

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA  
September 18, 2007, 3:00 PM – 4:05 PM**

**Attendees:** Maureen Cavanaugh, Bill Hale and Greg Ketchen—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Jim Hunt—Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Tom Powers—Island Alliance (IA); Antonia Pollak—City of Boston, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs; Betsy Shure Gross, Susan Kane and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Marianne Connolly for Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Bruce Jacobson and Terry Savage—National Park Service (NPS); CDR Fred Myer—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Betsy Shure Gross, Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed all. There was a quorum present. There was a motion to approve the minutes from the June 19 meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Election of Officers**

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Jim Doolin, recommended that Betsy Shure Gross, representing DCR, be re-nominated as Chair of the Partnership, and Jim Hunt, representing BRA be nominated as Vice-chair. Nominations were requested from the floor; none were received.

There was a motion made to accept the slate as offered by the Nominating Committee. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Water Transportation**

Tom Powers reminded attendees that the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) committed \$150k to operate the water shuttle in October 2006. This early announcement was critical for planning the 2007 season. There is currently no funding identified to operate the water shuttle in the 2008 season. Tom said that the discussion will continue at the November meeting. The Operations Committee also expects to report the ridership numbers from the 2007 season at that time.

Tom Powers announced that the Operations Committee is putting forth a proposal for the Partnership to consider supporting a harbor-wide landing craft. Susan Kane explained that the DCR's 76ft. landing craft was not operational last season. DCR has secured significant funding to repair the vessel. The repairs are scheduled to be complete by spring 2008. She said the Operations Committee would like to gauge interest of Partnership agencies in using this vessel as a shared asset. The craft would be useful for routine tasks such as transporting floats or moving heavy equipment. It could also be very useful in emergency situations, both natural and man made.

The Partners requested a one-page summary of the specifics of the proposal, which Susan said she could provide. Toni Pollak offered to poll the City of Boston's safety agencies to gauge interest. She said that it could also help with island clean-ups as well. CDR Meyer said that he would also see if the USCG would be interested. Tom Powers mentioned that Island Alliance would be happy to serve as the fiscal agent to facilitate the process.

## **Park Update**

Bruce Jacobson said the summer season review will be postponed to a later date. Visitation numbers should be ready in November.

Susan Kane said that there was an improvement in quantity and quality of programming offered on the islands. One of the new programs was a ranger-led kayaking program, which DCR launched in partnership with Island Alliance. Campsites were sold out every weekend in the summer season. The visitation at Spectacle Island increased and there were improvements in concessions and special events. Susan reported that there were 7,500 visitors over the Labor Day Weekend on Georges and Spectacle islands. Bruce Jacobson added that NPS, Island Alliance, and DCR held another teacher institute this summer. The number of curriculum-based programs continues to increase as a direct result of these workshops.

Bruce Jacobson said that NPS transferred an additional \$802k to the USCG for the construction of a dock on Little Brewster Island. Susan Kane reported that work on the Spectacle Island beach continues.

Bruce Jacobson announced Dennis Reidenbach is the new Northeast Regional Director of the NPS. The Northeast Region consists of seventy-five park units representing more than 20% of the entire National Park System. The region is home to a third of all NPS museum collections, a quarter of all historic structures, and almost 50% of the country's National Historic Landmarks. Bruce mentioned that the Boston Harbor Islands is due for a substantial increase in base funding, if the President's 2008 budget is enacted by Congress. The money will be used for a stewardship program if received. He also said that two projects were announced as eligible for Centennial matching funds: one for an eco-family camp on Peddocks Island, and one for the all-taxa biodiversity inventory (ATBI). Bruce reported the summary of findings from the archeological assessment is under review and will be sent to island owners. The report is not a public document because of the sensitive nature of the information.

Terry Savage announced improvements are in process to the piers at the Charlestown Navy Yard. Bruce Jacobson mentioned that the dock at Boston National Historic Park is considered as a potential Harbor Islands departure location.

Toni Pollak said the Long Island summer camp was a tremendous success. She said about 600 children participated; most of them had not seen the harbor before. Toni added the city is considering winterizing the building so it could be used year-round. Bruce Jacobson suggested that the Partnership take a field trip to Long Island to see the facilities. He mentioned that NPS and TIOBEC co-hosted an educational outing to Thompson Island for the campers. Toni also noted that the condition of the Long Island bridge remains a concern and the city is looking into transportation alternatives. Bruce said that the NPS wave and wake study results could be useful for determining an appropriate location for a dock. Steve Marcus remarked that fundraising and marketing efforts for the camp are in high gear. During halftime of a recent New England Patriots game, a short film was shown about the camp along with the announcement of a \$1M donation.

## **Advisory Council**

Greg Ketchen said the Advisory Council last met on June 6. The council was given the task of identifying what they considered to be the top three priorities of the park. The results will be compiled into a "report card" format and presented to the Partnership at the January meeting.

**New Business**

Tom Powers gave an update on the branding campaign. He said the selection committee chose Corey McPherson Nash. The campaign will be implemented over the next two years.

**Public Comment**

David Kales, Advisory Council member, announced the release of his new book *The Boston Harbor Islands: A History of an Urban Wilderness*. He gave thanks to the NPS and MWRA for their contributions to the project.

Tom Powers invited all to the 3rd Annual Boston Harbor Island Regatta that will be held on September 29.

Karen O'Donnell, Advisory Council member, stated that she believed the public has been denied full access to plans for the Harbor Islands, particularly regarding Peddocks Island development and the proposal for gambling on the Harbor Islands. Bruce Jacobson responded that the plans for Peddocks Island have been presented publicly and are known, park managers are searching for funds to rehabilitate the guardhouse and chapel, and restore the parade grounds. They also hope to demolish or stabilize existing fort buildings for safety reasons, with the longer-term plan of developing a family eco-retreat.

CDR Fred Meyer reported that CAPT MacDonald has retired and that CAPT Gail Kulisch is now the Sector Commander for Boston.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.