



SHELLFISH COMMISSION
TOWN HALL – 110 MYRTLE AVENUE
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WESTPORT™

**MINUTES
WESTPORT SHELLFISH COMMISSION
MARCH 6, 2024**

ATTENDANCE

Commission Members:

Jamie Walsh, Chair
Barry Lytton, Vice-Chair
Dick Harris
Jesse Harte
Clarinda Higgins, Alternate
Heather Williams, Alternate

Ex-Officios:

Brendan Fearon, Westport Marine Police

Staff:

Susan Voris, Admin. Asst. III

Guests:

Keith Wilberg, PE, LS, Town Engineer
Jonathan Goldstein, commercial shellfisherman

The March 6, 2024 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 March 6, 2024 meeting of the Westport Shellfish Commission pursuant to Section 1-225 of the Freedom of Information Act.

Colin Kelly
Conservation Director

The Commission will take such action as the meeting may determine regarding the following:

1. New Business

- a.** Review and comment on Bride No. 04972 – Greens Farms Road over Sasco Brook for replacement of the existing two-span bridge and pier with a single span bridge.

Keith Wilberg, PE, LS, Town Engineer, presented the application. This bridge crosses both the Westport and Fairfield town lines. Both communities are currently reviewing the proposal for impacts and regulatory authority. The project was designed under a DOT pilot program that does not cost the Town's any money for the design phase, but it allows the bridge to be designed to spec with coordination with the DOT. This bridge has a failing grade and was built in 1970. Its current span is 35 feet and the proposed span will be 60 feet. It will have an open culvert. The roadway will be raised to elevation 11.6 msl. This is above the flood height. Mr. Wilberg noted that because this bridge is in a tidal area, it does not mean that the bridge will not flood but could lower the number of times flooding occurs. For example, if there were a significant rainfall that causes flooding and a high tide coming in there likely will be flooding of the bridge. Mr. Wilberg reviewed the construction sequence and the sediment and erosion controls that will be in place during construction. At all times during construction, there will be a 50% of the stream will remain open. Natural stream bed materials will be stockpiled and supplemented, if necessary to maintain a natural streambed in the area post-construction.

Mr. Walsh read a Note to File from Colin Kelly into the record, which indicated there appeared to be no visible shellfish resources in the area. Mr. Kelly described the streambed as sediment, gravel and cobble. He indicated that due to the work being immediately upstream and downstream of the bridge, there should be no impact the shellfish resources.

Ms. Voris noted the area is designated as Prohibited.

The Commission made a determination that there would be no adverse impacts to the shellfish resources.

Motion:	Walsh	Second:	Lytton
Ayes:	Walsh, Lytton, Harris, Harte, Higgins, Williams		
Nayes:	None	Abstentions:	None
		Vote:	6:0:0

2. Approval of the February 7, 2024 minutes.

The February 7, 2024 minutes were approved as submitted.

Motion:	Walsh	Second:	Lytton
Ayes:	Walsh, Lytton, Harris, Harte, Higgins, Williams		
Nayes:	None	Abstentions:	None
		Vote:	6:0:0

3. Treasurers Report

Mr. Walsh read the checking account balance ending February 29, 2024 into the record.

4. Police Report

Cpl. Fearon stated he recently conducted a boat inspection with Mike Oravez for his Seed Oyster Permit. This passed. Mr. Oravez indicated he would be working the beds in the next two weeks.

Cpl. Fearon reported he will be putting Marine 2 and 3 into the water shortly and pulling Marine 1 in order to replace the motors. The replacement for Marine 2 should be ready in September. There currently is no opening date for the Marine Police Unit but will be by Memorial Day weekend. There

are 3 full time officers on the unit and they are currently working different shifts and there is mostly 24 hours coverage. They are keeping an eye on the beds for violations and watching for an increase in activity. He has also spoken with DEEP Encon Police about continuing patrols of areas. The work they did produced results last season. He discussed overtime for the Commission so that a presence is out early and strong.

Motion to allow 12 overtime shifts for the Marine Police to use for shellfish patrols at their discretion.

Motion: Walsh **Second: Williams**
Ayes: Walsh, Williams, Harris, Harte, Higgins, Lytton
Nays: None **Abstentions: None** **Vote: 5:0:0**

5. Recreational Shellfish Report

Ms. Voris submitted the following report:

The Commission has issued **108 annual recreational permits** as of February 29, 2024.

Adult Resident Permits issued –	42	(\$ 1,230.00)
Senior Resident Permits issued –	61	(\$ 915.00)
Adult Non-resident Permits issued –	3	(\$ 180.00)
Senior Non-resident Permits issued –	2	(\$ 60.00)
Daily Permits issued -	3	(\$ 45.00)

The Commission has collected **\$2,385.00** since December 18, 2023 when we began issuing the 2024 recreational shellfishing permits.

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

Month	Days Open	Days Closed	Total Days
January	18	13	31
February	29	0	29
March			
April			
May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			

Notes:

Closure Events
 1/9 - 1.93" rainfall event

Ms. Voris noted that staff issued a senior permit to an individual earlier in the day who was 96 years old.

6. Old Business

- a.** Review of PFA sampling report in the Saugatuck River by Dick Harris.

Mr. Harris noted his report and the surprisingly good results that have come from the testing. The Saugatuck River does not have some of the issues that the Norwalk River has including turf fields and fire stations using fire foam.

7. Other Business

- a.** Mr. Harris noted there is a large outbreak of Mitten Crabs.
b. Mr. Harris discussed proposed pesticide legislation that is going through the legislature.
c. Mr. Lytton discussed potentially having a booth at the Farmer's Market on shellfishing. It would address sustainability and the resource and the recreational program available. Mr. Walsh expressed interest in helping man a booth.
d. Ms. Higgins asked about what is needed to change the regulations to incorporate the free permit for Indigenous People as was discussed at the Gathering.

Ms. Voris stated that staff will look into the issue and provide the appropriate language change after proper review.

8. Next Steps – None

The March 6, 2024 meeting of the Westport Shellfish Commission adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

Motion:	Harris	Second:	Higgins
Ayes:	Harris, Higgins, Harte, Lytton, Walsh, Williams		
Nays:	None	Abstentions:	None
		Vote:	6:0:0