

Rhode Island Seafood Marketing Collaborative

Minutes of Thursday, October 18, 2012 start 2:00pm

RIDEM, Room 300

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On Thursday October 18, 2012, the Rhode Island Seafood Marketing Collaborative was called to order by Director Janet Coit for its fifth formal meeting (first meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> year) at approximately 2:07 p.m. at the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, 235 Promenade Street, Room 300, Providence, RI.

**In attendance were: (see attendance list) 26 attendees.**

## **Collaborative Members**

Janet Coit, Director of DEM  
Mike Walker, Senior Project Manager, EDC  
Robert Ballou, DEM  
Ken Ayars, DEM  
Ernest Julian, DOH  
John Mullen, DOH

## **Advisory Council Members**

Ann Cook, Co-founder, The Local Catch, Inc.  
Bill Silkes, President, American Mussel Harvesters  
Hirotsugu Uchida, Assistant Professor, URI  
Ryan Clark, Town Dock  
Derek Wagner, Nick's on Broadway  
Kathryn Farrington, Discover Newport  
Mike McGiverney, RI Shellfish Association

## **Others**

Representative Peter Martin  
Lori Pivarnik, URI Food and Nutrition  
Lori Blackwell, Author  
Katrina White, EDC  
Steven Anderson, RI PCBA  
Bob Rheault, ECSCIA  
Sarah Schumann  
Nicole Pollock, DEM  
Rayna Maguire, DEM

Director Janet Coit welcomed all. She proceeded to ask all participants to introduce themselves, stating name, title or role/interest in participation with the RI Seafood Marketing Collaborative / Advisory Council.

## **1. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Director Coit began with a few announcements:

- 1) First Annual Galilee Seafood Festival held on September 6, 2012 and it was a great success. Good events, seafood, and tours of seafood facilities at the Port..
- 2) Recent Projo front page article in Food mentioned the fishing industry. October 7, 2012 Projo article.
- 3) Ayars mentioned that many interagency activities are now involved in working towards institutional buying and new opportunities for small local businesses in Rhode Island.
- 4) October 26, 2012 was National Food Day. Several local events in Rhode Island from October 24-26<sup>th</sup> sponsored in concert with Rhode Island Food Policy Council.
- 5) DEM is proposing regulations around aquaculture regarding seed time duration in hatcheries.

Director Coit asked for open floor announcements:

- a) Wagner mentioned a Chef's Collaborative event in Boston promoting seafood specifically "trash-fish dinners", (underutilized seafood dinners).
- b) Farrington announced Newport Restaurant Week – November 2-11, 2012. Trend from restaurants are "...all about sustainable locally-sourced foods".
- c) Blackwell mentioned her newest seafood cookbook. Many recipes feature underutilized species of seafood, and easy to prepare seafood dishes.
- d) McGiveney added a transplant day will occurred today on Greenwich Bay and High banks.
- e) White mentioned a June 2013 event called Star Chefs, which is a New England event that maybe held in Providence showcasing "Trace and Trust" and "The Local Catch".
- f) White also mentioned an increase in inbound Chinese tourists, and Rhode Island Seafood is the logical food for these guests.
- g) Farrington requested we explore the possibility of uploading events on to the website. Rheault added that there should be more videos on the website illustrating easy methods on "how to prepare / cook seafood and shellfish. Perhaps Twitter, You Tube, and Facebook streaming videos.
- h) Coit also mentioned a recent Projo Article about Hope & Main Food Center. Ayars added that this facility, once opened, would offer a public kitchen for rent to prepare and refrigerate food. They are also filming videos and offering training classes on health and safety food production.
- i) Coit reminded the group that Election Day is approaching and Bond Issues #5 and #6 are on the ballot, and DEM is supportive.

## **2. STATUTE REVIEW**

Director Coit provided reminders to all members regarding:

- Commitments to the Task Force and/or Advisory Council require a 2-year term. This 2-year term ends under statute for current members after April 2013.
- Also, formal meetings are required 4 times per year, and,
- The statute also requires a formal written report of milestones/achievements of member meetings and subcommittee meetings be reported by April 30, 2013.

### **3. PROGRESS AND PRIORITIES**

Subcommittees will continue preparing progress reports, and establish outlines based on the April 2012 report, which will serve as the guidance to move forward.

#### **BRANDING: Robert Ballou**

BRANDING: Robert Ballou reported on the status of the Branding subcommittee work. *“What is the definition of local seafood”?*

- a) Ballou asked members to review the prospectus in the meeting handouts regarding RIGL Section 2-1-8 as potential suggestion for adaptation of regulations for local seafood.
- b) Logo designs were shown to the members, and with a quick vote the majority voted for the small blue sealed with suggested changes.
- c) Ballou stated subcommittee members had coined the phrase “Rhode Island harvested, grown or produced” to be added to the logo.
- d) Ballou also stated that the logo should be trademarked as soon as possible. This cost will be covered by the grant funds. Ballou added that any dealer or individual abusing the use of the logo would be denied its use. We had a challenge to protect the brand and what it stands for”. Again, DEM should define what is going to be “eligible’ as local seafood and what is not local. Julian stated “something must protect the brand with a solid definition”. Using a “whole and processed” commodity label then, “processed (at least New England regional products) by a Rhode Island company” as second label might be a possible solution.

Walker suggested we explore other state’s seals. Schumann stated: Were legislators trying to promote harvesters with less emphasis on producers?

Overall, Ballou stated that we need to educate the public on the “definition”. Ballou will call a subcommittee meeting and report back at the next meeting.

#### **Funding: Gerard Bertrand**

Bertrand announced that we have \$23,000+ currently available through the van Beuren Charitable Foundation (vBCF) grant which ends on December 31, 2012. Bertrand requested for extension until June 20, 2012, and it was tentatively granted. Bertrand will follow up with a formal letter to the foundation.

Bertrand reported that the RIRDC will not continue as the fiscal agent for grant funds beyond December 31, 2012 and plans are underway to transfer open grants to another non-profit.

Bertrand also announced another grant pending from New England Environmental Grassroots Foundation for a GROW grant in the amount of \$3,500, which could be used for promotional materials. In the meantime, Bertrand received approval from vBCF to cover the costs of the logo designs.

Bertrand closed with announcing that two major grants from USDA-RD for \$50,000 and USDA-AMS FSMIP grant of \$50,000 were not awarded to the Seafood Marketing Collaborative.

#### **4. UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES**

White mentioned that she has six Johnson & Wakes interns available solicit how many local restaurants use local seafood products on their menus, which can be used to populate the MARKETPLACE section of the website. White urged other businesses, producers and harvesters to place their business opportunities on marketplace section.

Ayars stated he would seek out a legal opinion on branding and definitions.

Farrington stated we need to strategize for more P/R and holiday events.

#### **5. NEXT MEETINGS:**

**Department of Environmental Management  
235 Promenade St, Room 300  
Providence**

**Tuesday, December 4, 2012 @ 2 Pm  
Wednesday, January 23, 2013 @ 2 Pm.  
Wednesday, March 27, 2013 @ 2 Pm**

**Adjournment: 4:05 PM (OCTOBER 18, 2012)**