

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Conference Room D, Boston, MA
September 15, 2009, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

Attendees: Maureen Cavanaugh, Bill Hale, and Charles Norris—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Tom Powers—Boston Harbor Island Alliance; Rich McGuinness—Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA); Antonia Pollak—City of Boston; David Cash and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Marianne Connolly for Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; Bruce Jacobson—National Park Service (NPS); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Peg Wheeler—The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR); CDR Nathan Knapp—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Antonia Pollak, Acting Chair, welcomed all and declared a quorum. There was a motion to approve the minutes from the July 21, 2009, meeting of the Partnership. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Strategic Planning

Maureen Cavanaugh, Chair of the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council and Planning Committee Member, gave background about the strategic planning process so far. She reminded all of a working group of the Partnership that was established in 2008 to look at how the board could work more effectively. One of the outcomes of this facilitated group was the recommendation to develop a strategic plan for the park. The Partnership endorsed this recommendation at the September 16, 2008, meeting.

Bruce Jacobson, Superintendent, explained the strategic plan describes strategies for the Partnership from now until 2016 as steps for implementing the general management plan. The strategic planning process continued with Partnership staff hosting several public workshops based on the five themes contained in the strategic plan: Education & Interpretation; Stewardship; Environmental Leadership; Recreational Experience; and Professional Excellence. A draft plan was developed and then reviewed by the Partnership and Advisory Council. A 45-day public comment period on the draft plan ended on September 4. He reminded all that the date 2016 was chosen

as the end date because it marks the 20th anniversary of the National Park, the centennial of the National Park Service, and the tercentenary of Boston Light.

Bruce highlighted significant changes that were incorporated since the Partnership reviewed the first draft:

- Funding targets for the plan clarified.
- Stabilization of DCR-owned cottages on Peddocks Island added.
- Development of a strategy for resource management.
- Availability of a park-wide Geographic Information System added.
- The target number of annual visitors changed to an increase of 50% from 2008 baseline (300,000 to 450,000).
- Need for a comprehensive study of water transportation system stated.
- Agreements between National Park Service and each partner called for to implement the strategic plan.
- Operational structure for the Partnership to be evaluated.

Bruce suggested that the partnership consider changing the target affordability measure of ferry transportation from the price of a movie ticket to the hourly minimum wage. The partners discussed; some felt the minimum wage was a better economic indicator, and others felt the movie ticket price was a better comparison for the average park user. There was agreement to keep the target of a round trip ferry ticket no more than the average adult movie ticket price.

The Partners discussed other portions of the plan. It was clarified that Outcome / Performance Measure 20.1, having to do with charitable giving goals, referred to all non-profit Partners in the park, not just Boston Harbor Island Alliance. The schedule for initiating the National Park Service agreements was requested. Maureen Cavanaugh reported the Department of Conservation and Recreation draft is underway, and they expect others to follow in this order: Boston Harbor Island Alliance, Thompson Island, City of Boston, United States Coast Guard, Massport and The Trustees of Reservations. David Cash felt the Outcome / Performance measure 10.1 regarding the reduction of carbon emissions was too low, as it does not reflect the goal of becoming carbon neutral. There was agreement that a reduction of 50% was realistic by 2016, and the target should be 100% by 2020.

A motion was made to adopt the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area in 2016 Strategic Plan Final Draft as recommended by the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership Planning Committee for collective action between 2009 and 2016 with the change: Outcome / Performance Measure 10.1 reflect the desire for the park to become carbon neutral by 2020. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Water Transportation

Tom Powers, President, Boston Harbor Island Alliance, reported there is good news to report on water transportation system this year. Despite several extremely rainy weekends, ferry ridership was up 2.5% already compared to last year end of season figures. Good weather for the last month of the season should boost the numbers more. Significant improvements were made to communication and coordination between Boston's Best Cruises, DCR, NPS, and Boston Harbor Island Alliance staff. The two free ferry days were a huge success. The larger ticket kiosk helped speed up the ticketing process; the voucher system for discounted tickets also went smoother this year. The boats had fewer mechanical issues and ran on a more consistent schedule. The long lines on the docks at the end of the day were a thing of the past.

Challenges for 2010 include funding the inter-island shuttle and infrastructure improvements. The existing pier on Georges Island is still usable, but needs to be replaced. The design for a new pier on Georges Island was funded through NPS in Fiscal Year 2009. NPS and DCR are actively looking for funding for the construction; a new pier will cost approximately \$17M. DCR is submitting a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program request for \$25M with the help of NPS and Boston Harbor Island Alliance.

Tom said the inter-island shuttle will be a challenge to fund in 2010. Last year, DCR and NPS contributed funds toward the system. With all of the cuts to the state budget, it is not known if DCR will be able to replicate its substantial contribution in 2010. Partners asked how much of a subsidy is needed. Tom said that it is actually a complicated question, the size of the boats, how many riders and how many trips are all factors in the equation. They are hoping to identify funds for a study to answer accurately. The purchase of larger vessels would involve very high capital costs; park managers are also looking at ways to offset costs to help keep riders' costs low.

Tom mentioned the ferry ticket kiosk needs to be relocated closer to Christopher Columbus Park and the entrance ramp to the ferry. This move would increase visibility, as the kiosk is now

located at the far end of the pier near a dumpster. Tom asked for assistance from the Boston Redevelopment Authority to accomplish this move; it would improve the visitor experience and greatly increase the amount of foot traffic the kiosk would receive.

Advisory Council

Maureen Cavanaugh, Chair, invited all to the Advisory Council meeting on September 16. She also encouraged people to come on a Partnership/Advisory Council boat trip on September 17 from 4:30 – 7:00 PM for an update on the Georges Island construction projects.

Public Comment

Steve Marcus, President of the Volunteers and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, reminded all that the Friends can be called upon to help support the goals in the 2016 Strategic Plan. For instance, last year, Boston Harbor Island Alliance recruited them to assist with a few weekends of public programming at no cost to the park.

Bruce Jacobson announced Terry Savage's retirement party will be at the Commandant's House on Thursday, September 17.

Marianne Connolly reported the Native American Memorial was recently redesigned to fit the budget available. This new design has been approved by the Native American working group, and will be presented to the MWRA board tomorrow. It is expected the Urban Arts Institute will get the approval to move forward.

Bill Hale, Peddocks Island Association, thanked the Partnership for including some cottages on Peddocks Island in the strategic plan. He hopes that this will extend their lifetime as they are important resources.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.