026/2027 season because recreational scallopers are already buying their permits now.

Update on progress for potential intertidal oyster farming for Sean Fitzgibbon and other growers – Discussion

The HSAB got a good explanation of the importance of intertidal harbor areas to oyster farmers from Mr. Fronzuto, Ms. Riley and Mr. Fitzgibbon.

Ms. Riley explained the two intertidal leases at Pocomo Meadows were available leases where oyster farmers could grow oysters year-round without moving them to deeper water sites. She added that Steve Bender and Simon Edwards secured those two leases. She explained that the intertidal area in front of Coskata Pond was created for deep water oyster farmers to overwinter their oyster where the water was much calmer.

Mr. Fitzgibbon updated the HSAB on how, from his perspective, the current oyster farmers got their leases and how each operates their leases, and he stressed that altogether, the current oyster farmers including himself, can't meet the demand for oyster consumption on Nantucket. He stressed that production is much higher in the intertidal areas versus the deepwater areas. He reported that the Trustees of Reservations does not want him to grow oysters in the harbor waters off of their Coatue property east of Wyers Point. He said he hoped that there might be some harbor bottom space in Madaket Harbor.

Mr. Fronzuto said the next step is to get the DMF and the Town to work together to survey harbor bottom in potential new oyster lease area in Nantucket's harbors.

Mr. Fitzgibbon said he'd be interested to learn from all the oyster farmers who also have intertidal or shallow water sites in addition to their deepwater areas how they would function without the shallow water portions of their leases. He expressed frustration that

he can't grow nearly as many oysters as the oyster farmers who have shallow water areas as part of their leases.

Mr. Fronzuto asked Ms. Riley to print out a sheet showing all the oyster leases with the farmers' names on them. Ms. Riley said she would get this done for the HSAB.

Mr. Lowell suggested that NRD aquaculture lease manager Joe Minella attend HSAB's Aug. 19, 2025 meeting to answer questions.

Eelgrass management plan – Input and discussion

Discussed in Ms. Riley's Natural Resources Department report.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

NEW BUSINESS

HSAB on Aug. 19 - Discussion

The HSAB voted unanimously, 5-0, to hold a meeting on Aug. 19, 2025.

Draft harbor update plan – discussion

Mr. Fronzuto reiterated his information on the public comment period ending on Aug. 31 and the date, time and place of the upcoming public comment meeting.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

No public comments or questions

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

ADJOURN

Mr. Lowell asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Brace seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 5-0 at 6:30 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

YOUTUBE LINK

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

Future Meetings:

Aug. 19 and Sept. 2

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary