

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Thirty-ninth Meeting Minutes  
Hale & Dorr, 60 State Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA  
December 19, 2000, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

***As Corrected***

PRESENT: Rob Moir, Advisory Council; Captain Chuck Beck, U.S. Coast Guard (USCG); Maynard Goldman, Island Alliance; Linda Haar, Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Cathy Douglas Stone, City of Boston Environmental Services; Terry Savage, National Park Service (NPS); Peter Webber, Department of Environmental Management (DEM); Holly Richardson for Brian Broderick, Metropolitan District Commission (MDC); Doug MacDonald, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Alden Gifford, Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Jim Doolin, Massachusetts Port Authority (MASSPORT)

Cathy Douglas Stone, Vice-Chair, called the meeting to order and declared a quorum. She announced that Dick Howe was changing jobs and would no longer work for The Trustees of Reservations. She presented him with a certificate on behalf of the Partnership recognizing his contributions as one of the founding Partners.

**Approval of minutes from November 21, 2000**

Terry Savage made a motion to accept the minutes of November 21, 2000.

**The motion was approved.**

**Strategic Plan**

Bruce Jacobson, NPS, reported that the Planning Committee met on November 13 to discuss the 5-year draft strategic plan, including a discussion of comments from the Advisory Council. Based on these comments, the Planning Committee endorsed the following: edit the document to improve readability; add more specific references to utility supply for islands; mention Chelsea as a potential gateway; emphasize the marine environment by using the word "estuary"; and make the references to education about the marine environment more explicit. Other recommendations of the committee included: adding the alternative energy sub-committee's efforts to the plan including sustainability ideals. The committee recognized that the Native American comment was not finalized.

Bruce explained that the committee did not agree with some of the council member's suggestions. Expanding the staff diversity goal presented in the NPS project office part of the plan to all Partnership agencies was seen as an important policy issue and staff diversity should be something that all Partners strive for, but that it would be impractical to come up with a single quantitative hiring goal for the varied Partner agencies. The committee found it unrealistic to request that each Partner specify their financial commitment to the plan over the next five years. The committee also did not endorse the request to change terminology from "archeological sites" to "burial grounds" in order to protect them from being disturbed. Using the term burial sites could trigger unwanted interest from pot hunters. The committee recommended taking the most cautious and conservative approach which is to not publicly identify the sites as burials.

Linda Haar, chair of the committee, who joined the meeting during the discussion, said that the committee recognized that the plan focused on capital and one-time expenses and that additional planning was needed regarding operating expenses. She asked the Partnership to adopt the plan with the understanding that modifications would be made if significant changes were made in the final general management plan.

The group discussed the plan. Jack Wiggin said that the Advisory Council members had felt that their role in the planning process was very important. He was pleased that so many of the suggestions were taken or improved upon by the Planning Committee. He expressed that the funding question was a very big issue. A key concern of the council was that funding issues were too general in the strategic plan. General terms were appropriate in the general management plan, but the council felt strongly that it would be appropriate for all Partners to estimate the level of funding that each anticipates making of a 5-year term. Linda Haar suggested that the issue is really operational and should be addressed jointly by the Finance and Operations committees. She said that it was important to get consensus on this document as it could be used as a basis for getting current funding, so the committee is recommending that the capital aspects of the plan be endorsed on an interim basis until the general management plan is accepted.

There was a motion made to change of the name of the 5-year Strategic Plan to Capital Plan and adopt it on an interim basis with the understanding that it will be reviewed when the general management plan is adopted and on a yearly basis. **The motion was carried.**

### **Summer Review**

The agencies reported on the past season.

DEM - Brad Sands said that DEM had a successful season despite the poor weather. He gave a special thanks to the law enforcement agencies, state, city and federal that assist with public safety. He also gave a special thanks to the many volunteers. He said that there are still communication issues between the islands and mainland, but some improvements were made this season. He presented visitation statistics. The no show rate of campers was discussed. Tom Lindberg, Advisory Council, suggested that they also keep track of the campers that were turned away through the reservation system.

There was discussion of some details of the visitation counts. George Price said that a goal of the Operations Committee is to define a system that will be consistent throughout the park.

Thompson Island - George Price reported that the Saturday trips to Thompson Island were expanded to include pick-ups at Fan Pier in South Boston this season. The visitation numbers were low but attributed to the difficulty of getting the word out late in the season and were expected to improve next season.

MWRA - Doug MacDonald reported that Deer Island had approximately 5,500 visitors this year, a 5% - 6% increase from last year. He said that the number did include visits

by over 2,200 school children but did not include events such as Sail Boston. They expect the visitation to increase drastically when the public access plans are complete.

City of Boston - Brad Swing reported that Mayor Menino expanded the camping program on Long Island to over 300 school children. They are looking forward to the program next year.

MDC - Alex Hall presented a slide show that showed the clearing of the parade grounds and examples of the temporary interpretive signage on Peddock's Island. He said that they are working on 2 new self-guided tour brochures, a geology/natural history trail and a fort trail.

Alex reported that the season was successful over all. Halloween on the Harbor was held on 2 weekends this year, faced unusually cold weather but still had better attendance than last year when the program ran for 3 weekends. He thanked the law enforcement agencies and the volunteers for their help over the season.

Alex said the extra staff that Commissioner Balfour designated to the islands this year was a great help. Having more staff and being able to keep them through the shoulder season not only helped general operations run smoother but was especially valuable for the Halloween program. He thanked Peter Lewenberg for his efforts in the process.

The pier work on Lovell's continues and the stabilization of the pier on George's Island has begun. They are investigating options for expanding the restroom facilities on George's.

### **Sign Project**

Peter Lewenberg, Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and chair of the Marketing Committee, said the Marketing Committee has found that signs are central to how the visitor perceives the park and is part of the branding initiative on which the committee is focused. He reported that research conducted for the park by the Volpe Center this past summer found: "It is clear from the focus groups that the biggest obstacle to greater attendance is lack of awareness (1) of the park itself, and its features and benefits, and (2) how to get to the park." He said that the sign working group of the Marketing and Planning committees has tried to balance the needs of individual Partners for maintaining their identity and for managing operational issues with the needs of visitors for a clear message about the park. He is hopeful that a sign system that benefits all can be adopted by the Partnership.

Bruce Jacobson explained that the Marketing Committee convened a meeting on September 29, 1999, to discuss ways to develop a parkwide sign system. An inter-committee working group was established. The group identified mainland and island locations where signs should guide visitors, with the hope of having some orientation signs installed by the 2000 visitor season. In October 1999 the MWRA stepped forward to develop sign designs for use at Nut and Deer islands, and that could be considered for other locations in the park. After a competitive process they engaged the firm of Kirilloff Associates to develop the sign system for their islands.

Bruce said that Marianne Connolly, Sam Baker, and Barbara Allen, worked very hard over the past year along with many other MWRA employees and their constituents to

develop the draft MWRA signs. On behalf of the Partnership he thanked Doug McDonald and the MWRA for providing the leadership on the sign issue—both for offering Nut and Deer island signs as prototypes for the park and for the quality of the product that they are producing with the help of their consultants.

He emphasized that MWRA's efforts have been supplemented by the Partnership committee work to develop a prototype sign system for the park. The sign working group recognized that there will be the opportunity to refine the prototypes at Spectacle Island. It also noted that the Blackstone Commission used signs as an important tool for implementing their mission for the multi-jurisdictional heritage area, and that the Blackstone experience should be an example. He distributed a summary of the goals of design for the signs (see attached). Bruce then presented a summary of the proposed sign system.

The group discussed the proposal.

Terry Savage saw this project as a concrete thing that could pull the Partners together. The group discussed the benefits of having consistent signage and how important that it was to a positive visitor experience.

Doug MacDonald said that the time would come when people must decide if the park is just a sum of parts or more than the sum of its parts. The symbolism of the sign project is high. MWRA worked with the designers with the Partners in mind and he was proud of the product. He stressed that the signs proposed as the template for the park are not MWRA corporate signs, but rather "park" signs.

Peter Webber expressed concern about the project, as many of the islands are part of another park and already have a signage system in place. He said that endorsing this proposal would require each owner to shift their sign standards agency-wide. He did not feel that they should be rushed into adopting this proposal; thought that there should be a better understanding of what is out there first to prevent potential clashes between new signage and old.

Holly Richardson said that the State Park predates the National Park by over 25 years. MDC felt strongly as a state agency that it was necessary to keep its identity intact in order to receive the funding that they do. She said that the agency has worked really hard to keep the MDC identity consistent across the system. She said that this summer there will be examples of how the national park area was incorporated into their signs.

Peter Lewenberg mentioned that each owner would decide the verbiage on the signs on their islands, within a broad framework. There were options for the materials that could be used to produce the signs. Agencies could choose from different options to meet their needs. He said that one of the group's goals was to develop signage that would create a park identity while keeping the agencies' identity. He also said that no one expected that there would be a wholesale replacement of all signs at once: signs would be installed as funding was available.

George Armstrong agreed that MWRA had a clean slate and it would be easier for them to proceed than existing organizations. He would like to understand the mechanics and

thought much more discussion was needed. The value of each Partner has to be incorporated in the project.

Maynard Goldman said that it is the Island Alliance's responsibility to raise funds for the park. The Alliance would continue to pursue funding to support the Partners with emphasis on the sign system. He felt that if we cant come to some conclusion in regard to signage then we haven't gone very far toward implementing the national park idea.

The group discussed what might happen if there was not consensus. Cathy Stone suggested that there be a meeting set up for interested parties to come together and discuss the issues.

### **Advisory Council**

Jack Wiggin, Advisory Council Chair, gave a short report because of the time constraints. He reported that the council last met on December 6. They discussed transportation issues and the strategic plan.

The annual meeting of the Advisory Council will be held March 7, the time and place will be announced soon. He is working on writing a full report to the Partnership.

### **Public Comments**

Rob Moir reported that a recent count of waterfowl was done in Boston Harbor. There were 24,000 waterfowl counted.

The Finance Committee now meets the first Tuesday of every month at 408 Atlantic Ave.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 PM.