

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP
60 State Street, 26th floor, Boston, MA
January 17, 2006, 3:00 PM – 3:40 PM**

Attendees: Cathy Stone—City of Boston, Office of Environmental and Energy Services; Betsy Shure Gross—Executive Office of Environmental Affairs; Tom Powers—Island Alliance; Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Marianne Connolly for Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; Terry Savage and Bruce Jacobson—National Park Service (NPS); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center; CDR John O'Connor—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Cathy Stone, Vice Chair, called the meeting to order. The minutes of the November 15, 2005 meeting were approved.

Analysis of the Partnership's 5-year Strategic Plan

Pat Morss, Chair of the Advisory Council, reminded all that in 2000, the Partnership developed a five-year Strategic Plan for the park that set out goals for six management initiatives. He reported that the Advisory Council has undertaken a review of accomplishments under the strategic plan in this, its final fifth year. He said that the written report is still in draft stage, but that verbal reports will be shared. Greg Ketchen reported on cultural resource baseline initiative and the resource stabilization & remediation initiative. Lauri Webster reported on the natural resource inventory & monitoring initiative. Jack Wiggin reported on the partnership effectiveness initiative. Claudia Smith Reid and Suzanne Gall Marsh were not in attendance to report on the interpretation & education or the visitor access initiative so Pat Morss summarized the findings. Overall, many of the goals were met, though some were not. The council also will recommend actions as part of their written report, which should be available at the next Partnership meeting.

Superintendent's Report

In honor of Ben Franklin's birthday, Bruce Jacobson started his report with an amusing story about Ben Franklin and his connections with the harbor islands.

Bruce announced that The Trustees of Reservations has nominated Peg Wheeler as a Voting Partner.

Bruce said that the marketing committee will discuss a communication strategy surrounding the tenth anniversary of the park's legislation on February 14. He invited all Partners to a planning workshop on Friday, January 27. Bruce reported on the outcomes of the joint planning and finance committee priority setting meeting held on Jan 10.

Bruce said that a proposal to convert Outer Brewster Island to industrial use remains in the legislature. A public hearing date is expected to be set.

Bruce reported on the progress of the float and ramp project. The work will be completed for the 2006 season. With the help of Congressmen Delahunt and Olver, the park will receive significant 2006 funding for docks through the Public Lands Highways Discretionary Program.

Bruce went through the status of several other projects: There was a pre-bid meeting held for the Georges Island safety improvements; Long Island pier planning continues; and the Peddocks utilities bid advertisement is eminent.

Spectacle Island is expected to open on June 24, 2006. Exhibits, waysides, signs, and shade shelters have been installed. The NPS and DCR will hire rangers to staff the island and Island Alliance will bid out other services.

Bruce said that it is a priority to increase the diversity in the staff and visitors to the park. The first step towards increasing participation of underserved communities will be identifying the current barriers that underserved communities face, whether they are financial or cultural. Building connections with a diverse population will help bring down these barriers so that they can enjoy the resources of the park.

The BEAN Program (Boston Environmental Ambassadors to National Parks) expanded and had the best year ever. The summer youth programs (Green Corps, Youth Conservation Corps and Public Land Corps) were also very successful. Education programs also expanded this year, including a new program for Weymouth 4th grades. There is a current opening for a NPS seasonal ranger position that will support education programs.

Bruce invited all to a meeting on February 1 where the NPS Deputy Director will present a briefing and discussion on the proposed changes to NPS Management Policies.

Bruce reminded all Partners that have not already submitted their nomination packages to do so. Appointments will be made by the Secretary of the Interior.

Water Transportation

Tom Powers gave a brief update on water transportation. He said he received a letter from Bruce Berman requesting that the fees be dropped for group trips for youth run by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. Tom explained that this fee was intended to support the water shuttle system. However, DCR has determined that the fee is not enforceable and it was dropped. This does highlight the long term problem of keeping the water shuttle system free for visitors. Tom said that Island Alliance is pursuing funding to purchase two new water shuttles that should reduce the yearly cost of the system. He said that they are considering adding a fuel surcharge to the ferry tickets in the 2006 season (an additional \$2 to adult tickets and an additional \$1 to senior and child tickets). He reminded all that with Spectacle opening, there will be another boat stop to fit in to the schedule. He also noted that the Island Alliance contributed an estimated \$30k in staff time in 2005 to managing the water transportation system, a figure not included in the \$82k shortfall between revenues and expenses.

Discussion from the floor:

Kristen Wyman stated that this fare raise contradicts the desire to diversify the park. The BEAN interns outreach efforts provide children an opportunity to learn about the park and visit. If rates are not affordable they can not come back to bring family or friends. Bruce Jacobson said that they are working on ways to increase opportunities for free or discounted passage for those that can't afford it. Pat Morss asked if the fuel surcharge was directly related to the increase in gas prices, and if it would be removed if gas prices went down. Karen O'Donnell, Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, said that there are other ways to save gas, going slower, taking fewer trips or to improve the efficiency of the boats. Steve Marcus, Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, pointed out that the Friends receive complaints about the boats going too fast and about their being fewer boats and a shorter season. He suggested that the ferry boats incorporate other islands on their regular runs.

Advisory Council

Pat Morss reported that the Advisory Council has prepared a position paper regarding the proposed liquefied natural gas facility, which was included in the meeting packet. The council opposed the project and recommended that the Partnership not support the transfer of use of Outer Brewster Island. The Partners thanked the Advisory Council for their thoughtful review and said it was a very useful document to have.

Greg Ketchen announced that the photo contest winners will be announced soon. They received a variety of very good pictures that can be put on CD and used to promote the park.

Public Comment

Steve Marcus announced the annual meeting of the friends and upcoming lectures.

The meeting was adjourned.