



Rhode Island Marine Fisheries Council

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MEETING MINUTES

December 7, 2015

Chairperson: *B. Ballou*

RIMFC Members Present: *R. Hittinger, D. Monti, J. Grant, A. Dangelo, C. Rein, W. Macintosh, J. Grant*

DEM: *G. Powers, J. McNamee, S. Olszewski, C. Deacutis, P. Duhamel, D. White (DLE)*

Public: Approximately 15 persons attended.

- 1) **Approval of the Agenda:** *B. Ballou* inquired as to any modifications to the agenda. Hearing none, the agenda was approved.
- 2) **Approval of RIMFC meeting minutes from October 5, 2015:** *B. Ballou* inquired as to any proposed modifications or objections to approving the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.
- 3) **Public comments regarding other matters not on agenda (added agenda item as inadvertently omitted in preparation of agenda):** No comments were offered by the public.
- 4) **Public Hearing Items – November 16 public hearing:**
J. McNamee provided an overview of all proposals via a powerpoint presentation which included a summary of additional industry proposals as well as those options that were noticed.
 - **Hearing item #1a - Commercial Summer Flounder:**

J. McNamee offered that comment and discussion were provided concerning keeping the fishery open as long as possible, which was different than years past when a minimum possession limit of 50 lbs/day was proposed as the lowest limit that could be caught while still being economically viable. He offered that the Council should think about this in particular. He provided a summary of the other possible management alternatives that were presented or provided as comments. *D. Monti* inquired as to the reasoning behind the 50 lb floor, to which *J. McNamee* replied that it was proposed that possession limits below 100/day are not economically viable, that it isn't worth the trip for possession limits lower than 100 lbs/day. He offered that this was in contrast to comments made by the Dealer who was present at the hearing, who preferred keeping the fishery open at a lower limit in order to keep the fishery open and maintain flow of product into the market. *C. Rein* inquired as to the Division's experience with bi-weekly aggregates; to which *J. McNamee* offered that the

Division had done it in the past and it is manageable, but that it may be necessary to reduce possession limits mid-period to avoid exceeding the quotas, which can be problematic for both the fishermen and Enforcement. **C. Rein offered a motion to institute the industry proposed and Division supported a bi-weekly aggregate possession limit @ 2,500 lbs/vsl/week during the Winter sub-period, a Friday closure, and to allow the possession limit to drop below 50 lbs; 2nd by M. Rice.** J. Grant offered that a possession limit lower than 50 lbs/day is not economically viable, to which A. Dangelo concurred, and also suggested a 2-day closure as an alternative. J. McNamee offered that he believed a 2-day closure was not favorable to dealers due to disruption of supply. R. Hittinger offered that aggregate possession limit should be based on a 5-day opening each week (Friday and Saturday closure) rather than a 7-day week, to which it was agreed was the intent of the motion. Upon conclusion of the discussion, **J. Grant offered an amended motion to recommend a bi-weekly aggregate possession limit @ 2,500 lbs/vsl/2 weeks during the Winter sub-period; a Friday and Saturday closure during the Summer and Fall sub-periods; and to not allow the possession limit to drop below 50 lbs/vsl/day (i.e., fishery would close instead); 2nd by C. Rein.** The motion passed 7 – 0.

- **Hearing Item #1b: Commercial Bluefish:**

J. McNamee provided an overview of the noticed options, comments received, and an additional industry proposal that was provided during the workshop and hearing. N. Lengyel provided rationale for the 18” minimum size; that 95% of fish are sexually mature at this size. B. Macintosh expressed concern that the Summer period possession limit is insufficient and could result in discards. Upon conclusion of the discussion, **M. Rice offered a motion to recommend adoption of the industry proposal as provided; 2nd by D. Monti.** The motion passed 7 – 0.

- **Hearing item #1c - Commercial Scup:**

J. McNamee provided an overview of the noticed proposal and industry considerations, and explained as the current management strategy of obtaining quota from the FFT sector to the GC sector in order to keep the GC fishery open, but that this transfer of quota cannot be relied upon. **B. Macintosh offered a motion to recommend adoption of status quo; 2nd by M. Rice.** The motion passed 7 – 0.

- **Hearing item #1d - Commercial Black sea bass:**

J. McNamee offered a summary of the noticed proposals, as well as his analysis for the aggregate limits proposed for each sub-period. After a lengthy discussion, **J. Grant offered a motion to recommend an aggregate in the Winter 1 sub-period @ 1000 lbs/week; an aggregate in Winter 2 @ 250/week; maintain the current 50 lbs/day starting possession limit and add a Friday closure for the other 3 sub-periods; do not allow the possession limit to drop below 50 lbs (would close instead); and delay the 9/1 starting date to 9/15. 2nd by B. Macintosh.** The motion passed 4-3 (R. Hittinger, D. Monti, and A. Dangelo voting against the motion).

- **Hearing item #1e and 2 – Editing of Finfish regulations and Part 1 - Definitions:**

***D. Monti* offered a motion to recommend adoption of all noticed proposals, including additional amendments offered by the Division of Law Enforcement; 2nd by *R. Hittinger*. The motion passed 7 – 0.**

- 5) **SAP Minutes:** *J. Grant* provided a meeting recap, of which there were 5 aquaculture lease applications reviewed. *B. Ballou* offered that the 2 applications that received objection from the SAP were subject of agenda item #6 of tonight’s meeting. He then inquired as to any objections with approving the minutes. Hearing none, the minutes were approved.

6) **Aquaculture Lease Applications:**

Peet application: *J. Grant* provided an overview of the reasons which brought the application before the Council and which are reflected in the SAP meeting minutes. Upon conclusion of the discussion, ***J. Grant* offered a motion to not object to the application based upon wild harvest conflicts (lack thereof); 2nd by *M. Rice*.** *J. Grant* offered that the density survey of 5/sq. meter would normally be criteria for objection, but that in this case, because of both the small size of the site and that it would be closed only in winter months, that a direct conflict with wild fishery harvest would be minimal. *R. Hittinger* offered that the application was circulated and that no objections were received. *J. Grant* offered that 2 recreational representatives on the SAP did not offer objection. **The motion passed 7 – 0.**

Walrus and Carpenter: *J. Grant* provided an overview of the reasons which brought the application before the Council and which are reflected in the SAP meeting minutes. *R. Hittinger* offered that he received many objections about this site as a popular recreational fishing area. *D. Buettel* offered that the application had been modified such that these impacts would be minimized by growing kelp only from Nov. 1 to May 1, and that all gear would be removed for the Summer months. *R. Hittinger* offered objection that a revised application was not currently before the Council. ***M. Rice* offered a motion to not object to the application contingent upon the revision of the proposal being a kelp based operation only (no oysters) between Nov. 1 and May 1 only; 2nd by *R. Hittinger*.** *J. Grant* offered that an objection was also provided from a whelk fisherman as the area is used for whelk fishing into December. **The motion passed 6 – 1 (*J. Grant* opposing).**

7) **Presentation of RI Saltwater Recreational Fishing License Program Report:**

B. Ballou provided the Council with the statutory obligation that the report must be presented at a public meeting, and that the Council shall provide a recommendation as to whether or not the Licensing program is meeting its intended purpose per RIGL 20-2.2-10. ***D. Monti* offered that he had reviewed the report and offered a motion to accept the report; 2nd by *M. Rice*. The motion passed 7 – 0.**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:25
Prepared by *P. Duhamel*