

**MINUTES
CT SEAFOOD COUNCIL
MARCH 4, 2009
BUREAU OF AQUACULTURE, MILFORD
1:30 P.M.**

Co-Chair Mike Theiler called meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. Quorum present.

CO-CHAIR'S REPORT – MIKE THEILER

Mike reported on status of V-notch program; further funding needed for program to proceed. Gauge increase being proposed again by National Marine Fisheries. V-notch necessary to prevent increase.

D.J. King commented that compensation re: gauge increase should be made for fishermen who have participated in the program.

Increase would pose an economic problem for restaurants who would not be able to offer chicken lobsters, but would have to use larger lobsters and drop prices. This would be bad for CT restaurants.

Minutes of the previous meeting of February 4, 2009 were accepted by motion and second.

Correction: on page 1, paragraph 8; line 3, word should be "vetted" instead of "betted".

Minutes approved with correction.

Mike Theiler also reported on his speaking engagement at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. Mike spoke to senior students about boarding of fishing boats.

A student of environmental studies commented that she thought fishing would totally deplete the fish population; Mike explained about certain areas, such as Hawaii which are indeed closed to fishing for conservation purposes.

Larry Williams expressed concern about a bias in teaching re: overfishing mis-information. People need to be correctly educated.

REPORT – CO-CHAIR LARRY WILLIAMS

Discussion of proposed legislation #6371, part of which deals with a fee of \$1.00 on each bushel of clams and oysters harvested. This translates into approximately a 10% cost. Larry had spoken to DEP lobbyist Tom Tyler as money is supposedly earmarked as part of the DEP funding bill. . Larry had also testified in favor of renaming the state vessel at the Bureau of Aquaculture in memory of John Volk, the late longtime director of the Bureau.

Mike Theiler commented that shellfishermen are already paying lease fees and the proposed additional fee would be excessive.

Bill Clayton said the bill also calls for increasing fees on commercial licenses.

Discussion followed re: tax exemptions. Larry Williams spoke about proposed legislation causing fear. Wording of bill is invasive. Worry that records will be subpoenaed. Also methods of taxing – expansion of regulation and oversight by DEP of great concern. Harvesters are a very easy group to target,

Discussion followed as to who has the authority to review records. Larry said that records are private property.

REPORT – BUREAU DIRECTOR, DAVID CAREY

Has submitted testimony on bills. New brochure from the Bureau is revision of Aquaculture Permitting process.

Milford Aquaculture program took place last week at federal offices of NOAA. New England marketing meeting was well attended.

Ag Day at Capitol will be on March 18. Seafood Council will participate with New England clam chowder, oysters & clams.

Re: Legislative Reception: Problems with Bureau staff attending due to budgeting restrictions. Discussion re: canceling event due to lack of funding, unless Council members volunteer. Decision will be made by Ag Day.

Decision by Islander East to end its quest for a pipeline in Long Island Sound is a big victory for the Seafood industry. Question as to whether or not councils, such as the CT Seafood Council, will lose funding or be eliminated altogether.

Dave Carey also reported that the CT Fund for the Environment has included a request for V-notch funding in its proposal to the legislators.

REPORT – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BARBARA GORDON

Many phone calls and letters sent re: proposed legislation #6371. ED feels bill will not go forward.

Also – pushing to keep funding for Council in budget. Chad Simoneaux of Gulf Shrimp in Plantsville will receive notification of his appointment to the Council by Senator Martin Looney.

Bids received for chowder for Ag Day. Kane's market of Simsbury will provide product.

Congressional staff of U.S. Senators & Representatives will be invited to Council's May 6 meeting to discuss the regulatory problems of the industry and the need for regulatory relief. .

Meeting will be held in the conference room of the National Marine Fisheries adjacent to the Bureau office.

Arthur Medeiros reported on the Stonington Dock situation. Good news is that there is a return to 1 to 1 instead of 2 to 1; leasing days at sea can now be done again; and a meeting was held with Chris Brown of Rhode Island re: sectors.

NEW BUSINESS

On March 19, in New Haven from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Nancy Balcom and Tessa Getchis will run a pilot program regarding the selection, purchase and use of fish as a healthy food choice.

Discussion took place as to whether or not funding for Sea Grant was protected from state budget cuts. Nancy responded that the program is fairly well insulated because it is partially federally funded.

No further business, meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Gordon
Executive Director