

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Hale & Dorr, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston,
September 16, 2003, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

Attendees: Edith Andrews and Claudia Smith-Reid—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Linda Haar—Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Andrea d’Amato and Cathy Douglas Stone—City of Boston, Office of Environmental Services; Kathy Abbott and Maynard Goldman—Island Alliance; Samantha Overton Bussell, Todd Frederick and Peter Lewenberg—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder and Marianne Connolly—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Terry Savage and George Price—National Park Service (NPS); George Armstrong—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Captain Dan May—United States Coast Guard (USCG)

Secretary Herzfelder, Chair, called the sixty-third meeting of the Partnership to order; there was a quorum present.

There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the meeting held on July 15, 2003. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Peddock’s Island

Doug Welch reported that a team has been reviewing the proposals for the Peddock’s Island Phase One Project Management. They held interviews last week, and are very close to awarding the contract.

Spectacle Island

Peter Lewenberg reported that construction continues on the Spectacle Island visitor center. It is hoped that the island will be ready for a public opening next summer, and possibly as a venue to showcase the islands during the Democratic National Convention.

Kathy Abbott reported that she and Joe Ferrino, Advisory Council, had a very positive meeting with Senate President Robert E. Travaglini about the park.

Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP)

Linda Haar said that at the July Partnership meeting, the planning committee presented the findings and proposed direction for a Visitor Experience and Resource Protection plan for the Boston Harbor Islands. A presentation was also made to the Advisory Council at their September meeting. The Partners discussed the draft motion that was in the meeting packet and made one change to the text.

A motion was made for the Partnership to adopt the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) plan as an approach for the Boston Harbor Islands. This plan identifies indicators to be monitored to insure the island resources are protected from over use while insuring a quality visitor experience is maintained. Standards are proposed, though they may be modified with experience. The Partnership also makes a commitment to institute a monitoring program and positive management action as necessary. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Summer Update

Peter Lewenberg reported that although this season was filled with uncertainties, the front line staff rose to the challenges. Peter thanked all of the front line staff and volunteers for working together, their spirit of camaraderie, and for all their outstanding efforts which really had a positive impact on the visitors.

Jennifer Whitman reported on the marketing efforts over the season. She said that the focus was on overall brand marketing to create awareness of the park. There were some radio advertisements, promotions, and a WBUR member day. There were magazine ads placed in *Boston* and *Where* magazines. One hundred thousand event brochures were printed and distributed through the Greater Boston Visitor and Convention Bureau, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, CTM racks, park partners and direct mail. She gave thanks to Martin Beveridge, DCR, who did the design of the ads and the brochure. Island Alliance also worked with the state this year to place lightpole banners with the park logo next to the banners for "Back to the Beaches". The park received a good deal of positive press this year, including an article in Smithsonian magazine.

Jennifer reported that a new program was launched this year and was quite a success. Family Fun Days were held on every Saturday in July and August on Georges Island. These events included an antique baseball game, a performance by the Boston Landmarks Orchestra, a Civil War weekend, Children's Theater, and a Nature Day with participation from Zoo New England, The Children's Museum and the New England Aquarium. She gave special thanks to the staff on Georges Island, without whom the events would not have been possible.

Also, Pat Morss, Advisory Council, had a Boston Harbor Islands photography exhibit displayed all summer long at the airport. Massport donated a park diorama and display rack which will stay at the airport when the photography exhibit moves to Long Wharf for the fall.

Island Alliance hosted two community trips to the islands. This idea came from the Advisory Council's outreach plan. The trips, which served over 300 people each, departed from Columbia Point and included local legislators, their constituents and local officials. The trips were so successful that Island Alliance hopes to expand this program next year and host up to 6 trips for local legislators and their constituents.

Peter Lewenberg said that this year has demonstrated that providing high quality programs will attract visitors to the park. As park awareness is growing, the marketing committee is beginning to shift its focus to event planning.

Water Transportation

Peter Lewenberg reported that the water transportation was particularly challenging this year. There was only one inter-island water shuttle running until the new DCR boat, *Abigail*, came into service in late August. A request for proposals has been sent out to a wide variety of boat operators for a 5-year water transportation contract to begin next year. This contract allows for the opportunity for vendors to bid on individual routes. It is hoped that landing fees will support an inter-island shuttle that will continue to have no extra cost to the visitor. Bids are due at the end of October.

Peter said that this summer, City Water Taxi experimented with providing taxi service for a fee between islands. The water transportation sub-committee is also exploring opportunities with commuter boat operators in Boston and Quincy.

There was a suggestion to put the RFP on the state website. Sam Overton Bussell suggested that the sub-committee take a look at the way the New York State Parks are managing boat service. Andrea d'Amato suggested adding a requirement or an incentive program for operators to use alternative fuels.

Predevelopment of Renewables

Jack Wiggin gave a presentation on the predevelopment of renewables in the Boston Harbor Islands national park area. The project goals are to: advance sustainable development policies of the park; provide a source of revenue to support the park; educate the public on renewable energy; contribute to the supply of green power and a greater reliance on renewable energy. The study was conducted within the Partnership criteria for evaluating revenue generating concepts as stated in the Economic Strategy report. The team is also doing a thorough environmental assessment and a study of community acceptability. At the suggestion of the NPS, the team is currently looking at a view shed analysis as well. Are there particular views of the harbor that should be protected as part of the visitor experience? George Price added that this is particularly important for the Partnership to consider, or to identify locations, because other wind projects have been proposed by Hull, Quincy, Weymouth and MWRA.

Public Comments

Todd Frederick announced that the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands received the National State Park Directors President's Award. They are being honored as the outstanding state park volunteer support group in the country. Todd presented Steve Marcus with the award. There will be a formal presentation by Secretary Herzfelder later this month.

Captain May announced that the repair work to Nixes Mate will start in two weeks.

George Price announced the upcoming Mass Marine Educators conference on October 4, the field trips on October 5, and the Science Symposium on October 7. He encouraged all to register online. He invited the Partners to attend a reception in E.O. Wilson's honor at Cathy Stone's house on October 3.

Nancy Martin reported that the Friends held a fall event on Georges Island September 7. There was storytelling and children's activities, donated apples, cider and doughnuts. They hope to expand the program next year. The Friends boat trips expanded this year, some more successful than others, mostly due to the weather.

Marianne Connolly reported that MWRA received an award for the Deer Island Public Access plan. She thanked the Partnership for all their work and support.

Gary McCann reported that he and Sam Sapiel appeared before Boston City Council about the policy of allowing dogs on Deer Island. Gary stated that MWRA, and NPS representatives were called to testify.

Advisory Council

Greg Ketchen gave a presentation about the outreach plan that the Advisory Council has developed. The Council has submitted a grant request to fund the full implementation of the plan. This spring the council began to implement parts of the plan; they worked with the Partnership on the Family Fun Days, the Balance Bar camp, community boat trips and increased their activity giving presentations that introduced the public to the park.

Gary McCann raised the concern about the outreach plan saying that it did not address Tribal issues or have a Tribal outreach component, even after he raised the issue at the last meeting. Greg stated that Tribes are included in the general outreach plan and that there has been involvement of the Native American interest group of the Advisory Council in the planning. Edith Andrews reminded all that they are working to get a Native American memorial on Deer Island.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.