

**N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries – Habitat and Enhancement
Shellfish Lease and Aquaculture Program – Public Hearing**

March 2, 2023

Present: Owen Mulvey-McFerron – Program Coordinator, Shellfish Lease Program

Attendees:

Stephane Adams, Lisa Spicer, Steven Quidley, Lisa Caudill, David Caudill,
Connly Adams

Meeting: 3 March 2023, 6:02-6:07 PM via in Person for Pamlico County proposed shellfish lease. Location at Pamlico County Courthouse, 202 Main Street, Bayboro

Applicant(s): Lighthouse Shoal Oyster Company, LLC, Steven Quidley

I. Meeting

At 6:02 pm the public hearing was called to order by Owen Mulvey-McFerron:

“I’d like to call this Shellfish Lease Public Hearing to order. My name is Owen Mulvey-McFerron, and I am the Shellfish Lease and Aquaculture Program Coordinator of the North Carolina Division of Marine Fisheries. I will be serving as the hearing officer tonight.

The purpose of this public hearing is to receive public comment on proposed shellfish leases in Pamlico County. Site investigations by Division staff have determined that these proposed shellfish leases generally meet the standards for shellfish leasing under NC General Statutes and NC Marine Fisheries Commission rules. The director of the Division has authorized this hearing to receive public comment.

This hearing is being recorded and is a public record. All verbal comments or other communications between members of the public body regarding the transaction of the public business during this meeting are deemed a public record.

This hearing is a formalized process where we take only public comment on the proposed shellfish leases that have been noticed in the Pamlico Daily News Newspaper on February 1st and 8th, 2023, and on the Division’s website. No decisions will be made at tonight’s hearing. This hearing is also not a dialogue or forum. Any discussion or discourse should be held until after the hearing concludes. Written comments on these shellfish leases can be submitted to the Division until 5pm tomorrow.

Everyone signed up who wants to talk? Alright, if you change your mind, I’ll make a last call for comments at the end.

As a reminder, no decisions will be made at tonight’s hearing. All public comment received tonight and during the comment period will be taken into consideration. I will give the shellfish

lease applicant an opportunity to speak first, and then I will open comments to anyone else who wishes to be heard. I will call on commentators by name in the order they signed up to speak.

Comments from all speakers including the shellfish lease applicants should be limited to no more than three minutes. I will indicate when your time is up.

Since this is a small group, you are welcome to just comment from your seat, does that work? Perfect. I do request that you direct your comments to me and not the audience.

Please be courteous and respect all persons who wish to speak. If you are discourteous or disruptive, I will ask you to leave.

If anyone has questions about issues not directly related to the proposed shellfish leases, staff and I will be happy to meet with you after the hearing.”

“With that, I will read the information on the proposed shellfish lease. We have a 9.60 -acre shellfish bottom and water column lease applied for on July 20th, 2022, by Lighthouse Shoal Oyster Company, LLC, agent Steven Quidley, located at the mouth of the Neuse River, from Cherry Point to Wilkinson Point. The management plan indicates the use of floating gear for the commercial production of oysters. Division staff conducted a site investigation on August 10th and 11th, 2022, which found zero bushels of shellfish per acre and zero submerged aquatic vegetation.

Now, I will call on the applicant and give them an opportunity if they wish to speak to their proposed shellfish lease. This is not a requirement of the applicant. Please limit your comments to three minutes. Once your three minutes are up, we will move to the comments. I would like to call on Steven Quidley.”

Stephen Quidley: “The only thing I’ll say is that we’re going to be using more bottom cages than the floating gear. Thanks.”

Owen: “Alright, thank you. Now I will call the first speaker. Lisa?”

Lisa Caudill: “Thank you, we support this lease and think that it will be good for the community. It would be a be a good asset because the oysters clean the water. I’m also from Point Marina, my husband and I live there.”

Owen: “Thank you Lisa. Next, I’ll call on David.”

David Caudill: “I’m also from Point Marina, down the road from the farm, I would like to see the farm expanded.”

Owen: “Thanks David. Next is Connly Adams?”

Connly Adams: “I just want to thank you for all the support and for letting me grow the farm with another lease.”

Owen: “Is there anyone else who would like to comment on any of these proposed shellfish leases?”

“If no one else wishes to speak, I will close this public hearing. I would like to thank you for your time and participation in this process. The time of closure is 6:07pm. Now that the hearing has concluded, I will take any questions that folks may still have.”

Closure: 6:07 P.M.