



City of Gloucester
Fisheries Commission Minutes
Thursday, January 19, 2012- 7:00PM
Sawyer Free Library
Friends Room
2 Dale Avenue

Members:

David Bergeron	Paul Vitale (absent)
Bruce Tobey (absent)	Mark Ring
Sefatia Romeo-Theken	Joseph Orlando (absent)
Angela Sanfilippo	BG Brown
Al Cottone (absent)	Gus Sanfilippo (absent)

Also in attendance: several members of the public

1. Call to Order & Chairman's Report

Mr. Bergeron, Chair of the Commission, called the meeting to order at 7:16pm. Without a quorum, the 5 Commission members in attendance decided to go ahead with the meeting and discuss some of the items on the agenda informally.

2. Boston Seafood Show

Mr. Bergeron began the meeting with a discussion of the potential for the City and local business partners to run a table at the Boston Seafood Show, which will take place at the Boston Convention & Exhibition Center on March 11-13. The City does not have any official plans at this point, but Sarah Garcia noted that funds could be provided to cover the cost of the table if the Chamber of Commerce and other local partners would be willing to provide staffing and material for exhibit. She mentioned that these local businesses should come forward and speak with her if interested.

Ms. Romeo-Theken added that a table at this Show was sponsored previously by the City's Tourist Commission. In instances where the City could not cover the full costs for the table, local businesses like Connolly's Seafood served as partners for the show. The show provides a great opportunity to gain exposure for Gloucester's seafood businesses and demonstrate to the public that the fishery is still alive and well. Ms. Romeo-Theken suggested that Ms. Garcia reach out to the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the potential to partner for this year's Show. Work should begin immediately, since there is less than 2 months until the show.

Ms. Garcia responded that the City and the Chamber used to split a booth for this Seafood Show. She added that Ann Molloy of Neptune's Harvest has already been approached, but was not sure if the venue would be appropriate for her business. However, Ms. Garcia still thinks it would be worthwhile for some of the city's frozen seafood processors to attend the Show. Gorton's might be interested. This Seafood Show could also offer a venue for networking with seafood processors that are undertaking some of the value-added alternative practices discussed at the Maritime Summit.

Ms. Sanfilippo added that attending this annual event used to be a regular practice for the City and organizations like the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association. Organization and ensuring coverage for the table is key to making sure the event is a success. In past years it was often challenging to ensure there was enough material and staff to cover the three days of the festival.

Ms. Garcia responded that this is why a partnership for the event will be key.

Ms. Romeo-Theken added that organizations like Cape Ann Fresh Catch and Turner's Seafood would be good partners for the event. She suggested that Ms. Garcia and her staff contact local parties that might be interested and make it clear that City is willing to sponsor a table. Depending on the number of businesses interested, timeframes could be set for presentations and staff time. The goal is to promote Gloucester and the sale of fresh seafood. PowerPoints could be used to demonstrate Gloucester's history and fishing industry. Many of these PowerPoints and displays already exist (like the Gloucester House's "How to crack a lobster" video). She added that the people who attend this show are regular, everyday people. Marketing should be geared towards the general public.

Ms. Garcia agreed to reach out to the Chamber to see if a partnership will be possible at this time. If not, plans will be made to participate in next year's show.

3. Update on the Ad Hoc Committee on Commercial Fishing Vessel Dockage

Mr. Bergeron moved to a discussion on the Ad Hoc Committee on Commercial Dockage and the survey developed to collect information directly from vessel owners. The intent of the survey is to supplement Patti Page's database of vessels currently docking in Gloucester. A draft version of the survey questions has been included at the end of these minutes.

In reviewing the proposed questions, **Ms. Sanfilippo** added that the survey should specifically ask what the current needs are for different vessel types.

Meeting attendee Suzanne Altenburger noted an example of electrical amenities currently provided at the docks in New Bedford.

Meeting attendee Phil Cusumano added that the survey should ask boat owners what type of commercial vessel they own and operate.

Ms. Romeo-Theken asked if the survey was only for commercial vessels. It was decided that yes, this survey is intended for commercial vessels only.

Mr. Ring added that once a survey respondent specifies the type of commercial vessel they own, their needs can be anticipated.

Ms. Romeo-Theken added that the information gathered from this survey will be very important in documenting the needs of commercial fishing vessels in Gloucester. She reminded everyone that there is plenty of anecdotal information floating around regarding the scarcity of commercial fishing dockage, but very little official documentation to back this information. This survey should collect the appropriate information required to properly document the scarcity of fishing dockage along with the lack of required amenities for commercial fishing.

Mr. Bergeron responded that the survey will provide reliable data for official use.

Meeting attendee Sunny Robinson added that the survey should include a question regarding whether or not vessel owners see their dockage as secure. This could be addressed with the question asking about future prospects, but something more specific would be useful.

Mr. Bergeron added that the question on local businesses used will help to document the importance of these vessels to the local economy.

Ms. Garcia explained that the question on waste streams is aimed at the same idea of understanding where there may be additional opportunities to invigorate the local economy through value-added processes. She is interested in learning what these commercial vessels are throwing away and how that waste might be re-directed to stimulate the economy. Adding value or lowering costs would be the goal.

Mr. Bergeron asked if there were any other economic opportunity questions that should be added to the survey. No one could think of anything else.

Mr. Brown responded to Ms. Garcia and noted that the waste generated by his boat is disposed of in the dumpster at the state fish pier. He was not sure what type of waste disposal amenities are available to vessels docking at other locations in the city.

Mr. Bergeron asked if the waste stream question should be removed.

The Commission had a short discussion on the waste generated by recreational boaters docking at the town landing next to St. Peter's square. It was noted that the waste there becomes an issue, especially during the summer. **Mr. Ring** noted that commercial vessel owners are responsible with their waste, usually bringing it home to dispose of. Mr. Cusmino added that waste issues stemming from recreational boaters should be addressed through the Waterways Board.

Ms. Romeo-Theken said that the the waste stream question should be removed from the survey. This type of question could open a can of worms for the City. It's also confusing and doesn't get to the main purpose of the survey.

Ms. Garcia agreed that it could be removed from the survey. She followed with a question regarding the best way to execute the survey.

Ms. Romeo-Theken responded that there are several options: it could be mailed with permitting information or by itself. It could also be a phone survey or an in-person questionnaire at the docks.

Mr. Ring added that it isn't that easy to get information on who holds fishing permits in the City. The federal government tends to guard this information carefully.

Ms. Sanfilippo responded that it is possible to get permit holders addresses. The GFWA has done similar surveying efforts in the past.

Mr. Bergeron asked again what the best methodology would be for this survey.

Mr. Ring responded that the Mass Lobsterman's Association performs similar surveying efforts and has seen a drastic reduction in the number of mail responses in past years.

Mr. Brown agreed, saying that anything that comes in association with a permit would most likely be ignored.

Mr. Bergeron proposed that a letter be sent to local fishermen, explaining that someone from the city would be contacting them over the phone to ask a series of questions. This letter would explain the purpose of the survey and eliminate suspicions.

Mr. Brown added that the letter should explain how the survey could benefit them down the line.

Ms. Sanfilippo added that an article could be published in the paper describing the survey as well.

Ms. Romeo- Theken said that the letter should be from the Fisheries Commission, provide a clear explanation of the survey, and be kept simple. It should also state that responses will be kept confidential. We don't want fishermen to worry that their responses on the state of their dockage will come back to hurt them.

Mr. Bergeron added that the question on the physical condition of the dock can be removed from the survey. The City can do its own physical survey to get to the bottom of this question.

It was suggested that it will be helpful to know if the vessel owners pay for their dockage. The question should read "Do you pay for your dockage?"

Sunny Robinson noted that increased survey responses could be encouraged with the offer of an incentive—for example, a drawing for a local gift card. It was agreed that an incentive would be helpful, if financially feasible. A gift card to Nelson's is a possibility.

Ms. Romeo-Theken added that the general fear over the potential loss of dockage will push results and returns.

Mr. Bergeron moved next to the second portion of the survey, which is intended for dock owners.

Sunny Robinson suggested that the question on prospects should be clarified.

A short discussion was held on the utilization of current dockage in the city. Sunny Robinson proposed that a three-part question should read: "How large is your dockage, what percentage is used for commercial? What percentage is underutilized?"

Ms. Romeo-Theken proposed that question 5, "What do you need to develop the underutilized dockage?" be removed.

Ms. Garcia offered an alternative question, "Have you considered expanding your dockage?"

Mr. Bergeron suggested that the survey should get to what types of incentives are needed to get dock owners to expand available dockage.

Patti Page added that water depths off current docks pose a problem in expanding. Dredging is needed at many of these locations.

Mr. Ring agreed, adding that the whole harbor should be dredged.

Mr. Bergeron summarized the changes to be made to this section: question 5 should read, "Have you considered expanding dockage and what do you need?" Question 4 should be eliminated and question 3 should also be eliminated, with the city conducting a physical survey instead.

Sunny Robinson suggested that the Commission refer to the Mt. Auburn report before conducting this survey. Many of the questions asked in the survey have already been addressed in this report. Although it is now a couple of years old, it can still be used as a starting point.

Next steps involve fine-tuning the survey and then taking it to the Community Development Department for implementation. The Fisheries Commission will be advised as the process moves forward.

4. Update from the Ad Hoc Committee on a Fisheries Summit

Mr. Brown explained that the subcommittee on a Fisheries Summit met briefly to discuss the focus and purpose of holding a summit. While further meetings of this subcommittee are required, it was decided that the summit should focus on maximizing value of our fish. Marketing ideas need to be developed so that boats are able to maximize value for their landings. Programs like Community Supported Fisheries or Co-Ops should be explored. Steve Parkes has been invited to meet with the subcommittee and has agreed to speak with them. Mr. Parkes is the former owner of Pigeon Cove Seafoods and was also instrumental in getting the Cape Ann Fresh Catch program up and running.

Ms. Sanfilippo added that the subcommittee discussed the potential for this summit to provide education to local restaurants on how to support the local fleet. The potential for Gloucester branding was also discussed, and Mr. Tobey mentioned reaching out to Suffolk University to help with this effort.

Ms. Sanfilippo also proposed that Heather Fraelick, Marketing and Communications Specialist from Cape Ann Fresh Catch, join the subcommittee. **Mr. Bergeron** agreed.

Mr. Ring mentioned Linda Greenlaw's effort to have her name branded a few years back. This branding added \$1.50 per pound to the fish she landed. Effective branding can clearly add significant value to seafood.

Ms. Romeo-Theken noted L.L. Bean's involvement with marketing Maine lobster as another success story.

Patti Page added that a key to maximizing value for Gloucester seafood will be to ensure the proper processing facilities are available in the city. At last month's meeting, Sheree DeLorenzo noted that she has been able to keep up with the summer-time demand for haddock at the Cruiseport by buying locally. If we are going to promote Gloucester, the proper infrastructure needs to be here to support it.

Ms. Sanfilippo responded that Cape Ann Fresh Catch is providing fresh local seafood to consumers and restaurants every day. At present the program has over 600 sharemembers and provides fish for a few local restaurants.

Heather Fraelick added that local restaurants are not moving enough volume on a consistent basis for Cape Ann Fresh Catch to work with them. As an alternative, she offered that while CAFC would not be able to provide Cruiseport with enough haddock to meet their demand in the summer, they are able to provide enough of an underutilized species for a restaurant to do a special on their menu. CAFC seeks to promote these underutilized species, getting fishermen a fair price for what sells at low prices at regular market. She also suggested that focusing on Gloucester branding will be much more beneficial than holding a general summit on the fishery in Gloucester. Incentives for buying local should be offered to local chefs. The subcommittee should focus first and foremost on making Gloucester seafood more visible.

Mr. Bergeron agreed that describing the task of this subcommittee as preparing a “summit” may be misleading. The focus should instead be how to promote economic development in the fishery and create jobs in the process. Perhaps a planning “workshop” or “seminar” would be a better idea to start with. He also suggested that the committee could include consideration in its planning suggestions on the city’s participation in the Boston Seafood Show as a marketing opportunity for this year or next. This activity is a component of marketing.

Ms. Romeo-Theken added that a summit should not be ruled out for the future. Promotion and marketing is great, but a summit is needed to show the public that Gloucester’s fishing industry is surviving and doing well.

Mr. Bergeron agreed to keep the idea of a summit for the future, but that a workshop on marketing should be developed first. He added that the subcommittee should meet again before next month’s meeting, come up with some written ideas, and present them back to the Commission in February.

Ms. Sanfilippo added that the first meeting of the state’s Seafood Marketing Commission will be soon. She is a board member and can inform the Fisheries Commission on the status of this state commission.

5. Agenda for the February 16, 2012 meeting

The next Fisheries Commission meeting will be held on February 16, 2012 in the Friends Room at the Sawyer Free Library. Agenda items will include:

- Update on dockage study
- Update on marketing workshop, working towards a fisheries summit.
- Presentation by Mr. Cusumano on the proposed breakwater marina
- Presentation by Ms. Garcia on the Mt Auburn Report fisheries economic development recommendations

Ms. Romeo-Theken inquired on the status of Patti Page’s dockage inventory. Ms. Page responded that the inventory is approximately 80% complete. She needs the help of some local fishermen to fill in the remaining gaps.

Mr. Bergeron also agreed to circulate a copy of the Mt. Auburn Report to Commission members for review before next meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:36pm.

ATTACHMENTS

Report from David Bergeron, Patti Page, and Sarah Garcia
(Incorporating changes made at the commission meeting)

January 9, 2012

Dockage Study

Goal: Inform a plan to provide sufficient commercial fishing dockage to economically sustain Gloucester's full service hub port infrastructure.

Objectives:

- 1) Assess needs of home port vessels
- 2) Assess needs of transient boats and what would attract them to home port here.
- 3) Assess unused dockage capacity and property owner interests.

Approach: Send Commission letter (but not the survey itself) to vessel & property owners stating purpose of survey. Community Development then dispatches researcher to conduct surveys by phone & in-person.

Draft Survey Questions for boats:

- 1) Where do you dock?
- 2) ~~What are physical conditions of the wharf?~~ REPLACE: "Do you pay for your dockage?"
- 3) What are your prospects over the next five years?
- 4) What amenities do you have?
- 5) What do you need?
- 6) What is your fishery and ~~landings~~ vessel type?
- 7) What businesses do you use in Gloucester?
- 8) ~~What waste streams do you create? (We are looking for current waste streams to assess if new value and markets could be created.)~~ [DELETED]

Survey for Dock Owners:

- 1) What do you have that is used?
- 2) What are your prospects? [POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE: "How large is your dockage, what percentage is used for commercial?"]
- 3) ~~What is unused?~~ [DELETED] - use Mt Auburn report data to get this information.

- 4) ~~Does your dockage pay for itself? [DELETED]~~
- 5) ~~What would you need to develop the unused dockage?~~ REPLACE: "Have you considered expanding dockage and what do you need?"