



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
FISHERIES COMMISSION MINUTES
THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2013; 6:00 PM
THIRD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY HALL
9 DALE AVENUE

Members:

Mark Ring, Chair

Joseph Orlando

Al Cottone, Vice Chair

BG Brown

Sefatia Romeo-Theken, City Council

Greg Verga, City Council

Angela Sanfilippo

Paul Vitale

Also in attendance: Sarah Garcia, Jack Wiggin, Scott Swicker, Susanne Altenburger, and Patti Page.

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:09 PM by Interim Chair Greg Verga.

2. Nomination of the Chair

Ms. Sanfilippo motioned to nominate Mark Ring as Chair of the Fisheries Commission. Seconded by Ms. Romeo-Theken. With no discussion, motion passes unanimously.

3. Nomination of the Vice Chair

Mr. Orlando nominated Al Cottone for Vice Chair of the Fisheries Commission. Seconded by Ms. Romeo-Theken. With no discussion, motion passes unanimously.

4. Vacant Commission seat

Mr. Cottone motioned to recommend to Mayor Kirk that Scott Swicker fill the vacant seat on the Fisheries Commission. Mr. Orlando seconded.

DISCUSSION ON THE MOTION

Ms. Romeo-Theken clarified that Scott Swicker will need to write a letter of interest to Mayor Kirk, who will then forward the nomination to the Ordinances and Administration Committee. She added that a recommendation from the Commission would be wise. **Ms. Sanfilippo** asked Scott Swicker to introduce himself to the commission. Scott Swicker is the owner of two vessels, one lobster and one ground fish, and is willing to volunteer his time to sit on this Commission.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

All in favor, City Councilors Romeo-Theken and Verga voted present. Motion passes.

5. Representation on the Waterways Board

Ms. Romeo-Theken asked which member of the Fisheries Commission was on the Waterways Board. The consensus was that no one is currently representing the Commission at those meetings. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** suggested **Mr. Ring** speak with the Mayor regarding this issue.

Ms. Sanfilippo motioned that the Chair of the Fisheries Commission meet with the Mayor to let her know the Commission feels there should be representation of the Fisheries Commission on the Waterways Board. **Seconded by Mr. Vitale.**

VOTE ON MOTION

All in favor, City Councilors Romeo-Theken and Verga abstained. Motion passes.

6. Dockage Study

Mr. Ring introduced Jack Wiggin from the Urban Harbors Institute, UMass Boston. Mr. Wiggin discussed the Dockage Study for commercial vessels in the Gloucester harbor, particularly in the Designated Port Area (DPA). This study involves a survey of vessel owners and of property owners, which have been conducted through the mail, so far. There are seventy-seven (77) property owners within the DPA and thirty-nine (39) have responded to survey. The vessel survey was sent to about three hundred fifty (350) individuals and one hundred twenty-five (125) have been returned; this leaves two hundred twenty-three (223) sent with no response. The Dockage Subcommittee members have reviewed responses and worked to fill in missing information. One issue has been getting a good list of vessels actually working out of Gloucester harbor. This list is being developed. The information received from property owners has not yet been reviewed. Mr. Wiggin's organization is willing to work on gathering further information from property owners, but it may make more sense for Gloucester people to be obtaining that information. Mr. Wiggin stated that there needs to be more information collected before determining recommendations for proceeding.

Ms. Sanfilippo asked if Mr. Wiggin was able to find information for who owns the AmeriCold property. Mr. Wiggin responded that there was a response from someone at AmeriCold, but could not confirm if it was from the property owner. Ms. Garcia has recently been approached by AmeriCold because their wharves are in disrepair and they need to replace pilings that also are supporting the building. The freezers are getting old and need reinvestment. Ms. Garcia is looking into resources to assist with these upgrades and incentives for AmeriCold's investment and hopes to create better access to dockage. Mr. Wiggin added that the property at One Rowe Square has responded. They have four hundred forty-five (445) feet of existing dockage, none of which is dedicated to commercial vessels, and they indicated they have no plan to make dockage available for commercial vessels. Ms. Garcia stated that cold storage is an asset to the fisheries.

The Commission further discussed dockage access for commercial vessels at these properties. Ms. Garcia mentioned that at a previous meeting a representative from MassDevelopment discussed allowing boats without insurance to mend nets at the State Fish Pier. The consensus was that this issue has been resolved by the implementation of umbrella insurance for the pier. There was discussion regarding the Coast Guard station and its potential for additional slips for commercial vessels. Mr. Wiggin added that the purpose of the study is to document the usage of dockage by commercial vessels and ensure in the future that the space is available for fisheries. Ms. Garcia will be following up with MassDevelopment regarding the waiting list for the pier

and the diagram of dockage.

Mr. Wiggin asked if a subcommittee could be convened to continue this discussion. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** suggested speaking with the Waterways Board regarding Peter Bent, as he is no longer on the Waterways Board. She suggested asking if they would like him to continue attending the subcommittee meetings or if they would prefer to send another representative. **Mr. Ring** will be contacting the Chair of the Waterways Board. Mr. Wiggin will be following up with **Mr. Ring** to schedule a meeting of the subcommittee. Ms. Garcia requested Mr. Wiggin reach out to the property owners to encourage a response to the survey. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** suggested distributing the names of the remaining property owners to the commission in case members know owners and can reach out. Mr. Wiggin will provide the list for Ms. Garcia to distribute.

Mr. Orlando stated there may be an opportunity for more dockage due to the new Harbor Line that has been designated for dockage and he suggested Mr. Wiggin look into these opportunities. Ms. Garcia clarified that it is the 2004 Harbor Line. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated the I-4, C-2 dockage water is very deep because it was all dredged before the dockage was installed.

The Commission discussed the process for requesting a Fisheries Commission alternate's attendance at other various meetings. It was decided, by consensus, the best system is for members to contact the Chair who will then attempt to find an alternate. Ms. Garcia requested that representation at other meetings try to remain as consistent as possible, since many of the committees are actively working.

7. Invitation to John Bullard for May meeting [May 16th, 6pm]

Mr. Ring asked if Mr. Bullard should still be invited to attend a meeting. The group consensus was yes. Ms. Garcia will be contacting Mr. Bullard to confirm. **Ms. Sanfilippo** suggested reserving the library, as more of the community may wish to attend. **Mr. Ring** stated that it will be a public meeting, but not a public hearing. People can attend, but should plan on observing.

8. Regulatory restrictions and reauthorization

Ms. Garcia stated Mayor Kirk has created a meeting for next Friday and invited all of the Fisheries Commission members to attend. The Northeast Seafood Coalition (NESC) has been doing a ten year, thorough job of looking at the regulatory context and where there can be movement to have the interests of Gloucester represented. The Commission, upon its creation, decided to not repeat what the NESC has been doing, but would instead focus on what the city itself needs for infrastructure. The Mayor has said that she does not wish to limit her support of the fisheries in Gloucester, but wants keep the Harbor healthy long-term by increasing the diversity of the Harbor. Ms. Garcia's understanding is that the Northeast Fisheries Council has sent a letter asking NOAA specifically for relief of Gulf of Maine haddock and Gulf of Maine cod. This would give immediate relief to quite a lot of people. **Ms. Sanfilippo** added that NOAA has rejected this request. Ms. Garcia discussed what she anticipates for the upcoming meeting that has been called by the Mayor in regards to the aforementioned issue and suggested the Commission begin discussing long-term ideas to assist Fishermen.

Ms. Romeo-Theken stated that if the catch share reduction goes through May 1st there is no fishing industry in Gloucester. She discussed the various ways people have tried to maintain the fisheries over the years and the struggles that have been faced. Fishermen are working hard to maintain the fisheries industry and NOAA has not been supporting these efforts. Fishermen need to be working together to protect the industry. There is a rally on April 29th. **Mr. Vitale** added that fish size has come down starting May 1st federally, but has not changed in Massachusetts. The Mayor needs to be contacting Paul Diodati to get Massachusetts on board with the federal size limits. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that Mr. Diodati will be present at the Coalition Board meeting tomorrow, whether in person or via telephone. She continued to state that the Mayor's direction could be good if she takes time to study "Vision 2020" from 1995. This document is available on the Fishermen's Wives Association website and was the result of an in-depth process. There are still things in that document that have not been achieved, but may still be relevant. That document drove a lot of good developments. **Ms. Sanfilippo** suggests that this process be revisited in order to assess what should be done for the fishermen.

Mr. Ring stated that it seems disingenuous for the Mayor to ask for a plan for five years when fishermen need to be focused on what will happen after May 1st. **Mr. Brown** asked if the interim request was officially denied. **Ms. Sanfilippo** confirmed that it has. **Mr. Brown** asked if the Commission could ask for reconsideration and add in something to protect the stocks. **Mr. Cottone** stated that protecting the stocks has nothing to do with it. In each community there was supposed to be meetings on the Friday before the rally on the 29th. He appreciates the effort the Mayor is trying to take, but there needs to be focus on May 1st. The state not signing off on the adjustments of the fish size is going to have a powerful, negative impact. **Mr. Brown** inquired who asked for the decrease in cod size. **Mr. Cottone** answered that UMass put together a research on the size of discards being within one inch of the legal limit. There was further discussion regarding the fish size and discard rate, and the contradictory requirements between the federal and state regulations.

Ms. Garcia stated that the Mayor should have a very clear position and understanding of these issues, and this information needs to come from the experts. **Mr. Orlando** stated that the Mayor does not seem to have much interest in the fishing industry. Ms. Garcia recommends that the Commission makes clear to the Mayor what is going on and what they feel she needs to know. There was further discussion regarding the Mayor's upcoming meeting.

Ms. Sanfilippo stated that the Council, in December, voted for the interim rule and sent it to NOAA. The interim rule is not status quo, as many believe it to be. It is actually three and one half (3.5) metric tons, which equals the lowest landing in Gloucester's history. It was rejected by NOAA and John Bullard. If the new catch share quota is one and one half (1.5) metric tons, think about what that means for the individual boats. **Ms. Sanfilippo** has been working with the Arch Diocese of Boston to garner support for the fishermen, especially to help get the funds from the disaster that has been presented in legislative bills. The fishing community needs to work together and be focused, not point fingers. The Mayor should be prepared and should be meeting with the people who have been working on this issue. There was discussion regarding how to prepare for the Friday meeting with the Mayor. Ms. Garcia stated she wants to know why Mr. Bullard will not support the interim rule request. There was discussion regarding the potential reasons why Mr. Bullard does not support the interim rule request. Ms. Garcia said she understood from others that Mr. Bullard does not feel solely constrained by the legal requirements, but that he feels the restrictions are truly necessary to protect the cod stocks.

Mr. Orlando motioned that the Commission support the current interim rule of the New England Fisheries Management Council. Seconded by **Mr. Vitale**.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

All in favor. Motion passes.

Mr. Orlando motioned that the Chair of the Fisheries Commission request the Mayor send a letter of support for the current interim rule to the Governor. Seconded by **Mr. Vitale**.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

All in favor. Motion passes.

Mr. Vitale motioned that the Fisheries Commission request Mayor Kirk write a letter to Paul Diodati to follow suit with the federal government's legal size limits on groundfish stock. Seconded by **Mr. Verga**.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

All in favor. Motion passes.

Ms. Romeo-Theken suggested the Mayor change the structure or focus of the Friday meeting in order to make it as productive as possible. People will not be able to focus on the future until after May 1st. **Mr. Ring** stated that it is the Commission's job to fight to get as much money as possible for the fishermen. Ms. Garcia stated that the Mayor can fight better when she has information. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated the State has received disaster money three times. The first time it went to NOAA and they made it a disaster. The second time it went to the State, to the Division of Marine Fisheries. The third time it was done well by the Division of Marine Fisheries. If disaster money is approved for New England, the State will fight for Massachusetts' s share and that will go to the Division of Marine Fisheries in order to be distributed to Massachusetts fishermen. **Mr. Orlando** added that the money being asked for is for the fish that will be lost. It will be sixty (60) million dollars a year for Gloucester.

Community member, **Susanne Altenburger**, stated that when you talk of Paul Diodati, John Bullard, and others you need to understand the range of their sensibility. Those folks are living with a White House that just got re-elected. **Ms. Altenburger** continued to discuss the current political atmosphere and motivations of Paul Diodati and other similar people. She also discussed the potential for new boat designs that are more environmentally sustainable.

9. Information- Gloucester support to New Bedford request for SAC funding for new study

Ms. Garcia informed the Commission that New Bedford is going to ask for about fifty thousand (50,000) dollars from SAC, because they do not feel as though NOAA does an effective study of the economic impact of their regulations. Although it does not seem as though that is enough money to do a comprehensive study, we should not stand in the way. **Mr. Ring** stated that he is

in support as long as someone from Gloucester is at the table. Ms. Garcia provided a letter from New Bedford and the Mayor. Group consensus was to support New Bedford and to decide who should be at the table once the money is received.

10. Approval of November 28, 2012 meeting minutes

Mr. Orlando motioned to approve minutes from the November 28, 2012 meeting. Seconded by **Mr. Vitale**.

VOTE ON THE MOTION

All in favor. Motion passes.

11. Information – Preliminary talks regarding shellfish aquaculture

Ms. Garcia informed the Commission that there have been preliminary discussions regarding shellfish aquaculture in Gloucester. David Alves and Joseph Buttner of NOAA Fishery are looking to go into Federal water for offshore aquaculture. There might be potential out there, but where to put it will be the issue. Our port should be involved in the process. Joe Buttner is considering experimenting with lobster pots offshore in the area. There was discussion regarding the potential for this type of aquaculture and viable locations local to Gloucester. **Mr. Vitale** stated that if someone is willing to go through all of the regulatory work, we should see what the plan is before we are critical.

Mr. Vitale proposed changing the meeting time to seven (7) PM, instead of six (6) PM. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she will check with Mr. Bullard regarding the time change. As long as we break at 8:45 PM, we can hold the meeting at the Friend Room at the Library.

12. Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and voted all in favor to adjourn at 7:55 PM.