



**City of Gloucester**  
**Fisheries Commission Minutes**  
Wednesday, June 20, 2012- 7:00PM  
Third Floor Conference Room  
City Hall  
9 Dale Avenue

Members:

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

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

Also in attendance: Jonathon Peros & Jonathan Labaree of the Gulf of Maine Research Institute and several members of the public

---

**1. Call to Order & Chairman's Report**

The meeting was called to order at 7:20pm. **Mr. Bergeron** thanked everyone for coming. Without a quorum, the meeting was started informally and no official votes would be taken. In opening remarks, **Mr. Bergeron** noted that a DPA panel discussion will be taking place next Tuesday at the Endicott College location on Commercial Street. Sarah Garcia added that the meeting will involve Mayors from other towns with Designated Port Areas to discuss successes and challenges. Mayors from Chelsea, New Bedford, Salem, Fall River and members of MassPort will be attending. Topics for discussion include the strict DPA regulations that make it difficult to attract investment. These regulations also make it challenging to determine how development should occur in the DPA/ around the harbor.

Additionally, Ms. Garcia noted that there will be a meeting with the Marine and Oceanic Trade Network(MOTN)- an organization that is coming up to Gloucester June 21 to tour the new Endicott facility. The lead speaker will discuss the potential for attracting new developers to the city. **Mr. Bergeron** asked who will be at this meeting. Ms. Garcia responded that Jay Amero, Setronics, Frank Rose, and Gloucester Engineering have been invited to attend the meeting. She added that the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute just received a \$100 million dollar grant to do ocean observation work, and that similar possibilities should be investigated for Gloucester.

Meeting attendee Damon Cummings asked how much it will cost to attend the meeting. Ms. Garcia responded that there will be a \$40 fee, which the city can reimburse for those who cannot afford the cost.

## **2. Brief Public Comments**

In public comments, Ms. Altenburger thanked the Commission for the letter of support. She is grateful for the support as her business enters its eleventh year.

## **3. Minutes of the May 17, 2012 meeting SKIPPED**

The Commission moved next to a discussion of the May 17 meeting minutes. Without a quorum present, it was decided that a vote on accepting the minutes would wait until next meeting.

## **4. Committee Reports:**

The discussion moved next to an update of the following sub-committees:

### **a. Commercial Fishing Dockage study**

In an update on the Commercial Dockage study, Ms. Garcia noted that the RFP has been sent to the city's Purchasing Department for finalization. The RFP will be released soon. Once contracted, the consultant will need guidance and support from the Commission while collecting data. Currently the work is scoped at \$10,000. It was decided to put the RFP out to bid to see what types of quotes come in. If the bids come in high with good explanations for a higher cost, the Waterways Board will put the possibility for covering costs on their agenda. The RFP should be published in mid-July, which would mean bids would be due the first week in August. The sub-committee will be called then to review the bids.

### **b. Ad Hoc Committee on Fisheries Summit**

No update was given.

### **c. Rapid Response Ad Hoc Committee**

**Mr. Bergeron** relayed that there is nothing new to report regarding the Rapid Response Committee.

## **5. Gulf of Maine Research Institute Fisheries Technical Assistance Program, Jonathan Labaree & Jonathon Peros**

Next, the Commission heard from two members of the Gulf of Maine Research Institute's Technical Assistance Program. **Mr. Bergeron** thanked them for coming.

Jonathan Labaree and Jonathan Peros thanked everyone for the invitation. In explaining their work, they noted that they work predominantly with the New England groundfish fleet and are interested in working more with the Gloucester fleet. Initially, their program provided technical assistance in setting up the new Sector system under Amendment 16. GMRI staff member Libby Ertie worked in Gloucester in collaboration with the Northeast Seafood Coalition as part of this process. For the first three years, the Technical Assistance Program provided fishermen with assistance in the areas of documentation requirements, permitting, Sector organization, permissions for catch histories, and a great deal of other paperwork. More recently, this program is working on convening a monitoring/ observer working group to find a solution to Amendment 16's requirement that the fleet cover costs associated with at-sea monitoring in the new fishing year. GMRI is aware that there is great concern amongst fishermen for covering these costs. More generally, the Technical Assistance Program seeks to convene stakeholders around issues that need greater industry

cooperation. Now that Sectors are up and running, this program is planning to deal with overarching issues.

**Mr. Vitale** noted that in his experience, at-sea monitors have been unhappy in their roles because of the requirement that they act as enforcement officers. Most of these monitors are people with degrees in marine science and are not looking to act as police on the water. In this light, it makes more sense for dockside monitors to handle enforcement measures. Mr. Labaree noted that issues like this need to be heard and should be incorporated into the process as these new requirements are rolled out. **Mr. Vitale** responded that at \$700 or \$800 per day for an observer, fishermen will not be able to shoulder the costs. If they go out and catch no fish, they will be in the negative—not including their regular costs of fuel, bait, etc.

Meeting attendee Suzanne Altenburger noted that other fisheries have had success with using cameras onboard vessels to monitor the fleet. **Mr. Vitale** and **Mr. Cottone** noted that a similar system was tested here and was not deemed effective.

**Mr. Cottone** noted that the industry needs an audience with NOAA to express their concern over these monitoring costs. Put simply, if the industry is not let off the hook for these costs, there will be no more small boat industry. The costs are too steep and will put most out of business. **Mr. Vitale** agreed, noting that the fishing industry is the only industry that is required to pay for their own monitoring. Mr. Labaree responded that this is a major issue, and that part of the reason for his visit with the Commission is to let everyone know that GMRI is trying to create a space where solutions to this issue can be discussed.

Mr. Labaree added that now that Sectors are up and running, their status as 501c5s can help as the organizations become more durable. GMRI plans to continue to offer technical assistance to Sectors in the form of board trainings and trainings in book-keeping, etc. A round of these trainings has already been offered, and if interest in additional trainings is expressed, GMRI is willing to have more.

Next, Jonathan Peros of GMRI discussed his role with the Technical Assistance Program and explained that he is now based in Salem, MA in an effort to make himself more accessible to the Gloucester fleet. Most of the work he has been involved in to date has revolved around outreach and increasing profitability. He held a workshop in Beverly in April that focused on improvements to gear and quality handling with the intention of producing higher profit margins for fishermen. He has also been involved in organizing workshops on sustainable seafood and supply chain logistics- aimed at increasing demand and price margins. Similarly, Mr. Peros works with seafood processors to get their perspectives.

Mr. Peros also announced that GMRI has organized a “Trawl to Table” event in Portland which will be held next week. These events involve bringing fishermen together with local chefs to create greater understanding of the entire supply-chain and seafood sustainability. They also give fishermen the opportunity to tell their story, provide demonstrations on their gear and how it works, and communicate what fishermen do on the water to the public. In turn, Chefs learn more about how to source directly from fishermen.

Mr. Peros also works with Libby Ertie on required VTR reports and noted that GMRI still has grant funds available from NOAA’s cooperative research branch to work on improvements to gear selectivity. He is also working on creating web portal for fishermen to enter and compile fisheries-dependent data and confidentially and view it (without government involvement) for their own

purposes. Moving forward, he would like to work more closely with the fleet to find out what they need to bring new ideas back to GMRI.

**Mr. Bergeron** noted that the Commission has been talking about the opportunity to market and promote red fish for Gloucester. There are gear issues and conservation issues that need addressing, but Gloucester would like to find ways to make better profits off this underutilized species. Perhaps some sort of special access program could be investigated. **Mr. Vitale** added that the port of Gloucester had a great deal of success with red fish in the 1970s and early 80s under a government contract. **Mr. Bergeron** followed that a new market analysis on the fish would be helpful.

Mr. Labaree responded that GMRI is working on programs that would align with this interest in promoting underutilized species. The organization already sponsors and organizes events called “Out of the Blue” where restaurants are encouraged to focus on underutilized species. GMRI provides marketing materials and gets details in the local press on these events. Restaurants are a great avenue for trying something new and developing new markets. GMRI is planning to feature one species a month for the next few months in Portland. **Mr. Bergeron** noted that the Commission would love to work more closely with GMRI and local partners on a similar program for Gloucester.

Returning to the “Trawl to Table” event, Mr. Labaree noted that there are still a few spaces available at the meeting next week. This program has worked well for Portland, and there is no reason it couldn’t work here in Gloucester or for a wider area. There is also a similar event planned for Portsmouth in late August or September. Commission members expressed interest in attending the Portsmouth event and the GMRI staff agreed to follow up with details.

**Mr. Bergeron** brought up the Commission’s draft letter to Whole Foods regarding their new policy to stop buying trawl caught fish. He noted to the GMRI staff that the Commission’s intention is to approach whole foods and let them know they are missing out by turning away from the local fleet.

Mr. Labaree noted that GMRI focuses on three core areas, science & management, research, and education. For a long time the organization was geared towards being an aquarium, but moved away from the idea instead targeting an education focus. He added that the organization has been at the new lab building in Portland for 7 or 8 years. They plan on trying to do training programs here in Gloucester and other fishing towns and are looking for more new ideas for improving gear, fuel efficiency, etc. **Mr. Vitale** responded that the recent training offered in Beverly was helpful and that additional similar trainings would be welcomed. He added that improving fuel consumption is a huge issue and should be focused on.

**Mr. Brown** asked if any of the GMRI programs are aimed towards fixed gear fishermen. Mr. Labaree responded that GMRI was working on developing a raised foot rope for gillnetters to be able to better target pollock. They are also establishing a working group for NOAA stock assessments and need fishermen to be on a panel. One of the goals of this panel will be to figure out a better way to determine discard mortality rates for all gear types. Currently the rate is set at 100%, which is not accurate.

Meeting attendee Suzanne Altenburger asked the GMRI staff how much success they have had gaining an audience at the Fishery Management Council. Mr. Labaree responded that they have had success with special access programs. He also added that many of the projects they are currently working on do not involve regulatory change at the Council level. One area that does need

regulatory attention is the discard mortality rates. Overall, GMRI is more focused on the research side to see if modern research can be incorporated to make things better for all parties involved.

**Mr. Bergeron** asked the Commission members if there is anything else the GMRI could help them with. **Mr. Vitale** expressed concern over Yellowtail Discards. **Mr. Cottone** noted that they could use help on the proposed Stellwagen Sanctuary closures. He asked if GMRI has taken a position on these closures. Mr. Labaree responded that to date, GMRI has remained neutral on the issue. Mr. Peros added that he has been attending the habitat committee meetings so he is aware of this issue and will remain up to speed if it does move forward. **Mr. Bergeron** noted that there are closed grounds to the east of the area that could be used as research areas instead. If GMRI could help with interpreting the scientific validity of proposing these alternative areas as ecologically relevant to the Sanctuary ecosystem, it would be great. **Mr. Vitale** added that this area could be used without impacting the livelihood of the local fleet. Mr. Labaree noted that they also have an economist on staff that might be able to help. **Mr. Bergeron** responded that the Massachusetts Fishermen's Partnership is already working with the University of Rhode Island to conduct a socio-economic study of these grounds. The groundfish portion of this study is just about done and they are planning to expand it to the lobster fleet as well.

**Mr. Brown** added that if the costs of covering observers were to fall on the industry, the impacts would be huge. It would personally put him out of business, along with approximately 90% of the rest of the fleet.

Ms. Altenburger asked if wind farms were being considered anywhere other than south of the Cape. Mr. Labaree noted that the potential for installing some in Maine was being explored, but is only at the proposal stage. A short discussion was held on the small windmills that have been installed on one of the islands off Portland, and Mr. Labaree noted that a couple of neighbors close by have complained about the noise but otherwise, they were working well. He also noted that GMRI sees other more substantial ocean issues coming soon—including the development of aquaculture, gear conflicts, etc.

## **6. Old Business**

### **a. Whole Foods**

Regarding the Commission's letter to Whole Foods addressing a recent decision to no longer sell trawl-caught fish, **Mr. Bergeron** noted that the newest version of this draft letter expresses the fact that Whole Foods is missing out with their new policy. Their new policy could back-fire and is a missed opportunity for Whole Foods to work with the fleet to open a more meaningful discussion with the public on seafood and sustainability. Given the current regulatory framework, Whole Foods should be promoting the local fleet- not staying away from them.

**Mr. Vitale** added that since the new policy of not buying from trawl vessels was put in effect, no boats have been landing at the Whole Foods plant. **Mr. Cottone** suggested that the Commission send the draft letter on the situation first, and if no response is received, a more public/ forceful stance should be taken. Whole Foods is still buying at the fish auction, where trawl caught fish is mixed with fish caught by other methods.

**Mr. Brown** asked if the new Whole Foods policy is linked to the Monterey Bay's seafood buying guidelines. **Mr. Cottone** responded that it is. **Mr. Bergeron** followed that the draft letter to Whole Foods is not asking them to change their policy, but rather to give closer thought to the idea of sustainability and how the local fishing fleet operates in a sustainable way. He also noted that he

has been asking around to find any connections to board members, but has been unsuccessful so far.

Jonathan Labaree of the Gulf of Maine Research Institute noted that his organization has been working with Shaws and Hannaford but unfortunately not Whole Foods because of their choice to use the strict Monterey Bay red listing system. This approach is extreme and does not get to details of what is really going on with the local fleets. **Mr. Vitale** asked if GMRI has outreach material that gets to more detail than the simple “red listing” standard. Mr. Labaree responded that they do and is happy to share this material.

**Mr. Bergeron** confirmed with the Commission that everyone is on board with the draft letter. They agreed. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** noted that she thinks the Mayor should be more involved. **Mr. Bergeron** responded that the mayor has offered to co-sign the letter and suggested that all members should sign the letter. **Mr. Cottone** reiterated that the letter should be sent as soon as possible. He added that if no response is received, the Commission should go on the offensive. He also added that the trawling video made by Frank Mirarchi showing the minimal effects of bottom trawling should be included as a reference in the letter. **Mr. Bergeron** asked if staff at GMRI have similar material that could be referenced in the letter. Mr. Labaree responded that they do, and that they could be included as a bibliography to the letter.

## **7. New Business**

### **a. Farm Bill Amendment: Operating Capital for Commercial Fishing Businesses**

Next, **Mr. Bergeron** moved to a discussion of the Farm Bill Amendment related to Operating Capital for Commercial Fishing Businesses. He revealed that the proposal was killed in the Senate the night before the Commission meeting. An opportunity may still be available in the House, and he feels it’s still worth talking about to get the Commission’s view on the record. Essentially he thinks that this proposal would give the fishing fleet an opportunity to get a foot in the door to access some programs that are available to farmers. Farmers have these federal aid programs, so why are similar options not made available to the local fleet? The Alaska & West Coast fishing fleets have come out in heavy support of this bill. **Mr. Bergeron** next confirmed that there were no objections from Commission members in supporting this proposal.

**Ms. Romeo-Theken** noted that the by-laws for the Commission should be reviewed to confirm how many members are needed for a quorum. If too high, the by-laws should be amended to account for the fact that fishermen are not always available to attend meetings. She also added that she was surprised to see that the city’s new fiscal year budget did not include a request for a budget for the Fisheries Commission. The Commission needs a budget and a proposal needs to be put through to the City Council requesting funds. Previously available funds have been discussed including funds that were to be made available to set up a table at the Boston Seafood Show. Funds should be set aside for Commission business each year.

In additional new business, **Ms. Romeo-Theken** also asked about discussions she had heard about revisiting the idea of CAD cells in Gloucester. She thought the idea had been thrown out a long time ago but heard discussions of the concept over past weeks and was therefore concerned. Ms. Garcia explained that the topic was raised by a recent college graduate who was researching the idea and came to speak with the Community Development Department to learn more. Ms. Garcia explained that the idea was not being considered but was simply discussed because of this recent graduate’s interest in the subject. **Ms. Romeo-Theken** reminded everyone that the idea was thrown out because of community opposition to the idea. She wants official word in writing that CAD cells are not being considered by the current administration.

**Mr. Bergeron** concluded by noting that Maggie Debbie of MassDevelopment would be speaking with the Commission about the State Fish Pier next month, and Carolyn Woodhead from NOAA's cooperative research branch would also be meeting with the Commission next month.

**8. Adjournment**

Without a quorum, the meeting was informally adjourned at 9:01pm.

Attachments follow.

## **Murkowski Farm Bill Amendment: Operating Capital for Commercial Fishing Businesses**

This amendment would allow commercial fishermen to qualify for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Services Administration (FSA) Farm Operating Loan Program. Commercial fishermen make an important contribution to the U.S. food supply and economy. This legislation will ensure commercial fishermen have the tools necessary to compete in today's markets without additional cost to taxpayers.

Although fish have been defined by USDA as an agriculture product since 1937 and U.S. fishermen were made eligible for the USDA Trade Adjustment Assistance program in 2003-2004, they are currently unable to access FSA farm operating loans. The proposed amendment includes "commercial fishermen" within the definitions of "farmer" and "farming" with respect to the FSA Operating Loan Program. The language also clarifies that for the purposes of the program, the term "farm" includes a "commercial fishing enterprise."

The FSA operating loan program provides farmers with low interest loans for annual operating expenses, and the purchases of land, equipment, seed, livestock, and processing equipment. As for traditional farmers, equipment necessary to begin and sustain a fishing business, such as boats and nets, are expensive. Under the proposed amendment, fishermen will be able to access loans for these basic operating costs. Extending eligibility for the FSA program to commercial fishermen would put them on a level playing field with fish farmers, who currently benefit from FSA loans and whose product commercial fishermen compete with directly.

All current FSA farm operating loan requirements would still apply to commercial fishermen. For example, in order to qualify for an operating loan through FSA, loan applicants must not be able to obtain sufficient credit to finance their needs elsewhere. This requirement would apply to commercial fishermen as well.

Rising operation costs, high entry costs (permits, quota, and vessel), and increasing complexity of fisheries regulations make operating a fishing business more difficult than ever. Fishing businesses are the heart of many coastal communities. A low-cost source of capital is needed to sustain businesses in fisheries dependent communities. Action is critical in order to prevent a drain of the assets that provide the valuable access to future fisheries earnings.

For more information, please contact Senator Murkowski's staff, Stefanie Moreland, at 202-224-9316 or [stefanie\\_moreland@murkowski.senate.gov](mailto:stefanie_moreland@murkowski.senate.gov).



AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_ Calendar No. \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: To make commercial fishermen eligible for certain operating loans.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—112th Cong., 2d Sess.

(no.) \_\_\_\_\_

To reauthorize agricultural programs through 2017, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ and ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT intended to be proposed by Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. KERRY)

Viz:

- 1 Beginning on page 522, strike line 15 and all that
- 2 follows through page 523, line 2, and insert the following:
- 3 (12) FARM.—The term “farm” means an oper-
- 4 ation involved in—
- 5 “(A) the production of an agricultural
- 6 commodity;
- 7 “(B) ranching;
- 8 “(C) aquaculture; or
- 9 “(D) in the case of chapter 2 of subtitle A,
- 10 commercial fishing.

1           “(13) FARMER.—The term ‘farmer’ means an  
2 individual or entity engaged primarily and directly  
3 in—  
4           “(A) the production of an agricultural  
5 commodity;  
6           “(B) ranching;  
7           “(C) aquaculture; or  
8           “(D) in the case of chapter 2 of subtitle A,  
9 commercial fishing.

Margaret Wittenberg, Vice President for Quality Standards & Public Affairs  
Whole Foods Market, Inc.

Dear Ms. Wittenberg:

We write to request an opportunity to meet for the purpose of discussing an opportunity that would mutually benefit our fishermen and Whole Foods. We appreciate Whole Foods long-standing presence on our working waterfront, but we are disappointed that Whole Foods decided to stop purchasing fish from certain Gloucester vessels without any dialogue. Whole Foods' Gloucester location is well positioned for a company that is committed to protecting the environment and our natural resources while providing the highest quality seafood to consumers. These are important values that are consistent with our Gloucester seafood brand as well. With so much emphasis on the importance of locally produced and organic agriculture, we believe Whole Foods is missing an important opportunity in Gloucester.

Over the years, fishermen based out of the port of Gloucester have taken great strides to rebuild fish stocks. They follow a tightly managed and highly accountable fishery management plan which is supplemented with habitat protection measures. In 2010 the fleet began operating out of locally managed harvest cooperatives known as "Sectors". This new Sector- system has placed more responsibility and accountability on the groundfish fishery. Consumers should be informed and encouraged that the groundfish they are consuming that are landed in Gloucester and throughout the northeast is tightly managed and sustainable.

We would like to propose the opportunity to meet with you to ~~educate you on the realities associated with~~ discuss information about our fishery. Like Whole Foods Market, we have a passion for the highest quality all natural food, especially when it originates with small scale producers that are most in tune with the natural environment they depend upon. We hope that Whole Foods shares our commitment to reward and promote the most ecologically responsible food producers that provide the highest quality, all natural products.

Gloucester seafood producers have contributed a great deal to the development of the Whole Foods brand over the past few decades. This has been a partnership that has worked very well for all involved, and we would like to keep this partnership strong. We feel optimistic that a finer examination of the facts here will help Whole Foods in its effort to source seafood in Gloucester and elsewhere that is harvested with appropriate methods in times and places that are ecologically responsible. We are suggesting that progress to continue improving the quality of food Americans eat as well as promoting genuine environmental stewardship requires more than broad strokes; we believe it requires knowing the people that produce your products.

We hope that you will be agreeable to our proposal and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,