

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council Meeting
Monday, September 19, 2016
6:00 – 8:00 PM
New England Aquarium, Harborside Learning Lab

Call to Order, Introductions and Remarks

Elizabeth Solomon, Chair, welcomed all and the council and audience introduced themselves. The minutes from the March 9, 2016, meetings were approved.

The Park and Partnership

Giles Parker, Superintendent gave a presentation on the legislated framework, intent and purpose of the park and Boston Harbor Islands Partnership and Advisory Council. The presentation is attached.

Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)

Elizabeth Solomon, Chair, introduced Jennifer Heindl, Attorney Advisor, Office of the Solicitor. She explained that the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) became law in 1972 and is the legal foundation defining how federal advisory committees operate. The law has special emphasis on open meetings, chartering, public involvement, and reporting. FACA committees, like the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council serve advisory functions only. They are established by law (like the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council), presidential authority, or discretionary. In general, committees must maintain a balanced membership and maintain all committee documents for public inspection. The meetings are required to be open to the public, allow the public to speak or file written statements, and announce all meetings in the Federal Register – 15 days in advance. They must create and certify minutes. There must be a Designated Federal Official (DFO) who approves and calls meetings, approves agendas and attends meetings. Sub-committee meetings must also be open to the public. Provisions of Section 14 of FACA are waived to the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council, so we don't have to renew our charter. Sub-committee recommendations must be discussed and go through public comment before the committee is allowed to use it. If these rules are not followed, it could lead to problematic litigation, so this should be avoided. The Ethics division is responsible for conflict of interest considerations.

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council has a few notable differences then most other FACA groups. There is no sunset clause, appointments are delegated to the National Park Service Director, and the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council makes recommendations to the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, instead of an agency official of the National Park Service.

Mary asked a question about the relationship of the council and the Partnership with two Advisory Council members holding voting seats on the Partnership, the federal operating committee. Jennifer said that it is a special situation, as they not only advise the federal operating committee (the Partnership), but participate in the decision making (vote as a Partnership member). It is unusual, but interesting situation regarding the relationship between the AC and the Partnership, and could be looked at as these voting members are wearing "two different hats." Giles Parker expressed the need for further clarification of roles. Jennifer said the structure is set by the enabling legislation of the park. Lou Gainor asked who the voting partners are. Mary Raczko, NPS answered that currently Maureen is voting partner, there is a vacant seat with the departure of Charlie Norris, and Rob Moir and Elizabeth Solomon are voting alternates. Elisabeth has been nominated as voting partner and Heather Deschenes as voting alternate.

Mary Raczko asked if the DFO has to attend subcommittee meetings, as well as council meetings. Jennifer said that the DFO should be there, but can designate a representative. The representative must be a federal official and have training in FACA. Suzanne Gall Marsh asked if there is a budget associated with the council. There are no appropriations specifically designated for the council, but there are staff and meeting costs associated with it.

Greg asked if meetings could be held on the phone or webinar. Jennifer said that yes, it is allowable but do have particular regulations associated with them.

Giles asked if there has been an effort to reduce the amount of committees on a national scale. Jennifer said that there has been concern about waste of effort and public funds.

The Next 20 Years

Giles Parker Spoke of five park initiatives: 1) Improvement of access to park, including current and future ferry contracts to improve water transportation for greater Boston area; 2) Working with partners for a youth engagement and strategy, includes internships, and creating the next generation of Park Stewards; 3) Visitor Engagement and community outreach strategies; 4) Place making, with a focus on Peddocks and Long Islands; and 5) Science and Stewardship, including development of the concept of a Boston Harbor Islands Center and also communicating climate change to our visitors, while also assessing climate impacts on our park and working with Climate Ready Boston

Elizabeth asked if preservation projects other than infrastructure improvements were being considered. She asked about the care of Native American artifacts and archaeological sites. Giles responded that this is a park priority and they continue to search for additional funding for assessments of sites. Elizabeth stated concern was raised that the Native American story is not being addressed. There is an interpretive planning process underway that will look at the themes and the missing stories.

Boston Harbor Now

Elizabeth Solomon introduced Kathy Abbott, President and CEO of Boston Harbor Now (BHN)

Kathy gave background on the April 1, 2016 merger between Boston Harbor Island Alliance and The Boston Harbor Association. She explained that Boston Harbor Now is a civic organization dedicated to catalyzing a vision, mobilizing a constituency and generating resources to connect the waterfront and harbor islands for everyone. She said that neither organization felt that they could get to scale by themselves. TBHA wanted a larger, broader impact, and BHN wanted to be able to distribute more resources. Also motivating the merger was the consolidation of the National Parks of Boston. BHN hopes to double its annual budget in the next three years. There are 10 full time and 2 part time staff positions at BHN and there are plans to increase that a little bit. The target goal is to raise 5 to 10 million dollars and be able to pass significant funding along.

Kathy said the Boston Harbor Now board is made up of 7 members from each of the existing boards, with 7 new members. There is also a board of advisors. Kathy said that they plan to continue to work in lock step with the NPS, including on the evolution of the partnership, while working on the strategic plan and how it will provide support.

Kathy said they are trying to build on the strengths of the two existing organizations. Thinking about all parks as green infrastructure is essential to their role, with the islands as the epicenter. They did 350 free programs on the islands this summer using funds raised, as well as land-side activities. The Harbor is the largest public open space in Boston, and they would like to get people to think of it that way. Water transportation is a huge need in the harbor, so they will be helping with that. She talked about how far we've come and how much we have left to do.

There were questions about if TBHA's advocacy will continue, Kathy said yes, they were always selective with issues and that will continue. Suzanne Gall Marsh suggested that a charette be held on the future of Long Island hosted by the Advisory Council. Elizabeth asked how BHN balances the fiscal management, fundraising aspects and the advocacy aspects of the respective organizations. Kathy said they are focusing on downtown and harbor islands now. The hope is that by doing it right, they can gain more money by accessing the developer community and have the two work together and bring new, important constituencies. It's not the organizations verses each other, they're excited to work together.

Elizabeth stated that neither organization has had a lot of representation from the community. She asked how BHN gets input from people outside of corporations and government. Kathy said that the Board of Trustees is broader than that and they do desire to incorporate more voices. Elizabeth encouraged her to consider a mechanism for input from regular citizens, including open meetings. Kathy said that her expectation is that specific development planning, vision planning etc, will have huge public planning components. It doesn't benefit the organization to do things behind closed doors.

Public Comment

Lou Gainor was disappointed that the June meeting was canceled. Suzanne stated concern that there were vacancies in over 1/3 of the council. Suzanne mentioned that tomorrow will be the 18th anniversary of the first advisory council meeting. She expressed concern about elections. Suzanne said it should be a priority for the next meeting to address membership. know.

Adjourn

Elizabeth adjourned the meeting.

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council
9/19/16 Meeting Attendees

MEMBERS PRESENT (X)

1. Greg Abel*	X
2. Neal Caten	
3. Maureen Cavanaugh	X
4. Chris Daly*	X
5. Heather Deschenes, Vice Chair	X
6. Lou Gainor	X
7. Walter Hope	
8. Kelly Hurstak	
9. Carl Johnson	X
10. Jim Martel	X
11. Rob Moir	
12. Jim Peters	
13. Peter Rosen	
14. Elizabeth Solomon, Chair	X
15. Lauri Webster	X
16. Susan Woods	
17. Vacant Seat, Boston Harbor Advocacy	
18. Vacant Seat, Business & Commercial	
19. Vacant Seat, Environmental	
20. Vacant Seat, Environmental	
21. Vacant Seat, Educational & Cultural	
22. Vacant Seat, Community	
23. Vacant Seat, Community	
24. Vacant Seat, Community	
25. Vacant Seat, Municipalities	
26. Vacant Seat, Municipalities	
27. Vacant Seat, Native American	
28. Vacant Seat, Native American	

*pending member

OTHERS PRESENT

Kathy Abbott, BHN	X
Marc Albert, NPS	
Jennifer Bender	
Kristina Bergquist, SCA	X
Elisabeth Colby, NPS	
Michael Creasey	
Theresa Czerepica**	
Jude Griffin	
Phil Griffiths, BHN	
Bill Hale**	
Elizabeth James-Perry	
Susan Kane, DCR	
Steve Marcus, FBHI	
Suzanne Gall Marsh** FBHI	X
Ed McCabe	X
Pat Morss**	
Giles Parker, NPS	
Jonathan Perry	
Mary Raczko, NPS	X
Bill Reardon**	
Bonnie Schwartz, SCA	X
Sally Snowman, USCG	
Kristen Wyman	

BHIA – Boston Harbor Island Alliance
DCR – Department of Conservation and Recreation
NPS – National Park Service
TIOBEC-Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center

**Emeritus Council Member

QUORUM PRESENT 7 OF 14 OFFICIAL MEMBERS