



Waterford-East Lyme Shellfish Commission



Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 16, 2020
East Lyme Town Hall, 7:30 pm

Members present: Chair Peter Harris, J. Patrick Kelly, Paul Spakowski, Eric Kanter, Tom Bowlen, Larry Tytla, Elizabeth Gelinias, and Marcia Benvenuti
Members absent: None
Guests: Chief Warden Chmiel, Ex-Officio D. Cunningham

FILED

January 21, 20 20 AT 8:14 (AM/PM)

- 1) The meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm and a quorum established. *Brooke Thornton*
EAST LYME TOWN CLERK
- 2) Approval of Minutes from previous meetings:
 - a) The minutes of the Nov 21, 2019 Regular meeting were reviewed and approved on a motion by Mr. Spakowski, seconded by Mr. Tytla, vote : 7-0, Ms. Benvenuti abstained
 - b) The minutes of the Dec 19, 2019 Regular meeting were reviewed and approved on a motion by Mr. Spakowski, seconded by Ms. Gelinias, vote : 8-0
- 3) The Treasurer's report for December 2019 was approved on a motion by Mr. Spakowski, seconded by Mr. Tytla, vote : 8-0
- 4) The Warden's report was delivered by Chief Warden Chmiel. The Niantic River is currently open to shellfishing. The scallop season has ended (Jan 14, 2020).
- 5) Old Business-
 - a) Approximately 20,000 scallop seed were placed in the river on Jan 16, 2020.
 - b) Chief Warden Chmiel is continuing to recruit an additional warden.
 - c) Mr. Harris, Mr. Kelly, Ms. Gelinias, and Mr. Spakowski attended the Annual Shellfish Gathering on Jan 11, 2020 and gave a brief summary of the meeting.
 - d) Mr. Kelly attended the Milford Aquaculture Seminar on Jan 13-15, 2020 and gave a brief summary of the meeting and handed out copies of the meeting abstracts.
 - e) Ms. Benvenuti discussed a meeting between Mr. Harris, Ms. Benvenuti, East Lyme First Selectmen Mark Nickerson, and Waterford First Selectmen Robert Brule that occurred on Jan 9, 2020. Ms. Benvenuti also submitted a written summary which is appended to these minutes. Discussion ensued related to some of the topics discussed.
A motion was made by Ms. Benvenuti, seconded by Mr. Tytla to hire a secretary. Motion was approved 8-0.
A motion was made by Ms. Benvenuti to amend the bylaws to formally describe the role of book keeper, motion was not seconded.
- 6) New Business-
 - a) Mr. Harris stated that he is stepping down as Chair and from the Commission after the March 19, 2020 Regular meeting and a successor will need to be voted in as chair. Discussion ensued but no action taken.
A motion was made by Mr. Kelly, seconded by Mr. Spakowski to issue a vote of confidence for Mr. Harris and to request Mr. Harris consider staying on the Commission. Motion passed 7-0, Mr. Harris abstained. Mr. Harris thanked the commission for this vote of confidence.
- 7) Ex-Officio comments-
Updated the commission on town matters including the progress being made on the Public Safety building renovations.

8) Correspondence -

- a) Mr. Harris forwarded an e-mail to all commission members of a report from the USDA on a subaqueous soil survey of the Niantic River and Niantic Bay. Hardcopies may be printed by the Waterford Town Hall if needed.
- b) Ms. Benvenuti presented a written statement for the record (attached to these minutes).
- c) Mr. Kanter briefed the commission on a recent TV interview he gave related to scallops to the local NBC news channel. The segment had not aired at the time of the meeting.

9) Public Input-

- a) Doug Lawson, Waterford Shellfish expressed concern for the tension between the community and WELSCO.
 - b) Fred Wise, 138 Niantic River Rd, Waterford raised a question about the role of WELSCO in the Public-Private oyster project. He also was concerned with a perceived lack of publicity regarding the oyster project.
 - c) Lou Bull, 8 Hathaway Rd, East Lyme expressed concern with how WELSCO is being treated by some members of the public.
 - d) Robin Lineberger, 20 Niantic River Rd, Waterford gave reason for the creation of the Niantic River Advocacy Coalition.
- 10) The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 pm on a motion by Mr. Spakowski, seconded by Mr. Tytla.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Harris

Report of meeting with M. Nickerson, Rob Bruhle, Peter Harris and myself, Marcia Benvenuti on 1/9/2020; 4:00; Selecttman's office

To be added to the record of our regular WELSCO meeting 1/16/2020

I handed out a typed page with my concerns and suggested remedies (see attached) to begin the discussion, however that was sidelined and Rob Bruhle took the lead to discuss the WELSCO budget with Nickerson in agreement.

Both had concerns regarding the WELSCO high balance, ever increasing sum of \$112,000 and requesting monies from each town.

After a lengthy discussion, Nickerson asked Peter to add possible reduction of town contributions to \$1,500 as a place holder with the benefit of going to each town should their situation change drastically. He asked for it to be placed on the agenda for the 1/16/2020 meeting. Both selectmen said they would attend.

Further discussion included:

Hiring a secretary: Nickerson advised Peter that that would be a good idea as it would maintain neutrality in the taking of minutes. I asked that hiring a secretary be added to the 1/16/2020 agenda. Peter said the former secretary now holds the position of "Financial assistant".

Use of emails: Nickerson and Bruhle warned of FOI issues and Nickerson explicitly told Peter to stop all email communications. Peter asked Bruhle to advise all other commissions similarly.

Dissemination of packets: Bruhle graciously offered to put together, print and distribute packets for every meeting. W would deliver EL packets to EL town Hall for pick up and courier would distribute to W commissioners. Bruhle asked Peter to have everything to his and EL's assistant the Friday before each meeting.

Nickerson and Bruhle suggested further meetings re WELSCO would be beneficial.

Marcia A. Benvenuti

2 pages for the record

Agenda 5e

(over)

meeting 1/9/2020

Concerns are:

Proper dissemination of all documents, correspondence, communications, and emails to all members of WELSCO in an inclusive and timely manner.

Recording and filing of all above according to all state and town rules and regulations.

Storage and access of all WELSCO items in a secure and accessible location.

Large amount of assets (\$12,000) not in an account with either Waterford or East Lyme.

Large amount of printing done by Waterford for WELSCO, free of charge.

Remedy:

Hire a secretary. Although our budget says we do not have a secretary, we have no resignation or retirement documentation, nor has a vote, motion, nor discussion ever occurred regarding this matter. Further our "former" secretary seems to still be working, drawing a pay check, and signing checks on behalf of WELSCO.

Disseminate all information and agenda materials at least four days prior to our meetings either by email or courier. I volunteer to make needed copies.

Secure all files in our rented office space, and or with each town.

Transfer all assets to either Waterford or East Lyme.

For the record 1/16/2020