

**St. George Planning Board
St. George Town Office
January 12, 2021 – 7 p.m.**

Public Hearing – St. George Sea Farms, LLC, 127 River Road - Map 219, Lot 65 & 85

A Public Hearing was scheduled for 7 p.m. via Zoom. Present were: Chair Anne Cox, Jane Brown, Mary K. Hewlett, Alan Letourneau, Michael Jordan, Ray Emerson, Anne Cogger, CEO Terry Brackett, Richard Bates, Ryan Cline, Russell Wolfertz, Joseph R. LaBranche, Jon Lewis, David Taylor, David Emery, Irene Rizkalla, Ben Norton, Carolyn Connors, Steve Taylor, Nadina Knisch, Mark Bartholomew, Liz Matthews, Loreen Meyer, James Dorsky, Chip Bauer, Sara Allenwood, and Matt Tibbetts.

At 7:00 p.m., Chair Cox declared the public hearing open. She introduced members of the Planning Board and noted the purpose of the Public Hearing is for the Planning Board to hear questions and concerns from the community about the St. George Sea Farms' application. This project is located in a CFMA District in the Shoreland Zone. Among the purposes of the Shoreland Zone Ordinance is to protect the coastal waters and to protect commercial fishing and marine industries.

Chair Cox stated this application is to repair the pound containment for marine aquaculture, specifically oysters to remove the existing structures, replacing these with a single wood-frame structure, and to replace the existing overboard discharge septic system with a new subsurface septic system. The Planning Board has had a pre-application meeting with the applicants, a meeting in which the application was presented and on January 9, 2021, an on-site visitation inspection was held. The Planning Board has not yet accepted the application as complete. Chair Cox stated the Planning Board received one letter and she will read it into the record. The applicant will make an opening statement and they will be able to respond again at the end. The Planning Board will then consider the application at the regular meeting.

The following letter was received from Albert and Gail Moncovich:

“Unfortunately, we will not be able to Zoom in this evening regarding Wildcat, however, we would like our concerns noted. We are very concerned about light trespassing toward the neighbors. Keep in mind, light that reflects off buildings can be a problem. We currently live with this problem in Connecticut. The other concern is noise from the operation as well as the lights from the trucks coming and going and their potential backup warning signals which can be annoying, especially during sleeping hours. The times with these trucks coming and going are concerning, too and we would appreciate confirmation that it would only happen during normal business hours and days. Thank you.”

Chair Cox asked if there were any comments from the applicants. Wolfertz introduced himself.

Wolfertz: I am speaking on behalf of John Wagner, who is on the west coast and has not been able to attend. He is not in a place where he can get cell phone coverage with Zoom. With me is Joe LaBranche of LaBranche Surveying and Jon Lewis who is representing the aquaculture side

of the project. I think the application is fairly straight forward. Sea Farms would like to remove the buildings that are there. Maintain the pound containment. Build a new building similar to that in the photographs and drawings then operate the pound containment as an oyster farm, at this point.

LaBranche: Thank you for meeting this past Saturday. As Russ pointed out the application seems pretty straightforward. There is a lot of information in it and I will try to answer any questions people might have.

Chair Cox: I will open this up and try to call on you in order.

D. Taylor: I represent the Georges River Shellfish Committee. About these oysters. Just a little information for you to take in before you make a decision. Oysters can siphon up to 50 gallons in 24 hours under the right conditions and they compete for the same food that clams do. On top of that when oysters aren't being cramped in their reproduction cycle, they can siphon in the larvae pearl from the clams. So, I really do feel if they move it into Long Cove, this will be competition for these clams. I represent the wild harvest (industry) and now you got aquaculture that wants to move in, and I am representing all the people that I have digging in the five towns. I just don't want this area to end up like the Damariscotta River which has been taken over by oysters. They cannot even dig a clam over there. The oysters have gotten onto the mudflats. It's just thoroughly destroyed that river for clamming. I am afraid that if they get into Long Cove as they grow up to a million oysters, that is a lot of siphoning, that is a lot of food they are going to consume, and it is a lot of competition. Oysters that come from sterile seed, they won't be able to reproduce, that would be even better, but that cuts into their profit margin.

There were no other public comments made. At 7:11 p.m., Chair Cox declared the public hearing closed.

Respectfully submitted,

Marguerite R. Wilson
Planning Board Recording Secretary