**Freeport Shellfish Conservation Commission**

**10/12/2023**

**Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Sara Randall, Chad Coffin, Sarah Warren, Kap Wallingford, Michael Ashby, Charlie Tetreau (Marine Resource Officer)

Quorum achieved. Meeting called to order at 6:34pm

Sara Randall motion to approve minutes from the September meeting. Kap seconded. All in favor, minutes approved.

Crystal Canney from Protect Maine’s Fishing Heritage Foundation asked to address the committee. Crystal provided an overview of her background, organization and the issue, which is advocacy for municipalities to limit the amount of leased acreage for aquaculture. According to Crystal, moorings can’t be within 35 feet of the lease. In Freeport, this is anecdotally not an issue, and if it is legally true, not being enforced here. Clarification about the largest legal lease. Questions about what advantage there is for a town in putting this in place.

Camden, who works with the organization and is a clammer/advocate who harvests mostly in Brunswick asked to speak. Camden anecdotally says that he witnessed an algae bloom originating near an oyster farm, and also that he witnessed a huge clam mortality (both examples in Brunswick on the Mere Point side). Believes regulation is lax while there’s a rapid increase in aquaculture leases. He says he sees many failed LPA’s, with gear left out abandoned and a lack of response from DMR. Disagreement about evidence, Camden allows that it is his experience and the Town of Brunswick declined to do further testing. Chair declined to bring this recommendation forward.

Marine Officer’s report:

Handed out a list of questions from the Town Council from the workshop (later on agenda). Town Council recommended to meet with the Ordinance Committee once the questions are resolved.

There is a closure due to 1+ inch of rain for WJ-CA1. Opens back up on 21st. Still waiting on response from DMR about the equation—request from last meeting. There are 2 more rounds of testing left outside and inside of the river. DMR is saying it’s too late in the year to change testing methodology outside of the river, re-certification needs to happen for Charlie and Greg in Spring.

Discussion of questions from Town Council. Decision to input language about an application, and other clarifying questions. Discussion of number of licenses, how many acres. Decision to add language about what needs to happen with placed gear, consequences for abandoned gear. Suggestion of tagging gear, decision that the level we’re talking about is manageable without that system. Decision to draft new ordinance language that addresses council questions, and to discuss at our November meeting.

Harvester survey

A student developed a survey that she wanted to give to clammers. The survey had challenges with outdated language and practices. Chair and co-chair declined to utilize the survey in our community due to this. Feedback will be provided.

Discussion of committee commissioned survey RFP—utilizing it for the purpose of mapping out the potential conservation areas for the ordinance changes. Discussion of potential dates.

Recompense Bay is closed officially until Nov 30th.

Discussion of agenda for November.

Sara Randall motion to adjourn. Kap seconded. All in favor. Adjourned at 7:31pm