

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Boston Redevelopment Authority
One City Hall Plaza, 9th Floor Board Room, Boston, MA
October 19, 2004, 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM**

Attendees: Marianne Farrington and Bill Hale—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Linda Haar—Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Cathy Douglas Stone—City of Boston, Department of Environmental Services; Karl Pastore for Samantha Overton Bussell—Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Tom Powers—Island Alliance (IA); Marianne Connolly for Fred Laskey—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. Kelly Fellner, NPS, introduced several students from Carl Johnson's class at Odyssey High School. The students were attending the meeting as part of their curriculum. George introduced one of the newest Advisory Council members, Bettina Washington from the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head.

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the meeting held on September 21, 2004. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Water Transportation

George Price reminded all that there is a significant deficit for the inter-island water shuttle. The exact figures are still not available as the ridership data has not been fully analyzed. George reminded all that Island Alliance accepted the water transportation contract on behalf of the Partnership, and that since the program is not yet self-sustaining, they will request support from the Partnership as soon as exact numbers are known.

The good news is that Secretary Herzfelder announced up to \$50k in matching funds for water transportation next season. These funds can not be used for the past season. Tom Powers added that they are also working on the larger issue of how to improve the water transportation next year.

Signs

Marianne Connolly gave a visual presentation about the park signs recently installed on Deer and Nut islands. She described and showed pictures of the different types of signs: orientation; island identity; welcome; wayside exhibits; and directional and regulatory. She described the process from design and production to installation and shared the lessons learned during the process. She hoped that MWRA's experience could help other Partners as they developed signs, and offered her assistance.

She mentioned that a Native American wayside had been bid out and designed, but that the Native American representatives involved in the project did not want it included because consensus about the content had not been reached. She did say that MWRA continues to seek funding for the memorials project.

Bruce Jacobson, NPS, gave thanks to Marianne and Barbara Allen and all the contributing MWRA staff for the tremendous amount of work they put into this project. He also thanked MWRA for providing the leadership on the sign issue, both for offering the Nut and Deer island signs as prototypes and for the quality of the product they produced. George Price invited all to a field trip to Deer Island on November 9 to view the signs.

Georges Island

Karl Pastore reported on the status of several projects on Georges Island. The historic walkways project has begun. DCR is in the process of removing/replacing an underground storage tank and installing a new fuel line. They are waiting for bids on the water line repair. They are investigating the renovation needs of the former hospital, and will hopefully be able to remove the lead paint this year.

Peddocks Island

Doug gave an update on projects on Peddocks Island. The asbestos has been removed from the guardhouse. The feasibility study on the utility restoration is complete. It has been recommended to drill borings to determine the conditions for installing a micro tunnel to Hull. This will be done in mid-November as part of due diligence, and could save money in the long run. A permitting consultant has also been hired after an RFP process. This expertise should allow the process to go smoothly, potentially avoiding problems and higher costs. Epsilon Associates, Inc. was awarded the contract. Epsilon brings very talented staff with experience with historic sites.

Spectacle Island

Karl Pastore stated that they are working on a number of issues on Spectacle Island. There is grant funding for a photovoltaic system that will be lost if it can not be installed in time. The grant is already on its third extension and time has run out. The system can not be installed because the visitor center has not yet been transferred to the state. The state can not accept at this time because of the outstanding construction issues. There is every intent to install this specialized system at a later date.

Vivien Li, The Boston Harbor Association, asked about the timetable for opening Spectacle Island to the public. She expressed how important it will be to have an impressive opening and an accurate opening date. She expressed frustration at the current situation.

George Price said that the Partnership is also advocating for the opening, that DCR and the City of Boston are eager for the island to open, but that the engineering and public safety issues need to be addressed to the owners' satisfaction. Commissioners Abbott and Pollack continue to work actively on the issue and park staff continues to prepare for the opening. It is hoped that the island will open next summer.

All Taxa Biological Inventory

Bruce Jacobson, NPS, gave a presentation introducing the plans for an all taxa biological inventory of the Boston Harbor Islands. This effort to identify all life on the islands will give valuable insight to the understanding of the flora and fauna of the islands. The program fits in with the Partnership goal of restoring natural diversity to the

islands. This huge undertaking will begin in phases, first with an invertebrate study done in partnership with the Harvard Museum of Comparative Zoology and Dr. E.O. Wilson. Harvard will staff the effort and house the collection. An important aspect of this project is the outreach program that will run concurrently. There will be educational programs and the opportunity for the public to be actively involved in the research by collecting data. Bruce showed a poster of a dragonfly produced by the museum and described the technology used to create it. Similar detailed photographs of island insects will be important educational outreach tools. The program should begin this fall.

New Business

Jim Scully announced that George Armstrong stepped down as President of Thompson Island and that he is the Acting President.

George recognized the passing of Sgt. Robert Guiney, who will be greatly missed.

Advisory Council

Greg Ketchen, Chair, announced that the next meeting will be held on December 1, 2004 from 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the New England Aquarium. He said that the council will discuss their direction for the next year and ways to revitalize the council. They will also prepare for the March elections and discuss the community outreach program.

Linda Smith-Mooney reported that she is working with the interim UMASS Chancellor on building connections to the islands.

Vivien Li complimented the Island Alliance on their annual dinner.

Public Comment

There was no public comment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 PM.