



CITY OF GLOUCESTER
HARBOR PLAN COMMITTEE
February 2nd, 2022
2:00 P.M.
Remote Meeting
Richard Noonan, Chair

MINUTES

Present Members: Rick Noonan, Al Cottone, Tony Gross, Tom Balf, Tessa Brown, Katie Kahl, Vito Giacalone

Absent Members:

Staff: Gregg Cademartori, Gemma Wilkens

Consultant Team: Matthew Littell – Utile, Will Cohen – Utile, Taskina Tareen – Utile, Zoë Mueller – Utile, Jason Hellendrung – Tetra Tech, Richard Jabba – Tetra Tech / Fort Point Associates, Jamie Fay – Tetra Tech / Fort Point Associates

Other Attendees: Andree Robert, Courtney Cole, Deborah Eliason, Jack Clarke, Karen Ristuben, Kathryn Glenn, Maggie Rosa, Mortillaro Lobster, Olivia Perez-O’Dess, Sal Di Stefano, Sarah Willwerth-Dyer, Susanne Altenburger, Thomas Burger

I. BUSINESS.

- A. Call to order
- B. Economic Development Goal Setting (30 min) - Taskina
 - a. Dec 1st Meeting Recap (10 min)
 - b. Process / Framework Review (5 min)
 - c. Q&A / Discussion (15 min)
- C. Regulatory Plan Opportunities (30 min) - Matthew/Jamie
 - a. Local Zoning (5 min)
 - b. DPA Allowed Uses (10 min)
 - c. Q&A / Discussion (15 min)
- D. Sub-Area Study and Considerations (30 min) - Zoe/Jason
 - a. Harbor Cove Active DPA, Small Lot Industrial (10 min)
 - b. Urban Renewal Era DPA, Large Lot Industrial/Port (10 min)
 - c. Former DPA, Marine Industrial (10 min)
- E. Next Steps/Meeting Minutes (5 min) - Taskina
- F. Adjournment

II. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL SETTING

- Taskina opened the discussion by recapping what happened at the December 1 public meeting. Feedback was that having a central entity makes sense, but that the MHP process should really be used to increase and expand the fishing industries, but also with concerns about the mechanisms for the creation of such an institution. The group touched on blue tech opportunities, but also the need to consider off-harbor location and what synergies they create. Lastly, the group touched on the tourism sector and how to bring people to the

waterfront and package that experience. The Utile team has worked to prioritize that into a set of key needs for the harbor, outlined as the set of “asks” on slide 5.

- That has led to a set of potential responses in four columns: DPA/Regulatory, Land-use/Local Regulation, Economic Incentive/Program, and External Economic Program. The key here is to figure out how to use the MHP to advance all of these.
- Taskina also provided an update on the schedule. While much time has been spent on economic analysis, the team now thinks it is time to pivot to regulatory issues. The public meeting will be pushed to March, and the draft plan will need a little more time as well.
- Ultimately, DEP wants to know: what are our goals or objectives for the harbor, and how will we seek to implement these ideas and find politics to guide development activity?
- Taskina also noted that the key issues to consider are still the same as at the start of this process. Preservation and economic change, embedding resiliency in all strategies, physical development strategy, etc. Taskina reminded the group about the economic strategy framework.
- Taskina then opened a discussion for questions.
- Tony Gross was pleased with this so far. Katie Kahl looked at the slides in advance, but now wishes she had gone back to her notes to refresh her memory, and will do this later. Tessa Brown agrees, and has questions on some of the future slides.
- Vito Giacalone, on the slide of “your asks,” sees maintaining culture and ownership listed. One comment there on land use is that this is in conflict with other desires for the harbor. He missed some of that previous meeting and would like to understand some of the context there. In response, Zoe noted that given the level of investment on infrastructure needed paired with desire to have control over docking and berthing space, this can be hard to do with private ownership and small parcels. Mr. Giacalone suggests to call it not an inherent conflict, but more of a consideration.
- Tom Balf has two comments. The strength in tourism: from the MHP and intent of this group, if we do our job in growing the fishing economy, the tourism goals will be met. Additionally, the supporting innovation and blue tech outside of the harbor: there were some differences of opinion regarding the economic development associated with maritime technology, but it is his opinion that blue tech development that brings jobs and young people to the harbor is really valuable. Doesn’t want us to think of blue tech as off-harbor, he thinks that is a false divide that he doesn’t want to create.
- Rick Noonan would like to better understand the impediments today for someone who wants to be in the business. Investment, shoreside processing, for all of it – if someone wants to spend money today, what is the impediment? To Tom’s point, he also was curious about the coexistence of these uses. GMGI has brought enormous investment.
- Vito Giacalone agrees that we have all of the options we need at the port already. The Gloucester community already has a fishing preservation fund to assist with this. Starting in 2007, have accumulated 58 fishing permits, hold them in a bank, and through a system, can lease all of the quota from that. The permit bank is the largest holder on four of the major species, and that is distributed to the individual sectors. That cooperative has done very well, much of it because of the permit bank and other support. What is missing is young fishermen who are starting at the bottom, apprenticing on vessels. The top five or six vessels still look for fishermen to help, and they’re grossing now that used to take five or six years. The vessels are old, the creature comforts have been exceeded by expectations. Costs have gone up, and the capacity to make money, though, is as good as it’s been in a long time.
- Rick Noonan is less sure that the capacity to make money is because of higher prices. It’s not as clear to him whether it’s because prices are up or the counts of fish are up.
- Haddock counts are way up. Not that we’re making more money, but we are landing more weight. Perhaps additional outreach to the high school can assist with this.

- Rick also asks about the shoreside absorption of that catch, whether the catch is going to Boston or Portland. Understanding where the fish moves is what he most wants to understand.
- Vito Giacalone notes that it's ultimately a human resources issue, where the faces are still the same as they've been for decades. We are good at flipping whole fish, but nobody is opening up a new large volume fish processing plant in Gloucester, due to pretreatment needs for the sewer.
- Tom Balf thinks we need to figure out how to make all of this work and that it's unlikely to be one central authority. A focus on the capacity that's been talked about to process and pretreat.

III. REGULATORY PLAN OPPORTUNITIES

- Matthew started to ask what the current regulations are doing for us. When thinking of the boxes, we can focus on DPA/Regulatory changes and the Land-use/Local Regulation side as what goes into the MHP. This means that there are a range of strategies at the categories of Local Zoning and City Site Development, at the level of the DPA and Chapter 91, and at the level of the Permitting and Licensing Process.
- Matthew notes that the zoning hasn't really changed since the last MHP. It's all primarily Marine Industrial, though of course some of the uses allowed in MI aren't permitted inside the DPA as a primary use unless they have a strong water-dependent quality to them.
- Matthew says that the team does not currently think that the dimensional regulations are a major impediment right now, but that we will continue to look at it. Moreover, looking at the remainder of the framework (NOTE: Internet went out)
- Matthew notes that a range of uses are allowed in the DPA. As a reminder, part of the last plan centered on redistributing the allowance of supporting uses. (NOTE: Internet went out for a while)
- Matthew notes that we pulled together a few examples of where supporting uses happen in other ports.
- Richard Jabba describes the first example of Mystic Pier One in Charlestown. There is water-dependent automobile processing on the ground floor, and the upper floor is a mezzanine with a designated parking area as well. The mezzanine has no required tie to the water-dependent use. This was permitted three years ago. They were allowed as a supporting use, by providing economic support through having the dual uses. Rental space could be a supporting use as long as it provides financial support to the underlying operation, as long as it isn't hotel or residential. Additionally, Richard notes that the required parking was set back, so that it doesn't conflict with the water-dependent needs.
- Kathryn Glenn clarifies that the requirements of supporting uses is that they do have direct financial or operational support of a water-dependent industrial use. You can't have a supporting use that doesn't provide that support.
- Rick reframes that if the building hadn't been built for the water-dependent use, the allowable supporting use wouldn't happen.
- Matthew briefly touches on the East Boston Shaw's as an additional example, but in the interest of time also shows the Mac Bell property on 44 Commercial St. Matthew notes that he has been working to redevelop the property to diversify his tenants. While the supporting uses described elsewhere sit on very large parcels, it is important to note that the situation is much different on smaller parcels like this.
- Kathryn notes that that building was originally on piers, so the harbor planning process would be needed to assist with adjusting the uses on such a situation. There is a 100% requirement for water-dependent uses on buildings supported on piers.

- Zoe asks whether the requirement is across the whole building or just the footprint. Kathryn clarifies that if the bottom half is WDI, and the top half is not, then it is considered 50% water-dependent calculated, so the 0% over pilings really is 0%, unless through a harbor plan.
- Tessa notes that she looked at this building as well. From experience, it was almost impossible to get a lease from Mac, so this might not be a good example. She couldn't see how anyone who would want to rent a business would be able to look at that building, and that the issue may not entirely be due to zoning. Tessa wants to know if temporary uses had ever been granted in the past. Gregg notes that there really haven't been, also that there's a difference between local process and state licensing. This might be something
- - TBD/Vito-Kathryn question - have to review recording (will agree: i am not totally following this)
 - i. This is related to the previous plan, that the 100/0% water dependent rule didn't apply before, so it's new to this plan.
- - TBD/ Jamie explanation
- Rick: Cape Ann lobster man would be a better case study for conditions on the ground today, finding space to grow their business, doing a survey of capacity on the waterfront and finding the space. Secondary message is value capture and land capacity that needs to happen, if you need inventory of processors who left the harbor (3-4). Cape Ann is a good example of growing business.
- Rick: Another part of this case study exercise, ocean alliance and how to manage more blue tech opportunities.
- Matthew: Not overselling 44 Commercial St as a good or bad example, just an example of an owner trying to make use of supporting use and finding it a difficult process. Would like to learn more about Tessa's operations, how its grown, how as a tenant you secured leases and how those logistics worked. your property is not in the DPA. but important for us to understand relationship between licensing and tenaning

IV. SUB-AREA STUDY AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Zoe describes the use of subareas to think in a more site-specific way.
- Five subareas: downtown commercial district, harbor cove, urban-renewal-era lot consolidation of the primary industrial port, the former DPA marine industrial, and adjacent residential, recreational, and industrial areas that surround the port but are not part of the ecosystem.
- Rick: clarification on Tessa's property expanding into the sub-area 3
- Zoe: shows a map with an inventory of parcel uses, grouped into fish/shellfish/boat, blue tech and office, public parks, and (NOTE: NEED TO DESCRIBE THESE MAPS BETTER), as well as a map showing public and private ownership patterns of property.
- Zoe also shows maps of truck access and infrastructure condition assessment.
- Zoe describes how the purpose of this assessment is to find potential for funding for this infrastructure assessment.
- For the Harbor Cove subarea, Zoe describes the overall typology of the parcels, that in Harbor Cove they are predominantly deep and skinny parcels, and describes their overall considerations and needs.
- Tom: make sure we study transportation issues associated with this area (harbor cove), the need to find systems that can work for both commercial fishing activity (loading, unloading etc) as well as the vibrant tourism area
- Vito: Fishermans wharf is yellow on the use map being presented and shouldn't be - should be purple, and that the white area next to it should be purple too.
- Zoe notes that the idea was to note that there could be dynamic uses happening there, but indeed it should be purple.

- Vito: the area near porter should have a truck route placed there, to use the hammerhead property (need to review – unclear!) Also important to note what a big deal the new FEMA line is. These additional feet mean that major property investments are needed when projects are being improved. This 14’ height is dramatically harder than the 10’ and 12’ that much of the city otherwise deals with.
- Kathryn: important to remember that the 14’ is quite likely to rise over time as the decades pass.
- Rick: Also important to remember the harbor depths and their needs to comply with them. Trying to comply with regulations leads to a question of where the money comes from. Gloucester has been a DPA since the 70s, and if it’s too hard to comply with a federal regulation, then what to do?
- Zoe: noting that this gets at a larger question about maintenance of those depths, which has been true for a while. Zoe notes that the Army Corps has provided some detailed information to the team. The map of Harbor Cove is showing the current depths. (Need to review here too, the recording)
- Zoe: in the industrial port area, the issues around trucking are paramount, particularly many of the upland processing and infrastructure questions that have been raised. Many of these parcels have bulkheads.
- Rick: National Grid is doing a lot of work, and would be good to know the standards around the work that they’re doing too. City has done an enormous amount of work on sea level rise.
- Gregg - TBD, watch recording
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V. NEXT STEPS / MEETING MINUTES

- TBD

VI. ADJOURNMENT

1. Motion to adjourn was made by Al Cottone. No voting occurred at this meeting.