

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Hale & Dorr, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston,
July 15, 2003, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

Attendees: Edith Andrews-Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Linda Haar-Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Samantha Overton Bussell, Todd Frederick and Peter Lewenberg-Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Kathy Abbott-Island Alliance; Jim Doolin-Massachusetts Port Authority(MASSPORT); Terry Savage and George Price-National Park Service (NPS); Jim Scully-Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center(TIOBEC); Cmd Sam Neill-United States Coast Guard (USCG)

The Sixty-second meeting of the Partnership was called to order, there was a quorum present.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the meeting held on May 20, 2003. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Peddock's Island

Doug Welch reported that a request for proposals for the Peddock's Island Phase One Project Management was sent out and that proposals have started to come in.

Spectacle Island

Peter Lewenberg reported that construction continues on the Spectacle Island visitor center and that it should be completed by this September. It is expected that the Central Artery will turn it over to the island owners in October. A tentative public opening is scheduled for July 2004, to coincide with Harborfest.

Kathy Abbott reported that there is a hearing scheduled at the State House on Thursday regarding the enabling legislation for Spectacle Island. If passed, it will allow the city and state to enter in a long-term lease with a non-profit to provide management services.

Visitor Experience and Resource Protection

Bruce Jacobson gave a presentation about the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) approach. Visitor use management is needed at the park to protect resources and to provide for quality visits. This VERP approach is endorsed by the park general management plan, and is supported by research from the University of Vermont's study of current use patterns and North Carolina State University's study of recreation related impacts on the island environment. The research findings indicate that there is an opportunity to substantially increase use of the park.

He described the four steps of the VERP process:

- determine the indicators of quality
- establish standards of quality
- monitor to see if those standards are exceeded
- take appropriate management action

Bruce explained that no “magic number” can be predicted for the number of visitors for any island or for the park as a whole. The impacts resulting from use are more important than the number of visitors in the park. Also, there are many actions managers may take if standards are exceeded other than to simply limit visitation.

To conduct a successful visitor capacity management program there has to be commitment by the Partnership to long-term monitoring of indicators of quality. It is anticipated that volunteer personnel can be trained to conduct much of the monitoring required thus reducing the burden on operations staff of island agencies.

The Partners discussed. There was general approval of the process, though the formal vote was postponed until the Advisory Council had an opportunity to review.

Gateways

Sarah Peskin gave a presentation about a proposed harbor and islands gateway in the Wharf District. The NPS, Island Alliance and the New England Aquarium have prepared a project statement that describes the gateway that would ideally be located on the Rose Kennedy Greenway. It would be part of the Long Wharf Gateway as described in the park general management plan. The plans include a fountain configured as a three dimensional model of Boston Harbor and the Islands on parcel 15 and park pavilions on parcel 14. Sarah showed drawings of two alternative designs for the park pavilions. She said that the concept has been very well received so far but that it is very early in the process. The Partners discussed and asked if there is anything that the group can do to support the effort. It was thought that the proposal will have the best chance if it fits in with the entire scheme of the Corridor Master Plan and if it contains plans for a structure that is multi-use and can be used multi-seasonally.

Little Brewster

Commander Sam Neill reported that Little Brewster is undergoing a staffing transition from all military to a mix of military, civilian and volunteer auxiliary. This transition has been underway for a few years, but after 9/11 the Coast Guard had been under even more pressure to use active duty personnel in other duty stations. The new position will be a civilian USCG position for an overall manager of the island that will bridge the responsibilities of the light with the Partnership program. Much of the on site watchstanding will be coordinated by the USCG Auxiliary. The new position offers more flexibility and will have a focus on visitor services and education programs. They are in the selection process now.

Commander Neill reported that the following projects are underway: pier development; lead paint remediation in the boat house; and construction of a public restroom on the island.

Summer Update

Peter Lewenberg reported that the Family Fun Saturdays on Georges Island have begun. The series kick off was a kids' fair day, and last weekend was an antique baseball demonstration. The event was a great success from all sides, the participants, staff and public enjoyed. Next in the series is the Civil War Days, then performances by the Boston Landmarks Orchestra.

Peter stated that the water transportation system has had many challenges this year; the Abigail still is not available for use as a water shuttle. The shuttle schedule is therefore very limited and the island staff are working commendably to compensate. Richie Sutherland, Captain of the *MV Irene*, has exceeded expectations as an operator and has been an outstanding park representative. The Department of Conservation and Recreation assigned a ranger to the Project Office to work with the NPS rangers. He is stationed on the Georges Island dock on weekends to facilitate passenger flow.

Peter said that they have an opportunity to augment the water transportation system with a UMASS vessel for a cost of \$7,800. Having another boat would help immensely, but they still haven't collected the \$7,500 they are still short to pay Richie Sutherland's contract. Peter beseeched all Partners at the table to contribute more to fill this urgent need.

New Business

Tom Lindberg reported that MWRA and NPS were summoned by the City of Boston to appear and discuss the Deer Island Public Access Plan and the issue of dog walking raised by Sam Sapiel and Gary McCann. He invited all to attend the hearing tomorrow.

Advisory Council

Greg Ketchen, Chair, announced that the next meeting will be held on September 3 from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM. He said that the planning is complete for the outreach plan and that a new proposal to fund this plan has gone out. They expect to hear the results this fall. He said that the September meeting will include a presentation about the renewable energy study.

Public Comments

Mary Corcoran reminded all about the Mass Marine Educators Conference on Saturday, October 4 and the Boston Harbor Islands Science Symposium on October 7.

Peter Lewenberg announced that the Morss Boston Harbor Islands photography exhibit moved to Logan Airport.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.