

**SHELLFISH MINUTES  
WESTPORT SHELLFISH COMMISSION  
MAY 3, 2017**

**1. Approval of April 5, 2017 meeting minutes.**

The April 5, 2017 meeting minutes were approved as submitted.

|                |                           |                     |         |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------|
| <b>Motion:</b> | Harris                    | <b>Second:</b>      | Higgins |
| <b>Ayes:</b>   | Harris, Higgins, Williams |                     |         |
| <b>Nayes:</b>  | None                      | <b>Abstentions:</b> | None    |
|                |                           | <b>Vote:</b>        | 3:0:0   |

**2. Treasurer's Report**

Ms. Higgins read the checking account balance ending March 31, 2017 into the record.

**3. Police Report**

There was no Police report.

**4. Recreational Shellfish Report**

Ms. Voris submitted the following report into the record:

The Commission has issued **329 annual recreational permits** as of April 28, 2017.

|                                      |            |                      |
|--------------------------------------|------------|----------------------|
| Adult Resident Permits issued –      | <b>158</b> | <b>(\$ 4,740.00)</b> |
| Senior Resident Permits issued –     | <b>157</b> | <b>(\$ 2,205.00)</b> |
| Adult Non-resident Permits issued –  | <b>7</b>   | <b>(\$ 420.00)</b>   |
| Senior Non-resident Permits issued – | <b>5</b>   | <b>(\$ 150.00)</b>   |
| Daily Permits issued -               | <b>0</b>   | <b>(\$ 0.00)</b>     |

The Commission has collected **\$7,515** since January 3, 2017 when we began issuing the 2017 recreational shellfishing permits.

**10** senior permits were issued to people who are 85 and older for free.

Ms. Mozian discussed the closure of the recreational beds and the 1 ½ inch commercial beds due to a herbicide spill at Birchwood Country Club.

**5. New Business**

There was no new business.

**6. Old Business**

a. Progress Report of the Seed Oyster Regulation Sub-Committee

Ms. Voris passed out the Seed Oyster Regulations updates to members of the public. She noted the minor changes since the last draft.

Ms. Higgins discussed the results of the shoreline survey done earlier in the day at low tide done by foot. In the prohibited area up to Hendrick's Point, there are scattered oysters. At Hendrick's Point, there are oyster below the seaweed. Mr. Schafer pointed out the area where he was working and where he is willing to replace cultch. She also walked the area on the west side of the river from Charmers Landing north to the bridge. There are scattered oysters along the shoreline until you come to the point near the bridge at which point you do find a good patch of oyster ranging in size from 1 ½ inches up. She also walked Harbor Road in the Saugatuck Harbor Yacht Club area. That area is patchy until you get close to the Yacht Club.

Mr. Harris reviewed the boat survey. They took 6 samples in a semi-circle area. Very few oysters were found.

Ms. Voris pass out a document for consideration discussing limited hand-picking. She noted this is an idea for review by the Commission and the sub-committee.

Mr. Harris voiced his disagreement with any hand-picking.

Norm Bloom expressed that hand-picking the sides reduces the seed oyster inventory. Eventually, Mother Nature will produce a set in the river. He said do not give away the side. A company cannot get enough to sustain it by hand-picking. There is only in the hundreds of bushels on the sides, not the thousands. He indicated that hand-picking was popular when people did not have boats. The law also changed saying you cannot transport over land. He said the things we should increase or do away with are the daily bushel limit instead.

Jimmy Bloom said there is not as much seed along the shores as there once was. He has worked Hendrick's Point with a boat. It is not easy but it can be done and you cannot take everything with a boat. With hand-picking, you do not stir up the bottom as you do when you are working with a dredge. You are not getting any of the benefits by hand-picking.

Ms. Higgins asked about cultch.

Mr. Bloom stated it was not necessary to add cultch to the river. There is plenty of shell in the river. The bottom just needs to be mixed up.

Steve Schafer noted he mostly agreed with what Norm Bloom had said. He commended the Commission for conducting the survey and the staff for attempting to introduce limited hand-picking. He stated he is willing to help the Commission manage the beds anyway he can. At the end of the day, it is the Commission's decision whether hand-picking will be allowed. He added dredging before spawning would mix up the bottom creating a harder bottom and would do a seeding.

Ms. Williams indicated the Commission should be conservative in our management of the beds and is against hand-picking.

Norm Bloom stated the Commission should always be vigilant and can shut down the program as needed.

The Commission discussed eliminating the daily bushel limit.

Norm Bloom said the daily bushel limit penalizes the small companies who come from far away. It is better to just shut the program down for the season when the gets low. He indicated that we will get a good idea of how things are going based on reporting by the shellfishermen and seeing the waterline of the boats. He added that the Commission can conduct a survey before the beginning of the season.

**7. Other Business**

- a. Ms. Mozian reported the Clams & Cocktails event will take place on June 3, 2017.
- b. Canal Beach clean-up – Ms. Williams reported that the Canal Beach clean-up was easy. The area was relatively clean. There were two small bags of garbage collected along with one bag of garbage that had been left behind.
- c. Earthplace Green Day – Ms. Mozian noted that the day went well though attendance was low.
- d. Ms. Mozian reviewed expired terms of office with Mr. Harris and Ms. Williams. Both agreed to remain on the Commission.
- e. Ms. Mozian noted there is a land use survey available. She noted that if members of the Commission have dealt with the land use agencies, they should take the survey.

**8. Public Comment**

The May 3, 2017 meeting of the Westport Shellfish Commission adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

|                |                                  |                     |                    |
|----------------|----------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Motion:</b> | <b>Higgins</b>                   | <b>Second:</b>      | <b>Harris</b>      |
| <b>Ayes:</b>   | <b>Higgins, Harris, Williams</b> |                     |                    |
| <b>Nays:</b>   | <b>None</b>                      | <b>Abstentions:</b> | <b>None</b>        |
|                |                                  |                     | <b>Vote: 3:0:0</b> |