



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
FISHERIES COMMISSION MINUTES
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2013; 7:00 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 [Absent]	Angela Sanfilippo
Greg Verga, City Council	Scott Swicker
Paul Vitale [Absent]	

Also in attendance: Sarah Garcia; Patti Page; Valerie Nelson; Suzanne Altenburger; Lise Breen; Jonathan Peros, GMRI .

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 7:07 PM by Chair Ring.

2. Approval of minutes from August 15, 2013

MOTION: On motion by Councilor Verga, seconded by Mr. Swicker, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes from August 15, 2013.

3. Update on Aquaculture Program and all SK Grants

Ms. Garcia stated that GMRI was working with Sam Novello on how to reduce the bi-catch of red hake in the whiting fishery. She stated that she wrote a letter from the mayor to the senators and the Secretary of Commerce on behalf of Nazio Sanfilippo indicating that he wanted to run two boats side by side in an area and test different mesh sizes to attempt to reduce the bi-catch of red hake. **Ms. Garcia** briefly reviewed the other grant opportunities, including the Northeastern stress study wherein leaders in the community would be connected to support systems. She stated that Mortillaro Lobster and Ocean Alliance were collaborating with a woman from UMass/Boston who is going to install a couple of wharves made of green concrete, which is made based on how the shell a surf clam is made. Neptune's Harvest wants to research extracting chitin from lobster shells and creating lobster bait from a gelled fish product. Donna Marshall from Fisherman's Partnership proposed reaching out to four culinary schools to teach them how to use different species in their cooking, and Cape Ann Seafood Exchange would like to get some processing equipment for redfish and dogfish. **Ms. Garcia** stated that the federal

shutdown stopped the reviews of these grants for two weeks but that they are trying to get the word out by January.

4. Update on Dockage Study

Ms. Garcia stated that she, Mr. Ring, Jim Caulkett, Peter Bent and Patti Page met yesterday and on the computer mapping went through every property and measured every wharf. She distributed copies of the measurements to the members and indicated that she sent it to Jack Wiggin with an indication that the Commission would like a draft report next month. Her plan is to have him attend next month's meeting to present the report.

(Mr. Peros joined the meeting at 7:17 p.m.)

At this time, the agenda was taken out of order.

6. Briefing on DPA Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Report, March 2010

Ms. Garcia submitted the report to the Commission, and wished to provide an overview for the Commission.

The deputy director from Coastal Zone Management presented it at the last meeting of the Harbor Planning Committee, but Paul Vitale has been away and unable to attend on behalf of the Commission. She asked Mr. Ring to email Mr. Vitale to find out when he is coming back. The next meeting of the Harbor Planning Committee is November 13th. Mr. Ring indicated that if Mr. Vitale is not back by then, he will make sure someone else is at the meeting.

This report is about proposed changes to the DPA. It is a tool because the time to draft these changes was already invested in 2009 and 2010, so they could be brought forward through the public process and potentially enacted, if successful in the process, within a year if we decide to ask the state to move forward in doing that.

In 2007, there was a request from the property owners' task force under the Chamber of Commerce indicating the three things that would make a difference to property owners being able to make money on the waterfront. These three things were 50% commercial supporting use for all waterfront properties, allowing supporting commercial use to be put over pile-supported structures, and permitting new recreational berthing when combined with building new commercial slips.

When the mayor held the harbor visioning sessions in 2008, she committed to moving all suggestions forward as long as they were consistent with the community's values.

In 2009, the city asked the state to pursue revising the DPA consistent with these recommendations from the Property Owners' Task Force.

The State convened a state-wide technical advisory committee (TAC) with representatives from the different DPA ports and port interests. The TAC met for a year, meeting about four times. The list of the Advisory Committee members is on the final page of the report. It then took another year for the state agency staff to write the specific technical language for the proposed revisions to the DPA.

The drafted potential revisions to the DPA contain two primary changes: they would permit supporting commercial use over piers, and they would allow a limited amount of recreational

dockage. [The third recommendation - 50% supporting commercial use – has already been achieved without requiring a DPA change.]

(Ms. Sanfilippo joined the meeting at 7:20 pm.)

With respect to recreational boating, first the report clarifies the local option of permitting wharves for recreational boating with an annual 10A permit from the Harbormaster. Ms. Garcia noted, however, that because a 10A permit is expected to be temporary, people have found the DEP does not allow electricity or water services on them. The report then contains drafted revisions to the DPA in which boatyards could be licensed to include recreational boating slips as long as the recreational use was subordinate to the primary water dependent industrial use. If the property was not a boatyard, it could only contain less than ten recreational slips, and only if that use was specifically permitted in that location by the local government through its DPA master plan. She noted that Massport was worried about the proximity of smaller recreational boats to big vessels and interference with commercial shipping lanes.

Ms. Garcia stated that we just got the money for the port revitalization and recovery plan, part of which was to try to keep shoreside businesses afloat. She requested that the Commission members, with their thorough knowledge of the harbor, think about whether there are properties where these drafted changes to the DPA might put enough income into the property that it will not go under. **Mr. Orlando** noted that if the fishermen are not going to be around, there is no need for shoreside businesses to be around either.

5. Final Report – Mass Development Multi-Species Business Development Report

Mr. Ring suggested handing this over to Jack Wiggin with the Port Recovery Plan. **Ms. Garcia** stated that the \$1 million at the state level was not spent for loans and is just sitting there. **Mr. Cottone** noted that there are a lot of stipulations on that money. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she talked to NOAA and they are very open to however the state wants to use it. **Mr. Ring** stated that the money was originally earmarked for the loan fund but he does not see that happening right now. The loan fund then said it might be easier to let the sectors handle it. He noted that people need it now more than ever and it has been sitting there for more than a year. **Ms. Garcia** thinks it should be like Monopoly; i.e. if you have a permit that is not returning any money right now, you could “mortgage” it and get the value of it each year for a certain number of years. At the end, you can either buy it back or let it go.

Mr. Cottone stated that if the money is injected into the sectors to lease fish, the state might have a problem with out-of-state boats in the sectors. **Mr. Ring** stated that perhaps out-of-state boats would not be eligible because it is Massachusetts money. **Ms. Garcia** noted that there are two loan funds in Gloucester run by local people. **Ms. Sanfilippo** believes that the issue is not who will handle the funding but what will be done with the money. **Mr. Cottone** stated that the money was allocated 100% for ground fish and the easiest way to get that straight to the ground fishermen is through the sectors. **Mr. Ring** stated that if none of the stipulations have been changed, there is still a lot of work to be done. **Mr. Orlando** noted that Cape Cod yellowtail is scarce right now. If something comes up, the sector should be buying it right away. When the boats catch it, that money will kick back to the sector again. **Ms. Garcia** asked whether the Gloucester fishing community preservation fund could match any of the state money. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that they bought permits for big money and they have a loss. However, the

permits are safe. **Ms. Garcia** stated that the key is to get people through two years of restricted catch. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that she will get the conversation going.

Ms. Garcia stated that Urban Harbors Institute was hired to write it all down and put it in a package for us or to be there at the meetings and describe it. The other one is the marketing program. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she spoke with Jen Levin, who has been working with Hannaford and Shaw's in Maine, and they might be able to add capacity. They offered to come to our meeting next month.

Mr. Orlando stated that there is nothing in the grants for the fishermen who are going bankrupt. Instead of writing grants, something should be done to help the fishermen. **Mr. Ring** stated that you cannot get the grants without tying them to a university. **Ms. Garcia** stated that she would like to make it better but she does not know the fishery [regulatory system] very well. **Mr. Ring** believes there should be relief for the people that were enticed into the system by the government, bought into the permits, and were stuck holding the bag. They should get some kind of compensation. He believes it is more of a failure of the system than it is of the fishery. There was a discussion about what the value of a permit is. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that they stopped buying permits with the preservation fund because they cannot pay the same kind of money that they paid three years ago. Her suggestion is to hold onto whatever cash is left and try to be as generous as possible to the people who are there right now and give them what we can. However, they are a nonprofit organization and cannot give them the fish for free.

Mr. Orlando noted that his boat has been tied up for almost four months with no income coming in and he has been charged a dockage fee every month. He has been asking for that repeatedly, but nothing has been said. Nobody has asked the fishermen what they really need to get through this. **Ms. Garcia** suggested asking for three years of dockage fees to carry them over. **Mr. Ring** stated that all of the politicians have already been told. **Mr. Cottone** noted that fishermen are working at a loss right now and that he has not made any money in eight months. If fishermen take a loan on their permit to pay their house bills, when they want to go back to work and need to buy the permit back, the money is going to be gone because it was spent to keep the house going. He stated that no one is going to take money knowing that they are going to lose something.

Ms. Garcia stated that the objective is to find a way for fishermen who want to stay in the fishery to pay their bills for two to three years. She suggested that a permit be mortgaged at whatever the fisherman's obligations are so that they are not holding something worthless that they have to pay for. The goal is to have him whole in three years.

Ms. Garcia indicated that Jack Wiggin is going to be hired to prepare a document validated by the community that will list all of the requests.

Mr. Ring requested that **Ms. Sanfilippo** try to set up a meeting with the state about the \$1 million. She stated that the important thing is to come to an agreement with the state as to what can be done with the money and the fastest way to get relief. **Ms. Garcia** said that it would be nice to get some outside help on how to resolve the needs.

7. New Business

- a. **Amero Project** – **Mr. Ring** stated that he received a copy of a letter from the mayor to Coastal Zone Management on behalf of Jeff Amero with regard to narrowing the federal

channel. Mr. Ring noted that neither the Fisheries Commission nor the Waterways Board was consulted before the letter was sent and that the Commission has no idea what Mr. Amero's plan is. He believes Mr. Amero wants the channel narrowed so he can have docks coming out from his property at the end of the Fort. It was the consensus of the Committee that, regardless of what Mr. Amero's plan is, that is not a place where you would want to narrow the channel. **Mr. Ring** stated that he spoke with Tony Gross about meeting with the mayor and Jim to see what is going on.

Ms. Garcia stated that the mayor wants to support property owners who want to make money on the waterfront. Mr. Amero did not want the DPA line to get in the way of a request to the Army Corps of Engineers, who has jurisdiction over the channel. She stated that the request has not yet gone to the Army Corps of Engineers and she believes the Commission is being notified very early in the process. **Mr. Ring** stated he would have liked to have been notified before the letter went out rather than after it went out.

Ms. Sanfilippo stated that the problem with that system is that the Commission members look like the bad guys who are trying to stop waterfront developers. **Ms. Garcia** stated that the letter could have been sent with no copies to anybody, as has been done in the past, and the Commission would not have heard about it until the Army Corps of Engineers was involved. She was trying to be transparent and keep people informed.

Ms. Sanfilippo stated that this is also a safety issue for the community.

- b. Vessels for Research – Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that the Massachusetts Fisherman's Partnership submitted a grant for \$7 million for a collaborative research program. She indicated that UMass was very responsive and immediately started putting numbers together. The proposal was submitted successfully but then the government shut down. She distributed a synopsis of the project, which indicates that \$4.4 million would be strictly for the boats to do collaborative research. Another \$1 million would be for equipment, such as nets, computers, etc. There is a long laundry list of work that needs to be done. Ms. Sanfilippo will keep everyone informed.

Ms. Nelson stated that in the grand scheme of things, \$7 million is a small amount. She reported that Barbara Mikulski, Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, has gone on record in support of dramatically increasing the use of chartered fishing vessels for fishing stock assessments and other science. The chief scientist of NOAA in testimony in May or June several times said that fishing boats need to be used more in research. **Ms. Sanfilippo** stated that Senator Warren also supported this in her letter to the editor.

Ms. Nelson stated that the Commission should focus on state government and the legislature because the state has more money than the federal government at this point, and the state has done nothing for the fishing industry. In her mind, the timing of this project is perfect. Gloucester is going to define what it needs and relate it to state programs and budgets and demand that Governor Patrick, Senator Tarr and Representative Ferrante step up to the plate and meet our needs. The items have to be listed by December because the state budget comes up in January.

Ms. Garcia indicated that state investments come under their bond bills and they just wrote an environmental bond bill, which funded the Seaport Advisory Council. She believes that most of the money in the environmental bond bill has been spent on the New Bedford south terminal to serve offshore wind.

8. Old Business – None

9. Public Comment

- a. Ms. Altenburger** asked **Councilor Verga** about his track record with respect to the fishing industry and what he proposes should be happening in the future as a councilor at large. **Councilor Verga** stated that he is trying to learn what he can about the industry. **Ms. Altenburger** stated that it would have been useful for him to speak up for the Fisheries Commission with the City Council. **Councilor Verga** stated that he is not married to DPA, that he has an open mind and is trying to learn what he can and make the best judgment calls. He stated that he has no regrets about the vote he took on Scott Memhard and he does not like the idea of the grants having strings attached.

- b. Ms. Page** stated that she is very frustrated about how grants are received and who they go to. She has learned that you have to speak their language and it takes the conduit of Jack Wiggin to put together a document that speaks their language. **Ms. Page** stated that what Ms. Nelson did in getting the \$7 million grant was all about knowing how to look at the budget, which is a pretty easy task. She believes our elected officials are not doing their jobs when this can be easily pulled out, which she believes is a big crime. **Ms. Garcia** stated that having the right proposal was key and she credited Ms. Nelson with pulling Steve Cadrin up here and asking how we can use fishing vessels for research to get money directly to the fleet.

- c. Mr. Orlando** stated that the City of Gloucester has the biggest percentage in the groundfish fishery and we are always going to own that if we keep our fleet and our infrastructure. **Ms. Garcia** requested that he get those figures to her.

10. Adjournment

A motion was made, seconded, and voted all in favor to adjourn at 8:31 PM.