

In accordance with notice to members of the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council's Ocean Special Area Management Plan (SAMP) subcommittee, a meeting of the subcommittee was held on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. at the University of Rhode Island (URI) Coastal Institute Hazard Room, Narragansett, RI.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael M. Tikoian, Chairman
Paul Lemont
Don Gomez
David Abedon

STAFF PRESENT

Grover Fugate, CRMC Executive Director
Laura Ricketson-Dwyer, CRMC Public Educator
and Information Coordinator

Others present: Jen McCann, URI/Coastal Resources Center and RI Sea Grant; Kate Manning, URI/CRC

Call to order. M. Tikoian called the meeting to order at 4:40 p.m.

Item 1. The subcommittee reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting, and accepted them unanimously. P. Lemont motioned to approve the minutes; D. Abedon seconded the motion. M. Tikoian added that B. Goldman would not be in attendance.

Item 2. G. Fugate gave the subcommittee an overview of the second quarter progress report from the Ocean SAMP management team, including explanations on the budget. G. Fugate reminded the subcommittee that there would be cash-flow model adjustments to the projected budget because the researchers missed the field season in 2008. More monies would be back-loaded he said to accommodate that. M. Tikoian asked what the difference was between the original projected yearly budget breakdown and the expected breakdown with that change. G. Fugate said that the EDC was flexible in the yearly breakdowns and that the SAMP team was asked to prepare two budgets for year one – one based on the \$1.6 million expected and one for what the team thought would be needed for year one. P. Lemont asked if the SAMP team does not use the exact amount of money, if the rest would be taken away. G. Fugate said that the understanding was that the state has allotted \$3.2 million for the project. M. Tikoian explained that his line of questioning was to educate himself so that if the Governor has questions (in his role as the chair of the EDC board), he would have answers.

D. Gomez asked if each of the researchers had arrived at their budgets, and G. Fugate said that the researchers were told what was wanted of them, prepared their budgets for that work and then most of the budgets were cut back. D. Abedon commented that in the eyes of the researcher, you can never do too much research. G. Fugate said that most of what is needed for the SAMP is not original research, but a lot of pooling existing data and then presenting it in a way that is relevant to the SAMP. Some data, like the bird data, is new and critical to the SAMP process, G. Fugate said. D. Abedon asked how much funding in the Cape Wind project was spent on birds, and G. Fugate said more than

\$4 million, and over \$30 million spent to-date on the EIS. M. Tikoian added that there was no guarantee of not having to do an EIS, and G. Fugate said no.

(Item 2b.) M. Tikoian referenced two budget documents produced for the subcommittee by K. Manning, and she noted that outstanding expenses that had not been posted to the account were listed on the documents. M. Tikoian asked for clarification on an overhead figure, and K. Manning explained that it's a percent that all universities take for expenditures. D. Abedon explained that it's for the university's overhead, and that the money doesn't go directly to the researcher. G. Fugate further explained that the money goes into the department budget, which is allocated to the faculty through payroll based on time and effort. There is no separate check for work on the SAMP. D. Gomez asked if funds from one line item could be moved to fund another line item, and G. Fugate said it had not presented itself yet. D. Gomez then asked if the economic stimulus plan would help in SAMP funding at all, and G. Fugate said that the CRMC had submitted it for consideration but at this point, he wasn't sure. M. Tikoian asked about how the quarters were set up for the progress reports, and whether by July 31, 2009 if all the milestones would be completed for year one, and K. Manning explained that the quarterly reports coincided with the calendar year, and yes.

M. Tikoian asked for more information on the policy aspect of the year one milestones, and G. Fugate explained that it was largely research and writing, trying to pull research and resources together from other countries for the comparative analysis, and then turn that into a document.

M. Tikoian asked what the encumbrances were and how they were accounted for. K. Manning said that the total was \$26,000 for the second quarter, and that the costs included a number of things like subcontractors or student wages. She added that it makes sure the university is protected from overspending.

G. Fugate said that the activities included in the second quarterly report were written like a grant document so the report contains things like the cruise report, and meeting agendas and documents, which all serve as support documents for the activities themselves. G. Fugate also said that there was a researcher update meeting two weeks ago to see where the researchers are in their data collection, and to share information. The projects, he said, are going to produce documents in the next few months; some studies are just beginning (like the bird study). G. Fugate added that there have also been meetings with the federal partners.

M. Tikoian expressed concern that the amount of pages in the latest progress report do not clearly identify what has been done to-date, what is going to be done next, and there is no list of what has been accomplished since the SAMP process began. D. Gomez agreed that it would be helpful to have a milestone chart. J. McCann explained that the EDC was not specific in how the reports should be structured, but directed the subcommittee members to pages four and five of the report, which gives an overview of the highlights and accomplishments during the second quarter. M. Tikoian asked what was left to complete for milestone one, and J. McCann answered that the essential habitat and marine trades still needed to be done. G. Fugate further explained that the team still has to collect bird, marine mammals and endangered species data, and a series of data layers still need to be compiled. J. McCann suggested the subcommittee concentrate on the first 10 pages to get a good sense of what had been done.

D. Abedon suggested that the report have page numbers for the appendices. D. Gomez suggested that there be hyperlinks to sections of the report being referenced.

D. Abedon asked if the EDC's primary focus was on renewable energy, and G. Fugate replied yes, but that the EDC was well educated on the need for a SAMP and that all renewable projects would have to go through that process. G. Fugate added that a large part of the research being done is renewable-based, but that the team and others were keeping the big picture of the SAMP in mind. M. Tikoian agreed and said that was the purpose of creating the firewall between the SAMP process and the developer, which has been done well, he said.

D. Abedon asked if the developer would be putting up radar for their own bird studies, and G. Fugate replied that there are discussions underway to standardize the methods and equipment used throughout the process so that the information is easily shared.

D. Gomez also asked that the final progress report have a page spelling out all acronyms, a milestone chart, hyperlinks and some uniformity between the line items. Graphics would also be so much good, he said, suggesting a quad chart.

J. McCann said that the plan is by the end of year one to produce a four-page report to document the accomplishments. M. Tikoian asked if the SAMP team negotiated the due dates of the reports, and G. Fugate said no, the EDC dictated those. M. Tikoian asked that the subcommittee receive the draft reports sooner so that there would be better dialogue at the subcommittee meetings, and to schedule those meetings in accordance with the drafts being available. P. Lemont said he'd like at least one week to look over the reports. M. Tikoian asked for the status of meetings with the fisheries group, and G. Fugate reported that the discussions continue, and that the SAMP team is currently trying to map the user areas and gear types. The result will be a series of map layers showing fishing activities per time of year and gear type. J. McCann said that the team still needs to meet with the recreational fishing industry and recreational boating groups. M. Tikoian asked about the status of the marine transportation aspect of the data, and G. Fugate reported that the team is in good standing with that; data is being collected and the team already has the commercial vessel traffic data.

M. Tikoian asked if the Council would be approving chapters as they are written. J. McCann said that the SAMP team hopes to connect the stakeholder process to the creation of the chapters, and that the team feels confident in the plan outlined in the progress report from now until August; after that time the team will be writing a few chapters at a time. Year two, she said, will mostly be for the creation of the SAMP chapters. M. Tikoian said he wants a mechanism for quicker review of the reports so the subcommittee can weigh in as soon as possible. G. Fugate said that the team is doing well on everything within its control; the problems are in waiting for other agencies and states. M. Tikoian suggested speaking to Congressional delegates to improve that.

ADJOURN. The subcommittee voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted February 19, 2009 by
Laura Ricketson-Dwyer, CRMC public educator and information coordinator*