

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company  
Faneuil Hall, Boston  
November 18, 2008, 3:00 PM – 4:35 PM**

**Attendees:** Maureen Cavanaugh, Greg Ketchen and Charlie Norris—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Tom Powers—Boston Harbor Island Alliance; Antonia Pollak—City of Boston; Marianne Connolly—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Susan Kane and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Bruce Jacobson and Terry Savage—National Park Service (NPS); Peg Wheeler—The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center.

Terry Savage, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order. There was a motion to accept the minutes from the September 16, 2008 meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Water Transportation**

Bruce reminded all that the Partnership chose water transportation as their highest priority for the coming year. Bruce said water transportation is also a high priority in his own work plan. He passed out a sheet summarizing park policies regarding water transportation.

*TBHA Water Transportation Initiative*

Vivien Li, The Boston Harbor Association (TBHA), reported that water transportation sustainability is a key issue of TBHA's strategic plan. They are focusing from both commuting and recreational perspectives. TBHA has launched a multi-year initiative to promote a robust water transportation network for Boston Harbor and will produce white papers that address technical, market-based, economic, and mobility aspects related to water transportation.

One issue of their focus is inner-harbor transportation. Subsidies from various sources such as the Big Dig are becoming scarce. Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA), an agency that has not been traditionally focused on water transportation issues, is currently facing severe economic challenges. MBTA does not want to raise fares and instead is proposing several service cuts, including a drastic reduction in water transportation services. TBHA asked Massachusetts Department of Transportation to rescind cuts, pending a review process. Vivien said the current administration is very sympathetic to alternate transportation, and the undersecretary is very knowledgeable as he worked with systems in New York Harbor, a much more complicated area. TBHA is advocating for the use of DEP Chapter 91 funds to support water transportation and other. One possibility they are pursuing is to move responsibilities for water transportation out from under MBTA and put them under the Secretary of Transportation. Vivien encouraged Partners to become part of the conversation and get the islands "on the radar screen."

Vivien mentioned other key issues such as ensuring emergency plans for a harbor command center are brought up-to-date, and that water transportation priorities be revisited due to all the changes on the landside that have occurred.

Vivien commended the partners on the quality programs they offered for families, and wants to be supportive of the islands; however, she received many complaints about the boats and ticket lines. She recommended getting a handle on the issues as soon as possible or that the park will not be ready for Sail Boston in July.

### *Harbor Park Pavilion*

Tom Powers said Utile, a Boston-based architecture and urban design firm, has been awarded the contract to design a visitor pavilion on Parcel 14 of the Rose Kennedy Greenway. Utile will be collaborating with IDEO to conceive the exhibits and information graphics. Tom said designs should be complete by spring, and hopes that Senator Kennedy's request for \$5M toward the construction gets approved. In the meantime, park staff is working with Utile and IDEO to improve visibility and functionality of the ticket kiosk. They hope to build a bigger structure with the look of the new pavilion and increase speed and efficiency of ticketing.

### *Hingham Gateway*

Susan Kane reported that despite very little signage and advertisement, the Hingham departure point did well. DCR has committed to staying at the location, and development in the area is moving along quickly. Renovations will be made to their current office building, a World War II era building, as it was found to be structurally sound. A ticket area will be added to the site and an area was set aside to continue to serve as a DCR boat maintenance facility. Susan hopes to maintain some low-cost parking spots for Harbor Island visitors, but expects that prices may rise significantly for parking. Tom Powers asked about signage regarding the islands, Susan said signage would be possible on DCR property, but permissions may be hard to obtain in other areas.

### *Alternative Transportation Project*

Bruce Jacobson said NPS continues an initiative to connect national parks in this area, with alternative transportation systems. This could lead to connections along a "cultural coast" from Boston to Plymouth. He asked Partners to participate in the process and offer ideas about what they would like to see for infrastructure on mainland and island locations. Bruce said Congressman Delahunt and Adams National Historic Park are particularly active in the initiative to create a gateway at Squantum Point. He encouraged Partners to participate in this policy discussion. Charlie Norris, Advisory Council, suggested that a demand analysis be done, as the only one he was aware of was 10 or 15 years old. Bruce said he will bring the recommendation to the NPS planners.

### *Georges Island Pier*

Bruce Jacobson reported that NPS has received funding to assist DCR with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process required if federal funding is used for replacement of the pier on Georges Island. He invited all to a public scoping session on November 19. Susan mentioned that plans for renovating the administration building on Georges Island are moving forward. The placement of this new pier will have implications for the landscaping.

### *Little Brewster Dock*

Bruce Jacobson reported that construction continues on a permanent dock for Little Brewster Island. NPS provided funding for this project led by United States Coast Guard. The dock should be in place by June 2009.

### *2009 Ferry Service*

Tom Powers said park managers envision similar ferry service next season as was provided in 2008. He said having two ferries that provided direct service to both Georges and Spectacle on Fridays through Sundays, and having one boat run on Mondays through Thursdays, worked well. He said the goal is to have the mainland ferry be self-sustaining; though it is not yet a huge money-maker, the park is not currently subsidizing mainland ferry service. The interisland

shuttle system currently requires a significant subsidy, and was funded through DCR for the past 3 years. Tom said he received good feedback about the schedule for the interisland shuttles and hopes to maintain that level of service. A request has been made to DCR to fund the 2009 season. There are currently no other sources of funding identified to support the system.

Tom noted several improvements to water transportation this past season including on-line ticketing, a staff person from Harbor Express working the docks on Spectacle and Georges Islands, and improved advertising. Many improvements need to be made to the ticket kiosk, and signage on Long Wharf.

### **Strategic Plan**

Bruce Jacobson presented an agency-only discussion draft of the 2016 Strategic Plan for the park. He asked Partners to review the general direction of the document, and suggest goals that could be added. He hoped to have a more substantial draft prepared by the meeting in January.

### **New Business**

There was a decision made to suspend all Partnership committee meetings—besides Operation—until the strategic plan was completed. Workshops will be held to help develop the plan.

Terry Savage announced funding has been received to create a tourist information center in Faneuil Hall. There should be more details about design in spring and construction is scheduled for fall 2009.

### **Advisory Council**

The Advisory Council will meet on December 3 to discuss the draft strategic plan and the annual meeting will be held on March 4.

### **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:35 PM.