

**Summary of
Meeting of the Taunton Bay Advisory Group
6 PM Tuesday August 19, 2008
Sullivan Town Hall
Facilitated by Sherman Hoyt**

Advisors present: Mike Briggs, Frank Dorsey, Shep Erhart, Lee Hudson, Doug Kimmel, Slade Moore, Steve Perrin, and John Sowles.

Public members: none

With the harvest plan more or less worked out, emphasis on this meeting was to check in with the Advisors about their assessment of progress to date and the process we have been using. With that, an open discussion followed.

Slade asked where his report on important subtidal ecological elements goes from here. Some of his recommendations were not included in ultimate DMR recommendation. He was concerned that these issues that were not addressed might be lost. He suggested that we need to figure out ways to articulate what we agreed or conceded to for the documented record. John explained that although not all options were explicitly discussed in the harvest plan, that all were considered and that perhaps, if there was time, he could elaborate on how DMR arrived where they did. John also noted that just because an option did not appear this time around, all options are still viable and might emerge at a later date.

Lee thought, that overall, the group was doing a good job advising DMR although not necessarily all agreeing. But most important is that points of view are represented for DMR to consider.

Doug felt comfortable not having to always agree. Silence implies assent. He does think that there is more agreement than maybe we realized. The advisors provide a full range of opinions. Frank affirmed that our modus operandi is to voice opinions. Shep thought neutrality is OK and part of process. Steve thought there is another way to get the full range of opinions by asking each member where they stand on an issue to get sense of weight. Shep noted that our mode might change if we complete our group with 14 advisors. Sherm suggested that it is easier if we don't need to get to consensus.

John expressed his concern that advisors will burn out and wanted to be sure they are still interested in participating. Also, in the legislative report, all options are open. Frank recommended preparing a calendar for recommendations and endpoints. Lee said that if we do not come to a decision, then the issue comes up over and over again. Frank noted that FOTB's interest in eelgrass and that following Steve's and Seth's presentations, there was no discussion yet dragging is allowed near Burying Island where eelgrass beds historically have been adjacent.

Shep liked the idea of putting a research agenda on the fall schedule.

Frank generally liked the meetings. Doug thought we were doing important work. Lee thought continuity in advisors has been good. Steve interested in personal - interpersonal relationships and how the brain works. He feels we have not done the job needed to bring non-advisors up to speed and that we need to change how we do the meetings. He suggested looking into a different type of meeting. He is getting mixed messages about how successful we are. On the one hand, we are going through the motions well but on the other hand, attitudes are not changing. John asked if we thought we were not effective. Lee thinks we've provided the information but harvesters meet on own terms.

Lee and Shep noted that at the harvester meeting, harvesters seemed to work well together as group. They got all the materials and met as a private group. There was back and forth education between harvesters and the advisory group. The education is not happening fast but there does appear to be progress. Frank likes the education role and sees it as way to make the difference such as Steve noted that was lacking and asked to add education to the issues we need to address.

Shep thought we are also starting to build trust with harvesters. Slade thinks that harvesters are compelled, not voluntarily, to participate. He concluded that from statements such as 'just leave it to us and leave us alone' that sends the message that they don't understand and are not doing this willingly. Lee countered that these guys know the effects of unsustainability but the current system doesn't allow or promote for stewardship. Doug thought we are all on a learning curve and it will take time. Education has many facets and we are all educable. Slade shares Steve's concerns but would not force them to get together with us. Lee noted that harvesters came up with a code of operation in 2000, long before the Taunton Bay effort. It was a stewardship document of what harvesters could agree on. It might not use an ecosystem approach but it is proof that harvesters can work together. Steve thought this was ok but wants to be sure we move ahead and do not let other issues fall by the wayside.

Lee added that the small Taunton Bay area might be too small for effort that goes into it. It might be better to look at a larger area if we are doing this again. Doug liked the focus on a small area as a test, linking research and management along with harvesting. Frank likes picking small battles.

John asked about value of subcommittees. Frank suggested that subcommittees are fine if there are specific tasks, but without them, there is no need. Lee noted that email has largely replaced the need for subcommittees. John asked about forwarding private email exchanges to the group. Most wanted to be included so they could know what is going on but agreed no need to reply. Lee asked about including others outside the advisory group? Could we develop another email list? John said he would do so. Steve suggested that we all do our best to speak once but do it well. Sherm noted that email is lousy at resolving disagreements. If there is a serious issue, we need to talk.

John requested names to fill in Advisory Group. Lee thinks we should bring new members up to speed as group rather than one by one. We all hoped that we could involve the municipalities more and it does not necessarily need to be an official

representative of the town. Doug reminded us that we are looking for perspectives, not necessarily representatives. We are also short on fishery representatives.

At the next meeting, when Antonio is present we should bring up the issue of meeting the process and in particular, how to involve the non-advisors who attend without interfering with the business of the meeting. So far, meetings have worked because we are small. We could get into trouble if we don't know policy. Shep thought that if a non-advisory wants or needs to speak but has to wait for 2 hr, they could become very dissatisfied.

On subject of publicity and outreach Frank offered that the FOTB is willing to sponsor a public informational meeting in late September that is more publicized. This would be especially important if people are going to see boats dragging in the bay. Lee thinks liability of being associated with the FOTB is not as strong now and this might be good test. We tentatively scheduled a joint FOTB and DMR public meeting for Thursday, September 25th with John to talk about the plan, as a concerned citizen, and a harvester.

Sherm reported that the Working Waterfront newspaper wants a story on this project, the Marine Dialogue Group wants an update, and that California Sea Grant has invited him to make a presentation at an upcoming conference.

Lee is not sure we have come far enough to be a called model. Slade thought, yes, although not complete. Frank talked about preparing a one year report. We are a model of how to start process and have a history of difficulties. But the product is unfinished. The second question is 'what is success?' Doug thought the biggest accomplishment is moving from the Advisory group doing the work to DMR and harvesters working it out. Frank believed that the legislation, e.g. the major substantive issue, and the awareness of the Legislature was success. Representative Eaton thought that the process was fascinating even if a year ago we did not think it could work.

Doug made a motion that Sherm should go to California. Steve encouraged it. Lee stated that advisors can't speak to media. But John said that was actually not true. Anyone can speak about their personal views and thoughts but just can not represent the Advisory Group. Steve noted that we were hampered early on by mistrust but the climate has changed. John agreed to develop an outreach list and maybe a calendar on EA or local town calendar. One small step at a time.

Sherman reported that the mussel harvester meeting went very well. It was clear that the harvesters don't like it but are willing to try to make it work. Harvesters are "doers."

The next was scheduled for September 16th at the Taunton Bay Education Center.