

GLOUCESTER FISHERIES COMMISSION MEETING
June 8 2017
GLOUCESTER CITY HALL 9 DALE AVE.
Third Floor Conference Room 7 PM

Mark Ring, Chair
Al Cottone, Vice Chair

Commission Members
Joseph Orlando
Paul Vitale
Scott Swicker
Dave Levielle

Angela Sanfilippo was absent. There are currently two empty seats on the commission.

1. Call to Order

A quorum was presented at 7:11.

2. Approval of Minutes - March Meeting and Emergency Meeting in December 2016

Mark Ring motioned, Scott Swicker seconded, and all were in favor of approving the March 2017 minutes.

On December 12, 2016 an Emergency Meeting was held in order to accept the Whiting Letter regarding Ipswich Bay Experimental Fishery. Joe Orlando motioned to approve the minutes from this meeting; Paul Vitale seconded and the motion to accept was unanimous.

3. Discuss recent meeting on the Coral Habitat Amendment

Mark and Al attended the Coral Habitat meeting last week, which focused on keeping coral habitats pristine. They learned that Earthjustice, PEW, and others were vehement about closing *Linen Cora*. Lobster fishing would be exempt whereas red fish would be banned. Arthur Sawyer advocated not separating fishing groups; he worried it would turn categories against each other. Al Cattone remarked that the study of historical fishing activity referenced during the conference only dated back to 2010: not the 1980s and 1990s -- so Al Cattone made a comment that the research was insufficient.

4. Recap of the Council Coordinating Committee meeting in Gloucester

Al and Mark were present for the three-day Coordinating Committee meeting. Most pressing was the topic of Revisions to National Standard 1 guidelines. In particular there was discussion of an aggregate MSY: to take all the species as one maximum yield, to treat the fishery as a whole, rather than separate the species. But this was not successful. Reports from the subcommittees were given. Mark and Al felt that The Western Pacific Council was very pro-industry. One frustration with the committee meeting was that aside from the presenters no one was allowed to speak.

Positive comments about the Beauport Hotel and local restaurants were made by conference attendees.

Chris Oliver of Rockport, Texas has been appointed to Assistant Directorship of NOAA Fisheries. Previously he was Executive Director of the West Coast Council.

5. Discuss upcoming Whiting season and new Herring regulations

July 1st marks the start of the experimental season. Five boats get three days a week, six days in two weeks total with observers available, for 100% observer coverage, for the first two weeks. State run experimental fisheries allow 3,000 a day until 37% of the population is caught, probably starting at 400 pound retention as of July 20th.

Herring: got up to 6,000 every day all summer and now it can be landed on any day of the week. Last year herring could only be landed on the days that Maine docks were open. This helps those who sell bait.

In terms of regulated groundfish, Haddock was overfished last year. All other species were fished to under 5% discarded, but Haddock was 10%-12%. The experimental fishing experience will be repeated this year.

6. Review for approval of the Gloucester Fresh Terms of Agreement

Al Cattone spoke with a representative of the Gloucester Fresh pilot program. The goal is to get restaurants to participate in buying more fresh local fish. Although the details are not yet final, the general proposal is that dealers who sell fish to restaurants will communicate the details of Gloucester Fresh program to their clients, and request each business commit to buying a certain amount of locally docked fish per month. In exchange they will receive a Gloucester Fresh window sticker and promotional materials to display to guests.

Restaurants must have one local fish (a fish landed in Gloucester) on their menu every night in order to get the sticker.

Dave's question: What percentage of the fish that's landed in Gloucester stays in Gloucester? The group speculated that the number would be low as Gloucester fish usually gets landed at Gloucester, but processed at North Andover. Another question from the group: could Gloucester Fresh replace the fish dealers, in terms of communicating with restaurants?

7. Old Business

Discussion about how to prepare Whiting fish, and the general saleability of the fish through local purveyors. Whiting is considered to be a stable species.

8. New Business

Sooki and Mark met about the Atlantic Link Project; a hydroelectric dam from St. John, New Brunswick to Plymouth, MA. The project is estimated to be finished for 2022, the bid closes in November. As soon as the bid goes out, the sonar survey will go out. Surface surveys have been done already. This project will replace the energy from the closed Plymouth nuclear plant. The link will be made of copper cable, dredged and buried in a plowed trench six or seven feet deep. It will supply 600 megawatts over 360 miles, 85% in US waters, the rest in Canada.

The Massachusetts Lobsterman Association has published pamphlets to help dealers sell soft lobsters.

Sysco, the largest foodservice distribution network in the world, has purchased Red's Best Seafood Wholesale company of Boston.

9. Public Comment

No public comments were submitted.

10. Motion to Adjourn

At 8:05 Paul Vitale motioned to adjourn the meeting; Joe Orlando seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.