**Massachusetts Sportsmen’s Council, Inc.**

**P.O. Box 462**

# Rockland, MA 02370-0462

Meeting for March 7, 2021 at 9:03am held via ZOOM by President John Kellstrand

**Send your E-mail addresses to get the minutes electronically.** **ShootingPete@comcast.net** **This will help us save in postage.**

**Roll Call** – quorum

**Moment of Silence** - Friends from the Sportsmen’s Alliance of Maine, George Smith and Edith Cronk died in February.

**President’s Comments -** On January 20th Associate Member Jack Coughlin “was struck by a small SUV on Mill Street in Agawam. His injuries were catastrophic and have left him paralyzed from the neck down. He will need a feeding tube and a ventilator to breathe for the rest of his life. He was doing what he has done every day cleaning our environment. On average he walked 10 miles a day cleaning parks, ponds, rivers, roadways and parking lots of trash and discarded "nip" bottles. If you've ever fished the banks of the Connecticut River, visited parks in Holyoke, Springfield, West Springfield and Agawam, or have simply driven through any of these cities and towns, you have seen our father. He was always out there volunteering to improve our environment.” Jack volunteered at the MSC booth at the Sportsmen Show at the Big E for many years. Jack was the key proponent in the revitalization of the Medina Street Boat Ramp on the Connecticut River. There is a GOFUNDME account to help Jack come home - <https://gofund.me/cdf716a0> .

There was a MA Conservation Alliance meeting on February 24th introducing Bay State Strategies as the lobbying group being looked at to assist in getting key sportsmen legislation to move on Beacon Hill. We received an email from a Vineyard Haven resident requesting support for moving the last day of deer season to January 1st. January 1st is a big family day and could be used for hunting. The sportsmen show that was scheduled in southern New Hampshire later this month has been canceled due to Covid 19. The next Fisheries and Wildlife Board meeting is March 23rd.

**Communication -** The CZ Group has acquired Colt and Beretta acquired Holland & Holland. A comment from Winchester at the Virtual SHOT Show 2021, “if they stopped taking orders for .22LR right now, it would take 2 years to fill all the back-orders”. New York Governor Cuomo hates the firearm industry so much that when NY based Remington Arms offered to reconfigure their manufacturing facility to supply much needed PPE and ventilators the didn’t return the call. When checking into legislation in Washington DC the Secretary found more than 5700 bills with the term “Firearm”. Finally gun sales are not slowing down, another 2 million sold in January. Federal approval for a clinical trial of a Lyme Disease vaccine was given to UMASS Medical and could be available in 2023. Three more listening sessions have been scheduled regarding the Proposed License Fee Increase – March 9, 17, 25 all via Zoom.

**Legislation -** There are more than 6600 bills filed for this legislative session so far. The Legislative Watch List that is monitor Sportsmen related bills has been posted to our website. There are 40 Senate Bills and 90 House Bills that concern Sportsmen. We are waiting on bill numbers to be assigned. You can click on the Bill Title to read the bill.

Today we had Ernie Foster III from the Fisheries and Wildlife Board as a visitor to our meeting. We had a great discussion on the proposed License Fee increases. “Everyone should way in”. “Propose alternatives”. “Everyone is listening”. The proposed Pheasant Stamp came from the early listening sessions.

Delegates mentioned Charging a Usage Fee to non-sportsmen just like the non-profits charge for using their property. Only F&W pays their own health and retirement fees. The Legislature through the budget pays for all other groups; this should change. This led to a discussion on this cost for F&W. It would be a major cost savings for F&W and mean that fees would not have to increase as much if done. This turned into a discussion on SD.1453, “An Act to reimburse the Inland Fisheries and Game Fund”. This bill would reimburse annually discounted and free licenses from the General Fund. Another comment was that before grants were given to Cities and Towns that their properties would have to be open to hunting, fishing and trapping. Also a suggestion was made to create a non-resident Sporting License.

**Hunter Ed –** The courses scheduled for March and April all are full. Each set of classes filled up in 3 hours. The classes are still Independent Study with the Field Day being held at HQ in Westboro. The training for the Youth Turkey Hunt will be done online this year.

**Ware River / Quabbin Watershed Advisory –** No meeting.

**Marine Fisheries –**  DMF is seeking comment on season and dates for Black Sea Bass. 2020 grants have been awarded for The Buzzards Bay Coalition (to rebuild a pier on Wickets Island in Wareham), Beverly (to continue routing maintenance and install bait cutting stations at the fishing accessible pier), Danvers 9to hire a surveyor to survey, mark, and provide signage to public ways to water). The Atlantic coastal states of Maine through Virginia have scheduled their virtual hearings to gather public input on the Atlantic Striped Bass Draft Amendment 7, March 8-25. Massachusetts’ 2021 Marine Recreational Fishing Regulations have been set at status quo seasons and limits for most species. The Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council and the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission are seeking public comment on management options under consideration in the Bluefish Allocation and Rebuilding Amendment, March 24 -April 8. Public Comment Period and Virtual Public Hearing: Proposed Commercial Fishing Regulations Affecting Striped Bass, Menhaden, Black Sea Bass Pots, Bluefin Tuna Purse Seining, and Mobile Gear, virtual public hearing on March 29.

**Forrest and Parks –** Just the standard traffic notices and the announcement of the Harbor Day poster contest.

**Fund Raising -** **Super Raffle 2021**. Tickets will be mailed to delegates. A motion was made to delay the drawing to the June 2021 meeting was passed.

**New Business -** Banquet for 2021 has been canceled. The MSC By-Law change regarding mailing out of the minutes passed. Minutes will now be posted to the website.

**Deer/Bear Damage Report –** A list of damage has been collected for 2018, 2019, 2020. 2018 and 2020 were worse than

2019. There were 57 reports of loss with more than $506,000 from Bear and more than $389,000 from Deer.

**Good of the Order –** Two scholarships will be awarded this year. This will be done at either the May or June meeting.

NWTF has an auction going on now with the end of bids the weekend of March 21st.

**Adjournment –** 12:04 pm

**Next Meeting –** April 11th with the location to be determined, Zoom or in Auburn. This is the second Sunday. The first Sunday is Easter.