



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
FISHERIES COMMISSION MINUTES
THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2013; 7:00 PM
THIRD FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
CITY HALL
9 DALE AVENUE

Members:

Mark Ring, Chair	Joseph Orlando [Absent]
Al Cottone, Vice Chair	BG Brown
Sefatia Romeo-Theken, City Council	
Angela Sanfilippo	Greg Verga, City Council [Absent]
Paul Vitale	

Also in attendance: Sarah Garcia; Jennifer Felt, Conservation Law Foundation; Susanne Altenburger; and Patti Page.

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM by Chair Mark Ring. Agenda items were taken out of order.

2. Approval of minutes for April 18, 2013

MOTION: On motion by Councilor Romeo-Theken, seconded by Ms. Sanfilippo, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from April 18, 2013.

3. Discussion on new ocean planning

The northeast regional planning body will be hosting a Gloucester meeting on Tuesday, June 18 from 4-7pm at Endicott College's Gloucester campus, located at 33 Commercial Street.

Ms. Sanfilippo introduced Jennifer Felt from the Conservation Law Foundation. She stated that Mr. Ring asked her to find someone who could provide an update on the new Ocean Plan. Ms. Felt is the new representative for Ocean Planning and was asked to provide an update to the Commission in order to help plan for the June 18th meeting. **Ms. Felt** stated that she is a recent addition to the Conservation Law Foundation and provided information regarding her background. She stated that the New England Ocean Action Network (NEOAN) was developed two years ago and was created to represent a diverse group of ocean users who each have different interests, but all have an interest in the ocean. Members of NEOAN agree that everyone should have a seat at the table to discuss ocean planning. The people living off the ocean need to have a say in what future ocean planning looks like. NEOAN is supporting an open, transparent,

bottom up ocean planning process for New England. This process is very important and Ms. Felt is glad Gloucester will be there on June 18th.

Ms. Felt gave a brief overview of the National Ocean Policy. She stated that in 2009 President Obama started a yearlong process in response to pressure to manage the oceans. The oceans are under threat by things such as oil spills, pollution, climate change, increased usage, and other factors. Many people are interested in finding a way to create livelihoods from the ocean. NEOAN is seeking to understand how these interests impact the ocean as a natural resource. There are 26 federal agencies that have jurisdiction in the waters and they are in charge of mandating over 100 pieces of legislation and these agencies exist within their silos. The idea behind national ocean policy is to get all of the various legislative bodies that were previously working in silos conversing and working together in order to better plan for the future.

Ms. Garcia stated that when President Obama put out the 2009 Ocean Plan, Massachusetts' ocean planning was used as a model. **Ms. Felt** said that the Massachusetts Ocean Plan was a model the federal government pointed to. There are good parts and bad parts, but overall the MA Ocean Plan was developed in a way that was inclusive and reached out to stakeholders. After the 2010 National Ocean Policy was implemented it was decided it would be implemented in nine regions, with New England being one region. This plan should be rolled out in a thoughtful way and NEOAN is seeking to make sure this is accomplished. The process was moving forward slowly, so it was hard to get people involved initially. A regional planning body was formed for New England and is comprised of Federal, State, and Tribal representatives and there is an ex-officio member from the fishing industry. There have only been two meetings of this planning body. At the last meeting in April, three draft goals were agreed upon by the Federal, State, and Tribal representatives. The public hearings being held are regarding these three draft goals. They have realized the goals really need to come from the ocean users. There was discussion regarding meetings/public hearings that have been held to discuss the Ocean Plan.

Ms. Felt continued by stating that NEOAN is trying to revise how these public meetings are structured to improve the process. They want to hear from the ocean users about what regional ocean planning should look like. **Ms. Felt** provided a copy of the draft goals. One goal focuses on healthy oceans/ecosystems, one on improved governance, and the other is on the compatibility of uses. **Ms. Felt** encourages the Fisheries Commission to take a strong place in this process from the beginning. Currently, ten public meetings are scheduled across New England throughout the month of June. Three will be held in Massachusetts they will take place in Gloucester, New Bedford, and Barnstable. Gloucester's meeting will be on Tuesday, June 18 from 4-7 pm at Endicott College's Gloucester campus, located at 33 Commercial Street. **Ms. Felt** emphasized that the goals are drafts and potential outcomes and actions based on these goals have also been developed. For example, one potential action is increased/improved mapping. These drafts are meant to be used as a template for people to work from; they are not set in stone. The regional ocean planning body does not have legal authority to mandate anything; they are not a regulatory body. This body cannot change the Magnusson-Stevenson act. This regional body will help to improve communication across industries and the region in regards to the ocean.

Mr. Ring stated that they are supposed to lobby on behalf of the members, if it works properly. **Ms. Garcia** stated that is not necessarily the case. She cited an example where improved mapping was used to help direct projects. **Ms. Sanfilippo** said the problem with the Massachusetts Ocean Planning was that nothing really changed. Participants were disappointed

at the end because they did not protect the fishing industry. **Mr. Cottone** asked how are they going to deal with conflict between the various user groups. **Ms. Felt** responded that is something they are hoping to address as they move through the process. **Ms. Garcia** stated that they do not have legislative power. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that they eventually should be a body that would need to be consulted before things like the aquaculture project go forward. They need to ensure that when people give input they are respected as the experts and their input needs to be taken seriously. **Ms. Felt** added that if there is a conflict between users, hopefully this planning process will be conducive to increasing data to help address the conflict through information. **Mr. Cottone** stated this body does not make decisions, they are informing the public. **Ms. Felt** agreed and added that they will work with the public and other agencies to inform decisions for the best outcome. This process is very much in its infancy.

Mr. Cottone stated that it looks great on paper, but at some point the information from this group could influence policy making. That is why there is hesitation for people from Gloucester, especially fishermen, to participate. **Ms. Felt** stated that the hope is that this body will stay true to its mission. She believes the concern about the potential for this body to influence legislative decisions is something that should be discussed. **Ms. Garcia** suggested one way is to pay attention to the goals and the way they are worded. **Mr. Ring** stated that it is going to be one project after another. **Ms. Felt** agreed and added that it is so important to livelihoods, the health of the ocean, and the health of the economy. It is important to make sure there is equal representation from all groups and these groups are driving the process together and it is not being swayed one way or another. Input and feedback from people is going to be what makes this process successful. **Ms. Felt** stated that the handout provided is also available online and it may help guide discussion at upcoming meetings.

Ms. Garcia asked Ms. Felt to explain her relationship to the Northeast Regional Ocean Council. **Ms. Felt** stated that the Conservation Law Foundation initiated NEOAN and is funded through the Moore Foundation as a public advocacy group. **Ms. Garcia** will be distributing information electronically. **Susanne Altenburger** stated that Massachusetts has been leading as national model for Healthcare and ocean planning. If the fishing industry wants to be heard they should combine the ecology and economic components; they need to start working together. The more ahead we are on ecological issues the more likely we are to have a seat at the table. **Ms. Felt** stated that the Northeast Regional Planning website has agendas from previous meetings and other items that can help in understanding the process that has led to where they are now. The Conservation Law Foundation will be monitoring this planning body to make sure there are meaningful interactions. Input will either be reflected in decisions or it will be demonstrated how input was considered. Now is the time to get involved.

4. Discussion of off-shore mussel proposal

Councilor Romeo-Theken motioned that **Mr. Mark Ring, Chair of the Fisheries Commission**, write a letter to the Army Corps of Engineers stating that it is unfair that members of the Fisheries Commission are receiving notification of this permit application for the first time on May 16, 2013 and would like an extension of the deadline for public comment. Seconded by Ms. Sanfilippo.

Discussion on the motion: **Ms. Garcia** offered to draft the letter on behalf of Mr. Ring. There was discussion regarding the content of the letter. **Councilor Romeo-Theken** stated the letter should focus on the fact that the Fisheries Commission is unsure of what concerns they have because there has not been sufficient notification. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that this is a good example of how the Regional Planning group can be useful. Whoever understands this project, can go to the Regional Planning body to see maps and understand exactly what happens in different areas. **Councilor Romeo-Theken** stated that none of the individual groups represented at the Fisheries Commission had presentations for their constituents. **Ms. Page** stated that this project was brought to the Harbormaster and was presented at the May meeting of the Waterways Board. There was discussion about the lacking communication between various City agencies. **Ms. Garcia** read a draft letter regarding the off-shore mussel project for approval by the Commission. The letter was discussed by the Commission and it was approved for submission.

VOTE: Motion passes unanimously.

5. Update on services available to ground fishermen affected by the new round of drastic cuts in allocation

Ms. Sanfilippo stated that she desperately needs fishermen who have been affected by the drastic cut in funds for services available to ground fishermen to fill out paperwork and be officially recognized as affected by this cut.

6. New business

Councilor Romeo-Theken requested that the Fisheries Commission, through the Chair, invite Representative Ferrante and Senator Tarr to come to the next Fisheries Commission meeting. She asked the Chair to send a formal letter. **Mr. Ring** stated that the next meeting is scheduled for Fiesta Thursday and suggested moving the meeting. There was discussion regarding changing the June date to the 20th.

Mr. Ring stated that the MLA is working with a national wildlife representative to put a dumpster down at the DPW for anyone to use and it may be available soon. **Ms. Sanfilippo** clarified that this will be for trash related to the fishing industry. She added that Tony Gross stated that the City will be hiring anyone who has a Captain's license to run the launch boat that was recently purchased by the City. Anyone interested should apply at the Harbormaster's office.

Ms. Garcia stated that a Designated Port Area (DPA) Boundary review meeting will be held at 6 pm Monday night at the Friend Room. **Ms. Garcia** reviewed the criteria for properties to be considered part of the DPA. She will be sending information to the Commission regarding this meeting. **Mr. Vitale** stated he needs to have representation at the Harbor Planning Committee on Tuesday at 7 pm as he will be unable to attend. **Ms. Garcia** added that the Harbor Planning Committee will be reviewing Section 4 of the 2009 Harbor Plan.

Ms. Garcia stated that a survey of fishermen was done regarding the recent closures. Steven Skypers, working with a team from the Northeastern University Nahant Marine Science Center, conducted a study to measure stress from the recent closures and the resilience of the industry. One finding was that the most resilient fishermen are the most stressed. They are going to present it to NOAA, but not the one in Gloucester. He is willing to come to the next meeting. **Ms. Sanfilippo** will be calling Steven Skypers to schedule a meeting for discussion. It was

determined that Steven Skypers should be invited to the June 20th meeting at 6:30PM, along with Sen. Tarr, Rep. Ferrante, and Jack Wiggin. **Ms. Garcia** will try to book the Friend room.

Ms. Sanfilippo stated that she was again contacted by a professor of biology at Endicott College who is doing a study on skates and wants to see if he can get some skates from fishermen. A tentative meeting was scheduled for Friday, May 24 at 10:30AM. **Mr. Ring** stated that this City should be doing whatever Endicott College needs if they are interested in being in Gloucester.

Councilor Romeo-Theken motioned that Mr. Mark Ring, Chair of the Fisheries Commission, write a letter to the Mayor regarding the loss of the Fisheries Executive Director and ask that the Mayor look for funding in order to fill this position again. Seconded by **Ms. Sanfilippo**. Motion passes unanimously.

7. Old business

Mr. Ring stated that three letters were sent to Mayor Kirk per the last meeting, but has not heard back from the Mayor to date. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she heard they are in the works. [sg – I don't recall what this referenced]

8. Public Comment

Ms. Page stated that Damon Cummings did present to City Council last week to request funding for an Executive position for the Fisheries Commission. **Ms. Altenburger** stated that this time last year the Fisheries Commission looked at the fleet core. There was no input from the fleet in the Bridge plan.

9. Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and voted all in favor to adjourn at 8:09 PM.