



City of Gloucester
Fisheries Commission Minutes
Wednesday, July 18, 2012- 7:00PM
Third Floor Conference Room
City Hall
9 Dale Avenue

Members:

David Bergeron
Bruce Tobey
Sefatia Romeo-Theken
Angela Sanfilippo
Al Cottone

Paul Vitale
Mark Ring
Joseph Orlando
BG Brown (absent)
Gus Sanfilippo (absent)

Also in attendance: Maggie Debbie, Mass Development; Carolyn Woodhead from NOAA's Cooperative Research Branch, several members of the public.

1. Call to Order & Chairman's Report

The meeting was called to order at 7:04pm. **Mr. Bergeron** thanked everyone for attending. In opening remarks, **Mr. Bergeron** noted that the agenda would not be taken in order. Review of meeting minutes from previous month's meetings would be first.

2. Minutes of the May 17 and June 20, 2012 meetings

Without a quorum at last month's meeting, the May minutes could not be approved and were therefore up for approval along with the June meeting minutes.

MOTION

Ms. Sanfilippo motioned to accept the minutes of the May 17, 2012 meeting. **Mr. Ring** seconded. All in favor none opposed with no discussion. May minutes unanimously approved.

MOTION

Ms. Romeo-Theken motioned to accept the minutes of the June 20, 2012 Fisheries Commission meeting. **Mr. Cottone** seconded. All in favor, none opposed, minutes unanimously accepted without discussion.

3. Public Comments

There were no comments from the public attendees at the meeting.

4. Committee Reports:

a. Commercial Fishing Dockage

In an update on the Commercial Fishing Dockage subcommittee, **Mr. Bergeron** informed the group that the RFP for a formal dockage study has been released. The City is already expecting a couple of responses to this Request for Proposals. He noted that the Commercial Fishing Dockage subcommittee members will have to review the responses.

In related business, a question was raised regarding the city owned I4-C2 property on the waterfront. It was clarified that the Mayor has no intention of removing this property from the DPA.

5. Mass Development, Maggie Debbie, Senior Vice President for Asset Management

Next, the Commission turned their attention to Maggie Debbie of MassDevelopment. **Mr. Bergeron** noted that as the managers of the State Fish Pier, MassDevelopment play an important role to the city and the industry. He thanked Ms. Debbie, Claire King (Manager of the State Fish Pier) and Anthony Militello (Facilities Maintenance Manager, Sate Fish Pier) for attending the meeting and speaking with the Commission.

Ms. Debbie started by distributing an information packet on her organization (included with these minutes) and explained that MassDevelopment is the state's quasi-public finance and development authority. She also noted that MassDevelopment (formerly the Massachusetts Land Bank) has managed the Jodrey State Fish Pier for 28 years. With regional offices across the state, the organization does state business with non-state funding, has a board of 11 members appointed by the governor and was originally formed in 1998. The organization's mission is to foster economic development across the commonwealth, create jobs and develop housing. On the real estate side, MassDevelopment also works with state and federal surplus properties to ensure that housing is in full use and free of slum and blight. Here in Gloucester, the organization runs The Gloucester Revolving Loan Fund (GRLF), which makes real estate and equipment loans to businesses located in Gloucester, Rockport, Essex, and Manchester-by-the Sea with a particular emphasis on fishing vessels and seafood-related businesses.

At the Sate Fish Pier, MassDevelopment is responsible for the care of physical structures and space. There are 56 boat slips for fishing boats on the pier, a freezer building leased by Cape Seafoods and a processing facility. Ms. Debbie explained that the state pier's origins were a joint venture between MassDevelopment and the Archdioceses. Many improvements have been made over the years, including the demolition of old buildings for the creation of modern facilities, dredging and construction of a riprap slope, the construction of a new 650' finger pier, and the construction of the Cape Ann Fisheries Development Center, among other improvements.

In 2009, there was a sense that land south of the freezer building was being underutilized. As a result, a study was conducted for proposed uses of this land. MassDevelopment interviewed a number of people around town to gain feedback. A copy of this study has been included on the City's website. No concrete ideas for this space emerged as a result of this study but MassDevelopment is still open to considering further development in the future. The feedback at the time of the study indicated that the addition of an ice plant or new processing plants was not needed because these needs were already being met by existing waterfront businesses around the harbor. **Ms. Sanfilippo** asked if fishermen were interviewed as a part of this process. Ms. Debbie responded that they were, and that she could look into who was interviewed specifically. She added that since conducting the study she has been informed that there is a need for a new processing plant on the pier.

Mr. Orlando asked if a water pre-treatment facility has been considered for this space. Ms. Debbie responded that the possibility was studied a decade ago, but it was determined that there was no practical need for such a facility at the time due to a reduction in overall catch volumes in the city. It has been made evident over the years, however, that this study may have identified a chicken-and-egg problem, where it seemed there was not enough volume for such a plant because there was no plant to handle large volumes of processing. **Mr. Bergeron** followed that establishing a pre-treatment plant is a major goal of the Commission in order to open new opportunities to add value to fish in Gloucester. Ms. Debbie asked if the development of such a plant would attract more people to land their fish here. **Mr. Orlando** responded that many fishermen already land here, but once landed the fish is shipped out of Gloucester for processing. A pre-treatment plant would make processing more economical here and ensure that more fish stays in Gloucester for processing.

Mr. Tobey noted that Ms. Debbie came before the City Council to make a presentation back in May and that the Council is currently thinking over all that was presented and considering how best to move forward with the space available for further development on the State Fish Pier. He added that back in the days of the height of the fishing industry this area was an economic center for the city. New options should be explored to bring new life to the area, especially focusing on value-added processing.

Ms. Debbie asked the Commission for some clarification on what they saw as valuable in adding a pre-treatment plant to the fish pier. She also asked if there would be enough of a demand for this facility if it was built. It was confirmed that a pre-treatment plant is required because of the inability to dispose of processing by-product in the sewage system. **Mr. Cottone** added that the buyers in town would use a pre-treatment plant if the option was available. There is enough of a demand for such a facility. **Ms. Sanfilippo** added that there used to be a small pre-treatment plant in town and that a bigger one was supposed to be built but politics got in the way. She also added that she was not aware of the study that was conducted in 2009. The GFWA has been very much involved with the development on the state pier over the years and would like to be contacted for all future feasibility studies. **Mr. Tobey** added that **Ms. Sanfilippo** was instrumental in getting the Archdiocese on board for the development of the pier. **Ms. Sanfilippo** also added that the *Vision 2020* planning document should be reviewed when considering the best use for the available space on the pier. Additional studies should also interview businesses and stakeholders other than those already providing the services that are proposed for the available space.

Ms. Garcia noted the City would welcome a partnership with MassDevelopment in future studies and new development on the pier. She added that the Fisheries Commission has connections with processors so if names or organizations need to be reached with necessary expertise, they can be found here.

Ms. Debbie responded that she is open to the options. The first steps are to determine the costs, economics, users, goals, etc for the available space. This should be done in the next several months.

Ms. Sanfilippo added that in the experience of the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association's work on the state fish pier, all has been positive. She is proud of the development that has occurred there over past decades and wants to see more development/ new opportunities. One possibility that has always been a dream of hers is to see facility constructed where fishermen can work out of the elements. Ideally such a facility would have enough space to allow for mending nets, storage, etc. A modern facility would be ideal. Ms. Debbie noted that State Fish Pier tenants currently use the end of the pier for these activities and **Ms. Sanfilippo** responded that this space is used for

necessity and doesn't provide protection from the elements. A community space with modern amenities would be best.

Mr. Tobey added that there have already been advanced conversations about the possibility of the Gloucester Fishermens' Wives Association building a test kitchen somewhere in town, and that the State Fish Pier has been considered as an option. This test kitchen would be a remarkable marketing value-added tool. This is still a viable option for the organization and the need is clear to develop the concept.

Mr. Orlando noted that the high costs of water and pre-treatment in the city have traditionally deterred this type of development in the past. Pre-treatment is the key to keeping Gloucester-caught fish in Gloucester.

Mr. Ring asked Ms. King how many boats are currently on the waiting list for dockage space at the state fish pier. She responded that approximately 20-25 are currently waiting. Ms. Debbie added that they are currently working on adding 2 new slips at the end of the pier. Ms. King added that the waiting list currently consists of varying sized boats. **Mr. Bergeron** asked when the two new slips would be available and Ms. Debbie responded that they are going out to bid this year.

Ms. Garcia noted that ideally the city would like to see pretreatment and processing facilities added to the state fish pier. She also suggested the concept of stock enhancements. She noted that Canada is having success with stock enhancements. **Ms. Sanfilippo** noted that exploring this possibility was also included on the *Vision 2020* planning document.

Meeting attendee Suzanne Altenburger suggested the possibility of partnering with universities to create islands of innovation throughout the working waterfront.

Mr. Tobey added that the requirements of a pre-treatment plant are not magic. Constructing such a facility on the waterfront will boil down to observing the current businesses already in Gloucester (Gortons, etc.) and locating the funding. Ms. Debbie responded that it makes sense to first figure out the technology that will be required and then figure out how much it will cost. She also suggested the possibility of locating federal money to fund the project. The key is first establishing the key needs on the fish pier and then to bring in a team of consultants/ experts. **Mr. Bergeron** suggested putting together a working group of Commission members. Both parties agreed that this was a good plan and that they would discuss it subsequently. **Mr. Tobey** asked what the timeline would look like, considering the immediate need for some of these development options. Ms. Debbie responded that work could begin right away. First steps are to get a list of questions developed and to figure out the parties to be involved.

Meeting attendee Patti Page asked for the physical location of the two extra slips on the pier. It was clarified that they will be closest to Parker Street and will not create interference with the current dockage there.

Mr. Orlando reiterated that insurance issues make accessing the fish pier a challenge which is a major issue for a large portion of the fleet. This is hurting the industry. **Mr. Cottone** asked if day waivers could be granted for access to the pier for those not holding insurance on their vessels. The purpose would be to deal with net maintenance or similar brief tasks. **Ms. Sanfilippo** noted that granting such a waiver would be greatly beneficial to the industry. As a point to keep in mind, Mr. Militello noted that there are only so many boats that the pier can accommodate at a single time. **Mr. Cottone** suggested that Captains could check in first before bringing vessels by to ensure that

space is available. **Mr. Vitale** asked if an electric crane could be added to the end of the state pier for transient work. It was relayed that this possibility would be considered but that the area he mentioned is currently a dockage area.

Ms. Romeo-Theken expressed disappointment over the limited access currently available to the state pier. It's been made clear to the Commission that there is a scarcity of dockage and work space for the industry in the city at present. In response to this, she asked if there was any way for the city to apply for a federal grant or some other sort of funding to cover a joint insurance for those lacking individual insurance. Ms. Garcia responded that she has heard the exact same concerns from industry stakeholders about limited access to dockage and work space. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** asked again what could be done about it from the city's perspective. She suggested that the city should look into partnering with the state to lease property on the pier that could have an umbrella insurance policy for open use by community fishermen. Ms. Garcia suggested the city may be able to work as a partner in this way.

As a follow-up question, **Ms. Romeo-Theken** asked if the state pier was looking to expand. Ms. Debbie responded that they are.

Ms. Garcia noted that it is unfortunate that the city was not more directly involved with the 2009 study exploring new opportunities for the state pier. It's clear that things were missed but there are still opportunities to follow through on what is needed by the industry at present. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** suggested that the main obstacle is funding. She is tired of hearing about the need for a working waterfront even though there is no place for the local fleet to work. **Mr. Bergeron** followed that he is glad to hear that the City Council is engaged in this issue and wants to partner to bring resources to the table. He also noted that he is pleased to hear that MassDevelopment is willing to act as a partner moving forward and mentioned that he will be in touch in the near future. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated she and the GFWA is also available as a resource. Ms. Debbie said she will work with David to put together a working group.

Mr. Bergeron noted **Mr. Tobey's** role in bringing MassDevelopment to the table and thanked everyone for coming. In a final question, Mr. Militello asked **Ms. Sanfilippo** if she knew of any present models of the joint/community workspace she suggested for the open space on the state pier. She said she was unaware of any such facilities at the time.

6. Northeast Fisheries Science Center, Carolyn Woodhead, Cooperative Research Specialist
Next, the Commission turned their attention to Carolyn Woodhead. **Mr. Bergeron** thanked her for coming before the Commission. She began by discussing her work and distributing materials on her programs. She explained that the Cooperative Research arm of NOAA started in 1999 to improve methods for collecting information and data for management purposes. Her programs all revolve around partnering with fishermen to collect this information.

Mr. Orlando expressed frustration over his concerns that none of the information collected through these programs are used in the management process. He also asked how much funding is allocated to collaborative research each year.

Ms. Woodhead responded that with offices in Gloucester, Woods Hole and Narragansett, staff in this program work with over 600 fishermen. She also explained that the research priorities are set by Council committees. In 2009, the Cooperative Research branch developed a strategic plan focusing on the question of what works best with fishermen. An industry-based survey was conducted and made clear that more fisheries-dependent data should be collected through this Cooperative

Research branch and that more gear-based research work was needed. At the time, NOAA also concluded that a wider distribution of information and collaborative-based work was needed in order to reach a larger segment of the industry.

Mr. Cottone asked if the research that was done on its own set-aside quota was split with the individual vessel contracting as part of the collaborative research. Ms. Woodhead responded that this was. **Mr. Cottone** also asked if there are currently any outside sources of funds available for this type of research. Ms. Woodhead responded that there is not to her knowledge.

Ms. Woodhead continued a discussion on current projects underway as part of the Cooperative Research branch. Current projects include work on scallops, multispecies, scup and black seabass traps, monkfish tagging, using cameras as noninvasive technology for stock assessments and data collection on ecosystem dynamics such as temperature and water-depth profiles in the Gulf of Maine that will add to an understanding of stock behaviors in the region.

Mr. Cottone asked why—if all of this information is readily available on ecosystem dynamics—is it not used to inform the trawl surveys used in current stock assessments.

Ms. Woodhead responded that work is underway with a group of oceanographers to make sense of this data so that it can hopefully be used more readily in the future. She also explained that some of the data collected as part of Collaborative Research studies goes into the flatfish assessments.

Mr. Cottone asked how vessels from Gloucester could become involved in this research.

Ms. Woodhead explained that each year approximately 6-8 new vessels become involved in the research through a competitive application process. Info on this process is distributed through the Cooperative Research Branch's website and through the Councils. She said she would be happy to walk anyone interested through the application process. There is currently space available in the program and the application is available for another couple of weeks. Insurance for vessels interested is required.

Ms. Woodhead resumed her description of some of the current projects underway at this time. She explained that two projects are currently looking at squid and butterfish by-catch with an emphasis on environmental conditions. Another is looking at how to improve and expand real-time reporting by fishermen. Another project involves developing a sustainable redfish fishery. Fishermen from Gloucester are currently working on this. The goal is to have a 4.5 inch exemption passed for catching redfish while also reducing by-catch in this size net. The regional office is hoping to have a decision on the mesh-size exemption by mid fishing-season. **Mr. Cottone** asked if the current allowable size is 6 inches. Ms. Woodhead responded that a 6-inch mesh size exemption has already been approved for redfish but the 4.5 inch size is also currently under review.

Two additional projects are looking at temporal/spatial concepts between species. A project called GearNet looks into what the biggest issues are for by-catch, selectivity, and access to certain areas. Another project is currently investigating fuel efficiency measures.

Mr. Orlando asked what the annual budget is for all these collaborative research programs. Ms. Woodhead noted that it varies but that in 2009-10 the budget was approximately \$9 million. **Mr. Orlando** expressed frustration over the limited amount of funding made available as economic assistance to the fleet and added that this \$9 million would have been better spent as direct financial assistance given some of the regulatory developments of late. **Mr. Cottone** asked how

collaborative research projects are conceived, explaining that a big part of the fleet's frustration stems from the fact that many of these projects yield no useful results or are not related to the important issues affecting the fishery. Ms. Woodhead responded that proposed projects are all screened by a technical committee at Council. **Mr. Cottone** responded that a lot of the work that is done is useful, but there are other projects that would make more sense.

Ms. Romeo-Theken noted that it would be preferable to see the group who are able to work on these projects diversified. **Mr. Ring** expressed frustration over the fact that more of this information collected through collaborative efforts is not used in stock assessments. Ms. Woodhead responded that not every project is designed to go into stock assessments. She added that recent efforts to tag dogfish have been used for stock structure analysis and will hopefully lead to an increase in quota. Mr. Orlando asked if codfish tagging was used in the assessment. Ms. Woodhead answered that it is.

Ms. Woodhead added that her department also funds the Marine Resource Education Program on fisheries science and management. These workshops take place all over the northeast and have already been held in New Hampshire, Beverly, Maine as well as locations throughout the mid-Atlantic. **Mr. Bergeron** noted that he would like to see a workshop hosted in Gloucester. Ms Garcia suggested the new Endicott College facility as an option.

Ms. Woodhead also explained that she was asked to bring materials for Commission review that outline the work of Richard Soja, who is in the cold water aquarium business. She noted that her passing this information along was not an endorsement of the project and left materials.

Mr. Bergeron asked for more information on RedNet as it relates to opportunities for the Gloucester fleet. Ms. Woodhead explained that the goal of the project is to develop a sustainable redfish fishery. The first phase, which is exploratory, aims to show that redfish can be targeted without excessive by-catch issues. The second component of the study involves selectivity studies for mesh between 4.5 and 6 inches. There will also be a socio-economic component of this study that looks at processing and marketing opportunities for redfish. Dan Georgiana from SMAST is working on this component. The project should be complete in about a year. About 10 boats are involved in the project at present. **Mr. Bergeron** asked what the next steps will be after the study is complete. Ms. Woodhead responded that meetings with Sectors will be held to identify fishermen who might be interested in using the modified gear at a reduced or no cost—assuming it is approved.

Mr. Ring noted that a big push for this program has come from large-scale boats interested in using the redfish as bait.

Ms. Sanfilippo noted that historically, Gloucester was a huge port for redfish using this 4.5 inch mesh. The fishery was clean and successful and its unfortunate that all this history has been lost. Ms. Woodhead noted that historical information on the distribution of redfish was used as part of the RedNet Program. She added that if a 4.5 inch exemption goes through it would be applicable to all Sectors.

It was mentioned that a marketing grant would be put to good use in Gloucester for this project, especially considering the success that Cape Ann Fresh Catch and the Gloucester Fishermens' Wives Association have had marketing lesser known species. Ms. Woodhead agreed that this could be a good partnership and agreed to get in touch if she heard of any such grants becoming available.

Mr. Orlando noted that many fishermen are not able to participate in Collaborative Research or other government-funded programs due to a lack of affordable vessel insurance. Ms. Woodhead responded that she understands these frustrations but the issue of safety is a huge one. She did make the point that fisheries observers are currently covered by a blanket policy and that this may be something to look into as a means of covering uninsured vessels.

Meeting attendee Suzanne Altenburger suggested that the Fisheries Commission start a regular installment in the Gloucester Daily Times highlighting on-goings and strengths of the fishery. The goal would be to demonstrate that the industry is not dead. **Ms. Sanfilippo** agreed and suggested this be added as an agenda item for the next meeting.

Mr. Bergeron thanked Ms. Woodhead for attending and suggested that the Commission stay in touch with her as new opportunities arise.

7. New Business

In new business, **Mr. Bergeron** noted that the Commission should consider appointing a representative to the City's Harbor Planning Committee. He explained that the city is gearing up for an update of the plan. Although there has not been a formal committee established yet, the Mayor has asked for a recommendation from the Fisheries Commission. Ms. Garcia added that several themes emerged as a result of the recent DPA meeting with Mayors from other coastal Massachusetts towns. A draft report of these themes is currently being produced and the plan is to convene a committee for the update to the Harbor Plan to review this draft once it is complete. She added that the theme of the 2004 Harbor plan was focused around regulatory change and that economic development building on the fishing industry was highlighted in the 2009 plan. The new group should be prepared to meet in early fall. **Mr. Bergeron** noted that he had already spoken to **Mr. Vitale** regarding a nomination to this planning committee and that he has agreed to participate.

MOTION

Mr. Ring nominated **Mr. Vitale** to sit as a representative of the Fisheries Commission on the Harbor Planning Committee. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** seconded the nomination. In discussion, it was decided that an alternate from the Commission would step up if **Mr. Vitale** is not available. It is important for the Commission to be a part of this process at all stages. If **Mr. Vitale** cannot make a meeting, a standing member of the Fisheries Commission will always be at the Harbor Planning Committee meetings. All voted in favor of **Mr. Vitale's** nomination. Motion passed unanimously.

In other business, **Mr. Ring** asked Patti Page if she ever received a list of vessels currently waiting for a slip at the state fish pier. She responded that she has not. This list is important and relevant to the Dockage Study. There are also waiting lists for St. Peter's Square and other locations and these lists should all be reconciled to get an accurate number of the total number of vessels that are waiting for dockage in the city. Because this is public information, the Commission should be able to get access to these waiting lists.

Mr. Bergeron also noted that a completed draft of the Commission's Whole Foods letter is ready to be signed at the Mayor's office. No one has signed to date and he asked that all do so as soon as possible. **Ms. Sanfilippo** agreed to pick up the letter and keep it at her office so the other Commission members could access it easily.

Ms. Garcia announced that a new Harbor Walk brochure is available and she circulated this brochure to Commission members.

Ms. Romeo-Theken asked for clarification on any changes to DPA exemptions that may currently be under consideration by the Mayor and specifically asked about a certain case. Ms. Garcia responded that the business in question is operating in the DPA under a management plan that required acceptance from the City Council. As part of this plan, the business is required to allow for the storage of a certain number of lobster pots on their property. **Mr. Bergeron** asked Mr. Ring what the lobstermen have said about this. **Mr. Ring** said that he was unaware of any complaints. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** asked that the Commission be informed as soon as information is available regarding changes to the plan as the DPA is an important issue for the industry. She also suggested that the matter be added to the agenda.

Meeting attendee Damon Cummings noted that a great deal of hard work went into the last harbor plan to allow more flexibility in the DPA and still preserve the working waterfront, and it is important that the DPA be protected and the water-dependent usage requirements be upheld and enforced.

8. Adjournment

Ms. Sanfilippo motioned to adjourn the meeting. **Mr. Ring** seconded. Meeting adjourned at 9:43pm.