



**SHELLFISH COMMISSION**  
TOWN HALL – 110 MYRTLE AVENUE  
WESTPORT, CT 06880  
P 203.341.1087 F 203.341.1088

**MINUTES  
WESTPORT SHELLFISH COMMISSION  
DECEMBER 7, 2022**

**ATTENDANCE**

Commission Members:

Heather Williams, Chair  
Jamie Walsh, Vice-Chair  
Jay Grayson, Alternate  
Dick Harris  
Clarinda Higgins, Alternate

Ex-Officios:

Colin Kelly, Conservation Director

Staff:

Susan Voris, Admin. Asst. II

Guests:

Matt Murray

The December 7, 2022 meeting of the Westport Shellfish Commission was called to order at 6:30 p.m. in Room 309 of the Westport Town Hall, 110 Myrtle Ave., Westport, Connecticut, by Chairman, Heather Williams.

This is to certify that these minutes and resolutions were filed with the Westport Town Clerk within 7 days of the December 7, 2022 meeting of the Westport Shellfish Commission pursuant to Section 1-225 of the Freedom of Information Act.

---

Colin Kelly  
Conservation Director

1. Approval of the November 2, 2022 minutes.

Mr. Walsh asked for clarification of what the float skid in the discussion of the dock at 259 Riverside Avenue.

Ms. Voris stated Mr. Ryder explained the DEEP is now asking for the float skids rather than the floats. They are affixed to the piers and will stop the float from touching the river bottom by 18 inches.

Mr. Grayson arrived at 6:35 p.m.

Motion to approve the minutes as submitted.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Higgins</b>	<b>Second:</b>	<b>Harris</b>
<b>Ayes:</b>	<b>Higgins, Harris, Grayson, Walsh, Williams</b>		
<b>Nays:</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Abstentions:</b>	<b>None</b>
		<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5:0:0</b>

2. Police Report

Cpl. Fearon was not at the meeting and had not reported any issues.

3. Treasurers Report

Ms. Williams read the checking account balance ending October 31, 2022 into the record.

4. Recreational Shellfish Report

Ms. Voris reported there was no formal report. She stated one new permit was issued in November. There were no closures in November. The recreational beds were closed earlier in the day due to rainfall. She reported staff was informed of a diesel spill into the Saugatuck River at the boat launch next to the sewage treatment plant within the past few hours. On Tuesday, December 7, 2022, there was an accident on I-95 with a diesel spill and this could be the residuals from that spill. She noted that this is an on-going investigation and staff will let the Commission know what they learn.

Commission members discussed the I-95 rehabilitation plans and the lack of stormwater improvements in Westport and how Ms. Higgins and Ms. Mozian had advocated for some improvements. It was noted that in Norwalk, there will be drywells installed to catch some of the stormwater runoff.

5. New Business

a. Review of 2023 renewal information

Ms. Voris reviewed the renewal letter. She indicated that each year there is an attempt to educate. This year is a reminder to call before you go clamming because rainfall is not the only indicator for a closure. Today was a good example. If there had been no rainfall, recreational and commercial shellfishing would be closed until the investigation was closed in Westport and potentially in Norwalk. Then the Bureau of Aquaculture would have to determine the impacts to the beds based on the spill and testing required.

6. Old Business

a. Follow-up discussion on shell recycling

Mr. Walsh stated Ms. Voris and he went to the last meeting of the Fairfield Shellfish Commission to discuss their shell recycling program and Westport's interest in partnering. Members of the Fairfield Shellfish Commission shared a wealth of information. Shell must be native and cannot come from European sources. Mr. Walsh noted that this is a strictly volunteer run program. There would be some financial outlay with the program

Ms. Voris reported on her discussion with the Bureau of Aquaculture (BOA). The Commission would have to be permitted as a partner with the Fairfield Shellfish Commission. She had sent out the Commission the document related to the permitting, which relates to procedures and protocols. She indicated that a participating restaurant would have to sign an agreement that their shell comes from native sources and if they change their sources, they must notify us. Permitting of restaurants would also need Fairfield Health Department approval.

Mr. Walsh added that he has spoken with the owner of Hudson and Malone tentatively. While interested there are questions and concerns. He noted that this program is more of a sell rather than a buy in. For the restaurant, adding work in the kitchen is a big concern. We have to make it easy and accessible. Consistency is key.

Ms. Voris noted that BOA has suggested that we start small with possibly just 2 restaurants and see how this goes. There is potential to add more later.

Mr. Walsh seconded that saying Fairfield said something similar.

## 7. Other Business

### a. Gathering of Shellfish Commissions

Ms. Voris noted the Gathering of Shellfish Commissions will be held on January 21, 2023 at the CT Ag. Station in New Haven. More information will follow and she will ask for members availability.

### b. Discussion of Water Quality Reports

Staff shared with the Commission recently released water quality reports from Harbor Watch and Save the Sound.

The Commission and staff discussed the sampling in Westport. It was noted that HarborWatch through their testing is often able to help pinpoint sources of discharge and Towns are able to fix breaks rather than replacing whole lines.

Mr. Kelly noted that Westport is an urban area. Samples are indicative of an urban area. There are improvements over the years. He stated he was at HarborWatch's presentation of their water quality findings last week and was speaking with Nikki Spiller, Director. She indicated that HarborWatch has lost some of the grant funding they have typically gotten in the past and is looking for other avenues. He is going to see about increasing the Conservation Department's spending for water quality sampling and testing supplies that has not changed in years.

Mr. Walsh asked if the Commission could make a grant to HarborWatch.

Ms. Voris submitted to the Commission that prior to staff's knowledge of the funding issues at HarborWatch, we had asked if there was any historic data on New Creek as its outlet in next to Burying Hill Beach. It is another water body we would like to see studied.

The Commission discussed making a grant to HarborWatch as the waterbodies studied drain into Long Island Sound. They would support a \$7,500 grant but would like a summary of the work that would be done.

### c. Mr. Kelly stated staff will be meeting with Mr. Lytton on Friday, December 9, 2022 to discuss press release.

The December 7, 2022 meeting of the Westport Shellfish Commission adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

<b>Motion:</b>	<b>Williams</b>	<b>Second:</b>	<b>Walsh</b>
<b>Ayes:</b>	<b>Williams, Walsh, Grayson, Harris, Higgins</b>		
<b>Nays:</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>Abstentions:</b>	<b>None</b>
		<b>Vote:</b>	<b>5:0:0</b>