

TOWN OF MOUNT DESERT SHELLFISH COMMITTEE MINUTES

Wednesday, March 15, 2017

**Town Hall Meeting Room
21 Sea Street
Northeast Harbor**

Members Present: Steve Boucher, Victor Doyle, Earl Moore, Ben Hamor, Tom Falt, John Stanley, Barry Thomas, and Town Clerk Claire Woolfolk. Also present were Commercial License holders Brian Silverman, Rustin Taylor, Laura Flannery, and David Dunton, and members of the public (Brian Thomas)

I. Call to order 4:30 p.m.

Victor Doyle called the meeting to order at 4:30pm

II. Warden Update

Leigh Guildford reported that the wardens have been trying to put someone over to Bartlets Landing the past few months during the regular shift; marked car visible on either side of the tide for 2 hours.

Three weeks ago they issued two summons for individuals from Searsport who had previously been warned. They are members from the same family that was warned last year. When a summons is issued, the wardens can seize the gear and the catch.

Using some of the budget money to purchase warden equipment (boots, binoculars) and continue with the patrols.

Victor asked if there were combined warden patrol with Bar Harbor as part of the shared police department. Officer Guildford reported that the two police departments are on the same records keeping system so that both town's have records of summons and warnings issued, and those records are accessible by all officers.

III. 2017 Shellfish Allocation

The committee reviewed and approved the 2017 Shellfish Allocation to submit to DMR. The allocation will continue with the 9:1 ration for commercial licenses.

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Falt/Hamor) to do the same allocation as last year. Motion passed 6-0.

IV. Annual Shellfish Management Review Submission

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Falt/Hamor) to submit the management review as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

V. Commercial License Renewal Discussion with DMR

Victor read a response from Heidi Leighton, DMR Biologist to the question of whether resident commercial licenses sold to non-residents after the 90 days are grandfathered. Heidi replied - no, any commercial licenses unsold after the 90-day mark are offered to anyone. The conservation requirements and restrictions no longer apply. The grandfather issue does not carry forward. (Only licenses sold within the first 90 days will qualify for the grandfathering status and have the conservation credit restrictions.)

The four individuals that purchased the remaining licenses after 90 days are not required to attend meetings for the conservation credits and will not be grandfathered next year.

VI. Such other business as may be legally conducted

Victor reported that he attended the fisherman's' forum. There was a call to regionalize the shellfish management plans. It is unclear whether representatives from each town would jointly run the plan or if it would be run through DMR. It was proposed to split the state: Penobscot, East, and West. Southern Maine towns have dug themselves out.

This came about since license holders want to be able to clam anywhere and not deal with town ordinances, so that they can move into regions with healthy flats after they have dug out their areas.

Many towns are opposed to this move. Victor will oppose allowing other regions to move in. He suggested that Mount Desert remain opposed while we wait and see the results of the bills. We could possibly partner with Bar Harbor and Cranberry Isles; Southwest don't have commercial harvest and Tremont doesn't have a committee. Victor feels that towns with a management plan are doing all the work and it is their residents that should reap the rewards. If it moves forward, Victor suggested a petition to keep our region small: MDI and outer islands.

Another topic discussed at the forum was that Angus King and Bruce Poloquin support aqua culture bill with intertidal access and ownership (deeds state that ownership is to the low-tide line). Most issues stem from harvesters accessing the flats by crossing owner's lawns without permission.

Brian Thomas was introduced by Victor Doyle as a not-for-profit attorney that also attended the fisherman's forum. He has been tracking the bills for regionalization. It's his take that DMR is not looking at the regionalization as a mandate, but rather as an opportunity for communities to work together to manage their resource plans.

Victor reported that he has been taking an aqua culture class in Ellsworth. It doesn't appear that it will work as planned (i.e. Bartlett's Landing). He will continue to work on it individually vs. as part of the committee to protect the town from lawsuits from individual landowners. He would like to try the seed net to see if it works half-way down the tideline where nothing is currently there. He will continue to update the committee with further developments.

Victor asked the committee if they would be comfortable with him experimenting as an individual. Committee members present indicated support. Tom Falt suggested approaching the Summer Resident's Association to help fund the seeding.

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Boucher/Thomas) for Victor to write a letter on behalf of the shellfish committee to Mr. Rales to request funding for the seeding. Motion passed 6-0.

Victor asked David Dunton to ask at Bar Harbor's next meeting how they would feel about combining time for the conservation credits on work that would benefit both towns. David agreed to report his findings at a future meeting.

VII. Adjourn

MOTION: Moved and seconded (Doyle/Hamor) to adjourn the meeting. Motion passed 6-0. Meeting adjourned at 5:38pm.