

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26th floor, Boston, MA
December 14, 2010, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

Attendees: Maureen Cavanaugh, Greg Ketchen, Chris Montgomery—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Joel Reck and Tom Powers—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); Antonia Pollak—City of Boston; David Cash, Susan Kane and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Marianne Connolly representing Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; Bruce Jacobson—National Park Service (NPS); Peg Wheeler—The Trustees of Reservations; Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); CDR Nathan Knapp—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Chair David Cash welcomed all and called the meeting to order. He explained he needed to leave early for a meeting with Governor Patrick. He mentioned he was glad to be continuing as chair, representing the administration of the newly re-elected Governor. He announced that DCR Commissioner Rick Sullivan was named by Governor Patrick as the next Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Bruce Jacobson pointed out that we would once again have the Secretary serving on the Partnership. The Partners and members of the audience introduced themselves. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the September 21st meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Dogs in the Park

Bruce Jacobson provided a brief background of the development of the current draft of the dog policy. He distributed copies of the draft along with notes from the discussion the Advisory Council had at their last meeting. He read highlights from the documents and asked for comments.

Toni Pollak stated that because of the structural nature of the cap on Spectacle Island, dogs could never be allowed off leash. Tom Powers expressed concern about Spectacle Island being off limits from March to August when that is essentially the entire summer season. He said it was of particular concern for boaters using the marina facilities. Joel Reck echoed the concern and added that no off-leash areas sounded a little extreme. Marc Albert, NPS, said the restriction in the draft policy was to protect wildlife.

David Cash asked if dogs were allowed on ferries. Bruce Jacobson said there was no definitive answer from the boat company, but the Advisory Council identified several issues for them to consider. Susan Kane added the DCR policy has been to not allow dogs, so it had not been much of an issue for the ferries. She said her office does not receive complaints about the “no dogs” policy, and she doesn’t expect a huge number of people to bring their dogs if the policy changes.

Susan also said DCR has experience with dogs in parks and noted enforcement is always an issue. Karl Pastore said even with an on-leash policy, many dogs will likely be let off-leash. Susan added that liability issues are of concern. If the park has an off-leash policy and a dog injures itself, or has an aggressive interaction with another dog

or human, the land owner can be held liable; if the park has an on-leash policy and the dog is let off-leash, the owner bears responsibility. Marc suggested that an on-leash area be designated for use of boaters on Spectacle Island. Bruce highlighted the difficulty of communicating a policy that is different for marina users and ferry riders. Greg Ketchen said it was important for the ferry to have clear rules about dogs like the Steamship Authority does.

David Cash felt the leash requirement made sense, but wanted to be sure the Partnership did everything they could do to accommodate a wide-range of people. He asked for ideas. There was a suggestion made to consider a no-leash policy in certain areas at certain times of the year (perhaps fall) when impact on wildlife would be minimized. Marc Albert said no entire island is wildlife-conflict-free, but suggested to look at particular areas that might be appropriate for fenced or non-fenced areas. Susan said gangways are all pulled from Bumpkin, Grape, and Peddocks before the fall season begins, and there would still be the liability issue. Arthur Pearson said Thompson Island had been supportive of off-season dog trips run by City Water Taxi in the past; but that the full ramifications of liability were not considered. He did not offer Thompson Island as a possible location. Joel Reck suggested they talk to lawyers to clarify liability, and that there might be a way to structure so that responsibility falls to the boat operator or remains with the owner.

CDR Nate Knapp suggested thinking both geographically and temporally, and perhaps invite dogs for a day, or a weekend or two in appropriate locations. Examining results from these “Dog Days of Summer” could provide information on how to best move forward.

David Cash identified two sets of distinct constituents, ferry riders and private boaters. He was hesitant to advance the policy without further consideration. Bruce suggested the draft policy be returned to the Operations Committee for further refinement.

Climate Friendly Parks Action Plan

Bruce Jacobson passed out the draft *Climate Friendly Parks: Boston Harbor Islands Action Plan*. He explained that Partners comments were incorporated in this version of the draft. Marc Albert gave a presentation on the action plan which provides the framework to meet green house gas emissions targets. He gave an overview of the top 25 actions planned.

The Partners made the following comments: Arthur Pearson complimented the level of detail and scope of the plan. Maureen Cavanaugh added that starting with a few Partners was a wise choice. Joel Reck liked the design of the document itself, and felt it was a key function for the park to be a good model and to set the stage for education on the issue. Toni Pollak appreciated that the goals set were realistic and achievable.

A motion was made to adopt the Climate Friendly Parks: Boston Harbor Islands Action Plan. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Park Communication Guide

Bruce Jacobson distributed the draft communication guide that was reviewed at the May 18th meeting of the Partnership and the June 2nd meeting of the Advisory Council. He

said comments were received from Massport and MWRA and were incorporated in the draft. DCR requested more time to consider. The vote to approve the plan was tabled to the next meeting.

Advisory Council

Maureen Cavanaugh reported the Advisory Council met on December 1, and had an animated discussion about the draft dog policy. She said the community outreach efforts continue and include a project spearheaded by Charlie Norris and Karen O'Donnell. They are working on a pilot presentation about the park for The Boston Harbor Association. It is hoped that this can be used as a guide for other members to reach out to other structured boards. Another presentation will be developed geared toward community groups, again with the hope that it can be used as a template. Maureen invited all to the Council's annual meeting on March 2.

New Business

Bruce Jacobson said National Geographic's Mapping Division is creating a trail map for Boston Harbor Islands. It will be created from existing data and photography and is expected to be published in spring. Marc Albert said National Geographic mapping staff will be in Boston for a week in February to present what they have so far. He invited interested Partners to attend.

Bruce showed the park's Facebook page (facebook.com/bostonharborislands). He encouraged all to visit and contribute to it. He reminded all that you don't have to be a Facebook member to view the park page.

Tom Powers gave an update about the Fort Andrews project on Peddocks Island. He said demolition and stabilization is scheduled to begin in early January and completed by April or May. This work will provide a safe environment for expanded visitation. Susan added DCR is preparing for camping on Peddocks this season. Ten platforms, equipped with water and power, will be constructed. Sites will be available for reservation this season on ReserveAmerica.com.

Tom said construction of the Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion is scheduled to halt for the winter in January and February, but will resume in March. June is the projected opening date. Bruce added that Eastern National was selected as retail vendor for the Pavilion and Georges Island by a team of DCR, BHIA, and NPS. Tom said discussions are underway with the New England Aquarium about selling tickets to the Aquarium at the Pavilion.

Greg Ketchen asked about planning efforts for a celebration in 2016. Bruce said that a committee was not yet formed to focus on it.

CDR Nate Knapp reported on information about Long Island Light that was requested at the last Partnership meeting. He said USCG Engineers took 8 samples from the lighthouse in 2009 and tested for lead. All 8 samples were in excess of the standards they were measured against, and he noted this would impact NPS if they took ownership. He explained USCG is not contributing to the cost of remediation.

CDR Knapp also said the Navy is planning activities and different sailing events for the anniversary of the War of 1812. Bruce added that Boston NHP is involved in plans for the *USS Constitution* and Navy Yard.

Bruce Said NPS is planning for the upcoming commemoration of the Civil War. He said parks in Massachusetts are developing yearly themes for each year of the commemoration under the umbrella of *Civil War to Civil Rights*. Parks will develop programs around those themes.

Susan Kane reported that DCR is working to upgrade the exhibits on Spectacle Island and is developing a new video. A student at Emerson is also working on a program that may help discourage visitors from taking the sea glass. They will have an opportunity to share their finds on a video screen, and their actual pieces can be returned.

Public Comment

Regarding the dog policy discussion:

Dawn Tesorero, NPS, cautioned all that it was her experience bringing school groups to the islands, that many children are terrified of dogs. She said it was important to provide a safe environment for learning, and critical to keep the youth separated from the dogs. It was of particular concern if dogs are off-leash.

Suzanne Gall Marsh, Volunteers and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, added that many adults are fearful too, and ferries are very tight quarters. She encouraged that a very clear policy for the ferries be developed. Suzanne suggested that any commercial ventures, like that of the dog cruises, should be subject to making a contribution back to the park to a fund that would support management or enforcement efforts of the program.

Regarding the Climate Friendly Parks Action Plan:

Pat Morss, Advisory Council member, added that he thought it was a great initiative, and thought the Partnership should be proud of it. He said it would be quite an accomplishment to be the first "net 0" emissions park, and suggested that the park get people excited and involved from these first steps. He thought architects and engineers would be very interested, and offered his assistance to get the word out in whatever way he could assist, including offering his photography services.

Suzanne announced the Friends New Year's trip to Spectacle Island on January 2nd.

Suzanne asked for clarification on which building on Peddocks Island would be rehabilitated. Tom Powers replied that more will be known when costs of demolition and stabilization are finalized. Suzanne stated that there were several DCR-owned cottages in major disrepair. She thought it might be cost effective to take them down at the same time this other work is done. Susan Kane said it would be great to capitalize on the situation, but there are many considerations and requirements to be met before that could happen.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 PM.