



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
HARBOR PLAN COMMITTEE

December 1st, 2021

2:00 P.M.

Remote Meeting

Richard Noonan, Chair

MINUTES

Present Members:

Absent Members:

Staff: Gregg Cademartori, Jill Cahill

Consultant Team: Matthew Littell – Utile, Will Cohen – Utile, Taskina Tareen – Utile, Zoë Mueller – Utile, Kevin Hively – Ninigret Partners, Jason Hellendrung – Tetra Tech

Other Attendees: Rick Noonan, Tony Gross, Tessa Brown, Tom Balf, Katie Kahl, John McCarthy

I. BUSINESS

- A. Call to order
- B. Debrief of Public Meeting (15 min)
- C. Approach (5 min)
 - a. Blue Economy - Relationship to Land Use
 - b. Economic Strategy Framework
- D. Foundational Trends & Influences (20 min)
 - a. Sector-Specific Economic Trends (Observations and Opportunities)
 - b. Living Resources
 - c. Wind, Ship & Boat Building/Repair
 - d. Tourism & Recreation
 - e. Blue Tech / R&D
- E. Economic Development Goal Setting (60 min)
 - a. 2014 Plan Recommendation Assessment
 - b. 2021 Observations & Questions
- F. Next Steps (5 min)
- G. Adjournment

II. DEBRIEF OF PUBLIC MEETING

1. Taskina opened the discussion by seeking feedback on the public meeting, including suggestions for improvement moving forward. We had 150 initial RSVPs and attendance held at about 90 participants.
2. Gregg: received email feedback, pleased with format and ability to interface with one another and have a roundtable discussion. Managing participating in the Social Pinpoint mapping at the same time as engaging in the discussion - this was challenging for people since it involved two windows.
3. Tony: was not in attendance but reviewed and thought the presentation was strong, notes from breakout groups had input that was expected - things that we have heard before and
4. John: logistics were handled well, format was good, but breakout discussion group was a bit quiet so we may need to do something in advance of next meeting to provide more direct/specific questions to encourage more input from participants.

5. Tessa: agree with John - people didn't seem to know what to expect, what they were going to be talking about. Maybe we can get more area specific to encourage focused feedback on what they care about most. There seemed to be a lot of people there who just wanted to learn more about what was going on and they got good clarifying information about what they were wondering about.
6. Tom: a bit quieter than expected/wanted. There was value in getting people learning more of the basics. It was a good civil conversation with one activist dominating the conversation. For the map - is it active and open? Wondering when the map feedback
 - a. Gregg: yes, the interactive map is live on the site and still is receiving comments.
7. Katie: agree - quieter than expected, not sure if people were hesitant or intimidated. Wondering how we can provide more education on the process and how the issues will be addressed, what it might mean for them.
8. Jill: same
9. Rick: what is the best way to handle specific interests? Would it be more passionate/
10. Data outcomes:
 - a. the map will not produce statistically valid survey - it will not prove priorities - but it is one element of a broader set of engagement efforts
11. Matthew: just want to point out that this is a typical public response to an open-ended first meeting. Subsequent meetings will have more specific items to react to and so will likely solicit more substantial and diverse public participation because it will not be so open-ended. Open ended meetings tend to have a mix of people who either come with a strong agenda and dominate the meeting or

III. APPROACH

- a. Blue Economy - Relationship to Land Use: the consultant team established a broad framework of uplands vs. coastal vs. marine environment aspects of the Blue Economy. Differentiating between these different physical sites for economic activities helps to focus the conversation and frame how they connect or don't connect to one-another.
- b. Economic Strategy Framework: the consultant team shared the workflow we will be moving through from foundational trends and influences, through economic goal-setting, into sub-area specific considerations, and ultimately into two implementation tools - (1) economic development initiatives and (2) regulatory changes.

IV. FOUNDATIONAL TRENDS AND INFLUENCES

Kevin presented an overview of sector-specific economic trends, observations and opportunities in each of the following areas:

- a. Living Resources
- b. Marine Construction (Offshore Wind), Transportation, and Ship & Boat Building
- c. Tourism & Recreation
- d. Blue Tech / R&D

For each of these sectors, the observations and opportunities were broken down into a transect that outlined observations and opportunities in each of the land use environments presented in the approach sections (uplands, coastal and marine environment).

V. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL SETTING

For each of the following topics, the consultant team took inventory of all the 2014 Plan Recommendations, determined what may have changed since 2014 (recommendations that have been implemented, contextual factors that have evolved), and then framed some current observations, questions and initial ideas to serve as conversation starters. The topics for discussion included:

- **Blue Tech + R&D**

Marine tech (electronic and life science) is making slow and steady progress in Gloucester. However, its physical footprint is different from the traditional fishing sector, and it's a "talent" driven field.

How does Gloucester ensure that the Harbor can accommodate growth of what is there now without pushing out the fishing related uses?

Is there a role for the downtown or other parts of the Uplands to play with this sector?

How does Gloucester continue to support innovation in this sector?

What is an appropriate way to encourage limited office-type uses to round out the ocean cluster?

- Tony:
 - slide 21 - ropeless lobstering technology is not well received here, and is extremely risky to Gloucester.
 - GMGI - a great resource, but doesn't necessarily supply the jobs needed (higher education), didn't see a clear idea of how these might fit into Gloucester.
 - Agree that offshore wind is not worth
- John:
 - agree with what Tony said
 - Can we look into the UMass marine station locally, maybe that site could be expanded
 - responding to idea "B" - we should be open to it, but need to prioritize water dependent use - need to focus on creating new space for fishermen.
- Rick
 - All these are worth pursuing/fostering, but concern that if we attract more institutions it becomes a capacity issue - GMGI reached out to 250 CEOs, and 75 of them said tell me more....
 - Can we focus another cluster elsewhere from the pier?
 - Views Blue Tech RD as a yes, but how do we deliver that, how to we deploy a shovel-ready space for them given
 -
- Tessa
 - we know what works here, what has worked well here in the past - wondering what gaps are we trying to fill?
 - seeing it from the perspective of someone who is working on the water - it is so difficult to find waterfront spaces for the expansion of seafood businesses
 - e.g. east gloucester - wasted space
 - from Tessa's POV, doesn't seem why we need blue tech on the harbor unless there are underutilized/vacant properties that cannot be re-deployed for seafood - not sure if it would be a positive change or is something Gloucester needs
- Tom
 - There is a lot of opportunity for Blue Tech off the harbor, doesn't necessarily need the water frontage
 - however visibility and integration with everything else is important to establish a harbor
 - very supportive of blue tech and r&d on the harbor
 - issue of capacity is huge - GMGI has generated a lot of interest in life sciences and biomanufacturing coming here to Gloucester, but we don't have real inventory to accommodate facilities of that size
 - we need to think about which industries - drone, etc - we have to get to the issue of capacity
- Katie
 - agree with Tom - see a big role, but don't know if it needs to be on the working waterfront. Why would we need it (to Tessa's point) - how can they integrate with active fishing, shellfishing, lobstering? How can they support through monitoring/projecting living resources and
 - Hodgkins Cove UMass facility has deferred maintenance issues but is very happy where they are - Gloucester would be one of the hubs for this initiative
 - UMass Amherst, Lowell, Dartmouth ___ & Boston
- **Blue Tech + R&D** - specifically technology change in the fishing industry
Technological change is taking place in a variety of sectors: e.g. electrification of engines and powertrains, deploying "smart tech", tracking, cold chain requirements, among others.
What is taking place in the fishing industry specifically that Gloucester as a port and a fleet will need to adapt to? Does Gloucester have access to the right technical expertise to assist with adaptation?

- Katie:

- Test-bed facilities are not a new idea, and often it is the local land grant institution (e.g. UMass) that takes this issue on at a state level. Need to look at operational issues and workforce training.
 - Lots of permitting issues - a long process, Katie has reached out to Kathryn at CZM
 - Tom:
 - Agrees with Katie. There's a wind turbine testing facility in Charlestown, if we are doing this for emerging technologies, why wouldn't we have comparable testing facilities for fishing technologies
 - Many of these exams feel like brick and mortar. oldest ground fishing boat dates to 1970s - *Kevin asked to hold that thought (regarding ground fishing)*
 - Tessa:
 - Doesn't see how a test bed is feasible or useful - if you are testing it in state waters it is not applicable because most commercial operations are out in federal waters where there are much more extreme weather conditions, so even if the "test" is successful in the context of state water conditions, it may not work in the context of federal waters.
 - Additionally, many people are already fighting over limited state waters (within the 3-mile line)
 - Rick
 - advancement of technology in our port (appreciates Tessa's candor) - ability to do something newer, better, faster and protect resources. This aspect of tech around our harbor is immensely capital intense.
 - A bit esoteric - worthy, but not necessarily quick enough to be tangible/useful to advance economic development in the 1-2 year vs. 10-20 year time horizon. Would put in third row of consideration, certainly worthy but doesn't seem as tangible as he would like to see it
 - A little more cerebral than he would be looking to pursue
 - Tony
 - more in Tessa's court. Division of Marine fisheries a lot of this. The federal government was working with commercial businesses with cooperative work that didn't require any displacement of existing industries or space.
 - This is something that been highly successful done, but really requires cooperation
 - one of the things we are missing here - we don't have a baseline of what we need to support our commercial fishing industry
 - we need to find out, what we need to grow our successful industries that fit into the confined spaces that we have
 - John:
 - Agrees with Tony & Tess - in good weather we are completely filled up with traps.
 - Only way he would support this is putting it in already closed waters where they would not be competing with active business needs
- **Tourism**

Harbor tourism appears to create synergies with the downtown and the coastline.
What more should be done?
What is going too far?

 - John:
 - Charter fishery has already taken off here - we should be looking at that as an opportunity. A lot of local fishermen fill in when Charter fishing season is over. It is good for tourism, they are staying in our hotels and eating at our restaurants.
 - Our regular fisherman are turning to this for supplemental income so it is a good complementary way to reinforce and fill in
 - Tony:
 - Tourism has always been a major part of Gloucester's economy
 - Agree with John. a lot of the guys turned to charter to supplement thei

- Discussion of tour groups going through fish plants is total non-starter, not a safe thing to do OSHA
 - Possibly tying, getting more direction towards heritage centre, gloucester maritime, great pier, harbor master office,- we have a lot of access to working harbor
 - I4C2 needs to be looked at for open space and enhancement
 - we've worked hard to bring people by boat (discover gloucester) to the city
 - we have quite a few waterfront festivals - not sure if we need more of those
 - after labor day, that's the end of the festivals due to weather
 - we need to keep our eye on the ball for this, and find ways to keep improving
 - Rick:
 - view on tourism is about getting people here - if you look at tuna fishery / charter fishery... was in Coasta Rica and went fishing with someone, people were enamored with Gloucester's fishery - Wicked Tuna TV show is a marketing point
 - always talked about how to figure out the shoulder season (film series etc) - it is nice for residents that it gets quieter, but would be good to extend economic impact.
 - been to Fisherman's Warf Santa Barbara, Honolulu Pier 38 - not sure that factory tours are applicable but the
 - Tessa:
 - works with a lot of charter fishermen - sees that as an opportunity to link to other things in Gloucester. Many of them all they know is from Wicked Tuna, but once they arrive they are surprised and want to stay and explore. They were really into bringing their catch to a local restaurant to have it prepared for their dinner.
 - Don't need more festivals, but having more education at the heritage center would be great.
 - Tom:
 - in general agreements with most of what's been said. different angle on charter, and there are regulatory issues that need to be looked
 - from a tourism lens, the more we can connect people to the harbor and to the ocean and have experiences which are core to that is a thing that will strengthen the tourism economy
 - another thing to add - broadened from maritime gloucester. Harbor loop has the ability to be packaged - has the potential to be a the center piece to be a tourist connection to the history of gloucester, current issues and future of fishing and blue economy
 - Katie:
 - agrees with folks. opportunity to capitalize the tourism and recreational sector. makes 85% of regional economy
 - Those jobs are not always living wage jobs. how can we help the jobs associated with them, all pieces of working waterfront
 - what is the opportunity to work with gloucester restaurants to serve more local seafood
 - The education piece from Tessa is very important, but what else can we do?
 - love the "cook your catch" concept - glad to hear Gloucester House, Lobsterland, Tanos (sp?) do this already
- **Capturing more value from fishing**

The slim margins and unpredictability of catch volume, particularly in fin fishing, could limit future capital investments (boats, docks, processing).

How can Gloucester's fishing industry extract more profit from its catch by capturing more from the value chain or using "whole fish" approaches?

Are there opportunities to better rationalize needed investments to reduce the risk and concentrate capital effectively?

 - John:
 - always something we should be looking into - expanding on the seafood coop, or even combining the farmers market around the idea of the seafood market
 - smell is a downside

- anything we can do to raise the price our guys are getting for fish, very worth look into
- Tony:
 - don't forget lapages - used all fish products for their glue product
 - when I was a kid there was no waste, everything was used, but for environmental and aesthetic reasons it was eliminated - because it creates odors and requires wastewater treatment in order for it to be politically viable to restore these uses
 - bait is an opportunity - but a lot of people prefer things that fish better, they aren't going to use an inferior bait product
 - technology could make a big difference - could address issues of odor etc.
 - A lot of waste in the past went into livestock food
- Rick:
 - unpredictability of supply
 - not seeing how this makes a dent - what are we catching enough of that we need something more than what we are doing today - what would justify major investment on the waterfront?
 - interested in landing value vs. pounds - this ties back to regulation of the fisheries and
- Tessa:
 - throughout fishing, boat price has been exceptional high (bait costs are going up, which eats into the margins) - been making more money on bait but that reduces the margin for others
 - from shore side standpoint, margins are small
 - buys lobsters from maine other areas when can't access here
 - bait - cheaper to truck in product from Maine and Canada than to buy it locally
 - might be some niche markets that could help grow
 - is the goal to help the boats? the shoreside businesses? grow jobs? I think there is space to improve, but not sure if you'll be able to process at a rate that will make the 100% fish strategy pencil out in the Gloucester context (water, labor, etc costs are too high and we don't have enough volume)
- Tom:
 - There are species that we are not harvesting - how can we increase those volumes? e.g. Pollock, Redfish and Haddock - not just margins, also more harvesting should be part of this conversation
 - important to understand from an entrepreneurial perspective, we need to understand why 100% fish hasn't taken off in Gloucester
 - if need to be serious about the economic model of 100% fish. lets really put the effort into it
 -
- Katie:
 - Tom made points about New Bedford ocean cluster - focusing on these issues - we do have Neptune's Harvest here locally in Gloucester, can we build on that model?
 - What is a baseline for what we need to have a successful commercial fishing industry here? There are all of these exciting ideas, but what is going to help sustain the fishing industry - what do we need? I'd like to here more of the foundation piece discussed.
- Vito (on the phone, raised hand)
 - What do we need to do? from commercial ground fish perspective - what we lost is harvesting capacity, while there still is opportunity to harvest
 - we're down to a handful of vessels
 - Can we buy our way into the market - the price collapsed as soon as they hit a certain volume... the unpredictability and interruptions in the market undermine the sustainability. The opportunity is huge but it needs to start at the harvesting level - if you have a vibrant fishing sector it brings tourism to it.
 - Groundfishing is headed towards a full retention with all of the dockside monitoring at the federal level needs to be ramped up

- delayed/incorrect science - policy has relied on science as if it is reliable - so we need more robust scientific methods with real-time studies of fish populations so that the conservation caps on fishing aligns with the actual populations.
- **Building Capacity**

Gloucester still has limited capacity to execute business development, promote innovation, drive marketing, and conduct recruitment at the scale necessary to “move the needle.”

What has gotten in the way in the past?

What kind of organization makes sense?

How does Gloucester build more capacity in a sustainable way?

Can Gloucester continue to do this work through “volunteer” labor?

 - Tom:
 - two things he would love to come out of this plan 1) set goals for harbor economy 10yrs from now 2) pivotal and necessary to create or identify the entity that says ‘im the point person or organization’ that will lead the further development of the working waterfront in alignment of all issues discussed here
 - Newbedford and Portand have authorities and have been successful in getting money and getting things done
 - representing EDIC, we’re legislatively limited to creation of jobs and manufacturing and industrial jobs - unless we go back to legislature and redefine the role of the Gloucester EDIC
 - what is the organizational capacity that can work through a public-private partnership
 - Rick:
 - The port authority idea sounds like another layer of bureaucracy.
 - he’s fascinated by Vito’s and Tom’s concept of volumes/harvesting refinements to better match unfulfilled quotas with fishermen who are looking for the work
 - Identify 2-3 things that a port authority would do and empowering businesses/property owners to advance it
 - John:
 - I’ve always thought of port authority as controlling public land - Gloucester is mostly owned by private entities
 - What would give them authority to work on private land
 - Idea is good of having one central entity looking at this is worthwhile
 - How do we go about getting grants or federal money to do this work
 - Need to confine this to what we can
 - Tony:
 - With this information - what is our baseline capacity need? we need to figure that out first. that is one of the key points that need to be established here
 - not very big on the idea of another layer of bureaucracy via port authority
 - Gloucester has always been mostly privately owned (compared with other ports that are mostly publicly owned) - doesn’t want to change that.
 - Tessa:
 - agree with Tony - need the baseline
 - can come up with the entity after the harbor plan - we need to use this process to set up ways of monitoring implementation of the harbor plan so that we aren’t starting at ground zero with things that did/didn’t work
 - Katie:
 - People want to see fishing/seafood to be healthy and to have the appropriate supporting services
 - Want to explore what we have, where are the gaps
 - Kevin has asked - why have past ideas failed? were they good ideas? - these are important questions.

- It is important that the buck stops somewhere, that someone owns this work, but how to we get the community involved and ready to make change when the next good idea comes up
 - Vito:
 - agree with Tony - the context of the harborplan is as far as we can go... we don't have ability to seed/support the fishing industry, that is over our pay grade - we need to be educated about what the needs/opportunities are. It is an issue of science and regulation.
 - Gloucester has lots of small privately owned properties sharing watersheet - it is difficult but we need to prevent consolidation of those properties - is that what we want? what can we do to help the current businesses strong and operational and position them to compete despite their small size and diverse ownership.
 - We dont have to subsidize it, we just have to make sure we don't preclude those options going forward
 - Tom:
 - support the desire of committee to maintain the culture and ownership (e.g. small parcels, diverse ownership), but I think there is still a need for organizational capacity to support the central goal of the plan
 - Kevin:
- **Local Zoning**

This was tabled for future conversation to allow for more discussion time on the building capacity topic.

VI. NEXT STEPS

- Two Notes from Jill:
 - Al Cottone is here on the call
 - There will be additional HPC meetings on this topic
 - Future public engagement session will focus on shaping the economic strategy as a follow-up to this meeting was HPC business meeting only.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn was made by Rick Noonan. No voting occurred at this meeting.