

# MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

## Town of Bar Harbor

Regular Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, February 17, 2021

Call to order 4:07pm. Virtual meeting through zoom link available to the public.

Present: Chris Petersen (chair), Fiona De Koning (member), Scott Swann (member), John Avila (member), Joanna Fogg (member), Matt Gerald (member).  
Visitors: Charlie Phippen (harbormaster), Aliza Leit (COA student/research assistant on clam projects)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - December minutes were approved.

### OLD BUSINESS:

A. Update on materials for recreational clammers. We will work on this document, with the goal of getting it out by summer for tourist season. We would like to see if we add other species or have other changes to our ordinance before finalizing any document.

B. Maine Shellfish Restoration and Resilience Grant – update. Chris submitted a short summary of the summer work to the Maine Shellfish Resilience and Restoration Fund, with suggestions on how we might be able to reallocate the remainder of the grant. The directors of the fund responded that any of our proposed reallocations were appropriate. That document is attached to these minutes as the document: *BHMRC 2.17.21 attachement research summary.pdf*

C. Annual Shellfish Management Report. Chris circulated the 2020 DMR Annual Shellfish Management Report from the town. The information included 8 meetings, approximately 250 hours of volunteer time from 30 volunteers, 120 hours of shellfish patrolling, 2 clafat surveys, and recruitment and predation work and well as pH measurements at six sites over the year.

### NEW BUSINESS

A. Potential changes in ordinance – review and update  
i. 4" maximum for soft-shell clams. Fiona and Joanna each talked to a current or recent commercial clammer, neither had any problems with the change in the regulation, although one clammer doubted that it would be useful, while wishing that the limit had been in effect a decade ago. Neither saw it as a major removal of harvestable clams, saying that the larger size are not preferred. Given the potential conservation value of keeping large clams in the mud, we will pursue this ordinance change.

ii. Adding additional bivalve species to the ordinance. We reviewed our information on quahogs, *Mercenaria mercenaria*. This species exists at several sites on the Blue Hill Bay shores of Bar Harbor, but is only found rarely in Frenchman Bay. This species has existed at these sites for decades, but we do

not have data to suggest that it is decreasing or increasing over time. Within the town, the only two easy access points to the intertidal are at Clark Cove and at Town Landing Road (off of Indian Point Road). Quahogs have been found from Northwest Cove to the causeway, and DMR staff recently did a quick survey showing harvestable numbers of quahogs at Clark Cove. If we were to add them to our ordinance, recreational clammers would have to have a town license to harvest them. These are available for residents and non-residents. For commercial harvesters, they would need a town commercial license, which are available to residents with 7 conservation hours in a year, but only to a non-resident once five resident licenses are sold in a year. However, we are not aware of any current commercial harvest of quahogs in this part of the state.

We would also add oysters to the ordinance. They have become more common in the intertidal over the last several years, which probably represents loss of small seed clams from aquaculture that have been moved by currents to these intertidal sites. They could also be from reproduction of local aquaculture clam populations, although we think that is much less likely. We plan on doing censuses along the shorelines in late spring for these species west of the causeway. Assuming we find adequate populations, will we request the ability to manage those species from the Maine Department of Marine Resources.

#### B. Spring plans

i. What to do with seed stock in the spring? We currently have small soft-shelled clams overwintering in lantern nets. After we examine them to see if they have grown at all over the winter. We plan using them in the mudflats to ask simple research questions. After a discussion, the committee came up with two potential projects.

The first priority project would be to put 2 nets at different intertidal heights at Hadley Point to examine how growth rate is affected by intertidal height. We expect clams lower down, with more hours to filter feed, to grow faster.

The second priority project would be to put a third net at Otter Cove at an intertidal height that matches one of our nets at Hadley Point to study differences between this two sites. Currently Hadley Point gets very high recruitment, while Otter Cove is our lowest recruitment site.

We will try to start these experiments in May.

ii. Recruitment experiment year 5. The group thought continuing the recruitment experiment would be useful, we are getting good data on the spatial and temporal patterns of recruitment and predation of soft-shelled clams. We will discuss the exact experimental design, and number of replicates, in May.

C. Harbormaster retirement. Our current harbormaster, Charlie Phippen, will be retiring May 14<sup>th</sup>, so our April meeting will be our last meeting with Charlie as our support staff member. Several individuals expressed their gratitude for all of the work that Charlie has done with the committee over the past years. Charlie will try to introduce his replacement at our April meeting.

C. Other items that were discussed.

i. State legislation. Fiona brought up a bill being considered to have depuration companies pay towns more for each bushel of clams that are harvested as part of depuration digs, where clams from restricted sites and harvested, taken to a facility and kept with clean water so that they can be eaten without any risk. Bar Harbor has only had one depuration dig that people remembered, about a decade ago, and this bill was not thought to be a large concern for us.

D. Aquaculture. Joanna talked about the idea of using historic lobster pound sites as a location for aquaculture. Chris mentioned that Downeast Institute was already working on this and trying to pass legislation that would allow harvesters to have a simpler license process for these types of recycled sites.

#### ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING

Items for our next agenda include:

- i. Any updates on the American Aquafarms project
- ii. Setting the dates for clamflat surveys for Clark Cove, Northwest Cove
- iii. Planning outplanting of clams for May

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10pm

We decided that we would not have a meeting in March, our next meeting is scheduled for April 21th, 4pm.

Respectfully submitted by Chris Petersen