**Freeport Shellfish Conservation Commission**

**5/11/2023**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Chad Coffin, Sara Randall, Sarah Warren, Nelson Larkins, Michael Ashby, Kathryn (Kap) Wallingford, Gina LeDuc-Kuntz (attending remotely until 7:00pm) and Charlie Tetreau (Marine Resource Conservation Officer)

Welcome new members, introductions (Mike and Kathryn)

Chad motion to accept outstanding minutes. Nelson seconded.

Mike and Kap abstained due to being new/not present during the meetings in question. Motion passed.

Update from Charlie: 4 students did not renew licenses, so the 4 resident student licenses will be out for lottery and one resident commercial license up for lottery. For the next few years there will be several harvesters turning 65 each year. (Will provide exact numbers via email)

We hit over 2 inches of rain last week and there was confusion over closures. See DMR’s website, from the home page there’s a link on the top left for closures. WI CA1 was the issue, some people thought they couldn’t dig CA3.

Nelson moved to change language of 32-601.A 3 and 5 per the edits made by Charlie regarding student credit requirements. Sara seconded. All in favor, motion passed.

Discussion of statement of purpose letter to Town Council. General agreement to accept edits and send.

License allocation discussion.

Re-introduction of apprentice program idea; each approved person could choose one apprentice per lifetime. Similar to what is done in the lobster industry, was introduced to this committee in 2019 but was put aside by COVID. Last time the program was not passed by one vote, the committee changed members and this group has not reviewed the proposal. Anecdotally, there are people currently raising concerns about student licenses and want to get their children licenses.

Discussion of importance of generational role modeling. Many members in favor of this approach.

Apprenticeship program: Review of 2019 draft plan for piloting apprenticeships. 5-10 spots for 2 year apprenticeships. They would be eligible after 200 tides, and have to stay in the same cove. They would be eligible for a renewal commercial license, no lottery. Committee wants to keep this to a lower number, 5 at most.

Discussion of how many harvesters flats can sustain with declining numbers. Discussion of the difficulty of accurate surveys over the many flats, point in time data not being accurate due to predation as water warms. Committee agreed that there is interest, Sara will send around the previous proposal (with lower apprentice numbers) for discussion at a future date.

Downeast Institute project: Sara provided overview/more details of the proposal for the nursery project from the Downeast Institute. Test a less laborious method to grow seed clams to a certain size for them to better resist predation. On the Wolfe’s neck side of the river, not productive mud; the mid-intertidal.

Chad motioned to approve and encourage Downeast Institute to move forward in 2023 with the project as outlined via email to the committee. Kap seconded. Sara abstained. Motion passed.

Chad motion to adjourn. Mike seconded. Motion passed, adjourned at 7:22