

Ref: Taylor Property Rezoning

December 31, 2022

Brevard Planning and Zoning Board

Dear Board Members,

I write to you today in strong support of Mr. Ewan Leighton's request for a zoning change of the Taylor property located in Melbourne Beach. As you may be aware, over the last few years the myriad efforts to restore the Indian River Lagoon have made great progress using shellfish for the improvement of water quality. Specifically, hard clams have been exceptionally successful in this approach and the demand for clam production by licensed and qualified commercial producers has skyrocketed. However, state laws delineate specific areas in which this type of aquaculture can occur and unfortunately, the number of suitable locations in the IRL is severely limited. Further, the recent closure of a large-scale clam nursery facility at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute in Ft. Pierce has significantly reduced the capacity for clam seed production on the East Coast of Florida (both for restoration and commercial seafood production). Many current and planned restoration projects in the IRL utilize clams to a great extent and I have been working with Mr. Leighton to increase clam production in an effort to bolster projects and reduce costs by growing clams that will be utilized locally. It is my understanding that the Taylor property is a rarity as it is suitable by standards set forth by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services making it an ideal location to conduct clam nursery and aquaculture activities. My collaborators and I at the Indian River Clam Restoration Project are proud to support Mr. Leighton's request and ultimately his efforts to help solve the environmental issues faced by the Indian River Lagoon. If I can be of any service to you in the decision making process, please do not hesitate to contact me by one of the means below.

Sincerely,



Todd Z. Osborne, Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Soil, Water and Ecosystem Sciences Department

Whitney Laboratory for Marine Bioscience

University of Florida

osbornet@ufl.edu

352-256-3826

9505 N Ocean Shore Blvd.

St. Augustine, FL 32080



FLORIDA SHELLFISH AQUACULTURE ASSOCIATION

GRETCHEN KELLY
Executive Director

DENNIS DAVID
Chair
New Smyrna

TOM McCRUDDEN
Secretary
Tequesta, Florida

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Treasurer
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ANDY ARNOLD
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TYLER HEEB
St. James City

TIM JORDAN
Panacea

ERIN MCGUIRE
Crawfordville

DON McMAHON
Pensacola

DAN SOLANO
Cedar Key

DJ STROTT
Tampa

To The Brevard County Planning and Zoning Board of Directors,

The Florida Shellfish Aquaculture Association (FSAA) is writing to you in support of rezoning The Taylor property in Melbourne Beach, FL. Our mission is to share best practices, inform policy makers and regulators, and seek funding for research that can improve our productivity and product safety in Florida shellfish aquaculture. In this pursuit, we are encouraged to see Ewan Leighton's innovative efforts to expand production, work in tandem with our cause for the betterment of Florida's economy and ecosystem .

The FSAA supports the growth of shellfish production in Florida for commercial purposes and environmental benefits. As the United States is seeing a 90% seafood trade deficit, shellfish act as an opportunity for American farmers to help reverse that percentage. In recent years, there has been growing scientific evidence of the key role shellfish play in providing ecosystem benefits to our nearshore marine environment. Efforts to produce more seed will aid in the many new and ongoing restoration projects across the state of Florida.

For these reasons, we certainly encourage the necessary growth of bivalve production at the hatchery level. Its importance cannot be overstated. Ewan Leighton is a member of the FSAA and we hope that you consider and support the request of a zoning change of the Taylor property in Melbourne Beach, FL. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

Gretchen Kelly

Gretchen Kelly
Executive Director
gretchenkellyfsaa@gmail.com

CEDAR KEY SEAFOOD DISTRIBUTORS, INC.

PO Box 979

Cedar Key, FL 32625

Lori Schleede, President 352-221-0572

John F. Schleede, Vice President 352-221-5656

12/30/2022

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to express my concern and support of the rezoning of the Taylor Property in Melbourne Beach to AU (Agriculture.) The shellfish hatchery has been operating on the Taylor property for +/- 20 years. This is one of very few remaining hatcheries that supports the farmed clam industry in the state of Florida.

This industry is already stressed due to weather events, hatcheries closing, limited supply and high demand. The remaining hatcheries are currently operating at maximum capacity, trying to supply our industry, as well as support waterway restoration. Assurance to secure this property as agricultural is essential to aqua culturalists, their supporting industries, and water quality projects .

The farmed clam industry affects 275 farmers and 1500 employees directly. As a \$35,000,000 industry, hatcheries are essential, without one, the other will fail. For that reason, this is so important. Our industry needs your support.

Feel free to contact me at any time to discuss this issue. I have been in Cedar Key since 1997. Prior to that time, I was a resident of Melbourne Beach. As a grower and wholesaler, I am fully aware of the impact shellfish hatcheries have on our industry and the wellbeing of the Indian River Lagoon.

Sincerely,



Lori Schleede, President CEO



P.O. Box 725
Cedar Key, FL 32625
(O): 352-543-6346
(C): 352-215-6341
cantwellrr@bellsouth.net

December 29, 2022

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to you at this time in hopes of your willingness to visit a rezone request from The Taylor Property in Melbourne, Florida. The request pertains to the current property in hopes of enlarging the clam hatchery facility. By enabling The Taylor Property to rezone it would also enable the expansion of an already existing clam hatchery. This expansion would be a tremendous asset to our industry now and to our future. Currently our industry which is composed of over 200 certified clam farmers is in dire needs of having more opportunities for clam seed and this request would secure that issue.

As an industry we have been faced with numerous setbacks, such as BP Oil Spill, hurricanes, Red Tide etc. Those issues unfortunately deal with Mother Nature which we can't control however expanding a hatchery is something that is not Mother Nature related. Unfortunately, our large industry currently is at the mercy of 2-4 local clam hatcheries to purchase seed from. We have lost some major players in the recent past, one big issue has been to restoration projects. Which don't get us wrong that is definitely a direction we are very supportive of, but we also need hatcheries to substantiate our farmers to fill their immediate and future needs with clam seed. This year we lost one of our largest hatcheries Seaventure Clams, and we are all feeling the pain and need a "life line"

Please consider Mr. Leighton's request for rezoning and in turn expanding. This would certainly be the answer we all as an industry need to move forward with ease.

Thank you for your time with this matter. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at 352-215-6341 or cantwellrr@bellsouth.net.

Regards,

Rosanne Cantwell (President)
Dog Island Blues Clam Co., Inc.
P.O. Box 725
Cedar Key, Fl. 32625
352-215-6341

1-4-23

Brevard County Office of Planning and Zoning

Mark E. Headley

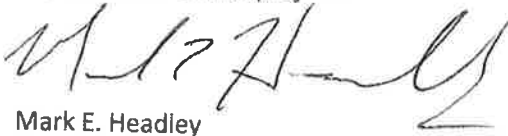
8894 South A1A Highway

Melbourne Beach, FL 32951

To whom it may concern: This communication is from Mark E. Headley. My home is located at 8894 South A1A Highway in Melbourne Beach, Brevard County Florida. The Parcel I.D. # on my property is 30-39-07-00-14.3. The Tax Account # is 3008434. It is Homesteaded property.

This message is to voice my approval and encouragement of my neighbor, Morris M. Taylor, in his effort to rezone his SEU property located at 8850 South A1A in Melbourne Beach, Brevard County, Florida to AU (Agricultural/Residential.) I understand this effort is in furtherance of a desire to increase production of bivalves to seed in the Indian River Lagoon. I understand also that this is part of a State/private program to use shellfish to begin the process of cleaning a badly damaged waterway in an ecologically sustainable manner.

Again, as a property owner adjacent to the proposed land use alteration, I repeat my wholehearted endorsement of this project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark E. Headley', written in a cursive style.

Mark E. Headley





UF/IFAS Extension
Shellfish Aquaculture Extension Program

PO Box 89
Cedar Key, FL 32625
352-543-5057
Lnst@ufl.edu

January 4, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in support of a request being made by Max Taylor and Ewan Leighton, owners and operators of a molluscan shellfish hatchery located in Melbourne Beach, Florida, to change zoning of the hatchery property from residential to agricultural. The hatchery facility maintains an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Aquaculture and meets the agency's best management practices as defined in Chapter 5L-3, F.A.C. The Certificate authorizes production and sale of aquaculture products, identifies aquaculture products as cultured products, and entitles the producer to the same benefits bestowed on other agricultural producers.

As aquaculture production of shellfish, in particular hard clams, has increased throughout the state over the past 40 years, the demand for seed has likewise increased. There are over 250 certified shellfish growers who are dependent on a handful of private hatcheries producing from 400-500 million clam seed annually. Unfortunately, the number of hatcheries has not increased. With the closing last year of a large facility located at Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute, seed supply will most likely not meet the demand. This hatchery has been in operation in Brevard County since 2000 and must expand to meet the current seed demand.

The clam aquaculture industry actually began in Brevard County in the 1980s as a result of a declining fishery. Today, the industry is centered along the north Gulf coast as the impaired waters of the Indian River Lagoon no longer support optimal production. This hatchery operates using highly filtered water to maintain the necessary water quality.

Clams are now being used for restoration efforts in the IRL, particularly for water quality improvement. Mollusks are filter feeders and have the capacity to reduce sediment loads, turbidity, and excess nutrients from the waters in which they are grown. Projects such as the Indian River Clam Restoration Project are using clams as natural biofilters and have out planted over 11 million clams in the Lagoon since 2019. In collaboration with the Brevard Zoo, a new clam gardener program has established 100 clam growout sites within Brevard County that are being monitored by citizen scientists. All of these efforts require hatchery-produced seed, thus increasing the overall demand for seed.

For these reasons, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Leighton would like approval of a land use change for their shellfish hatchery, an aquaculture facility which has minimal environmental impact.

Sincerely,

Leslie Sturmer
Shellfish Aquaculture Extension Specialist



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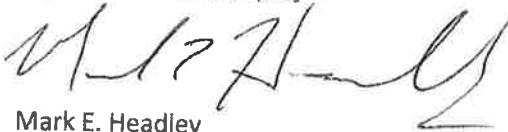
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