

Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.
Via Zoom
***HSAB meeting are video-recorded**

Members present: Andy Lowell, Peter Brace, Ellen Mayo, Bobby DeCosta

Members Absent: Dave Fronzuto, Scott Anderson, Jim Sjolund

Marine Dept:

Natural Resources Dept:

Others: Ken Brasfield, John Gardner

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Lowell called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. DeCosta made a motion to approve the agenda. Ms. Mayo seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 4-0 to approve the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Draft minutes of Sept. 2, 2025

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Brace reported that he had 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

Shellfish biologist Tara Riley was unable to attend this meeting. Instead, she sent her report to the HSAB. Mr. Brace read it into the record. Ms. Riley's report is as follows: "Our hatchery team is finishing up surveys related to our larval releases and oyster work from the summer and we expect to have that portion of the field work wrapped up by Oct. 6. We just finished surveying 2nd and 4th bends and will move into our Madaket release studies next Monday and Tuesday. We are getting ready for another harbor health symposium hosted here with the GHYCF (Great Harbor Yacht Club Foundation) starting 18 from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. It's a free community event focused around seagrass conservation and our new eelgrass management plan. I should have more updates for the Oct. 7 meeting."

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

No public comments or questions

OLD BUSINESS

Amendments to Town shellfish regulations – Discussion related to Sept. 10, 2025 Select Board meeting

Mr. Lowell reported some of the comments on these amendments focused on dredge weight is too light and also that there be an established chain of custody for commercial scallop catches that are confiscated by the shellfish warden.

Mr. DeCosta explained how weight of dredges and the various types of dredges, and how these dredges impact the bottom. He added that the issue of using the new dredge design with a plane on the dredge to keep them from digging up the bottom and uprooting eelgrass that the HSAB discussed in the spring is unresolved because Ms. Riley hasn't completed her study of these new

dredges. And further, he said that around half of the fleet is going to be using them in the upcoming 2025/2026 commercial bay scallop season. He expressed concern over what happens when the shellfish warden decides to enforce the 35-pound dredge weight limit during the season. Mr. DeCosta stressed the uproar that could ensue if the shellfish warden decides to enforce the 35-pound dredge weight limit on the new dredges, which may or may not be over the limit. Mr. Brace the HSAB had some more time on this because Ms. Riley hasn't completed her study. Mr. DeCosta said he knew of only one scalloper whose new design dredges could over 35 pounds.

Madaket ditch dredging to enhance and improve herring runs – Discussion

Mr. DeCosta said he'd like to see a wood bridge on concrete pilings replace the First Bridge culvert because it would increase the flow of water between North Head of Long Pond and Long Pond. Mr. Brace suggested asking Dr. Sarah Bois about the herring population in Long Pond. Mr. DeCosta reminded the HSAB that the flow of water in the Madaket Ditch is severely restricted because the ditch is filled in with sediment.

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

Mr. Lowell said he hadn't heard from Mr. Fitzgibbon lately on new intertidal areas he may have found to grow oysters in, The HSAB engaged in a discussion about potential intertidal sites in the harbors and also discussed current quahog areas in the harbor.

Mr. Lowell said it is up to Mr. Fitzgibbon to find an intertidal area in the harbors where he can grow his oysters. The HSAB discussed the various land owners that have to give permission for this type of use.

Eelgrass management plan – Input and discussion

No discussion.

HEALTH OF THE HARBORS

NEW BUSINESS

Nantucket and Madaket Harbors Action Plan Update Committee – Update and discussion.

Mr. Brace reported that the Nantucket and Madaket Harbors Action Plan Update Committee (NMHAPUC) is now going through the draft plan to make changes to it based on comments made the Aug. 14 public input meeting. Mr. Brace detailed the path to approval of the plan through the Select Board and the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM).

Great Nantucket Scallop Hunt – Discussion

Mr. Lowell informed the HSAB that there is some concern about the commercialization of the recreational scallop season. Mr. DeCosta there is nothing illegal about Nantucketers taking people out into the harbor to show them how to scallop. He said he's doing it along with other people and island organizations, and the benefit of this service is to the fishery because people who sign up for these experiences learn from islanders the difference between adult and seed scallops, and more than likely gain a greater understanding of bay scallop fishery.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

Ken Brasfield talked about how he researches how the upcoming commercial bay scallop season to determine the price he'll pay to scallopers for their catch. He also explained the current restaurant needs for seafood and how Nantucket's bay scallop fishery fits into this.

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Mr. DeCosta asked to have the app for harbor temperature and daily catch reports on the Oct. 7 agenda. He also requested a discussion on increasing the bushel limit to six bushels starting on opening day of the commercial bay scallop season, Nov. 1.

ADJOURN

Mr. Lowell called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. DeCosta made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Mayo seconded that motion. The HSAB voted 4-0 at 6:08 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

YOUTUBE LINK

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6rY6u_cWdg&list=PL49sKqpy7VAj6nJnAlrlKlxWm6VQTfuXg&index=1

Future Meetings:

Oct. 7 and Oct. 21

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Secretary