

## **Gloucester Fisheries Commission**

Meeting Minutes – September 17, 2015

### Commission Members

Mark Ring, Chair  
Al Cottone, Vice Chair  
Paul Vitale  
Greg Verga, City Council

Joseph Orlando  
BG Brown  
Angela Sanfilippo  
Scott Swicker

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Commission Chair Mark Ring called the Meeting to order at 7:04 pm. The Meeting was held in the First Floor Conference Room at the Gloucester City Hall, 9 Dale Avenue, Gloucester, MA.

Present: Mark Ring, Al Cottone, Joseph Orlando, Scott Swicker, Greg Verga  
Absent: Angela Sanfillippo, BG Brown, Paul Vitale

### **MEETING MINUTES**

The Commission Members reviewed and discussed the Meeting Minutes of August 4, 2015.

Greg Verga made a motion to approve the Meeting Minutes of August 4, 2015.  
The motion was seconded by Joseph Orlando.  
The Motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

### **COMMISSION DISCUSSION – REPORT ON RECENT O & A MEETING REGARDING THE NEW LANGUAGE AND MAKEUP OF THE FISHERIES COMMISSION**

The Commission Members reviewed the proposed changes to the document.

Scott Swicker made a motion to accept the new written description regarding the composition of the Gloucester Fisheries Commission.

Greg Verga seconded the motion.  
The motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

The Commission Members agreed that Chair Mark Ring will write a letter regarding the open seat on the Fisheries Commission and he will deliver the letter to the Mayor of Gloucester.

Greg Verga made a motion for Chair Mark Ring to write and present a letter to the Mayor regarding the open seat on the Fisheries Commission.

Al Cottone seconded the motion.  
The motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

### **COMMISSION DISCUSSION – UPDATE ON THE BIN 3 DISASTER FUNDS AND THE RECENT MEETING HELD IN NEW BEDFORD**

The Commission Members discussed the Federal Disaster Aid which stems from a September 13, 2012 disaster declaration in the Northeast multi-species (ground fish) fishery by the Acting Secretary of Commerce. The Department of Marine Fisheries MF developed a draft spending plan. The Commission discussed the draft spending plan.

### **COMMISSION DISCUSSION – A LETTER TO PRESIDENT OBAMA TO KEEP THE CASHES LEDGE AREA OPEN TO COMMERCIAL FISHING**

Cashes Ledge is located in the Gulf of Maine, roughly 80 miles due east of Cape Ann.

The Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, Inc. wrote and will be sending a letter to United States President Obama. The follow is excerpts from the letter dated September 18, 2015:

"The Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association along with the following organizations: Atlantic Offshore Lobstermen's Association, Maine Lobstermen's Association, Downeast Lobstermen's Association, Maine Lobstermen's Union, Stellwagen Bank Charter Boat Association, Rhode Island Lobstermen's Association, the Gloucester Fisheries Commission and the American Bluefin Tuna Association (Organizations); collectively represent an estimated 10,500 commercial and charter fishermen from New Jersey to the Canadian Maritimes. Collectively, our Organizations are greatly concerned and strongly oppose the proposal put forth by environmental organizations to have Cashes Ledge and New England Canyons designated National Monuments. To unilaterally allow such a designation would usurp the established habitat and fisheries management public process and could be economically catastrophic not only to the commercial and charter fishermen, but also to hundreds of small coastal communities in New England. The iconic New England commercial lobster industry has historically fished within the Cashes Ledge and canyon areas without harm to the habitat/bottom.

Over the years, the commercial fishermen, state and federal fisheries managers, and environmental groups have continually agreed that the Cashes Ledge region of the Gulf of Maine is home to a number of unique and important marine environments. State and federal fisheries managers have recognized the significance of this area and taken steps to ensure the long term protection of this unique habitat area. This includes prohibitions of mobile bottom tending gear from the area. The only fixed gear commercial fishery currently allowed is the lobster fishery, which is managed under the Atlantic Coastal Fisheries Cooperative Act, via the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and NOAA Fisheries. These organizations have determined that the placement of lobster pots on the bottom has negligible impact on the habitat/bottom as Cashes Ledge continues to thrive even with lobster fishing taking place.

The management measures adopted to date have been the result of countless discussions, public hearings, rulings and collaborative efforts of scientists, commercial fishermen, state & federal fisheries managers, and other important stakeholders in the New England region. The key point is that these efforts have all been taken in an open, democratic, deliberative, public process that allows individuals to offer public comments on proposed restrictions, and offer suggestion on how to mitigate negative impacts. Furthermore, the New England Fishery Management Council (NEFMC) and NOAA Fisheries have agreed to prioritize the development of a coral amendment for the New England area, so consideration of the New England Canyons is premature at this time. The proposed Council management plan will be developed in an open public process that involves all parties, including the environmental organizations, and allow for extensive opportunities for comment from all concerned parties.

We strongly oppose the designation of Cashes Ledge and the New England Canyons as a National Monument under the Antiquities Act. Any designation for a National Monument would require a unilateral action by your office, so we are requesting that you reject any such effort and allow the current process by NEFMC, ASMFC, and NOAA Fisheries to take place."

Greg Verga made a motion to support and have the Chair sign on behalf of the Fisheries Commission the letter written by the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, Inc. requesting that Cashes Ledge remain open to Commercial Fishing. Al Cottone seconded the motion.

The motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

The Commission Members discussed and proposed that the Chair of the Fisheries Commission and the Mayor of Gloucester write a letter stating similar sentiments regarding allowing Commercial Fishing on Cashes Ledge in support of the letter written by the Massachusetts Lobstermen's Association, Inc.

Greg Verga made a motion to support having the Chair of the Fisheries Commission and the Mayor of Gloucester write and send a letter stating similar statements in support of allowing Commercial Fishing on Cashes Ledge.

Scott Swicker seconded the motion.

The motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

## **COMMISSION DISCUSSION – THE RECENT APPOINTMENT OF A NEW DIRECTOR OF THE DIVISION OF MARINE FISHERIES**

The Fisheries Commission Members discussed the fact that the Division of Marine Fisheries (DMF) announced the appointment of David E. Pierce, PhD, as Director. The Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) with the approval of the Commonwealth's nine-member citizen Advisory Board, and the Marine Fisheries Advisory Commission appoint the Director of the Division of Marine Fisheries. On September 10, 2015 the Advisory Commission unanimously supported DFG Commissioner George Peterson's recommendation of Dr. Pierce to head the agency. The Division's

former Director, Paul J. Diodati, retired from state service this past April. Dr. Pierce has served the Division since then in the role of Acting Director.

The Commission Members agreed that a letter should be written from the Commission which welcoming the New Director of Marine Fisheries.

Greg Verga made a motion to authorize the Chair of the Fisheries Commission to write and send a letter on behalf of the Fisheries Commission to the New Director of Marine Fisheries.

Joe Orlando seconded the motion.

The motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Susanne Altenberg shared with the Commission Members her thoughts regarding fleet diversity and environmentally green vessels.

### **MOTION TO ADJOURN**

Joseph Orlando made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Greg Verga seconded the motion.

The Motion passed by the majority of Commission Members present; 5:0.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the Chair declared the Meeting to be adjourned at 8:17 PM.

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Fisheries Commission is scheduled to be on October 15, 2015 at the Gloucester City Hall, 9 Dale Avenue, First Floor Conference Room, Gloucester, MA. The location and date of the meeting is subject to change.