Conservation Commission

DRAFT OF Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 18, 2021, 4:30 PM

Surry Town Office

**Attendees:** Ralph Topham, Sharon Minogue, Tom Minogue, Irene Schmidt, Nancy Hathaway, Lucy Leaf, Chris Stark, and Marie Merkel through remote access

**Minutes from June 17/Notes from July 22 Gathering (no August mtg) –** Passed with edits.

**The following officers were elected – Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary**

**Ralph Topham, Chair**

**Irene Schmidt– Secretary  
Tom Minogue- Treasurer**

**Treasurer’s Report – no change**

**Patten Bay Water Monitoring Project Update** –

Crab study

Tom said there was a great turnout (20 people) on Saturday, 11/13 in counting shellfish in and around the 3 crab exclusion boxes. There were plenty of shellfish in the boxes and only 5 small clams around them- indicating that the green crabs are eating them. Ralph said that 1 crab eats about 40 clams a day. A female green crab produced up to 185,000 eggs. Observed crab predators are – crows/herons. European oysters are appearing with more frequency and have greater survivability over clams/mussels because of their hard shells. Ralph said the crab traps on Newbury Neck collected 1000 pounds of crab. He brought them to Clayfield Farm in East Blue Hill to compost.

Other observations made: There are more seals in Patten Bay. Sharon said there have been hundreds of ducks the bay this summer/fall that she hasn’t seen in such great numbers before, and a surge in Canada geese due to them being fed at the mouth of the bay.

Ralph said Heather will produce a report of this year’s water monitoring and crab study data by March or April.

Shaw Institute recorded a plume of contaminated water from the Union River across Under Canvas from the last rainstorm. It could be attributed to the Union River treatment plant /possibly sewer runoff along Union River. Heather will be sharing information about that recent plume with the public. Prior tests of bacteria in Patten Bay were from unidentified animal and avian sources.

Recommendation: **Tidal Flow study** – hasn’t been conducted yet. Commission will follow up with Heather Richard’s replacement at Shaw Institute and will determine what other water monitoring studies to follow up on upon receipt of Heather’s report.

The only recommendations about invasive green crabs were to encourage composting them commercially and to find out what other coastal towns are doing – connect with Frenchman’s Bay Conservancy.

ACTIONS: Tidal flow study – follow up with Tidal Flow counts

Can we do kelp farming for composting to filter water coming from the Union River into Patten Bay?

**Other Business**

Drinking water – Nancy raised the question about how many people have safe drinking water at their homes and how many must buy bottled water because of contamination like arsenic and/or radon. She said that Surry should have a place that people could get water for drinking -such as a well with a hand pump.

ACTION: Raise the question about potable water in the Surry Scoop coming out on December 1st. The question might be: Do you buy bottled water? My reason for doing this is… My reason for not doing this is…. Have you had your water source tested? What street do you live on? Nancy, Chris and Irene will develop the questions

Survey to the Surry Scoop related to potable drinking water. Phone Number - What street do you live on ? …

Lucy pointed out that one role of the Conservation Commission is to develop an Open Space Index and will need to discuss this in the near future.

Ralph said that we need to determine where the Commission members 3-year terms are at and if they need to be renewed by the Select Board

**Next Meeting: [POSTPONED for Jan 20]**

**Thursday, December 16 – 4:30 Town Office- Fire station with zoom**

Topics include: Review -terms of Conservation Commission members - need renewal

What are we doing, what do we need to do next– process for getting new commission and committee members. -