

**Harbor and Shellfish Advisory Board
Tuesday, March 15, 2016 at 5:00 p.m.
Community Room, 4 Fairgrounds Road**

Members present: Peter Brace, Wendy McCrae, Andy Lowell, Michael Glowacki

Members Absent: Dr. Peter Boyce, Bill Blount, Ken Gullicksen

Marine Dept: Sheila Lucey

Natural Resources Dept: Kaitlyn Shaw

Others: Dann Pronk, Devon Wiggins, Carl Sjolund, Ron Shepherd, Bruce Cowan

CALL TO ORDER

At Mr. Brace's request, the board agreed to let Ms. Shaw give her presentation after the chairman's report

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Unanimously approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes unavailable for consideration

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Mr. Brace reminded the board of the public hearing scheduled for the Board of Selectmen's March 23 meeting for consideration of the HSAB's proposed amendment to the town's shellfish regulations regarding the over-60 scallop license. Ms. McCrae asked whether all concerned parties had been notified of this meeting. Mr. Brace indicated that they had been notified, but he would call to remind them just in case.

Mr. Brace reminded the board of the Meet the Candidates event scheduled for March 26 and urged all HSAB members to attend. Ms. McCrae asked if the board would like to generate questions for the HSAB candidates

MARINE DEPARTMENT REPORT:

Harbormaster Shiela Lucey's written report

Ms. Lucey gave the following report in written form:

Town Pier: Anticipate plumber and electrician to commission water and power on or about 1 April. Beach: 45 lifeguards hired. Beach access signs 60% complete. ATON (Aids to Navigation): Scheduling fly over with USCG and/or State Police to evaluate shoal shifts and bottom contour. Boats: Head Hunter, Buoy Boat, P2 and new P3 will be commissioned by 15 April. Conducted training on Sealegs.

NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

General report from Jeff Carlson and or Tara Riley

Mr. Carlson sent Mr. Brace a written report for this meeting. Ms. Shaw gave this report:

Brant Point Shellfish Hatchery Renovation

Work is continuing on the hatchery. All rough carpentry has been completed and the plumbing, electric and HVAC are in roughed in. The dormers have been constructed and the roofing is underway. Equipment for the hatchery is beginning to arrive and we are still looking forward to beginning setup starting in May.

Scallop Season

The fleet has continued to get smaller and we are down to 6-12 boats going per day between both harbors. Catch reports continue to come in and will have the season total to date at the next meeting (April 5), as catch reports for February are due today.

Summer Interns

We have been conducting interviews and are hoping to have secured two of the summer interns by the end of next week (March 21-27).

Additional comments

She added that the oyster shell reclamation program is still collecting shells and the pilot oyster reef proposal is almost complete.

Ms. Shaw said the NRD would be opening Sesachacha and Hummock Ponds in early April and would be putting out temperature sensors in these ponds prior their openings. She said the NRD bought a new meter for detecting pH levels in the water. Her stream water quality sampling begins on March 16 for the season and she'll be deploying dissolved oxygen and chlorophyll level sensors in the harbors and eventually the ponds.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MARINE DEPARTMENT / NATURAL RESOURCES REPORT

Mr. Cowan asked where the oyster shell reef would be located in Nantucket Harbor. Ms. Shaw said she is exploring a three or four locations in the harbor and she is taking water quality samples to investigate these potential sites. Mr. Cowan said he might be concerned if the reef would pose a threat to navigation in the harbor.

Mr. Shepherd asked where the water quality sample analysis is done. Ms. Shaw said it is done off island and that the Surfside Wastewater Treatment Plant is trying to establish such a lab on Nantucket.

Mr. Sjolund proposed dropping the maximum number of bushels commercial scallopers can legally harvest from five to four just for the month of November during the commercial scallop season. He said this could help "stretch out" and enhance the season for those fishermen who scallop for the full five months of this season. He suggested this would leave roughly 2,000 more bushels in the harbor.

Mr. Brace said he would put this matter on the agenda of the April 5, 2015 meeting so the HSAB could discuss

Mr. Glowacki said let's have the hearing at the hearing. Ms. McCrae said she wouldn't be at any BOS public hearing that might be held on this matter because her term expires on at

the April 5 meeting. She cautioned Mr. Sjolund from limiting the amount of scallops during the holiday season and that this be a “turn-off” to the consumers.

Mr. Pronk said he believed there to be a lot of scallop seed in the harbor right now and that he supported Mr. Sjolund’s proposal.

Mr. Sjolund said the Nantucket Shellfish Association would discuss this matter at its next meeting.

Mr. Lowell liked Mr. Sjolund’s idea of putting a clipboard looking for signatures of support at the permit office window in the Public Safety Building at 4FG.

Mr. Pronk made a proposal to the HSAB that those holding a commercial conch license be allowed to fish for conch in Nantucket Harbor every year instead every other year and that they be allowed to set more than the 30 conch pots each. Mr. Pronk stated conchs being a predator of bay scallops, this could only help the scallop fishery, that it would be a good idea to remove all of the conchs.

Ms. McCrae said the gentlemen’s agreement among Nantucket’s three conch fishermen that they take turns fishing the harbor is much like Mr. Sjolund’s proposal above and that Mr. Pronk’s need to make money is not the HSAB’s concern. She said that reversing the regulations as they exist now on conch fishing would not happen quickly.

Mr. Glowacki noted that this discussion had “wandered” well beyond the confines of the public comment segment of the meeting. Mr. Brace agreed. At Mr. Brace’s urging, Mr. Pronk requested that the chairman put this matter on the agenda for the April 5, 2016 meeting of the HSAB.

2015 Harbor Eelgrass Mapping project – presentation – Kaitlyn Shaw

Ms. Shaw gave the HSAB a presentation on the eelgrass mapping project conducted during the Summer of 2015. She explained that Charlie Costello did aerial and ground surveys of Nantucket Harbor, Madaket Harbor and off of Tuckernuck. Mr. Costello previously did eelgrass surveys for the Massachusetts the Department of Environmental Protection. Ms. Shaw said her presentation could be view on the town’s website at this link: ----- . She detailed the extensive losses up in the Head of the Harbor, Hussey Shoal and in the deeper parts of the harbor.

She noted a healthy eelgrass bed on the east side of the west jetty and an unhealthy one in front of the field station and Quaise. She noted not much of a change in eelgrass bed densities off of Tuckernuck. In Madaket Harbor, Ms. Shaw noted a loss of eelgrass on the north side of the harbor, but that Madaket has very thick beds of eelgrass with some epiphytes on it. She said the town region of Nantucket Harbor up through Hussey Shoal, since 1995, eelgrass declined 30 percent, up through Third Bend since 1995, eelgrass had declined 30 percent and the Head of the Harbor experienced a 32 percent loss of eelgrass during this same time period. Ms. Shaw added that since 1995, there has been increase in nutrients, specifically, nitrogen in Nantucket Harbor.

Ms. Shaw said Mr. Costello recommended using the 2015 survey as the baseline data for what he further recommended was future surveys at two-year intervals. She added that the NRD would be doing bimonthly sampling spring through fall annually to keep tabs on the eelgrass as well GPS measurements on eelgrass beds annually.

OLD BUSINESS

Final review/confirmation of HSAB public comment and meeting material submission policies

Ms. McCrae said it looks like we would be limiting public comment. Mr. Brace explained that explaining that public comment is not a right of the public to speak at any meeting, but a privilege afforded the public by the board, according to Robert's Rules of Order. Noting this, Mr. Brace said he is attempting to get the point across to the public that decorum is vital to public comment proceedings. Mr. Brace assured Ms. McCrae that the current public comment segments of the HSAB meetings would not be removed. By it's silence when asked if the board was good with these policies, the HSAB affirmed that the current material submission and public comment policies were all set.

Proposed Slip & Mooring Regulations revisions - discussion

Mr. Brace stated that because Mr. Gullicksen didn't make this meeting and didn't send the chairman his latest revisions, there was nothing to talk about until the April 5, 2015 meeting. The board agreed.

Shellfish Management Plan – HSAB's possible role in implementation - discussion

Mr. Glowacki suggested that the NRD staff implement the SMP and that it's "counterproductive to have committees and boards such as the HSAB do this work.

NEW BUSINESS

2015 Harbor Eelgrass Mapping project – presentation – Kaitlyn Shaw – moved to after first public comment segment per order of the board.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENT

RECAP and ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

ADJOURN

Unanimously approved

Future Meetings:

March 15 and April 5

Respectfully Submitted,
Peter B. Brace, Chairman