

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Seventeenth Meeting Minutes
December 9, 1998 10:30am – 12:30pm
Hale & Dorr, 60 State St., Boston, MA 26th Floor**

As Corrected

PRESENT: Edith Andrews and Rob Moir, Advisory Council; Cathy Douglas Stone, City of Boston; Peter Webber, Department of Environmental Management (DEM); Maynard Goldman, Island Alliance (IA); Terry Savage, National Park Service (NPS); Linda Haar, Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Alden Gifford, Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Brian Broderick, Metropolitan District Commission (MDC); Doug MacDonald, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Richard Howe, The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR)

Chairman Webber called the seventeenth meeting of the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership to order and declared a quorum.

Review of minutes from the November 18, 1998 meeting

Peter Webber mentioned that there were misspellings and that the location of the meeting was incorrect.

Suzanne Gall Marsh, Advisory Council and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands (FBHI), asked how public comment is recorded in the minutes, and if all public comments are supposed to be recorded along with the name and affiliation of the person that said them. She had made comments on behalf of the Advisory Council and the FBHI, and George Marsh, FBHI, had also made comments that were not specifically addressed in the minutes. Peter responded by saying that he wants to acknowledge comments by name. George Price said that the goal is to catch the essence of the dialog for the minutes. The minutes are not intended to be just a one-page record of decision, but to capture relative points of discussion while avoiding the problems that arise from transcribing word for word. If topics have been misstated or omitted during the editing process, it should be brought to our attention and it will be corrected. Linda Haar agreed that the minutes can not be verbatim, but public comment should be emphasized.

There was a motion made to amend the fifteenth meeting minutes to include Suzanne and George Marsh's comments. **The motion was approved.**

Operations Committee - George Price

George presented the revised draft role and function statement. The role and function statement for the Operations Committee now includes natural & cultural resource protection.

Finance Committee – Cathy Douglas Stone

Cathy requested that the discussion begin with a report from George Price. George reported that the Department of the Interior used new criteria to evaluate NPS development projects and consequently, several of the Boston Harbor Islands projects were cancelled or pushed back for several years. We were not the only park to suffer the same fate, 18 projects were cancelled in the Northeast Region alone. He received positive feedback, and felt optimistic that the project to

reconstruct the seawall at George's Island would stay on the list for FY 2000. In addition, he thought that the \$240,000 NPS operating base increase would stay for FY 2000.

Cathy proposed that the partnership send a letter to the Secretary of the Interior expressing concern about these projects. She thought that it should be signed by all of the Partners. Peter Webber supported sending a letter, but worried that this retaliation may have a negative effect on Park Service staff. He suggested that it might be better strategically to write periodic letters that emphasized projects and progress rather than just fax a letter when in trouble. There was general agreement to this suggestion. Brian Broderick said that we should be careful with the tone of the letter, and instead of just focusing on the issue of one project being dropped, we should focus on accomplishments to date while we continue to seek support. Edith Andrews said that the letter should not be threatening sounding, but have a tone of concern.

Lauren Downing, NPS, gave a report on the upcoming financial submittals. She reminded each Partner that a reasonable accounting of all cost attributed to the Boston Harbor Islands from 11/17/96 through 11/30/98 be presented to NPS by 1/15/99. If anyone has questions, please call Lauren.

There was a motion made to write a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt. Cathy amended the motion to include a letter thanking the delegation.

Maynard Goldman suggested that one person draft the letter, not the entire partnership, although there should be an opportunity for all to edit. George said that now, before the general management plan is in place, is the time to act. The Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area is a model, a different kind of park, and it would be advantageous to be aggressively friendly during the planning process.

Cathy pulled the amendment to the motion; the letter to the delegation will be done separately.

There was a motion made for the Partnership to send a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, Bruce Babbitt. **The motion was approved**, Terry Savage, NPS abstained.

Cathy introduced Jack Delaney, of the law firm Hale & Dorr. Jack listed three actions that are going on as the park moves from creation into a working entity.

1. Capturing match money
2. Developing a management plan
3. Need to get draft language into Massachusetts statute defining the National Recreation Area, so that the state agencies recognize the entity. Now, state agencies do not have the authority to do cooperative things.

The draft language allows provision of resources from state and local agencies to be managed by Island Alliance and Partnership and provides a legal basis for state and local entities to contribute money, goods, or services to implement and carry out the general management plan.

Peter asked if this would make it unnecessary to enter into interagency agreements. Jack answered that it would allow all funds to be moved directly and this would help cut down on the need for interagency agreements. Maynard pointed out that the language is permissive, it does not require the transfer of funds.

The name of National Recreation Area in the draft was questioned. Jack said that Federal law has the islands designated as a National Recreation Area. Brian asked if the Commonwealth could change the name to National Park Area. Jack answered that the Commonwealth could not amend federal law, but that it could be called a National Park Area in the Commonwealth. Edith said that the Native Americans felt that the recreation part should be eliminated anyway, out of respect for the burial grounds. Changing the name to National Park Area would show that the Commonwealth was sensitive to the Native American feelings.

Peter questioned the last phrase in the draft that referred to donations. He thought that it could be read narrowly. Jack said that it was defined in the federal legislation as funds, properties or services. Maynard asked if there was any reason not to expand that phrase in the legislation. Jack said that it was a good suggestion and that it would be added.

Jack said that the Partnership needs to decide when to file the bill. It could be put in as a late file bill, or as an amendment to a budget bill that would not require a public hearing. There was general agreement that it should not be hidden, and that it would be an opportunity for some attention. If it was sponsored by the governor, it would be accompanied by a message; it would have a story and a history. Cathy thought that the Mayor of Boston might be interested to include it in the State of the City Address.

Marianne Connolly, MWRA, asked if a request for appropriations should be included in the bill as a possible trigger for matching funds. Jack answered no, because expenditures need to be authorized by law, and it is not yet known what and how much to ask for.

Barbara Mackey, NPS, asked what the deadline is for the Governor to file. Peter said that the Governor works toward the last Wednesday in January to do the budget filing. Vivian Li, The Boston Harbor Association, said that it could possibly be included in the State of the Union Address, then filed afterward.

Suzanne Gall Marsh thought that it was critical to write into the legislation that funding be available to support the Advisory Council. This concern has been brought to the Partnership before. Rob Moir said that it was important to get the legislation done first, before deciding on the Advisory Council, Committee and project needs. The vehicle needs to be in place before deciding details. Peter asked if direct federal funding is possible. Jack answered that since the Secretary of the Interior appoints the Advisory Council, he sees no reason the partnership could not pass money directly to the Advisory Council.

Suzanne said that the legislation should mention cooperative agreements with other non-profits, not just Island Alliance, to keep open alternative ways to bring in money. Rob said that Island Alliance can enter into contract with anyone and the legislation does not preclude any Partner from entering into agreements with anyone.

Peter asked Jack to make the revisions that were discussed and approved. The next task for the Partnership will be to prepare the message for the January filing. He expected to work with the Park Service, City and State and invited anyone with ideas to contact him. He said he would get a draft to anyone interested.

A motion was made to accept the draft legislation with the understanding that the discussed revisions will be made. **The motion was approved.** Doug MacDonald said that there is a great opportunity for the new Secretary of the Executive

Office of Environmental Affairs to see this as a significant initiative and hopes that a paragraph will be added that includes appropriations language.

Cathy thanked Jack on behalf of the partnership and extended an offer to sit in on future meetings. Jack said that once the legislation is filed, and a realistic proposal for an appropriation is decided, it could be included in an outside budget as a line item.

Planning Committee – Linda Haar

Linda said that the comments would be brief because a summary was handed out that explained the status of the committee. There was a newsletter sent to the Partners that was an update on the alternatives. Peter Webber said that he had some changes to the newsletter that he hoped could be considered for the final printing. The Planning Committee is also working to have recommendations to the Partnership on the components for a water transportation RFP to be issued in March 1999. Linda mentioned that the Spectacle Island project is moving along well. The Friday field trip to Long and Moon Islands was announced.

Advisory Council – Rob Moir

Rob thanked Greg Ketchen and the Aquarium staff for hosting the recent public meeting. There was a good turn out, with all of the interest groups represented. The purpose of the meeting was to update the public and to prepare for the March nomination meeting. The council is trying to get the word out and new people involved.

Edith reported that during the meeting they broke out into groups and prepared a mission and goals statement for each group. Claudia Smith Reid said that the Advisory Council's mission and action plan would be reported to the Partnership. George Price suggested that the January Partnership meeting would be a good forum.

Suzanne Gall Marsh said that the Advisory Council is not a temporary entity and has two major reasons for being, assisting the management plan and park operations. She said that there is great potential for the council, but they need a mechanism to get things done. She thought it extremely important that the council receive staff support. Now, the council is mostly made up of volunteers and the Partnership staff is already overworked.

Public Comment

Nancy Martin, FBHI, announced the Thompson Island, January 1st holiday trip for families. Spaces are limited so tickets should be purchased in advance. She mentioned the Friday field trip to Long Island and that the Friends are collecting items to be given to the shelter on the 21st. She also mentioned that the organization has been planting hardwood trees on Long and other islands and that trees are available if other agencies need them.

Doug MacDonald said he was sorry he couldn't go to on the field trip to Long Island. The MWRA had at one time considered Long Island as the site for the water treatment plant. He commented that Long Island was an extraordinarily rich resource that was troubled with many complicated issues. He said that Long Island was key to the park and he hoped that everything could be worked out.

Brad Swing, City of Boston, announced the specifics of the Friday field trip, adding thanks to

Jack Wiggin at Urban Harbors for the use of the North Parking Lot at UMASS. George said that there was still room on the bus and anyone interested should contact him.

Closing Comments

Rob Moir mentioned that follow up is needed for the letter thanking our local politicians for all of their help and hard work.

Peter Webber asked for any comments on future Partnership meeting dates. George Price said that there was only one request to change dates, so the proposed schedule stands.

George announced the NPS and IA Holiday Open House. He said that the office has space for interns.

Peter reminded everyone that the mission statement for the Park has been put back on the agenda for the January meeting. Bruce Jacobson, NPS, has only received one comment to date. He asked that all come prepared to talk about it at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:35 PM.