

PUBLIC INTEREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PIAC) MEETING
April 22, 2003, 10:30 to 12:30 PM, MADEP Boston
FINAL MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Members Present: Patty Foley, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, PIAC Chair; Bruce Berman, SH/SB (alternate); Peter Borrelli, Center for Coastal Studies; Joseph Favaloro MWRA Advisory Board; Sal Genovese Safer Waters in MA; Tara Nye, Association to Preserve Cape Cod; and Steve Tucker, Cape Cod Commission (alternate).

Observers: Todd Callahan, MCZM; Cathy Coniaris, MADEP; Winifred Donnelly, MADEP; Ben Kelly, SH/SB; Steve Lipman, MADEP; and Andrea Rex, MWRA.

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

1. PIAC approved January 13, 2003 minutes.
2. PIAC thinks that since OMSAP's recommended changes to the monitoring plan are based on sound science, they support the recommended modifications to the monitoring plan.
3. Patty Foley will contact Bill Adler of the MA Lobstermen Association to discuss their concerns and the MA Division of Marine Fisheries to see what data exist on the lobster catch around the outfall.
4. Sal Genovese will contact the Nahant lobsterman again to discuss his concerns.
5. PIAC will contact several whale watch boat operators to discuss whale distributions and the outfall.
6. PIAC would like to eventually contact the MWRA Advisory Board regarding recommended revisions to the monitoring plan.
7. Steve Tucker will contact Wayne Bergeron to discuss what extent he should represent Wayne at PIAC meetings.
8. PIAC will meet on Tuesday September 9, 2002, 10:30-12:30 at the MADEP conference room on the fifth floor to discuss all workshops held by OMSAP and to how to relate their recommendations on the monitoring to the public.
9. Win Donnelly will book a room and send the message out for the September meeting.

MINUTES

Welcome and Review of January PIAC Minutes

Patty Foley thanked the MWRA for their efforts to document the studies and explain them to PIAC. There is still much to be discussed in the next two OMSAP workshops. OMSAP will review water quality monitoring at the June 18-19 workshop benthic community/nutrient flux monitoring at the July workshop.

PIAC approved the minutes from the January 13, 2003 meeting.

Overview of April OMSAP Monitoring Review Workshop

Andrea Rex gave an overview of the proceedings and conclusions reached by OMSAP at the March 31-April 1 workshop (for more information, see Synopsis of Recommendations of OMSAP Monitoring Review Workshop). The four areas discussed and reviewed at the March/April workshop were: effluent monitoring, sediment contaminant studies, fish and shellfish monitoring, hardbottom community monitoring.

Bruce Berman asked if there was any logic in having the sediment contaminants and fish and shellfish monitored in the same year. Andrea Rex replied that it would not tell us much because there is a lag time between the accumulation of contaminants in the sediments and fish and shellfish bioaccumulation.

Preview of June OMSAP Meeting

Andrea Rex said that MWRA is now in the process of preparing for the June workshop. They are getting feedback from consultants about changing water column sampling and statistical analyses are showing that MWRA is over-sampling in the nearfield (21 stations, 17 times per year at five different depths). The MWRA is performing a statistical analysis to document levels of redundancy and determine which are the most representative stations and how many times to sample per year. MWRA also has other data available that may even be better than sampling by boat, e.g. USGS moorings and satellite data from NOAA. Remotely controlled sampling is another future potential option.

Steve Tucker said that it's important to look at effort, certainty, and expense. He asked if MWRA will propose several approaches to changing the monitoring plan. Andrea Rex said that they will.

PIAC Discussion of OMSAP Monitoring Review and Outreach to Inform the Public

Patty Foley asked the group to look over the list of proposed tactics for public outreach that had been discussed by PIAC at previous meetings.

Bruce Berman and Peter Borrelli agreed that it is important to note that if there were negative changes due to the outfall in the future, we would want to have to option/ability to monitor more extensively again. Peter Borrelli mentioned that lobstermen want lobster contaminant monitoring in the Plymouth/Scituate area. Sal Genovese said that one lobsterman from Nahant told him that he blames the outfall for the lack of lobsters and chemical burns on the tops of lobsters. He also said that they no longer fish around the outfall. Bruce Berman told the group that he has not seen a decrease in lobsters in that area and he thinks the concerns about chlorine from the outfall (which he thinks are unfounded) are based on the lobstermen's knowledge of the lobster burn that occurs when eggs are illegally removed from egg-bearing females using bleach. He noted that the MA Division of Marine Fisheries collects catch/landing data. Steve Tucker suggested that PIAC contact the Mass Lobstermen Association (MLA). There was some discussion about asking the MLA to write a letter relaying its concerns. Patty Foley will contact the state to see what data exist. Sal Genovese said he will contact the Nahant lobsterman again to discuss his concerns.

Steve Tucker thinks that it would be useful to show the whale watch industry that the lack of whales in Cape Cod Bay is not due to the outfall pipe. Last year the humpbacks were 50-75 miles away from their usual feeding grounds in the bay.

Steve Tucker thinks that PIAC concurs with the recommended changes to the monitoring plan because it is based on sound scientific data and not just a desire to cut monitoring. If MWRA left the monitoring plan without changes, then that would suggest that the MWRA was not looking at the data.

Peter Borrelli said that the Center for Coastal Studies is hosting a public forum as part of the Coastal Solutions Initiative on May 21, 2003. This will be a moderated event with a panel. Questions will be given to the panelists in advance. Local cable and WGBH are expected to broadcast. The problem is how to get people's attention when there is no emergency. PIAC discussed developing a distillation of the OMSAP workshops to publish in member groups' newsletters. PIAC represents thousands of folks and can use newsletters websites to relay the information. If there is low turnout, word about the proceedings will come about through groups like PIAC.

Joe Favaloro agreed that it's difficult to "hook" the public into attending these workshops. He would eventually like to bring this to an MWRA Advisory Board meeting. Bruce Berman agreed that it would be useful for PIAC to meet with the MWRA Advisory Board regarding recommended revisions to the monitoring plan.

Peter Borrelli said that PIAC is the public interest group because most people don't have time to attend meetings. He doesn't think it is discouraging if the public doesn't attend government sponsored meetings because the public expects their environmental groups to attend for them. It will be newsworthy if PIAC could come together and agree on the changes to the monitoring plan.

Andrea Rex noted that some of the toughest decisions on the monitoring are still ahead of us. PIAC decided to meet after the last OMSAP workshop to review the outcomes and produce a strategy for outreach. If PIAC was alarmed by any of the recommended changes, the strategy would be different and the timetable would be stepped up.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, September 9, 2003, 10:30 – 12:30 in the fifth floor conference room at MADEP.

Patty Foley asked if anyone has spoken to Wayne Bergeron and whether his schedule will remain prohibitive to him attending PIAC meetings. Steve Tucker agreed to contact Wayne Bergeron to discuss what extent he should represent Wayne at PIAC meetings.

ADJOURNED 12:30 PM

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- Agenda
- January 2003 draft PIAC minutes
- MWRA briefing packet and draft synopsis from March 31 – April 1 OMSAP workshop
- PIAC ideas for public outreach

Summary prepared by W. Donnelly. Post-meeting comments (if any) are included in [brackets]. All such comments have been inserted for clarification only. They do not, nor are they intended to, suggest that such insertions were part of the live meeting components and have been expressly set-off so as to avoid such inference.