



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Division of Marine Fisheries

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SEAFOOD MARKETING PROGRAM STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

April 16, 2021

Held Virtually Via Zoom

In attendance:

Steering Committee members: Senator Bruce Tarr, Representative Susan Gifford, Director Dan McKiernan, Colin, Bonita Oehlke, Angela Sanfilippo, Beth Casoni, Laura Foley, Tory Bramante, Bob Colbert, Frank Mirarchi, Ed Barrett

DMF members: Julia Kaplan, Kevin Creighton

Members of the public: Kim Starbuck, Ed Doherty

Wendy Mainardi: Welcome everyone, thank you for coming out on this rainy morning. Welcome to our new delegates. I am Wendy, the Seafood Marketing Program Coordinator. I have been back to work for two months now and there is a lot of action brewing.

Our last steering committee pre-COVID it was suggested by this group to do a buyers meeting at the Expo and this is our pivot. On May 4th we are hosting a zoom event for 3 hours, two hours approximately which are private room zoom meetings between buyers and sellers. One hour is a presentation by DMF, breaks and wrap up. At the end we are going to do a giveaway raffle to reward those people who are still participating, and I will probably be getting in touch with this group to see if someone would be able to donate a quick tour of their facility to the lucky buyer. 10 more buyers were added at the time that this breakdown of buyers was made, so it's not accurate but you can get a sense that institutions make up a fair amount after restaurants. Other is caterers, small food businesses, distributor is Sodexo for example. We are very pleased to have the Boston Globe in attendance. This should be a good event and a proof of concept for the seafood marketing program doing such trade events in the future. The invitation went out to our entire permitted list. Today is the deadline to sign up if you are interested, or know someone who is, please get in touch.

I am also really excited about this project. We have been working with a grad student to create a survey that will be going out to our permitted wholesale and retailers in the next few weeks. The survey instrument is almost ready for review. It would probably be closer if I didn't keep tweaking it. We are hoping that some of you might help us by taking a test run. We are trying to capture Covid responses, the cost of responses, the interest in local seafood over the past year and the general question of what Massachusetts seafood is sold in state. I don't want to squander this opportunity so I look forward to hearing your comments when the time comes and I look forward to sharing the results.

This was our digital billboard and Mass DOT signage from a few years ago and we are in the process of setting up another round. I will let you know when you can expect to see this go up. Again, this is free as

a public service announcement program and we just have to nail down our messaging for Summer 2021 which is part of the larger conversation about advertising...

Last year we spent more money than ever have on a single piece of the program. \$72,000 and we wanted to gauge the interest of this group about doing it again this summer, where to focus, for how long, and any other thoughts you have about messaging or otherwise. I have been in touch with NPR so we could diversify our audience, for example. Last year our timing was too rushed to do a 4th of July specific ad, but this year we could do that. Does anyone have any thoughts?

Beth Casoni: Please look into WROR. We've brought lobstermen in there to talk, they are willing to have people in as guests.

Laura Foley: It could be important to respond officially to SeaSpracy via PR, it's been really damaging. Some sort of expenditure would be helpful to have a voice from the industry.

Director McKiernan: Could we reach out to NFI and see if they are involved, this is a national issue.

Tori Bramante and Laura Foley: We are all for the Mass DOT billboards, and what about other PSA avenues as well?

Beth Casoni: Please turn the billboard into a sign with a QR code and distribute.

Wendy Mainardi: The Woods Hole Sea Grant applied for a grant from their national office and we are half of their project. They wanted to contribute to our existing grant program and we thought that this would be a win-win for everyone if the funding came through. We would be administering the grant program and we would be asking for assistance from them and you on the review side. We are probably going to be doing it differently than in the past. We are going to shorten the written grant application and have people present their projects over zoom for 5 minutes. We will know if we got the grant in June, and we will start spreading the word immediately with the open application period being September/October. There will be a winnowing process then the proposal presentations would be in December with projects starting January 1st and going for a year and half. We are casting a wide net but we are also looking for Covid relief projects. This is a lot of money so keep this in mind and please spread the word.

These are some statistics about the food security infrastructure grant compiled by The Massachusetts Food System Collaborative. It gives us some interesting information. Fisheries was 10% of the total applications, with a total amount funded of \$3,839,000 or 11% of the total amount of money funded. When they analyzed the funding, there were a lot of very large project funded, and as Winton Pitcoff says in his report, "Producer applicants were significantly under-represented in the final grants, with farms and fisheries receiving just 11% and 18% of the funds they had requested" I heard that there might be another round of this funding, does anyone on this call know anything about that?

We will now turn to Kim Starbuck and Story Reed for a quick few slides on the port profile project. I have a few more slides after that.

Story Reed: Kristin Uiterwik was supposed to give this presentation. Urban Harbors Institute was the lead on this project as part of Seafood Marketing Grant project. This report is a much needed document of ports in Massachusetts. It describes what is caught, where it is landed, the values, trends in fisheries

and infrastructure. This had input from the industry and from harbormasters, and it provides recommendations. This is the first time all of this is captured on a municipal level. We had 300 fishermen respond to this survey. Parking was often cited as an issue for industry. This information can be used for budgeting, legislation, and the value of fishing in the community. This is hosted on a mass.gov page. There will be a need to refresh this every few years.

Senator Tarr: We think this is very valuable to legislators, and I think the Seafood Economic Council will be very interested in this. Could you present this to the Coastal Caucus?

Ed Barrett: Because of COVID, there are many more boats. In Hyannis, they raised the dock prices. You might see reduced landings of fluke in the summer because of this. Seafood production starts at the dock.

Wendy Mainardi: This summer I want to combine the port profile information and do postings of ports along with short industry interviews. This is an image from Our Wicked Fish that is run by Amanda Davis and this is part of the grant project from us that she is completing. We can use her fishermen interviews as a starting point, and this with port profiles can be a great way to promote Massachusetts seafood by “telling the story.” We wouldn’t limit it to fishermen and I hope that a few of you would lend some photos and a quote for this project.

Another aspect to our summer promotion in the absence of events is this ongoing project that I am excited to jump back into. We are creating a web page that will display real time seafood landings to tell the consumer what is available. This is an example of what Rhode Island does. This is combination with the port profile postings with industry interviews and advertisements should really start to paint the picture for people hopefully.

Lastly I wanted to share that our Chef Series last summer went well into the fall after I was on leave. We have over 30 chef recipes and many great photographs and thank you Julia Kaplan for doing this work while I was gone. If anyone wants some good culinary photos, please get in touch.

Director McKiernan: We want to expose this content to the public more.

Beth Casoni: We have opportunity to connect through our social media. Also CZM has a newsletter.

Senator Tarr: We can circulate this through legislators, we just need to have the information.

Colin from Senator Dykstras’s office: Add these videos and recipes to the QR code.

Frank Mirarchi: The majority of the public doesn’t know fisheries policy. US fisheries are the worlds best managed and hyper conservative to protect resources. How do we explain the difference in a context that the average consumer can understand? Are we losing part of our client base because people are afraid of environmental harm? All of your marvelous work is being undermined by fear and misunderstanding. There are great things happening in the oceans: species rebounding and ghost gear being pulled up.

Wendy Mainardi: Let’s see what has been done by the national organizations.

Angela Sanfilippo: We should come up with a document that describes how fisherman are fishing. The public doesn’t understand how fish are caught today. This is a real piece.

Director McKiernan: When I read about fisheries in the news I find the comments to be valuable so we should all weigh in.

Laura Foley: We should engage with the media: Chronicle, Globe, Herald.

Tori Bramante: We could use a rebuttal to the negative messaging in the form of a document or documentary.

Beth Casoni: I think we need a national label for sustainability. Not MSC, something from NFI. 45 years of Magnuson debunking SeaSpiracy. We need language, messaging, on this sensitive subject.

Frank Mirarchi: We need to highlight some good things being done around the state. These projects are being done in MA. These stories need to be told.

Angela Sanfilippo: We need to publish this. Even fishermen don't understand what Magnuson is.

Beth Casoni: What about a Fisheries 101 class or publication.

Senator Tarr: What we provide is sustainability. I support the national sustainability label.

Angela Sanfilippo: We have recipes to donate for printing.

Laura Foley: We also have recipes.