

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ATLANTIC COAST SECTION OF THE NEW JERSEY SHELLFISHERIES COUNCIL

Nacote Creek Law Enforcement
Port Republic, NJ
October 15, 2012

Present were: Chairman: Walter L. Johnson III (Ocean County)
 Vice Chairman: John Maxwell (Atlantic County)
 Councilman: Walter Hughes (Monmouth County)
 Councilman: Oliver Twist III (Cape May County)

State Representatives: Jeffrey C. Normant, Bureau of Shellfisheries
 Gustavo Calvo, Bureau of Shellfisheries
 Kira Dacanay, Bureau of Shellfisheries
 Michael Celestino, Marine Fisheries Administration

Mr. Johnson called the meeting to order. Mr. Normant read the State's compliance with Sunshine Law. He announced that the meeting would be recorded.

1. Total Revenue for August 2012: \$ 1,729.99
 Shellfisheries Law Enforcement Fund: \$ 666.00

 Total Revenue for September 2012: \$ 1,273.94
 Shellfisheries Law Enforcement Fund: \$ 610.00

2. Presentation of August 20, 2012 minutes for approval

The minutes of the August 20, 2012_meeting were approved on a motion by Mr. Twist and a second by Mr. Hughes.

3. Applications for Consideration

LESSEE	LOT #	SECTION	ACRES	LOCATION	MAP#
Raymond Seyler	2509	B	2.00	Scull Bay	27
Robert Mayer	2342	B	1.97	Dry Bay	24.2

Mr. Normant provided the Council with copies of the lease applications. Both applicants were present. Pursuant to leasing regulations, applicants must attend one of two meetings at which the Council would review their applications. A decision will be rendered at the next meeting.

4. Applications for Decision

LESSEE	LOT #	SECTION	ACRES	LOCATION	MAP#
Gerard Zodi	1039	A	2.00	Great Sound	5
Joseph Wagner, Jr.	1040	A	2.00	Great Sound	5
Denise Wagner	1042	A	2.00	Great Sound	5
Joseph Wagner, Sr.	1043	A	2.00	Great Sound	5
James Pharo	401.1	B	2.85	GB_Big Creek	10
Tim Pharo	399	B	2.86	GB_Big Creek	10

All applicants were present at the last meeting. The lease applications were approved on a motion by Mr. Hughes and a second by Mr. Twist.

5. Applications for Transfer

LESSEE	APPLICANT	LOT #	SECTION	ACRES	LOCATION	MAP #
John Aubin	Matthew Gregg	11	D	2.0	Swan Point	1
Hallie Aubin	Matthew Gregg	12	D	2.0	Swan Point	1
Richard Hartmann	Steven Mastro, Sr.	2231	B	4.44	Dry Bay	24.2
Richard Beckley, Sr. & Richard Hartman	Steven Mastro, Sr.	2226	B	2.83	Dry Bay	24.2
Richard Beckley, Sr. & Richard Hartman	Richard Beckley, Sr.	2338	B	2.00	Dry Bay	24.2
Richard Beckley, Sr. & Richard Hartman	Richard Beckley, Sr.	2077	B	2.06	Absecon Bay	22

Without discussion, the lease transfers were approved on a motion by Mr. Twist and seconded by Mr. Maxwell.

6. Old Business:

Aquaculture Permits

Mr. Parsons inquired on the transferability of permits allowing for use of aquaculture structure. Ms. Dacanay stated that Waterfront Development Permits involving bulkheads and other such structures usually remain with the property and carry over to the new property owner. She stated that the same probably applies to aquaculture structures.

Middle Island Leases

Mr. Dale S. Parsons stated that he and three other individuals (Dale B. Parsons, Robert Frick Sr. and Robert Frick Jr.) applied for leases in an area of deeper water located adjacent to the block of leases in Middle Island Channel. This area had been surveyed in 2009 when the initial block of leases were proposed, but the lease applications in this deeper area were cancelled by the initial applicants due to the water depths. During the shellfish survey of Middle Island channel, a high density hard clam station was recorded along the boundary of leases 1409 and 1412, and open bottom (area of the cancelled lease applications). The size and shape of 1409 and 1412 were modified to avoid the high density area as per the leasing regulations and Council policy. This created an open water inset between the two leases. Mr. Parsons proposed to position the four lease applications in a block like configuration adjacent to leases 1409 and 1412. This configuration would create an area of open bottom being surrounded by active leases. Mr. Normant stated that he had spoken with Mr. Parsons about modifying the configuration of the lease applications to avoid the high density area and to prevent having an open water area within the block of leases. Mr. Johnson and Mr. Maxwell stated their opposition to Mr. Parson's proposal because it would create open harvest bottom in the middle of the block of leases, which would complicate enforcement and increase the potential of vandalism and theft within the surrounding leases.

Mr. Parsons stated that he should be able to lease the entire area as the Bureau had used a hydraulic dredge to sample instead of less efficient industry harvest methods. He stated that the bottom was not conducive to hand harvesting and that by using industry harvest methods, it would have demonstrated the actual "harvestable" density. Mr. Normant explained that all surveys conducted by the Bureau use the most efficient methods available to collect scientifically valid and accurate information. Mr. Johnson suggested that Mr. Parsons work with the Bureau on a modified lease application.

7. New Business:

Surf Clam Advisory Committee

Mr. Normant reported that the 2012 surf clam stock assessment was completed for New Jersey territorial waters from Shark River to Cape May. He stated that overall surf clam abundance was extremely low. However, some recruitment (15-35 mm surf clams) was found in the inshore areas of Ocean and Monmouth counties for the first time in over a decade. He stated that the Surf Clam Advisory Committee (SCAC) recommended only a nominal quota 24,576 industry bushels to be divided between NJ surf clam license holders. On a motion by Mr. Maxwell and a second by Mr. Hughes, Council approved the SCAC recommendation. Mr. Normant reported that Federal funding used to conduct the annual surf clam inventory of New Jersey territorial waters was not appropriated for this fiscal year. The funding was through a grant administered by the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act. Mr. Normant stated that the Bureau was exploring other options to possibly continue the surf clam inventory in the future.

Barnegat Bay Estuarine Shellfish Inventory 2012

Ms. Dacanay reported that field sampling for the 2012 Barnegat Bay Estuarine Shellfish Inventory was just completed. A total of 355 stations were sampled in Barnegat Bay from the Manahawkin Bridge to the Point Pleasant Canal. The survey was conducted to provide up-to-date information on hard clam populations and submerged aquatic vegetation habitat distribution in Barnegat Bay, as well as documenting the presence of other associated species. The last Barnegat Bay inventory had been conducted in 1985 -86. She stated that the raw data was currently in the process of being sorted and entered into a database.

Barnegat Bay Shellfish Restoration and Enhancement

Dr. Calvo reported on upcoming shellfish seeding activities and previous hard clam enhancement site selection survey work. He stated that up to four hundred thousand oyster seed (size = 25mm and greater) were scheduled to be planted on the Bureau's one acre site off Good Luck Point in Barnegat Bay. He reported that firm shell bottom conditions were recently verified.

Dr. Calvo stated that hard clam restoration site selection work involved sampling areas off Waretown, Gulf Point and Sandy Island in Barnegat Bay was completed. Gulf Point and Sandy Island areas were suggested by the Barnegat Bay Shellfish Enhancement Committee. He reported that blunted clams were found to be common in the area off Waretown and present in the area of Sandy Island. He stated that the area off Gulf Point where shell had been planted for a study conducted by Rutgers University in the 1990s was selected as an initial area for enhancement. Most of the clam seed would be planted in the area off Gulf Point and a smaller portion would be used to re-seed areas within the Sedge Island Marine Conservation Zone. Up to one million clam seed (size = 20-25mm) were slated for planting over the next few weeks. Mr. Normant stated that planted clams would be monitored for growth and survival in the spring.

Mullica River Oyster Season

Mr. Johnson inquired on the possibility for opening a Mullica River oyster harvest season. Mr. Normant stated that observed poor oyster bed conditions in the fall of 2011 precluded a 2012 spring season. He stated that the Bureau planned on sampling this fall to verify current oyster bed conditions. He anticipated that oyster bed conditions would be similar to last fall.

Oyster Collection

Mr. Parsons inquired if he could collect some Mullica River oysters from the Reef Bed, under a scientific collection permit, to use as brood stock for a "spat on shell" oyster restoration experiment. Mr. Normant stated the he would discuss the proposal with the Administration.

Lease Renewals

Mr. Normant reminded the Council that all leases must be renewed by December 31st of each year. The Bureau's Nacote Creek office will begin to accept Atlantic Coast lease renewals on October 15th.

The next Council meeting was moved to December 3, 2012 due to scheduling conflicts on November 19th.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Mr. Twist and a second by Mr. Maxwell.

8. Date, time and place of next meeting:

DATE: December 3, 2012
TIME: 7 PM
LOCATION: Law Enforcement Office
360 New York Rd. Rt. 9
Port Republic, NJ 08241