



*Wild, Natural & Sustainable*

**ASMI Communications Committee Meeting  
Thursday, November 12, 2020  
11:00 AM**

Dial-In Information  
Call in number: +1 253 215 8782  
Meeting ID: 850 4248 9836

*Draft minutes*

I. Reconvene – Julianne Curry called the meeting open at 11:00am

A. Welcome New Committee Member

Curry welcomed new committee member Matt Carle.

B. Roll Call

Members present: Julianne Curry, Nicole Kimball, Cassandra Squibb, Peggy Parker, Jessica Hathaway, Tomi Marsh, Matt Carle, Hannah Heimbuch, Pat Shanahan

Absent: ex-officio Jack Shulteis  
Quorum was met with eight present.

Others present: Ashley Heimbinger, Tanna Peters, Keith Singleton, Alina Fairbanks, Susan Marks, Arianna Elnes, Kate Consenstein, Christine Fanning, Katie Goldberg, Tessa Ward

C. Approval of Agenda

Parker moved, Kimball seconded a motion to approve the agenda. It was approved unanimously.

Public Comment was moved before the Good of the Order, and the PR presentation was added to the agenda after the budget, with timing flexibility. There were no objections.

#### D. Approval of Previous Minutes

**Shanahan motioned, Kimball seconded to approve the minutes. There was no opposition.** Curry noted that she did not make a motion to adjourn the previous meeting, as noted in the minutes, and recommended the minutes end with the meeting adjournment.

#### E. Review of Communications-specific Species Committee comments

- Curry asked Heimbigner how the committee could be most helpful to the Communications program. Heimbigner made a few opening remarks, and recommended that the committee continue to work closely with the team, and that quick feedback has been especially helpful, as well as any high-level guidance.
- Heimbigner gave an overview of a few large projects of the Communications program, and identified that she would be reaching out to the committee to make sure that both the new website, asset acquisition, and crisis communications plan are meeting stakeholder needs. Heimbigner also suggested the creation of subcommittees for these projects. Hathaway agreed.

#### F. Budget

- Heimbigner went over the current budget status.
- Squibb asked about FAM trips, specifically where that money would be allocated after cancellations. Heimbigner responded that a media FAM trip was scheduled for late June/July to be coordinated with Edelman and additional opportunities would be considered should the FAM be cancelled due to ongoing concerns regarding the pandemic.
- Keith Singleton asked where in the budget the website overhaul falls, and Heimbigner clarified that that is a separate line item funded through ASMI's admin budget.

#### G. PR Program Presentation

Tessa Ward gave a presentation on ASMI's consumer digital and public relations activities with Katie Goldberg.

- Challenge for this time is to maintain our brand position. In response, they are:
  - Paying attention to how coronavirus effects our audiences.
  - Adjusting strategy to speak to frequent seafood eaters, new seafood eaters, and domestic audiences at retail and takeout during COVID.
  - Providing support and guidance for crisis management

- Creating campaign moments, such as #SeafoodSunday and Choose Alaska, and driving origin messaging with virtual storytelling and media experiences.
- Pushing an “Always On” stream of content through publications and social media to talk about ease and preparation of Alaska seafood, and drive people to the website.
- Squibb noted that the NYC event is usually such a huge event and asked if Edelman feels that gap has been made up for.
  - Ward answered that while the NYC event was cancelled, they have pivoted to sending seafood to specific publications so that food journalists can create their own recipes. They have also strategically selected influencers to have a higher reach, and if events do get cancelled later, we can lean on those influencers to share our message. With this heavy pivot they have not seen a gap in reach and engagement.
- Hathaway recommended that with the recent update of the FDA guidelines for pregnant women to increase their consumption of fish, we work with pregnant fisherwomen and incorporate them into our Strong at Sea campaign.
- Kimball asked Ward how we were tracking and judging our success of the #SeafoodSunday campaign, and how we are tailoring it to the results.
  - Ward answered that they are working on a report on #SeafoodSunday now, and that they are constantly updating the content to remain nimble.
- Heimbigner asked if there was any way that the communications program could improve its reporting.
  - Squibb said she would like to see a consumer PR budget, along with the Communications budget.
  - Heimbigner distributed the consumer PR budget to the committee during the meeting.
- Curry asked if there was anything that they would like to report to the board.
  - Carle said that the data is helpful and informative, and that anywhere we can use data to inform our strategies would be helpful to the board as well.

#### H. Review and Respond to Operational Committee Questions from

Kimball recommended the committee address the third question first.

**3. Please address the comments from the species committees that were directed toward your program. Do you have any recommendations of the committee in terms of action from the program your committee guides?**

Individual committee members participated in many other committee meetings and noted several common themes and suggestions throughout the All Hands meeting:

- **Seafood safety and COVID.** Many species committees asked for enhanced communications regarding seafood safety during COVID including packaging safety and our existing quality standards. Heimbigner said that the communications program is working closely with the technical program on talking points. The committee agreed to support that program direction.
- **Seafood industry efforts to prevent the spread of COVID throughout the summer.** The committee felt strongly that we need to produce messaging to tell our own story about industry response to COVID mitigation measures. The committee recognizes that it's challenging for ASMI to speak on behalf of the entire industry on this issue and that there are many sensitivities to declaring 'success,' but clear and simple messaging on the measures in place and the emphasis on health and safety in the workplace would be beneficial. The COVID issue will continue into the 2021 season, and we should be prepared.
- **Strong messaging needed regarding parasites and seafood.** The committee supports ASMI's joint effort with Alaska SeaGrant to address communicating to the trade about the parasite issue. Although materials are already available, the committee recommended that the documents are refreshed occasionally and that sales teams are supported as issues continue to arise.
- **Moving climate change messaging to the forefront of our communications efforts (moving beyond only crisis communication).** Look for opportunity to further elevate the Alaska brand and seafood businesses as key partners in both climate resiliency and food security. Several of the species committees' concerns are related to climate impact, and we need to position Alaska as a data-rich, science-driven management regime, incorporating climate and ecosystem factors into management (part of sustainability). We need to highlight opportunities to show Alaska seafood has a direct role in food security. Tell the story as a holistic connection to the natural world — Alaska Seafood is beneficial to your personal health as well as the health of the planet, the climate and the coastal communities where it is harvested.
- **Continue to push quality information to harvesters and processors.** With COVID reducing processing capacity during the summer salmon season, concerns have been raised regarding quality issues. Continue to educate across all industry partners (including retailers).

**#1. What are the biggest opportunities for your program in the current pandemic environment?**

Shanahan noted that staff and contractors are doing an excellent job of addressing the opportunities to drive the Alaska seafood story wherever they can. The committee agreed and encouraged that direction. In addition to the individual species opportunities in question #3, the committee noted the following:

- **Consumer buying habits:** Heimbuch said that there have been changes in consumer buying habits, and there is an opportunity to continue to reach those new consumers after the pandemic. She said people are looking for quick and easy recipes with fewer ingredients. Hathaway said that people are buying seafood at retail, and wanting to use fewer ingredients but still looking for the restaurant experience. Kimball said that just because people are at home, doesn't mean they have more time. Considerations for recipes included:
  - Fast preparation times
  - Family-oriented meals
  - Using one seafood meal as the basis for a second seafood meal
  - Sides to serve with seafood entrees
  - How best to serve left-overs (better cold than reheated)
  - Seafood as a breakfast and lunch item
  - Aspirational cooking with restaurant-quality & restaurant experience.

The committee was interested in seeing how ASMI will work to combine all these ideas and meet consumers where they are during the pandemic.

- **Capture any new seafood consumers and ensure that consumers continue to cook seafood at home after the pandemic.** Heimbuch said we should continue to collect data and re-evaluate target consumers as the pandemic evolves.
- **Messaging on health, wellness and sustainability.** Carle noted the link between seafood and wellness. Curry said that during COVID and the cold and flu season, many committees felt it was a priority to further highlight the health benefits of eating seafood for immune support, reducing inflammation, and Vitamin D benefits. Hathaway mentioned that the technical program had information on health claims of Alaska seafood. She suggested it could be updated to include specific aspects of seafood as they pertain to COVID-wellness (for example, 6 oz. of sablefish provides 90% of Vitamin D). Parker mentioned the connection between healthy eating and a healthy planet, and recommended a holistic and harmonious approach to messaging around wellness and sustainability.
- **Expand fishing industry brand ambassadors.** Hathaway recommended including pregnant fishermen/fishing parents to broadcast the message that eating wild seafood is a best choice for your whole family — highlight FDA guidelines.

## #2. What are long term challenges/opportunities that your program must continue to monitor?

- **Crisis communications.** Kimball mentioned that there has been an ongoing discussion around crisis communications, and the committee recognized that crisis communications is an ongoing priority for ASMI at this time. The Communications program is developing a protocol/guide for crisis communications in January 2021, but potential crises and updating messaging will be ongoing.
- **RFM and sustainability messaging.** With climate change, Heimbuch noted a need to stay on the forefront of sustainability messaging, rather than a crisis reaction. Hathaway agreed, and said that sustainability continues to be a major driver in sales and messaging of the Alaska brand. The committee recommended the communications program continue to emphasize the strength of Alaska fisheries management; inherent in this topic is the discussion of climate change and food security.
- **Seafood traceability.** Kimball said that the CAP panel talked about seafood traceability as a growing area of focus for both consumers and trade audiences. ASMI should continue to highlight traceability and help connect audiences to this information.
- **Social responsibility.** Kimball said the CAP panel also emphasized that consumers/buyers are increasingly paying attention to social responsibility. Coherent industry messaging on this topic is necessary.
- **Competing messaging from other proteins.** Shanahan expressed concern over cell-based and plant-based protein entering the market. Particularly concerning is the messaging from those companies, which includes disparaging remarks about wild capture fisheries. Shanahan expressed similar concern over the investment made by competing seafood and other proteins to communicate the attributes of natural, organic, coastal community resiliency, and generational practices, despite not being a wild product. ASMI should continue to monitor and evolve messaging regarding cell-based and plant-based proteins and other center-of-the-plate proteins.
- **Continued focus on marketing smaller fish/shellfish.** Shanahan, Squibb, and Parker said that harvesters are currently landing smaller fish. Heimbinger said there has been some effort by ASMI to support small sablefish and sockeye through directed photo shoots and recipes, and appreciated being made aware that the communications program can put more focus on marketing and messaging.

- **Opportunity for direct marketing efforts.** Squibb said there are many members of the industry moving toward direct marketing. ASMI has responded to an increase in direct marketing efforts, but there may be opportunity to continue to push information out to harvesters capitalizing on this growing trend. Direct marketers are great ambassadors to tell the Alaska story and we should continue to support their efforts. Heimbigner said the communications program has been working to make ASMI's materials and resources more accessible, and survey direct marketers about how ASMI can best support them. The committee recommended that communications about resources are reiterated throughout the year.

**#4. Are there any specific questions pertaining to your program you would like the ASMI Board to address or any specific actions you would like the Board to consider?**

Committee discussion regarding this question centered on the following topics:

- **Make the CAP meetings front and center at every All Hands meeting on day 1.** This was the content that every committee member needed to hear in order to inform program discussions. The committee felt that the CAP discussion oriented and inspired committees to focus on market-based discussions that were highly productive. The CAP information was so useful that the board should consider recording future CAP meetings outside of All Hands and making them available to ASMI members.
- **Ensure crisis communications planning and implementation continues to receive adequate funding and attention.** Shanahan suggested there be a specific budget line item for crisis communications support. The issues will keep coming at the industry, crisis communications will continue to be an on-going need for ASMI.

**I. Chair and Vice Chair Elections**

Curry briefed the committee on chair and vice chair roles and terms.

Kimball nominated Shanahan for Chair and Squibb for Vice Chair. Parker seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion, and no discussion.

- New Chair: Pat Shanahan
- New Vice Chair: Cassandra Squibb

**J. Discuss Next Meeting Dates**

Heimbigner recommended an email to propose and discuss a meeting in the spring.

Curry said the committee expressed a desire to meet more frequently, and asked how the committee should do so. Shanahan recommended shorter meetings on particular topics. Heimbigner agreed, and said she would follow up with the committee by email.

Curry asked if there was a date that worked best for the budget discussion. Heimbigner said that March is ideal for a larger budget and strategic planning meeting.

#### K. Old Business and Good of the Order

Curry suggested longer meeting times.

Parker gave a big thank you to Curry and Kimball, and commended the rest of the committee and team.

#### L. Adjourn

Curry expressed what an honor it was to lead this committee with co-chair Kimball.

Kimball motioned to adjourn, Squibb seconded. There were no objections.

**The meeting adjourned at 1:02pm.**