

Aquaculture Learning Plan Proposal

Prepared for Municipality of the District of Yarmouth (MODY) Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)

Prepared by Victoria Brooks, Chief Administrative Officer
September 2021

Background

Precipitated by a re-zoning application, the PAC for the District of Yarmouth received a recommendation from the Municipal Planner to amend language in the Municipal Planning Strategy with respect to the treatment of land-based aquaculture facilities within a Rural Industrial zone. Through background reports and public participation meeting, the PAC determined it wanted a broader, sector focused rather than project focussed, training and education program to understand contemporary dynamics in the aquaculture industry leading to informed decision making by the PAC, and ultimately Council.

Major changes have occurred including vocabulary, technology, the volume of peer reviewed research, and regulatory systems since the current language in the MODY's MPS was adopted in 2013.

Part 2 of the MPS discusses the foundation principles and the long term sustainable goals and objectives for MODY. In May 2021 Council adopted a new Mission, Vision and Values statement which will be incorporated into the MPS moving forward.

Mission: MODY serves its residents by providing the highest quality services through effective, efficient and ethical stewardship of the resources and assets entrusted to us by our citizens.

Vision: To support and grow thriving, resilient and welcoming communities known for their

- Resourceful and innovative people
- Embrace of diversity and inclusion
- Connectivity and openness to new ideas and opportunities
- Attention to the environment and the County's natural beauty, heritage and architecture

Values:

- Accountability to the tax payers
- Collaboration as a way to move forward
- Respect within our Council, staff team and the citizens we serve
- Integrity in all we do
- Openness in how we conduct our operations
- Reliance on the best information available to support decision making
- Commitment to sustainable practices
- Health and wellness of our people

Specifically related to planning matters, MODY's new plan contains four main pillars with associated objectives. Those pillars are economy, people, stewardship and governance.

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These new corporate statements align with the language in Part 2 of the MPS whereby Council seeks to strike a balance between responsible development activities and protection of clean air, water and land.

The question before the PAC, and ultimately Council, therefore is whether or not:

1. Current language honors the essence of the principles of the MPS, Mission, Vision and Values of MODY
2. An amendment can be made to the MPS respecting contemporary aquaculture practices that honors the values and principles of Council, and its policies as a whole.

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed learning plan is to provide the PAC, and Council, a balanced view of the following dynamics related to the aquaculture industry:

1. Contemporary vocabulary and associated meanings
2. Industry Innovations
3. Environmental concerns and responses
4. Community benefits of the industry
5. Licensure, performance requirements, monitoring and enforcement

Resources

The Province of Nova Scotia renewed its Memorandum of Understanding with other Atlantic Canadian Provinces on work to grow the aquaculture industry as part of the overall seafood sector and supply of high quality food to the world. A large community of practice and peer reviewed research exists in Nova Scotia to measure environmental and community impacts, support industry innovation and manage growth. Some of those resources include:

1. Federal and Provincial Government Departments representing the 73 pieces of legislation governing the industry
2. Center for Marine Applied Science (part of COVE)
3. Inter-Provincial and Post-secondary departments and research Labs – more than 30 organizations involved in aquaculture research in Atlantic Canada
(<https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/services/factsheetsandbrochures34.html>)
4. Industry Associations
5. Environmental and built environment engineering
6. Third party certification programs like the Marine Stewardship Council
(<https://www.msc.org/en-us/>)

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Learning Proposal

A number of industry participants, researchers and agency staff have been identified who can speak to

1. Contemporary vocabulary and associated meanings
2. Industry Innovations
3. Environmental concerns and advancements
4. Community benefits of the industry
5. Licensure, performance requirements, monitoring and enforcement

It is proposed the program would be delivered in a workshop format whereby speakers would present material related to themes above (30 – 45 minutes) followed by questions/answers (10 – 15 minutes). It is anticipated the material would be delivered over a couple of ½ day long Public PAC meetings and would require both in person and virtual attendance for the speakers. All regular parliamentary rules and procedures would be followed but due to technology constraints, there will be no live feed and proceedings will not be recorded. Minutes will be taken as usual and made public once approved.

Recognizing public interest in this file, it is proposed meetings would be held at the Hebron Rotary Centre where room for public gallery can be made. Any and all public health orders respecting Covid-19 will be respected and enforced.

The following individuals have confirmed a willingness to participate. It should be noted that Inka Milewski and Boreal Salmon specifically requested a place on this agenda. However, some are still waiting for senior management approval so this is subject to change based on that premise.

1. Inka Milewski – Research Associate. Inka’s work points to environmental concerns respecting the effects of in-water pen operations on eel grass in New Brunswick. She recently spoke on CJLS’s *The Weekender*.
2. Jim Duston – Professor Fin Fish Aquaculture, Dalhousie University. Sector overview including vocabulary, major innovations over last five years and a sense of where the industry is growing
3. Gregor Reid – Canadian Center for Marine Applied Research. Mr. Reid will share work done through the centre and what science is telling us about environmental impacts
4. NS Fisheries & Aquaculture – licencing, oversight and enforcement
5. Boreal Salmon - A company representative will discuss their proposed project in Nova Scotia
6. Private Citizen – a community’s lived experience; an individual who is willing to share their lived experience in a community with land-based aquaculture



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7. Tom Smith - Sea Farmers NS. Tom will discuss community cohesion (how land based aquaculture can peacefully co-exist with other community members) and industry benefits for those communities