

POTOMAC RIVER FISHERIES COMMISSION
Colonial Beach, Virginia
March 16, 1973

PRESENT - MEMBERS: Commissioner J. Clifford Hutt, John T. Parran, Jr., James E. Douglas, Jr., Roy E. Julie, Jr., James L. Sisson, Jr. (Absent: Richard E. Lankford)

OFFICERS: Robert M. Norris, Jr., Executive Secretary.
(Mr. K. Thomas Everngam, Legal Officer absent)

VISITORS: Messrs. Robert V. Hancock, Chief, and E. Ralph Dameron, Supvr., Howard S. Hudnall, of Virginia Marine Resources Commission; Lt. Paul C. Wentzell, of Maryland Marine Police; Dexter S. Haven, Virginia Institute of Marine Science; Diller Harding, President Virginia Oyster Packers Association; James W. Dutton, President Charles County Watermen's Association; George E. Garrett and M. Sidney Pecht, Jr., of VEPCO.

PRESS: Arlee C. Green, Maryland Independent; Miss Isobel Gough, and Mrs. Jackie Shinn, Tidewater Weeklies.

At 9:30 a.m. the Commissioners held a conference with Messrs. Garrett and Pecht, of VEPCO, discussing our request for a rate on electricity comparable to that being charged other public agencies, which is approximately 1/2 of rate PRFC is paying. The Commission requested a refund for the resulting overcharge since 1963, when the special rate was first requested and not granted, apparently because of a misunderstanding on VEPCO's part. Mr. Garrett advised the Commission that all recent correspondence with VEPCO had been turned over to Mr. Guy T. Trip III, attorney for VEPCO in Richmond, Virginia and suggested that our Legal Officer contact Mr. Trip. The Executive Secretary was requested to have Mr. Everngam do this.

At 10:00 a.m. the Commissioners had an interview with Mr. A. C. Carpenter, of Charles County, Maryland, an applicant for the proposed position of Assistant to the Executive Secretary.

At 10:10 a.m. the Commission went into formal session, being called to order by Mr. Hutt, Chairman. Copies of the Minutes of the last meeting were circulated to the Commissioners and others and read by each; a motion was made, seconded and approved as follows:

"That the Minutes of the meeting of December 8, 1972 be approved as written and presented."

Mr. Hutt announced that one applicant for the position of Assistant to the Executive Secretary had been interviewed and that another would be interviewed at 11:30 a.m.

Turning to the agenda, Mr. Hutt reminded the assembly that the Commission meeting was being held in the new office building; the staff and the equipment being moved a few days before. He said that considerable work remained to be completed on the outside of the building and the lot, but that basically the interior work was complete.

In regard to the oyster repletion program, Mr. Dexter Haven said that because of continuing low salinities in the upper shellfish growing area that transplanting any oysters from the lower river to the bars that had been killed by tropical storm "Agnes" was not advisable. Mr. Norris said when and if conditions merited such action later that it would be implemented. Mr. Harding, of the Virginia Oyster Packers Association, said his group was in agreement with this, but that they want very much to see the upper river areas restored to oyster production by any means possible. Mr. Dutton, of the Charles County Watermen's Association, said his group had contacted him and expressed strong feeling in favor of this policy. Also, that they would like to see certain shell areas "cleaned" by turning the shells. He mentioned areas such as St. George's Island and others.

Generally, however, the consensus pointed to being cautious of spending money on any program unless the chances of success in producing oysters was good, as funds available to the Commission are very limited. It was suggested also that we plan a shell bag planting program, if possible.

Mr. Norris outlined the shell planting program for the lower river in the better setting areas, saying that plans are proceeding for planting some 300,000 bushels plus of fresh shells on Hog Island, Jones Shore and Great Neck.

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With reference to a question about Federal Funds for the above work, Mr. Douglas said that he understands approval of the money for Virginia, which includes the PRFC, is imminent. The share being allotted PRFC by Virginia is \$50,000 and it was stated that Maryland has also included a like amount in an application to the Federal Government for the PRFC.

Mr. Dutton asked if the allegedly fast growing Japanese oyster would be a partial answer to our problem of lack of oyster population. Mr. Haven answered by saying that the Japanese oyster grows to a very large size but needs clear, cold water - probably would not thrive in the warm turbid water of the Potomac; however, if it did, it would probably spread over the entire Chesapeake Bay. His conclusions:

1. It is not a tasty oyster either raw or cooked.
2. It would probably not live in this area.
3. If it did survive, it would probably spread over the entire bay system and eventually destroy our native oyster.

A comparison of buying seed oysters from the Great Wicomico or James River followed. Mr. Norris said count is low in Great Wicomico but price is high in James River, and Mr. Hutt said also that it has been the policy of the Commission not to buy in the James in competition with private planters. Lt. Wentzell said that Maryland is concentrating on planting in lower Chesapeake Bay area, as the upper bay area is fresh, and that the salinity in the Potomac would follow about these lines, and that perhaps we should give some thought to applying this principal to our 1973 planting. Mr. Haven thinks that large oysters from upper James would be about same salinity as the middle to upper Potomac. The Commission recommended to the Repletion Committee that they delay any buying in the Great Wicomico and see if seed will be available in the James.

Mr. Julie and Mr. Sisson reported that until the building is finished, they cannot make a final recommendation on total insurance coverage. Mr. Hutt asked them to study the present coverage limits and prepare an insurance coverage package and put same in effect.

Under new business, Mr. Douglas, Speaking for the nominating committee, presented the following slate of officers for 1973: The Honorable John T. Parran, Jr., Chairman; Mr. James L. Sisson, Jr., Vice-Chairman; Mr. J. Clifford Hutt, Secretary. Mr. Hutt asked Mr. Douglas to act as Chairman pro tem for the election. A motion was made, seconded and approved that the nominations be closed. Mr. Douglas asked for a vote on the candidates, and by voice vote, the above slate was unanimously elected. Mr. Douglas turned the Chair back to Mr. Hutt, who by custom continued as Chairman throughout the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Parran gave a short talk, expressing his appreciation of the honor of being elected Chairman and including comments about how well the Commission, the staff, and the watermen have functioned together. He complimented the retiring Chairman on his amazing capability in carrying out the work and activities of the Commission.

Itemized lists with totals of disbursements for the months of December 1972, January and February 1973 being \$8,394.13, \$13,804.28 and \$13,410.61 respectively (including \$22,000.00 for construction of new building) were presented. After a

study of the items, a motion was made, seconded and approved as follows:

"That the amounts of itemized disbursements for the three months aforementioned be approved."

Lt. Paul C. Wentzell, on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources of Maryland, presented a Maryland Flag to Mr. Hutt for the Commission's new flagpole, with an appropriate speech relating the friendship and binding ties between the citizens of the two states as evidenced by the operation of the PRFC and the cooperation of the various agencies involved.

Mr. Norris reported that he had not undertaken the expense of setting up the old two-way ship to shore AM radio equipment, as he understood that both Maryland and Virginia were installing VHF two-way radio equipment not compatible to our present set. The Commission authorized him to determine the cost of a useful type of radio equipment compatible with both states Marine Police units, and report at the next meeting.

Mr. Diller Harding read a Resolution to the Commission and presented a written copy of same, which had been recently adopted by the Westmoreland County, Virginia Board of Supervisors. This statement called for restrictions on any sewage effluent discharge from developments into waters of Virginia that might cause the Health Department to create a buffer zone around the outfall, thereby closing any shellfish producing areas. He asked that the PRFC adopt this resolution to protect the shellfish waters of the Potomac River.

In relation to Mr. Harding's request, Mr. Hutt disqualified himself as Chairman and asked Mr. Parran to chair any discussion on this matter.

Mr. Douglas said he thought it appropriate that the PRFC should address itself to the intent of the resolution, but since we are dealing with Maryland waters that the wording should be changed - that the subject should be studied in conjunction to other state agencies and then considered in an early meeting of the Commission. It was the consensus to follow this line of reasoning.

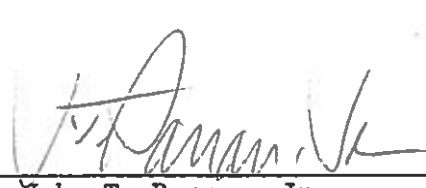
Mr. Dutton, with reference to Rangia clams, asked that it be recorded that he opposed to taking said clams by soft shell hydraulic dredges, but that if the Maryland Health Department and Mr. Hamons recommends the taking or catching of Rangia clams, that it would be satisfactory with him to take them by hand shaft tongs.

Mr. Dutton also requested that a Legislative Committee meeting on modifying PRFC Regulations be set for an early date and the watermen's associations be advised, so they would be able to propose some changes. Mr. Hutt assured Mr. Dutton that this would be done, and that he would be advised of the date of such meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

The next meeting was set for Friday, May 11, 1973.

J. Clifford Hutt
Chairman



John T. Parran, Jr.
Secretary