

Shellfish Advisory Panel

May 9, 2018; 4:30PM

URI Bay Campus, Coastal Institute Building, Large Conference Room
218 S Ferry Road, Narragansett, RI 02874

MEETING SUMMARY

RIMFC members: J. Grant (Chair)

DEM: C. McManus; E. Schneider; T. Angell; S. Olszewski;

SAP members: M. Sousa; R. Tellier; K. Eagan; G. Schey; J. Gardner; E. Troiano

CRMC: D. Beutel

Public: M. Taylor; K.T. Murgo; K.P. Murgo; T. Dasilva; D. Eagan; J. Crandall; J. Scappatura; C. Allard;

1. Review of aquaculture lease applications sent to public notice by CRMC:

a. 2017-11-061, Keeley, Quonochontaug Pond:

D. Beutel provided a brief overview of the proposal. *D. Beutel* expressed the list of objections to the site from the town of Charlestown, which included: gear visibility, the site not properly zoned, it's location in the Charlestown portion of the pond and not Westerly, and concerns with the mooring field nearby. The neighbor to the north objected with concerns of a business being allowed in a residential area. One person formally objected to the site based on fishing and clamming conflicts. One SAP member formally objected to the site as an individual (i.e. not as a SAP representative) given the site's proximity to the docks. On the shellfish survey conducted by *D. Beutel* with *D. Leavitt* present, they found no quahogs, but some oysters and blue crabs. The applicant added further comments on the site and feedback he received from others to modify the site, and fielded questions from the audience. **Motion made by *K. Eagan* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *J. Gardner*. The motion passed 5-0 (*M. Sousa* dissenting vote).**

b. 2018-02-049, Lopes-Taylor, Sakonnet River:

D. Beutel provided a brief overview of the proposal. The shellfish site assessment administered by CRMC indicated no quahogs were present, but there were blood arks. Bottom type of the site was hard sand. **Motion made by *J. Gardner* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *M. Sousa*. The motion passed 5-0 (*G. Schey* not present for the vote).**

c. 2018-04-078, Crandall, Quonochontaug Pond:

D. Beutel provided a brief overview of the proposal. *D. Beutel* described that the concerns with the site have been about the pond acreage approaching 5% and why are the new leases for Quonochontaug Pond going in Charlestown waters of the pond and not Westerly portion. *C. McManus* asked about the licensed marina owner component of the application, and *D. Beutel* clarified that the site was not permitted for a marina and the owner is only looking to use his abutting property for access for this proposed site's commercial activity. Given this application is still out for comment in the public notice period, *K. Egan* ask if a non-objection vote could be contingent on no other member of the public formally objecting to CRMC regarding wild harvest conflicts at the site. *R. Tellier* asked how close is Quonochontaug Pond to the 5% limit, and *D. Beutel* indicated that the pond is not close to 5%. *G. Schey* asked is there has been any request to CRMC about increasing the 5% rule, and *D. Beutel* indicated no. **Motion made by *K. Eagan* to recommend no objection to the application as long as no objection is received by CRMC regarding site conflicts with wild harvest (commercial or recreational) during the public notice period; 2nd by *G. Schey*. The motion passed 6-0.**

d. 2018-04-063, Puckett, Great Salt Pond, Block Island:

D. Beutel provided a brief overview of the proposal. The site is for kelp and would only be operational from November 1 – May 1. The applicant worked with the Block Island Harbor Commission and the Block Island Shellfish Commission on the site location. *J. Gardner* warned about the sailing activity in Great South Pond. **Motion made by *G. Schey* to recommend no objection to the application; 2nd by *M. Sousa*. The motion passed 6-0.**

2. Discussion on Whelk Questions Presented to DEM DMF from Industry Members regarding Trap Numbers, and an Update on a Future Whelk Workshop (non-voting item):

C. McManus introduced to the SAP a concern from an industry member brought before DEM DMF regarding whelk. The individual from industry was concerned with whelk fishers being able to fish more than one license off a boat and the number of traps permitted per license. *T. Angell* provided more insights on the concerns presented to DMF. *D. Eagan* commented on the whelk fishery, and thought that not only is it not economically feasible to limit one license per boat for some individuals, but only allowing one whelk fisher boat to actively fish would result in more traps in the water at a given time. There was extensive dialogue between the whelk fishers regarding what they see on the water regarding the whelk population, their prey and predators, growth rates, and habitat preferences. The consensus from the fishers that attended the meeting was the concerns from the individual were not representative of the industry at-large. Industry members in attendance discussed pursuing a trap tag system for whelk pots. *S. Olszewski* provided perspective on a prospective trap tag system based on the other trap tag programs (e.g. gill nets, lobster traps). He offered that the DMF could pursue this idea for whelk fishing if industry wanted such a program. *C. McManus* provided an update on the whelk workshop held in the Fall 2017 with DEM DMF, the Nature Conservancy (TNC)

and the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries, and how the workshop was to better understand what the current data needs are for better whelk management, and with the current data, what tools could DEM DMF pursue to understand the stock trends. *C. McManus* asked if industry would like to have a meeting in August where DEM and TNC could share the findings that came out of the report and get industry's feedback. Industry requested that they receive a copy of the report first to read through, and then they would decide if they would like to meet on it. *C. McManus* indicated he could relay this message to TNC and DEM staff that are organizing the workshop.

Prepared by: C. McManus