

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
DELAWARE BAY SECTION OF THE NEW JERSEY SHELLFISHERIES COUNCIL

SPECIAL MEETING
CONSOLIDATION COMMITTEE

Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory
Bivalve, NJ
Monday, March 9, 2020
1:00 PM

Present were: Committee: Councilman Warren Hollinger, Chairman (Cumberland County)
Councilman Steven Fleetwood, Vice Chairman (Cumberland County)
Timothy Reeves, Industry
William Riggin, Industry
Robert Robbins, Industry

State/Fed Reps: Craig Tomlin, Bureau of Shellfisheries
Andrew Hassall, Bureau of Shellfisheries

Compliance with the Sunshine Law

Notice of this meeting was posted March 5, 2020 with the Secretary of State's Office, State House, Trenton, NJ and the Bridgeton Evening News, and Daily Journal pursuant to L. 1975 c. 231.

1. Committee Goals

For the purposes of the meeting, it was held as an open floor discussion. Mr. Tomlin stated the goals of the Committee were to discuss what the existing consolidation rules were [within N.J.A.C 7:25A-1.3 through 1.5], discuss the Committee and industry members' ideas about possible rule changes, and come up with a consensus on changes to the rules to be presented to the Council. He noted that the rule changes were for the industry and not for the State, and that the State only had a few criteria they wanted kept in place. Mr. Tomlin directed the Committee to a packet he distributed that contained the New Jersey consolidation regulations, and for example references also contained regulations for surf clams in NJ and a few other states' regulations including Delaware and Louisiana. He noted that the surf clam regulations allowed three licenses to be harvested by one vessel and that there were no tonnage requirements.

2. Discussion of the Rules

Mr. Tomlin reviewed a list of ideas brought to him from various industry members on how the consolidation rule should be changed. He told the Committee that the three most common ideas included no tonnage requirements for the licenses, assigning the licenses to an individual instead of a boat, and that licenses stand alone with no license number or boat attached. Mr. Tomlin stated that the Committee had many options for changes to the rule as long as they agreed no more than the prescribed quotas were to be harvested and they did not increase the number of licenses.

The Committee and Bureau representatives had a long discussion about the different aspects of the existing rules and scenarios of changing those rules. The topics discussed included: keeping the dredge requirements in place; keeping the license fee structure by tonnage or changing the fee to a fixed rate; if tonnage regulations should be removed; if the licenses should be assigned to a vessel or entity, or become unattached to any vessel or entity; if quotas could become transferrable with a designated agent to harvest; and how many licenses should be allowed for consolidation onto one vessel.

3. Meeting Results and Future Planning

A consensus was not met by the Committee on any topics discussed, but nothing was completely disregarded. The Committee agreed there were to be no changes to the rules that govern the size, number, and weight of the dredges, and that the number of licenses and quota would not be increased or surpassed. From the topics discussed, the Bureau agreed to review the tonnages and fees for the 80 existing licenses to find the minimums, maximums, and averages.

The Committee agreed they would take time to think about the scenarios put forth and would continue the discussion at the next meeting. Mr. Tomlin said the Bureau would also review the different scenarios to see if there would be issues with any of them, and what may be plausible to change. Mr. Tomlin said he would provide an update to the Committee, and that everything may be discussed at the next meeting. The Committee agreed to table all discussion, and to hold the next meeting April 1, 2020 at 1:00 PM.

4. The Consolidation Committee meeting of the NJ Shellfisheries Council, Delaware Bay Section adjourned at 2:35 PM.

The tentative date, time, and place of the next Committee meeting will be:

Date: April 1, 2020
Time: 1:00 PM
Place: Haskin Shellfish Research Laboratory
6959 Miller Ave
Port Norris, NJ 08349