

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Boston Redevelopment Authority, One City Hall Plaza, 9th Floor, Boston
May 18, 2004, 3:00 PM – 4:45 PM**

Attendees: Linda Smith-Mooney and Bill Hale—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Cathy Douglas Stone—City of Boston, Department of Environmental Services; Kathy Abbott, Samantha Overton Bussell, and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Doug Welch for Maynard Goldman—Island Alliance; Marianne Connolly—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); George Price and Terry Savage—National Park Service (NPS); Jim Scully—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC).

Cathy Douglas Stone, Vice-chair called the meeting to order, there was a quorum present.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the meeting held on April 20, 2004. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Georges Island

Karl Pastore reported that Georges Island is open for the season and that the Harbor Express ferries are running. In a real example of partnership, Harbor Express and DCR engineers repaired the power ramp gangway system at Georges that has been broken for several years. Karl also said that the damaged floats that were on Georges have been replaced with working floats, which were moved from Great Brewster. There will be no ferry service or docking system at Great Brewster this year, but Thompson Island will be hosting kayaking trips to the island and will assist the DCR engineers with the caretaking of the island.

Karl reported that there was release of fuel oil at Georges. Approximately 1500 gallons of fuel oil was released from the day tank in the generator room. Most of it was contained and much of the oil was recovered. Engineers from DCR worked with Department of Environmental Protection and Safe Harbors on the clean-up. They also developed a fail-safe system to prevent future spills.

Peddocks Island

Doug Welch, Island Alliance, reported that they are working in conjunction with Tom Malhstadt, the state Archeologist and Massachusetts Historic Commission as they continue working on the Peddocks Island feasibility study. The project team will seek evidence of well water at two locations on East Head. Doug reported that there is a new project manager from Spaulding and Slye, Tom Hamill.

Spectacle Island

Karl Pastore said that there are still several outstanding issues to be resolved before the ownership of Spectacle Island is transferred from the Central Artery to the city and state. They are still hopeful for a soft opening this summer, but there is currently no set opening date. Hopefully, more will be known after Commissioners Abbott and Pollack and the Central Artery managers meet later this month.

George Price reminded all that planning for the opening of Spectacle proceeds. There are temporary exhibits in the works and staff has been allocated from the state and from the NPS. The planning had also included marketing the opening and for Spectacle to be a hub of the water transportation, so there indeed will be a ripple effect if the island does not open as

anticipated. Steve Marcus, Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, encouraged managers not to be shy about moving people resources to other islands, as they can be put to good use. George said that they do need to make the best use of all the individuals. The NPS funding will not be around next year.

The legislation that would allow a non-profit agency to manage Spectacle Island is still stalled in the State House. There was a suggestion to begin work again on legislation for the park as a whole that would allow the partners to work with each other with more flexibility. Cathy Douglas Stone said that she has copies of all the previous work to share.

Transportation Update

Doug Welch reported that the 5-year water transportation contract was signed with Harbor Express. He reported that there has been concern expressed by Bruce Berman, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, about the overall business plan and on how the ferry and inter-island water shuttle system is funded. Landing fees for charter companies were built into to business plan as one way to support the system. A policy was put into place to charge a \$2 per-person fee for charters (\$1 per-person for the preferred vendor, Harbor Express) and a reduced \$0.50 per-person fee for school groups (no charge for the preferred vendor, Harbor Express). This policy was communicated to all charter companies prior to the start of the season and in the RFP distributed to all water transportation operators in 2003. The group discussed the policy, which had been previously endorsed as part of the water transportation contract. They discussed if they should keep the policy as is, or remove the school group fee. There was agreement to keep the policy because the charges supported services, such as education programs, staff time, and maintenance; the policy would be evaluated after the season when the numbers were in. Also, it was pointed out that there are other programs the park offers to subsidize groups (100 free ferry tickets a day in summer, Duke Energy grant money for students and other private grants). The intent of the landing fee policy was not to hinder access for students to the islands. Doug will report to the Partnership at a later date after the season's data was evaluated.

George Price said that the boats this year are smaller (approximately 150 passengers) than the Boston Harbor Cruises boats were (300-500 passengers), but they are faster. Harbor Express is committed to covering the peak times with additional vessels. If boats are full, another boat should arrive shortly after. Early in the season, communications broke down among all parties and there were people left on Georges for an extended time after the last boat. Since that incident, procedures were put in to place to avoid a reoccurrence. Karl Pastore will work directly with the front line island staff. George stated that he will be the contact for any boat issues and concerns. He requested that people report to him immediately any safety related issues so that they can be resolved effectively. He invited people to also contact him about any serious problems as they occur. Bill Walker, Harbor Express, will work with George if there are any problems on his end. Harbor Express and the Partnership are committed to visitor safety and satisfaction.

Planning Committee

Bruce Jacobson, NPS, announced a joint meeting of the planning and finance committees on June 29, 2004 to look at park-wide funding priorities. He encouraged Partners to designate representatives to be involved in this planning process.

Marketing

Jennifer Whitman, Island Alliance passed out the 2004 events brochures and asked that people contact her if they need quantities to distribute. The main distribution sites for the 100k brochures will be CTM racks, the Greater Boston Convention and Visitor's Bureau visitor contact stations at Boston Common and the Prudential Center and their mail out program, Mass Pike visitor centers and Massport. An 8,000 piece direct mailing is also scheduled.

Jennifer gave a report on the marketing and public relations activities for the summer. The main focus of marketing is park awareness and branding. They have also been highlighting the new water transportation system and the Family Fun Days. Radio stations WBUR, WBOS and WCRB are running ads and print advertising has been placed in the Boston Globe, Where Magazine and Boston Magazine. The website continues to undergo design and functionality improvements. There will soon be signage and light pole banners on Long Wharf.

Jennifer said that there have been many articles already this year appearing in several publications including national publications like Coastal Living, and Family Fun magazines.

They are also sponsoring special boat charters for the civic engagement plan, and the Concierge Association. There are plans to host a cruise through the national park with a renewable energy focus in conjunction with CERC during the DNC. The Drumlin Cruise, an annual fundraiser for the Island Alliance, is scheduled for June 15, 2004. Throughout the summer the park will also have a presence at events like the Seaport Festival, Harborfest, and the WCRB Esplanade Concerts. Pat Morss will have his Boston Harbor Islands photo exhibit displayed at the Moakley Courthouse and on Spectacle Island.

Operations

George Price announced that the floating dock has been installed at Little Brewster. Kelly Fellner, NPS, said that she is working with Kristen Karl Carnahan, DCR, on joint training. This year, the joint training will be held on Thompson Island in conjunction with the state-wide ranger interpretive training. There will be a 3-day workshop which will include Harbor Islands intensive training. One of these days will be an orientation to the islands. Kelly said that the training is open to all Partner staff, any organizations we work with, and volunteers. Please contact her to reserve a space; it is a great opportunity to learn about the park and the various organizations.

Education

Kelly Fellner said that the education committee will not meet in the summer months, and members will communicate primarily by email.

She said that David Weinstein, Harbor Connections, has brought out several classes to Georges, Lovells and Bumpkin. An overnight trip to Peddocks is also planned. There have been issues with the state police boat and it has not been available for school programs. They have been filling in with the *Abigail*, *Hurricane*, *MV Irene* and *Seabreeze*. She thanked the DCR for getting the docks in place in time for school groups' use. It made it much easier and safer for the students to get on the islands.

Kelly announced that the Harbor Island guidebook created by students from Odyssey High School in South Boston was published. The book signing got press attention and it was a great day. The book is on sale through the Island Alliance and Globe Book Store. She said that the

Odyssey School hopes to sponsor other editions that focus on other islands and also that other schools have expressed interested in creating their own island guidebooks.

New Business

Cathy Douglas Stone announced that Captain May will be leaving Boston for a new assignment. She thanked him for all his exemplary work and his deep commitment to the park and Little Brewster. Captain May said that it had been an honor and a pleasure to be part of the park for all these years and that he will miss it. He will be stationed in Washington, DC.

Advisory Council

Pat Morss announced that the next meeting of the Advisory Council will be held on June 2, 2004, at the New England Aquarium.

Public Comment

Steve Marcus invited all to the Friends cruise to Spectacle Island on June 5, 2004.

The next Partnership meetings will be held on June 15 and July 20. There will not be a meeting in August.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.