

**Maryland Aquaculture Coordinating Council**  
**Minutes – July 14, 2016**

**Members Attending:**

Don Webster  
Karl Roscher  
Don Meritt  
Pete O’Neill  
Kathy Brohawn  
Kim Coulbourne  
Andrew Griffin  
Colby Ferguson  
Johnny Shockley  
Stephan Abel  
Ben Parks

**Guests Attending:**

Chris Aiken (Self)  
Steve Schneider (DNR)  
Alyssa Cranska (DNR)  
Rebecca Thur (DNR)  
Kari Bradberry (DNR)  
Robin Henderson (DHMH)  
JD Blackwell (38° North)  
Chris Judy (DNR)  
John Backus (MDE/SSA)  
Stuart Dawson (Industry)  
MJ Dubois (Industry)  
Hal McBee (SCFTS)  
Bill Cox (Honga Oyster)  
Eric Wisner (Industry)  
Cindy Wisner (Industry)  
Allison Roe (MARBIDCO)  
Larry Jennings (CCA)  
Scott Budden (Industry)  
Adriane Michaelis (UMD)  
Rebekah Borgert (MSU)

**Call to Order:**

Vice-Chair Webster, filling in for Chair Harrell, called the hmeeting to order at 6:35 pm and asked guests and members to introduce themselves.

**Administrative:**

Approve May Minutes

The minutes of the May 12, 2016 meeting were approved as written by the Council.

### Announcements

- Vice-Chair Webster announced that demonstrations and workshops by UM Extension have been well attended. Upcoming programs include using data to manage oyster crops, determining natural set, marketing shellfish and a tax management workshop for growers.
- Mr. Roscher announced The Annual Maryland Buy Local Cookout on July 21<sup>st</sup> at the Government House in Annapolis. The event showcases some local growers and Council members are invited to attend. He also announced that the Council received an email from the Oyster BMP expert panel to remind everyone the first set of recommendations will be released in September.

### **Reports:**

#### Aquaculture Division Report (Karl Roscher, DNR)

Mr. Roscher informed the council that some members of the Division have been out on leave and the work load has not gone down, but he hopes to be fully staffed by September. He introduced Kari Bradberry, the Division's new Administrative Specialist, who started in June and announced that recruitment has begun for the Field Operations Manager position.

Vice-Chair Webster asked Mr. Roscher for an update on protested leases. Mr. Roscher informed the council that protests are not slowing down. Some projects are moving forward including:

- Three Pomeroy and Lowe proposed areas in the Little Choptank; two of the leases were issued after the Public Information Meeting was held. After working with the protestants, the third area was modified to be positioned further offshore and to exclude an area with a high density of oysters.
- Brown, Sr. proposed area in the St. Mary's River Sanctuary: protests were withdrawn after a density survey was conducted per agreement from the protest.
- Petty proposed area in Sotterley Creek: Judge ruled in the State's favor by stating that the concerns of protestants were invalid.
- Dubois and Dawson proposed area in the Miles River: sent to Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) but protestants did not participate in pre-hearing call resulting in a default order for lease to be issued.
- Budden: proposed area in the Chester River was protested by a commercial clammer and the case has been sent to OAH. The protestant did not participate in the pre-hearing conference call.
- Barnette: proposed area in the Wicomico River was protested by adjacent landowners due to safety concerns. Open discussions took place at the PIM, hoping for a compromise between parties.

The Division received 13 new shellfish lease applications since the last ACC meeting. A total of 32 new lease applications have been received so far in 2016; ten are for water column leases. In addition, five new lease agreements have been issued. Hydrographic surveys for three lease applications have been completed since the May meeting and three additional surveys are pending. Public notices for 10 proposed projects were initiated comment periods ending in mid-July to late August. Two have received a protest and/or request for PIM to date. In addition, three new lease application packets were prepared and forwarded to the Corps of Engineers for review.

Fifty-four Shellfish Import Applications have been received in 2016 and 41 have been issued for shell, seed and larvae. One inspection of VA shell piles was completed May 20<sup>th</sup>. Nine new Shellfish Nursery Permit applications have been received in 2016 with eight having been issued.

From September 2010 through May 10, 2016, 375 lease applications have been received, with 297 having been received since August 1, 2011 when the Department began accepting applications for water column and sanctuary leases. The State has issued 186 new commercial shellfish aquaculture leases totaling approximately 4,469 acres. An additional 103 lease applications are in process, one of which is incomplete.

So far in 2016, 1,782 Shellfish Aquaculture Harvester Permits were issued which included 489 Permittee and 1293 Registration cards. This represents 440 individuals who are permitted to work in the industry.

#### Shellfish Aquaculture Financing Program Status (Ms. Roe)

Ms. Allison Roe, a new employee, was in attendance tonight representing MARBIDCO. She requested everyone to review the information included in the packet and contact Mr. McHenry with any questions.

Mr. Roscher indicated that funding is still available for the program and requested members to pass the word along. MARBIDCO has prepared new brochures describing the program and is providing detailed information on funding opportunities.

#### **Continuing Business:**

##### 2016 Council Annual Report - Mr. Griffin

Mr. Griffin announced that a draft copy of the 2016 Council Annual Report issues and recommendations is included in tonight's packet, but the final version still needs to be approved by the Council. Vice-Chair Webster asked if the issues and recommendations should be approved tonight or later via email.

##### ***Motion (Brohawn/Shockley)***

The 2016 Council Annual Report's issues and recommendations should be approved via email as soon as possible.

##### Update on ACOE Nationwide Permit-48 - Mr. Roscher

Mr. Roscher stated that there is not a lot of information provided at this meeting on the subject. He spoke with the Corps earlier this week and they are on track to reinstate the Nationwide 48 permit in mid-August. Discussions are ongoing with NMFS to determine how far they can go with the previous consultation. A follow-up public notice with regional condition options will soon be released by the Corps.

#### **New Business**

##### Grant Program and Asian Market Access - Mr. O'Neill

At the March Council meeting Mr. O'Neill presented information on providing assistance to the aquaculture industry by identifying new markets for Maryland oysters. The MD Department of Commerce investigated international buyers and determined there may be markets in South China. Pat Hudson, one of our growers, will travel to Hong Kong to attend the 2016 Seafood Expo Asia. The Department of Commerce will provide assistance to Mr. Hudson for travel funds and to ship 100 pounds of their shellfish and provide a Chef for the Expo. They will then travel to Southern China to meet with brokers and buyers for potential imports. Mr. O'Neill informed the Council that the Dept. of Commerce can provide other growers up to \$5,000 in funds for similar trips, but they need to submit applications to the agency starting July 1<sup>st</sup>. Vice-Chair Webster requested that Mr. Hudson be invited to address the Council about his experiences after the fall trip.

The Department of Commerce will also consult with a contact in Dubai to determine if there are markets in the United Arab Emirates. After meeting with Mr. O'Neill, ORP drafted a marketing proposal that will be used to determine why people choose and enjoy the Maryland Oyster.

Update on DNR 5 Year Oyster Management Report – Mr. Judy, DNR

DNR has committed to reviewing the effectiveness sanctuary locations, Public Shellfish Fishery Areas and aquaculture locations every five years and to propose changes where needed. The report titled *Oyster Management Review: 2010-2015* will consist of five chapters including the Executive Summary, Background, Description of the Three Types of Management Areas, Effectiveness of Management Areas and Importance of Location and Conclusions and Recommended Management Alternatives. Two appendices will be included – the Characterization of Individual Sanctuaries and Characterization of Individual Harvest Areas (NOAA Codes). An independent panel consisting of three consultants has been hired to review the data and make suggestions for the report. A draft report should be available in June and will first be provided to the Oyster Advisory Committee (OAC) which was just reformed. Mr. Roscher provided a summary for the aquaculture segment which included early initiatives, success stories and dedication of resources and growth. The council has already been presented with most of the information in the past.

Mr. Judy provided a summary from the OAC meeting. He reported it was very productive and focused on three major objectives. The first was the delay of the Tred Avon restoration project; the second to begin determining the next two tributaries to be considered for restoration; and third, to review the five year report and give recommendations on the sanctuary program.

**New Business/Announcement**

Vice-Chair Webster announced that Delegate O'Donnell will be resigning from the Council and giving up his seat in the legislature for a gubernatorial appointment with the Public Service Commission. Delegate O'Donnell helped write the legislation to form the Aquaculture Review Board and the Aquaculture Coordinating Council. He was the keynote speaker at the 2015 Aquaculture Association of Nova Scotia Convention and has supported the Council and industry whenever they have needed him.

***Motion (Brohawn/Griffin)***

For the Council to write a letter to Delegate O'Donnell thanking him for his service to the Council and aquaculture industry and wishing him the best in his future.

**Public Comments:**

MJ Dubois commented on an aspect of the surveying process, Mr. Roscher will follow up with Louis Wright, the DNR Hydrographer.

Eric Wisner announced this was his first time in attendance and thanked the Aquaculture Division and all other agencies involved for all of their help and commitment to the growing industry.

**Adjourn:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 pm with the next regularly scheduled meeting to be held on Thursday, September 8, 2016 at 6:30 pm in the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, C-1 Conference Room.