

Shellfish Advisory Panel

February 7, 2018; 4:30PM

URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Building, Small Conference Room
218 S Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02874

MEETING SUMMARY

RIMFC members: J. Grant (Chair)

DEM: C. McManus; E. Schneider; P. Barret; S. Olszewski; P. Duhamel; C. Hannus (Water Resources)

SAP members: K. Eagan; M. McGiveney; R. Tellier; D. Ghigliotty; M. Sousa, R. Rheault (alt. for J. Gardner), G. Schey, R. Pastore, E. Troiano

CRMC: D. Beutel

Public: P. Rasso, J. Arnoux, P. Capaldi, W. Helt, O. Kelly

1. **Introduction of new members:** New members Manuel Sousa and Ed Troiano were introduced and welcomed.
2. **Review of aquaculture lease applications sent to public notice by CRMC:**
 - a. 2017-11-051, East Beach Farms LLC, Quonochontaug Pond:

The Chair reminded members their aquaculture lease application review criteria as specified in RI Gen. Laws section 20-10-5. *D. Beutel* provided a brief overview of the proposal. He offered that a shellfish survey revealed a density of < 1 shellfish/sq. meter. He offered that of the 30 samples, there were no quahaugs found. He offered that from a CRMC perspective there are “little to no issues” with this site being suitable for aquaculture “in terms of fisheries and user conflicts”. **Motion made by *R. Rheault* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *R. Pastore*. The motion passed 9-0.**

- b. 2017-11-086, Raso, Potter Pond:

D. Beutel provided a brief overview of the proposal. He offered that multiple objections were received. He offered that the RISSA Kayak committee objected due to conflict with use of waters for striped bass fishing during the Spring cinder-worm hatch. He offered that several objections were received from neighbors. He then offered that he has also received “one letter of support for every objection”. He offered that a shellfish survey revealed a density of 0.88 shellfish/sq. meter. *M. Sousa* offered that he cannot support any lease that uses floating gear; that he can only support bottom culture. *C. McManus* offered that DEM was in receipt of several objections due to conflict with recreational harvest (letters will be provided as an attachment to the minutes). *Mr. Raso* offered that

he chose the site due its depth, and that recreational harvest from shore was not occurring at the site. *D. Beutel* offered that eelgrass was not present at the site. *C. McManus* inquired to *D. Beutel* the number of support and objection letters received; to which *D. Beutel* replied there were 100 letters of objection and 12 letters of support. *M. McGiveney* inquired if the application would also be reviewed by the RI Marine Fisheries Council; to which *D. Beutel* and *J. Grant* replied that it most likely would be. **Motion made by *G. Schey* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *R. Rheault*.** *D. Pastore* noted that the floating gear would impact fly fishing for striped bass during the Spring cinder-worm hatch. *R. Rheault* noted that you could not fish in the lease when the floating gear is suspended. *R. Rheault* offered support for the application due to the small amount of area currently occupied by aquaculture in Potters Pond, and the area of the pond remaining available for striped bass fishing. *D. Pastore* noted that the state lacks an initiative with respect to the state looking at competing uses, making review difficult. It was discussed that the lease would include the entire water column in addition to the bottom. **The motion passed 7-2 (*M. Sousa* and *R. Tellier* dissenting votes).**

3. **Discussion of Fish Habitat Enhancement Sites and Oyster Reef Creation in Pt. Judith Pond Shellfish Management Area (non-voting item):** *E. Schneider* provided an overview of the project, which was provided to the SAP for informational purposes. Presentation slides describing the project are available on the Division's website.
4. **Update on timelines related to Providence River Fisheries Management (non-voting item):** *C. McManus* provided status on the Division's stock assessment efforts, and that the current plan is to make such information available to the SAP and/or interested shellfishermen next month. Discussion ensued regarding the potential future opening. *C. Hannus* offered that the Office of Water Resources (OWR) is only looking at waters below Gaspee Point for possible opening in May, and cautioned that several aspects are still being assessed, any of which could affect opening. *C. McManus* offered that if this area was approved for shellfishing, and fisherman were interested in opening for harvest, regulations would need to be filed 20 days in advance of the opening date. Discussion ensued regarding the Council meeting date, and the possibility of pushing the date out to provide the SAP with additional time to review the data and provide a recommendation. *C. McManus* offered that a SAP or Quahog Workshop meeting date would be scheduled to present the Divisions stock assessment, and possibly a subsequent SAP meeting where a vote on an industry harvest schedule proposal would take place.

Prepared by: P. Duhamel and C. McManus