

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
New England Aquarium
Conference Center
September 12, 2001
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Tom Lindberg, Co-chair, welcomed all. 10 voting members of the 28 Advisory Council were present (see attached attendance sheet). There is not a quorum. The approval of the minutes from the March and June meetings was tabled.

Opening Comments

Tom Lindberg recognized the passing of Edith and Joe Andrews' son José. Condolences were shared.

George Price, National Park Service (NPS), thanked all for coming this evening. He said that the decision to hold the meeting was deliberate even though we all are dealing with the attacks on 9/11/01. The current administration, the Secretary of Interior, and National Park Service have encouraged us to operate as normally as possible. George agreed that getting on with business after this horrific attack was the best thing to do, even being a way to support our fellow citizens. He ensured that appropriate precautions were taken, he was in contact with various law enforcement agencies throughout the day. He thanked each and every attendee again for their presence.

Interest Groups

Environmental

Seth Kaplan stated concern about the generator on Georges Island and requested an update. He also mentioned the proposed gas pipeline and asked if the islands would get any benefits from it.

Peter Lewenberg, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs, said that the generator on Georges Island was replaced, but the new one also has issues. It is larger than needed and therefore does not run efficiently; they are trying to adjust. The Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) is aware that it does need to be corrected, in fact, it is a mandate by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). They are very anxious to fix the problem and clean the face of the fort. Seth urged them to be very conscious of the emissions issue, not simply the visual issue.

Education

Mary Corcoran said that the park's Education Committee met in July. They are moving forward with the education resource guide. It should be available on-line shortly. She announced that Deer Island is hosting an educator's conference in October. She said that there is a science educator's meeting in May and they are looking for speakers.

Advocacy

Suzanne Gall Marsh said that Georges Island is without water again. She said that this is the 2nd time this season, earlier, at the peak of the season, the waterline was broken for 10 days. Alex Hall, MDC, reported that the breaks in the water line were due to two different reasons. The earlier break was due to dragging in the channel looking for a drown victim. That break was underwater, which complicates repairs, and extends the repair time. This weekend, the break happened on Friday on the land-based portion. It was repaired in a short period of time. George Price, National Park Service (NPS), said that this relates to

the overall infrastructure problems of the park. The Partnership is looking at long term and sustainable design utility options for the park.

Suzanne said that the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands (FBHI) are preparing a report about volunteers' concerns and issues from last season. There were several areas of concern, the water shuttle schedules, moral, agency staffing. She said that it is the role of the Advisory Council to bring attention to these issues and get resolution. She requested that the December meeting of the Advisory Council include a season update.

Suzanne inquired about the plan to remove the debris on Peddocks Island that was left from the recent unannounced demolition. Peter said that the removal has been slowed by the presence hazardous waste materials left by the cottagers, but hopefully it will be removed within the next few months. Suzanne stated several concerns about the way the demolition was done, including issues regarding the prison workers that did much of the labor. She said that it was very disturbing to watch the way the prisoners were treated that they were not given proper equipment to do the job or given access to proper bathroom facilities. A cottage owner stated that the cottage owners are having meetings with the commissioner at MDC. The council discussed the situation on Peddocks and noted that the visitor experience has not been improved in recent years. They discussed ways that the council could make a positive influence. It was suggested to create a framework to have operational discussions with the agencies that would not be constantly critical, but keep things positive and flowing. Phil Lemnios said that if the council as a whole could identify specific issues to focus on and bring these issues to the Partnership as a united group, it would be a much more powerful message.

Report on Nixes Mate

Captain May, US Coast Guard, was scheduled to give an update on Nixes Mate, but could not be present this evening due to his responsibilities on the harbor.

George Price gave the update. He said that about one year ago, Commander Bibeau announced that Nixes Mate was scheduled for dismantling due to severe deterioration and structural problems and the detection of hazardous chemicals in the paint. The Coast Guard planned to replace it with a modern navigational beacon. The Coast Guard put out a notice and heard back exactly how much opposition there was to the icon being taken down. A group from various Partnership agencies, including historians, architects, and FBHI went on a site visit with the Coast Guard. It was previously thought that the original structure built in 1805 was replaced in the 1860's and again in 1911. At this site visit, it was discovered that the internal structure appeared much older than 1911, and in fact, we believe a large part of the original structure still makes up the current structure. It was later found out that the actual costs to demolish the structure are about the same to stabilize it, so stabilizing will be feasible. The current plan is to stabilize the structure, close off access to the inside and patch the seawall. The fix will be temporary, but should last 20 years.

Water Transportation

Diane Haynes said that she is looking for the council's input regarding the water transportation contract for the park. She said that the current contract ends in March 2002. There is an option to continue the current contract for one year. If they are going to bid a new contract, they need to begin the process now. The situation is that the water shuttle system has been operating with grant money for the past two years (\$120k a year). There will be no grant money available this coming year. There has been no money allocated in the agencies' budgets to support the water shuttle system. They are faced with the possibility of returning to a sole source contract. She is working with the park's transportation sub-committee on the issue.

The council discussed the water transportation. They felt it crucial to provide adequate access to the islands. They suggested finding federal or state money to support the transportation system. There was also a suggestion to piggyback on current programs, like the MBTA and Massport systems. The council formed a sub-group led by Seth Kaplan to address transportation issues and form recommendations to the park.

Report from the National Park Service

George Price reported that the Partnership unanimously approved the general management plan. The remaining steps in adopting the plan will be review by Governor Swift, and approval by NPS Regional Director Marie Rust on behalf of Secretary of the Interior Norton.

George reported that he received information that visitation to the park had increased this year. He said that the August numbers were up 40% over last year. He said that marketing efforts increased this year and that there were two new very successful events that month, a triathlon and a performance of the Landmark Symphony Orchestra. He also noted that much of the increase could also be attributed to the weather, which was particularly good on the weekends this August.

Ellen McBride asked about the status of the Council appointments. George answered that he continues to work with Washington and that it is not uncommon to take an extended period of time, especially with a change in administration.

Island Alliance

Doug Welch reported on the revenue generating activities of the Island Alliance. He said that retail efforts expanded from last year; they added a cart on long wharf that was successful. The Boston Light tour revenues doubled from last year. The moorings were installed very late in the season, but show promise for next year. The work on the economic development plan is progressing and the final plan should be completed shortly.

Doug announced that the Annual Island Alliance Dinner will be held Monday, October 29. He said that they have allocated eight tickets to the Advisory Council. They are asking corporations to donate a few extra seats, and there are some volunteer opportunities, but they seats are limited and first come first serve. He asked members to contact Barbara Waters for details.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:01 PM

Next Meeting Dates

March 6, 2002 6-8

Location to be announced

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council

September 12, 2001

Meeting Attendance

VOTING MEMBERS

1. Edith Andrews	
2. Regina Burke	X
3. Charles Cristello*	
4. Stephen Comer	
5. Mary Corcoran	X
6. Peter Davidoff	X
7. John Dinga	X
8. Bernie Dreibratt	
9. Joe Ferrino	
10. Patricia Foley* (Lisa)	X
11. William Giezentanner	
12. Carl Johnson	X
13. Seth Kaplan	X
14. Greg Ketchen	
15. Phil Lemnios	X
16. John Lewis	
17. Vivien Li	
18. Tom Lindberg	X
19. Bernice Mader Chris Reilly	CR
20. Suzanne Gall Marsh	X
21. Ellen McBride*	X
22. Ed McCabe	
23. Sherman Morss	X
24. Karen O'Donnell	
25. John Sam Sapiel	
26. Claudia Smith Reid	
27. Lawrence Snake	
28. Jack Wiggin	

* Does not have voting status yet

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Ex officio (Education)

Nick Haddad	
Dotty Merrill	
Rob Moir	
Sukey Padawar	
Peter Rosen	
David Weinstein	

Ex officio (Community)

Sha-King Alston	
Lorraine Downey	

Ex officio (Environmental)

Marci Tyre	
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Ex officio (Municipalities)

Dan Condon Congressman William Delahunt	
Frederick Clark Congressman Joseph Moakley	
Gregg Nolan Congressman Michael Capuano	
David Soule/Mark Racicot Metropolitan Area Planning Council	

Ex officio (Native American)

Hiawatha Brown	
Mildred McCowan	
Chris Montgomery	X

OTHERS

Kathy Abbott	
Diane Haynes	X
Bruce Jacobson	
Peter Lewenberg	X
George Price	X
Mary Raczko	X
Doug Welch	X