

TOWN OF IPSWICH - MASSACHUSETTS

Ipswich Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee to the Select Board
Meeting Minutes
April 5, 2022

A meeting of the Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee to the Select Board was held on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. Members participated remotely utilizing Zoom in accordance with the Governor's March 12 Order suspending provisions of Open Meeting Law and to promote public health and social distancing.

Members present were Chairperson Linda Alexson, Charlie Surpitski, Wayne Castonguay, Peter Soffron, Michael Walker, and Evan Orlando. Also present were Police Chief Nikas and Shellfish Constable LaPreste and Recording Secretary Marie Rodgers.

This meeting was video recorded by the host.

Citizen Queries: There were none.

Constable Report:

Constable LaPreste reported on spring rule changes. Applications for trapping green crabs are available from April 11th thorough the 22nd in the lobby of the police station. Five trappers will be picked the week of the 25th and trapping will start in May. Next year trapping will start in April; Story Reed, Permitting & Statistics Program Manager at DMF will provide an exemption from closure due to protection of right whales migrating to the Gulf of Maine.

Ms. Alexson noted the Select Board approved the payout price for green crabs at forty cents per pound for the coming fiscal year 2023.

Chief Nikas will follow up at the June meeting regarding the "shellfish gift account" dedicated to the eradicating green crabs.

Review of Harvesting Data

Constable LaPreste reviewed harvesting data; reports were submitted to members. On average, 22 people go out in a day; with an average harvest of 200 pounds per person. He feels this demonstrates the limit increase to 300 pounds does not play out. He added that pricing is all over the place. Discussion took place regarding the value of placing pricing in the metric.

Closure dates in 2021; May N4 only open 10 out of 31 days; June open 18 days; July open 2 days on N4 and N7; August open 12 days; September open 8 days; rain average 3-inches a month. July there was red tide. It was a wet year that contributed to increased number of closures; it was not a good year for shellfish harvesting. There were no closures last year due to discharge of sewage.

2022 Commercial Task Program

Constable LaPreste spoke his plans for the task program, scheduling Saturday mornings and Tuesday afternoon. Some people do individual tasks, which he verifies. Patterson's landing needs maintenance and more stone, along with the TTOR road. He will report in October how many tasks were done and what they were.

Mr. Soffron suggested "a task" of clearing salt march hay at Eagle Hill Landing and clearing out buried nets. He then asked about harvesting snails, Constable confirmed that it is allowed and can be credited as a task.

Landing locations for Ipswich harvesting

It was reported that two people launched out of Rowley. Rowley Harbor Master said it was illegal and they could not go out of Rowley. Constable LaPreste opined it was not an enforcement issue, he thinks it has resolved itself; he opined it's a non-issue – if, it was, he would have addressed it years ago. There are no rules that prohibit it.

Discussion took place regarding oversight and enforcement. It was suggested that area Constables work together for mutual aid, similar to police and fire. Constable LaPreste will explore this option and report back.

Regulations - Permit/Enhancement Fees

Options were crafted by Ms. Alexson, Mr. Castonguay and Mr. Surpitski, titled **2021 vs. 2023 Shellfish Permit Fees and Enhancement Fund Revenue**. It was distributed to members and the three options were reviewed at length.

Discussion covered many issues and concerns were voiced. Fees in surrounding towns were noted and discussed. Newbury is the only town that exceeds the "5x" rule. It is not known where the "5x" rule originated. According to Mr. Castonguay even DMF could only speculate.

The fee for the family license was discussed; only Ipswich has this category. Chief noted that according to the town clerk it is the most abused license. When an application is submitted, the town clerk questions the ages of family members and discovers they are adults.

Discussion continued surrounding issues of the shellfish budget, expenses and revenues; protecting the Great Marsh is one of many benefits of trapping green crabs; funds for green crab trapping are taken out of the shellfish budget. The enhancement fund covers expenses for improvements for the TTOR road and Patterson's landing. Chief noted that the enhancement fund is not considered revenue.

It was suggested to go back to the Finance Committee, question their motivation and share options and thoughts. Currently, Ipswich fees are in line with surrounding towns. Mr. Walker opined the increase should be similar across the board.

Further comments supported the cap for commercial licenses, which helps the resource, the revenue generated for the town from the shell fishing industry, contributions to the environment. The history of clamming provided a financial fall back for folks in time of need.

Mr. Walker moved to increase non-commercial fees as proposed and increase \$50 for commercial licenses. No second was made; the motion failed.

Mr. Soffron and Mr. Orlando voiced their support for increases and proposed to table discussion to the June meeting. Mr. Castonguay concurred.

In response to the comments and suggestions, Ms. Alexson will prepare another spreadsheet to view at the June meeting; proposing an increase of the non-residential recreational permit to \$200; individual to \$35 and family to \$50, as well as the commercial permit proposed at \$425 and \$450.

Documents and exhibits used by the Shellfish Advisory Subcommittee to the Select Board: 6 pages of local comparison fees; document: "2021 Permit Fees and Enhancement Fund Revenue"; Definition for resident and summer resident; 15 pages Shellfish Rules & Regulations.

Definition of "Resident"

Discussion was tabled to the June meeting.

► Approval of minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Soffron moved to approve the February 17, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Castonguay seconded, the motion passed unanimously with a roll call vote.

► Next Meeting –Tuesday June 7, 2022 @ 7:00 PM in Room A.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously passed with a roll call vote to adjourn at 9:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Marie Rodgers

Approved by the Subcommittee on June 7, 2022

Pursuant to the 'Open Meeting Law' the approval of these minutes by the Board constitutes a certification of the date, time and place of the meeting; the members present or absent; the findings made and actions taken. Any other description of statements made by any person, or the summary of the discussion on any matter, is included for the purpose of context only, and no certification, express or implied, is made by the Board as to the completeness or accuracy of such statements.