

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

Meeting was held at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension (1623 Whitesville Road Toms River, NJ 08755)

Monday, October 16, 2023

Present were: Chairman: Walter L. Johnson III (Ocean County)
Vice Chairman: George Mathis Jr. (Burlington County)
Councilman: Paul T. Felder (Cape May County)
Councilman: Vacant (Monmouth County)
Councilman: Vacant (Atlantic County)

DEP Representatives: Jeffrey Normant, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
Jenny Tomko, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries*
Scott Stueber, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries*
Nina Colagiovanni, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
Richard DiVaccaro, Bureau of Marine Habitat & Shellfisheries
Sarah Gentile, Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring*

Mr. Normant outlined the State's compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act. He stated that notice had been filed with the Secretary of State Office and sent to the Atlantic City Press and NJ Advanced Media outlets. He announced that the meeting would be recorded.

1. Total Revenue for September 2023: \$ 633.72
Shellfisheries Law Enforcement Fund: \$ 12.00
2. Presentation of the September 13, 2023 minutes for approval.

Mr. Normant stated that the September 13, 2023 meeting minutes were up for approval. The September 13, 2023 minutes were approved on a motion by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Mr. Mathis.

3. Applications for Consideration

LESSEE	LOT #	SECTION	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP #
Thomas Glenn	1114	A	2.11	Great Sound	5

Mr. Normant presented the lease application for consideration. Mr. Normant stated that the lease was approved at the last meeting, but the lease was intentionally not signed by Mr. McGee to allow Mr. Glenn to apply for it. Mr. Glenn was present at the meeting, fulfilling his requirement to attend at least one of the two meetings at which the Council reviews their applications, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-24.6. Mr. Johnson asked if the gear that was found on the lot was addressed. Mr. Normant replied that the gear belonged to someone else and that it was being removed. Mr. Johnson also asked if this satisfied Mr. McGee and Mr. Glenn. Mr. Normant replied that it did.

**Denotes virtual DEP representatives*

4. Applications for Decision

LESSEE	LOT #	SECTION	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP #
Raymond Damico Jr.	2534	B	2.16	Scull Bay	27

Mr. Normant presented the above application for decision. Mr. Damico Jr. was present at the last meeting, fulfilling his requirement to attend at least one of the two meetings at which the Council reviews applications, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 7:25-24.6.

A motion was made by Mr. Mathis to approve Mr. Damico Jr.'s lease application, which was approved by Council. Mr. Normant informed Mr. Damico Jr. that he has 30 days to sign his lease agreement and that a letter would be sent as well as a notification for a transfer that must be signed for. Mr. Normant added that he could come in and pay for his leases as well as do his renewal at the same time as signing the new lease agreement.

5. Applications for Transfer

LESSEE	APPLICANT	LOT #	SECTION	ACRES/FT	LOCATION	MAP #
Santo Rando	Parsons Mariculture LLC Dale S. Parsons	2221	B	3.30	Dry Bay	24.2
Santo Rando	Parsons Mariculture LLC Dale S. Parsons	2339	B	2.77	Dry Bay	24.2
Santo Rando	Ron Hammell	2236.1	B	2.09	Dry Bay	24.2
Delaware Hood	Parsons Mariculture LLC Dale S. Parsons	2257	B	2.10	Dry Bay	24.2
Delaware Hood	Parsons Mariculture LLC Dale S. Parsons	2278	B	1.88	Dry Bay	24.2
Thomas Glenn	Joseph McGee	2547	B	1.74	Scull Bay	27

Mr. Normant presented the above applications for transfer and added that the applications were all completed before October 1, 2023, which was the deadline to accept transfers for this year. The above transfers were approved on a motion by Mr. Mathis and which was approved by Council. Mr. Normant gave a reminder that when the approved transfer applicants come in to sign their new lease agreements, they could also renew at the same time. Mr. Normant recommended setting up an appointment with the front office staff to come in and sign their new lease agreements and renewals.

6. Old Business

2024 Lease Renewals – October 16th

Mr. Normant stated that the 2024 Lease Renewal started on October 16, 2023. He added that this is in-person only. The new lease agreement and lease renewal would be signed simultaneously. Mr. Normant added that for those who utilize structural gear, insurance was required. Other additional forms, such as permission to work and a GP-30 notification form, would also be available.

Public Comment

Mr. Avery asked if a copy would be given when the lease was renewed. Mr. Normant replied that a copy of the new lease agreement and renewal would be mailed out once approved.

Mr. Johnson asked when the Bureau would be able to meet with the Structural Committee. Mr. Normant replied that he and Mr. Mathis had discussed meeting after the January meeting, and that there was no date set.

7. New Business

No New Business was discussed.

Public Comment

Mr. Avery asked about scallops and the potential for an oyster season. Mr. Johnson replied that the scallop rules were written out of Title 50 during the 1978-1979 revision, and a Bill has been pending for years. He asked Mr. Normant what the conditions of the oyster bed(s) were. Mr. Normant replied that the bed conditions would not support an oyster season. Mr. Johnson asked specifically about Mullica River, to which Mr. Normant replied that an assessment would be conducted this December and added that a lot of shell had been planted. Mr. Normant added that it is unlikely that any oysters would be moved until there was a stronger understanding of what was on those beds. Mr. Normant informed the Council that Mr. Stueber was currently researching the opportunity to conduct a stock assessment of the Mullica River. A strong sampling methodology was currently being developed. Further discussion about the last oyster season ensued.

Mr. Johnson asked where the “buyback” oysters were. Mr. Normant replied that the SOAR/Sea Grant oysters were placed on Fitney Bit. Mr. Johnson asked if it was closed to future harvest after the “buyback” oysters were placed. Mr. Normant replied that it was not closed due to the program. Mr. Johnson asked if there was an assessment, to which Mr. Normant replied that there was high mortality.

Mr. Johnson asked when a stock assessment of the Mullica River would be available. Mr. Normant stated that it would not be for a while as the methodology was being developed.

Mr. Avery inquired if oysters can be harvested elsewhere. Mr. Normant and Mr. Johnson replied that oysters could be harvested in the wild, but not on the beds. Discussions ensued about the location of other existing beds that were off limits to leasing and harvesting.

Mr. Avery asked about a relay permit for oysters. Mr. Johnson replied that there was an oyster relay permit, but it pertains to Delaware Bay. Mr. Normant stated that the relay program was the hard clam relay program. Mr. Johnson asked about the oyster relay program in Delaware Bay. Mr. Normant

explained that under a permit from the Bureau of Marine Water Monitoring, it was permitted to transplant market-sized oysters or shellfish to Approved waters, which was called a relay permit. Further discussion about the hard clam relay ensued.

Mr. Mathis asked if there will be any rewriting of the rules or allowance of a scallop season. Mr. Normant questioned if there was enough resource to do a scallop season. Mr. Mathis stated that he did not know. Mr. Johnson added that he did not think there was an ability to have a scallop season under Title 50. Mr. Normant added that it would be in regulation. Lengthy discussion ensued.

Mr. Avery asked about the funding in the rules for the clam relay. Mr. Johnson replied that they were not certain what happened to the dedicated fund. Mr. Normant added that he also was not certain, but he believed it was a state appropriation rather than a dedicated fund. Mr. Johnson asked if Mr. Normant could find out more information. Mr. Normant replied that he would try to find out.

Mr. Normant stated that a regular lease rather than a relay lease may be more feasible to develop a small relay program where shellfish could be harvested and brought to a lease and held for 30 days and maybe discuss this in the future. Mr. Johnson agreed to discuss this and to include their relay coordinator, Mr. Jenks. Discussion ensued about future opportunities for a relay as well as simplification of the current regulations.

The meeting was adjourned on motion by Mr. Mathis.

8. Date time and place of next meeting:

DATE: Monday, November 13, 2023

TIME: 6:00 PM

LOCATION: Atlantic County Library – Galloway Township Branch with virtual option 306 E Jimmie Leeds Road, Galloway Twp NJ 08205

Attendees:

Dr. Doug Zemeckis
Ned Gaine
Bill Avery
Dr. Mike Acquafredda

Virtual Attendees:

Tom Glenn
Steve Fleetwood
Chris Carroll
Tom Burke
Jordan LoPinto
Amanda Wenczel (NJDA)
Michael Moore (NJDEP)