

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Partnership Office, 408 Atlantic Avenue, Room 217, Boston, MA
Wednesday, June 3, 2009, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM

Bruce Jacobson, Superintendent, introduced Dennis Reidenbach, Northeast Regional Director, National Park Service. Dennis remarked on the high energy and enthusiasm of the group, he thanked all for their participation and for the opportunity to join them this evening.

Maureen Cavanaugh, Chair, welcomed all and members were introduced. The minutes of the March 4, 2009 meeting were approved.

Messaging Workshop

Maureen Cavanaugh introduced Katherine MacDonald, KMAC Marketing, who led the Advisory Council through a messaging workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to create a messaging platform for council members to use when reaching out to the community. To begin this process, the council reviewed its role in the Partnership, which is to be the “voice of the people” when advising the Partnership on park management and operational issues.

The council discussed how to engage the public in this type of conversation. There was general agreement that there was an outreach role to build awareness and a basic understanding of the park, and also for the council to serve as a conduit for public feedback to the Partnership.

Kathy introduced the council to the process of creating a communication strategy, and presented the park’s identity guide, so there was an understanding of how the Partnership agencies talk about the park. There was general agreement that members need to have a common understanding of the Council’s role and their part in it.

The council discussed possible forms of outreach such as: public meetings, speaking engagements, surveys, activities, escorted tours, and person to person conversations. They also talked about many challenges of civic engagement, and how to stay focused on the council’s specific role to engage the public in management issues.

Members identified many possible target audiences in past workshops, and recognized that the message and delivery method may need to be tweaked when reaching out to these different audiences, as motivations to participate may be very different. Caution was raised about going in too strong with a message when trying to get feedback as you may inadvertently shut down input. Kathy encouraged the council to pick a short list of priority groups and focus on ways to engage them.

There was frustration expressed about internal communications, and there was agreement that it needs improvement. It was hoped that the new website currently under development will facilitate more on-line discussions between Council members, and make it easier for them to find park reference materials.

Ask the Superintendent

Bruce Jacobson responded to several questions. A summary of answers are below:

- ✧ Design alternatives for a new pier on Georges Island are available for public review. Bruce invited comments.

- ✧ National Park Service, Department of Conservation & Recreation, and Boston Harbor Island Alliance worked very hard on a request for Recovery Act money to fund construction of a new pier on Georges Island. The attempt was unsuccessful.
- ✧ The construction of a new floating dock on Little Brewster is stalled. The dock needs to be redesigned. It was designed to be installed in bedrock, not the boulder substrate that was encountered.
- ✧ Construction of a new maintenance facility on Georges Island has begun. The administration building will not be accessible to the public in 2009. Restroom facilities will be relocated, and food service will be limited to a snack cart. The new maintenance facility will have a solar array on the roof. Plans for Georges Island improvements also include an upgrade to the generator.
- ✧ Planning moves forward the Harbor Park Pavilion at Long Wharf, final designs are near completion. The park received \$5M for construction of the facility.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

