

Marine Industry Revitalization Advisory Council

Wednesday, January 6, 2021

Present: *Presiding Officer Robert Calarco, Legislator Susan A. Berland, August Ruckdeschel, Chris Pickerell, Kimberly Lamiroult, Tom Kehoe, Eric Kreuter, Eric Johansson, Vincent Biondo, Irene Rios, Vinny Pesce*

Staff members present: *Bob Fonti, Derek Stein, Lora Gellerstein, Christina DeLisi*

Meeting called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Presiding Officer Robert Calarco.

Welcome & Introductions:

Presiding Officer Calarco asked for the members of the Task Force to introduce themselves and state whichever industries they are representing.

Approving 2020 Annual Report & Meeting Minutes.

2020 Annual MIRAC Report

Presiding Officer Calarco noted that the Advisory Council is required to put together an annual report each year reviewing any actions they had taken. He asked Derek Stein to review the Annual Report (<https://www.scnylegislature.us/DocumentCenter/View/75418/2020-MIRAC-Annual-Report-PDF>). Derek Stein began reviewing the Annual Report, noting that it was changed to reflect membership changes as well as the creation of the Cabling and Offshore Wind Sub-committee. He noted that summaries of each of the full Advisory Council's meetings are included, and draw on information originally listed in each meeting's Minutes. The report then includes information on each of the Sub-committees and their activities over the past year along with a list of potential actions and goals for the Advisory Council to look to meet in 2021. He stated that he based goals off of items previously discussed in Sub-committee meetings. The report then concludes with information on Suffolk County's dredging projects over the 2020-2021 season, which was compiled by Scott Hilary and Peter Priolo from the Department of Public Works. Tom Kehoe suggested that since he had not yet reviewed the report that they could delay approving the Annual Report for a week in order to review and make any final changes. Presiding Officer Calarco agreed, and stated that any members who have changes should send them to Derek Stein by Wednesday, January 13th.

October 8, 2020 MIRAC Meeting Minutes

Presiding Officer Calarco then moved on to prior meeting Minutes from October 8, 2020 and asked if anyone had any changes they would like to make to the minutes. Seeing none, Presiding Officer Calarco took a motion to approve from August Ruckdeschel, seconded by Tom Kehoe, which was approved unanimously.

Sub-committee Updates:

Aquaculture & Commercial Fishing Sub-committee:

Presiding Officer Calarco asked for an update from the Aquaculture & Commercial Fishing Sub-committee. Chris Pickerell informed the council that \$6.7 million in funding was recently made available through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from the CARES Act that was reserved to support fishermen. Fishermen could apply for relief starting on December 1st and through December 31st. He noted that he was aware of some early numbers, and that there is a delay with DEC needing NOAA approval. Tom Kehoe replied that he was skeptical of how successful that program would be, since many fishermen are skeptical of the DEC, they see them as an enforcement arm. He proposed commercial fishermen create a quasi-governmental agency like Discover Long Island. Presiding Officer Calarco asked if the Advisory Council had put together a letter in support of the Suffolk County Aquaculture Lease Program's 10-year Review. Derek Stein replied that they have not and noted that the Suffolk County Aquaculture Lease Program's 10-year Review was holding one more Public Hearing on January 15th. Chris Pickerell noted that the issue was largely because of navigational and visual concerns over the installation of floating gears for oysters. Tom Kehoe stated that residents often just don't like to see the floating gears, while residents like to see the boats they do not appreciate seeing them work. Augie Ruckdeschel added that the program had a one-week extension for comments as well. Presiding Officer Calarco asked for the Sub-committee to put together a letter in support of the SCALP program's 10-year Review and IR 1981 which adopts their amendments. Tom Kehoe stated the letter should focus on the benefits of the program and on perhaps extending the program in the future to the five Towns of Western Suffolk.

Cabling & Offshore Wind Sub-committee:

Chris Pickerell updated that they had finished their work on the letter to State and local officials about their concerns. Derek Stein stated the letter went out and he had not heard a reply from any organization. Eric Johansson felt that cabling would have a huge impact on the shipping industry and that more research was needed. Chris Pickerell stated that Cornell Cooperative was entering into a contract to work with South Fork Wind Farm awardee Ørsted on monitoring and research to take place before the construction of these offshore wind farms could begin. Tom Kehoe suggested that the Task Force continue as a separate committee and not as part of the aquaculture and commercial fishing sub-committee. Eric Johansson added that the Garamendi Bill was recently improved which will have a positive impact on local industry. The bill requires that offshore wind vessels be flagged in the United States. Presiding Officer Calarco asked if he could share information on the bill with the Advisory Council.

Education & Workforce Development Sub-committee:

Irene Rios felt she had been on a productive Zoom with members of the Education & Workforce Development Sub-committee in late November. She noted that meeting had focused on establishing a partnership between Suffolk County Community College and SUNY Maritime with the eventual goal of creating some kind of articulation agreement enabling more SCCC students to take accredited SUNY Maritime licensing courses. Both John Lombardo and Paul Beaudin both had attended the meeting as well. Derek Stein mentioned that one of the 2021 goals he listed in the Annual Report was to create an articulation agreement and to continue discussions about career programs with the Department of Labor.

Environmental Sub-committee:

Bob Fonti informed the Council that that the last sub-committee meeting focused on finding a consistent funding source for dredging, particularly Legislator Susan A. Berland's proposal of installing recreational boating racks to store kayaks, paddleboards and canoes in County parks, beaches or campgrounds similar to what the Town of Huntington had done at Gold Star Beach. At Legislator Susan A. Berland's request, Bob Fonti had reached out to Don McKay from the Department of Parks to follow up on some information about what fees on boating they currently collect at Suffolk County Parks and was trying to obtain a cost estimate for the installation of kayak racks at County Parks and Beaches that currently have boat slips. Vinny Pesce added that the debate also centered on if there was a need for State Legislation for any kind of program. Legislator Susan A. Berland replied that if it's just the County installing the storage racks then they would not need to worry about getting State approval first. She noted the only real concern is the cost of installing the racks and if it would be financially viable. Chris Pickerell added that a registration system for kayaks would help with safety, as two kayakers passed away on Peconic Bay late in 2020.

Bill Hillman added that dredge spoils were another topic covered by the Sub-committee, they had discussed storing spoils in an open site, but they cannot store them in open-space. He offered to put together a map with lists of spoil sites, and the spoil sites themselves do not affect open space preservation scoring and rating. He recalled the referendum that created the Open Space Preservation fund does not permit use of a site for dredge spoil disposal. Presiding Officer Calarco noted existing Town sites could also be used, such as the Town of Brookhaven landfill when a new site is eventually developed.

Economic Development Sub-committee:

Derek Stein noted that the Economic Development Sub-committee has not met over the past year, but it was suggested to restart the sub-committee as the County looks to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and the accompanying recession. Vinny Pesce noted his organization is paying close attention to are some State level proposals which have come up, including amending the boat sale tax cap currently set at \$235,000, and the usage tax applied to mega yachts which dock in the East End. Presiding Officer Calarco asked to restart the Economic Development Subcommittee,

and if necessary to focus more so on recreational fishing and boating when compared to the other subcommittees. Derek Stein stated that one proposal from the Economic Development Subcommittee in the past was a waterfront study. Presiding Officer Calarco suggested reaching out to the IDA and seeing if they would be open to conducting a waterfront study on their behalf.

Goals for 2021:

Derek Stein repeated many of the goals he had mentioned going over the Annual Report. Presiding Officer Calarco suggested that the next subcommittee meetings scheduled in February could all focus on a couple particular goals from the Annual Report and put together plans on how to accomplish each of them.

2021 Meeting Schedule:

Derek Stein informed the Advisory Council he had drafted the calendar below for all future Advisory Council meetings in 2021:

Full MIRAC meetings, held at 10:00 a.m. over Zoom:

*Wednesday, January 6th, 2021,
Thursday, March 18th, 2021,
Thursday, May 13th, 2021,
Thursday, July 15th, 2021,
Tuesday, September 14th, 2021, and
Thursday, November 18th, 2021.*

Bi-monthly Sub-Committee meeting windows, alternating with months where the full Advisory Council meets:

*February 16th to the 19th,
April 5th to the 9th,
June 23 to June 30th,
August 16, to August 20th,
October 18 to October 22nd, and
December 8 to December 14th.*

Derek stated he would circulate the dates around to the rest of the Advisory Council and members who could not attend today's meeting and if no issues or conflicts arose would send out calendar invites for each of these meeting dates.

Presiding Officer Calarco adjourned the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Meeting Summary by Derek Stein.