

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Hale & Dorr, 60 State Street, 26th Floor
September 21, 2004, 3:00 PM – 4:50 PM**

Attendees: Marianne Farrington and Bill Hale—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Cathy Douglas Stone—City of Boston, Department of Environmental Services; Karl Pastore for Samantha Overton Bussell—Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Doug Welch for Tom Powers—Island Alliance (IA); Marianne Connolly for Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); George Price and Terry Savage—National Park Service (NPS); Cmdr. John O'Connor—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Cathy Douglas Stone, Vice-chair, called the meeting to order. She introduced Cmdr. John O'Connor, the new voting partner for the USCG. The presentation on the Deer Island signs was tabled.

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

Water Transportation

George Price gave an update on the status of the water transportation. He said that there have been a number of issues involving communications, logistics and capacity that managers continue to work on. The season was also affected by a series of mechanical failures. Staff and volunteers have taken much of the brunt of the disappointment of visitors. However, there were many positives of the season. George introduced Bill Walker, Harbor Express. Bill said that they are enthusiastic with the opportunity to provide service to the islands. He said that service to the park visitor has improved as they learn about their specific needs. This year Harbor Express repaired the ramp at Georges which enhanced the visitor experience. He said that they have provided visitors newer vessels and the convenience of bow loading. There are ADA accessible ramps at Long Wharf, Quincy and Logan. The ridership from Quincy to the islands has been much greater than expected. A ticket booth, donated by Boston NHP, was in place at Long Wharf and has helped the boarding process.

George Price stated that they are still working on the numbers, but it is clear that there will be a shortfall of dollars to pay for the water shuttle. This year, a portion of the ferry ticket was designated to support the shuttle and a charter fee with graduated amounts was also implemented to help supplement. Ferry ridership was not what was expected; some of this is attributed to bad weather on weekends, and very low visitation during the week of the DNC, a week that had been very busy in past years. George reminded all that last year, the transportation sub-committee came to the Partnership for contributions, and he gave them heads up that it appears this will be the case again. Last year, NPS (Boston NHP & Boston Harbor Islands) provided most of the funding for the shuttle, with substantial contributions from DCR, and Massport, as well as a small contribution from Thompson Island. The NPS announced at that time, that there would not be money in the budgets for transportation this year. After careful review of the data that has been collected, the transportation sub-committee will report back to the Partnership.

Terry Savage suggested that future planning include making links with the islands and the one million visitors that go to the Navy Yard. He said that a new ADA dock on Pier 1 is planned for FY06. Bill Walker suggested that a cost/benefits analysis be done on the water shuttle.

Peddocks Island

Doug Welch, Island Alliance, reported that the engineering feasibility study for Phase I of the Peddocks Project is complete. The recommendation is to provide utilities to the island through a micro tunnel from Hull. This project is estimated to cost around \$4M. A committee that includes members of the Island Alliance economic development committee and members of the Partnership are reviewing the recommendation and weighing the options. An Advisory Council study session on this topic was held on September 1.

The guardhouse asbestos removal project is complete.

Spectacle Island

Doug Welch reported that construction work continues on the leachate recirculation leachate system on Spectacle Island. There has been some success in some locations, but no solution has yet been found. Other hazardous material has been identified on the island. The Department of Environmental Protection is working with DCR to determine the extent of the problem.

Park Pavilion

The park pavilion project continues to move forward. Nancy Grilk said that Mayor Menino has recommended the project. They are working through some permitting issues. The next step is for the NPS to sign a lease document. Island Alliance will manage the site which will serve as a gateway to the Boston Harbor Islands. NPS has submitted a request for \$4M for design, permitting and construction.

Operations

George Price said that six new floats have been delivered to the islands. It is the first phase of the ADA access plan for the islands.

George reported that the Georges Island walkways and safety railing project has begun and that compliance work for the Little Brewster dock project has started.

Karl Pastore said that the reorganization of DCR has brought many positives. There is now one radio system used on the islands. The LCM 8 has undergone repairs and is operational. The Abigail has been in use for school programs and is a useful boat. Floats were moved from Great Brewster to replace the sinking floats on Georges, making it much easier and safer for park visitors. Karl said that many volunteer groups have done work on the islands thanks to Carol Fithian and the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands. He would like to see the program expand. Karl said that next year restoring water service to Georges Island is a top priority. He also said that there is a goose problem that also needs to be addressed.

Native American Projects

Kelly Fellner, NPS, said that a number of people from the park Partnership and Advisory Council are working on a Native American Video Project. This project was funded out of NPS Ethnography money that was received a while ago. The group is working with Dan Knapp, World Turtle Productions, to develop an oral history video. The video is designed for middle school students to learn about life on the Boston Harbor Islands from the perspective of the native peoples of the region. Other projects include classroom programs and planning for a Native American speaker's bureau.

Kelly introduced Dan Knapp, who showed clips from the video project. He said that the video format is used to present the information in the oral history tradition of the various Native American groups connected to the Harbor Islands. Each story is unique and is told in a unique way. The project is not simply production, but involves community development and involvement. It will be a sustainable model; during the process he will teach the techniques to youth so that new videos can be made to meet the educational needs of the future.

Public Comment

Maynard Goldman announced the Island Alliance Dinner.

Cathy Douglas Stone said that Dr. E.O. Wilson visited Georges Island recently to retrace the steps of his great-grandfather "Black Bill Wilson".

Doug introduced Mike Cardillo as the new USCG intern, who will work for the Island Alliance on business development. The Island Alliance is aggressively interviewing for the positions of both the development director and events and marketing manager.

Steve Marcus announced the upcoming trips sponsored by the Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, the fall foliage tour on October 2 and a lighthouse excursion on October 16.

Kelly announced the upcoming Boston Harbor Educator's Conference on October 2.

Carol Fithian made a plea to the Partnership to broaden the possibilities for volunteer groups. She said that currently the opportunities for group involvement are very limited. She said that many groups contact her for projects, with repeat calls and it is a shame to turn them away and not utilize the manpower. George Price said that the Operations Committee is working on the issue, while it is important to involve the public in stewardship programs and the islands certainly need the help, volunteer groups require a great deal of oversight and coordination. Carol said that the Operations Committee is currently just looking at the DCR owned islands, and she would like to see possibilities on other islands, like Long and Deer be opened up.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 PM.