

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs,  
100 Cambridge Street, Boston, MA  
September 20, 2011, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

**Attendees:** Maureen Cavanaugh and Charles Norris—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Tom Powers—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); David Cash and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Bruce Jacobson—National Park Service (NPS); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Peg Wheeler—The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR); CDR Jason Smith—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

David Cash, Chair, welcomed all, called the meeting to order, and Partners and audience members were introduced. Bruce Jacobson introduced Hugh Hawthorn as the new NPS Youth and Visitor Services Program Director. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the May 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Bruce said the nomination packets for several Partnership members have been submitted to the NPSs Washington Office; and will be transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior. The candidates include: Michael Caldwell and Bruce Jacobson (NPS); Doug McGarrah, and Tom Powers (BHIA); and Charlie Norris, Rob Moir, Chris Montgomery, and Maureen Cavanaugh (Advisory Council).

### **2011 Summer Review**

Bruce Jacobson reviewed highlights of the summer season, including:

- BHIA held their annual gala on Georges Island, in which 500 people participated, despite a major rain storm.
- There was an increased use of social media; there are more than 1,400 'followers' for the park's Facebook page and 800 'followers' on BHIA's Twitter account.
- Boston Preservation Alliance gave their 2011 Preserving Boston's Architectural Heritage Award to DCR for work on Georges Island visitor center.
- New England Chapter of the Victorian Society in America gave their Preservation Award to DCR, BHIA, and the Partnership for on-going efforts to rehabilitate Fort Andrews on Peddocks Island.
- NPS now owns Long Island Head Light on Long Island.
- Tropical Storm Irene did minimal damage: mostly downed trees, and a damaged dock at Peddocks Island.
- It was the 13<sup>th</sup> season of Green Corps with 20 youth doing back-log maintenance.
- A successful teacher workshop was held on Thompson and Georges Islands in cooperation with the Massachusetts Historical Society, NPS, TIOBEC, and DCR that focused on the recruitment of disenfranchised populations by the Union Army during the Civil War.

- The Associated General Contractors awarded the Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion its highest honor for the collaborative process between designers, contractors, and clients who worked on the project.
- BHIA facilitated 190 free public programs this summer, many of which fell under the programmatic umbrella of Civil War commemoration or First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move Outside" campaign.
- The 2011 Native American Festival was held in cooperation with the University of Massachusetts–Boston's New England Native American Institute, NPS, BHIA, and DCR.
- BHIA and Eastern National opened two gift shops in 2011, one at the Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion and the other at Georges Island visitor center.

Arthur Pearson added that educational programming between NPS and TIOBEC currently totals about 8,700 school-days of curriculum programming, of which 3,000 are new since 2010.

Tom Powers commented that Peddocks Island's re-opening in 2012 will be a major achievement. Karl Pastore commented that staff had a great summer; the staff especially enjoyed the Civil War encampment, and Spectacle Island Fun Run.

### **2016 Strategic Progress and Celebration**

Bruce Jacobson reminded all of the significance of the year 2016. The park will celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Boston Light will celebrate its 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and NPS celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The year 2016 is also the end date of the current strategic plan. Bruce said the plan contains strategies adopted by the Partnership to work on collectively to carry out the park's mission. He reported that many of the identified strategies are actively underway, with many targets met or even exceeded. The 2011 Strategic Checklist distributed to members is attached.

Bruce asked how the Partnership would like to celebrate all the anniversaries that will be held in 2016. The Chair agreed that the Partnership should take a role in the "big picture vision." He instructed Bruce to identify the appropriate committee to develop a proposal.

### **Water Transportation**

Tom Powers said that ferry ridership for the 2011 season felt less robust, despite good weather (except for August weekends) and good press. He stated that ridership was down by less than 0.5% from 2010 to 2011, with an estimated 95,000 riders compared to 100,000 last year. Tom added that Boston's Best Cruises acknowledges they had more mechanical and communications issues, as well as online ticketing struggles this year, but do plan to have those issues sorted out by the 2012 season. Tom said the next step for BHIA and the Partnership is to re-open and get more visitors to Peddocks Island, which could require additional ranger and operations staff and boat service.

Bruce Jacobson said it has been a long-term goal of the Partnership to have a park-wide water transportation system, combining ferry service to DCR islands, Little Brewster, and Thompson Island. He said National Park Service received funding through an alternate

transportation source to hire a consultant to take a look at the park's transportation system. He distributed a draft of the report for Partners to review, and asked for feedback within the next few days. Bruce added that it was desired to find a permanent home for the ferry operators to the Boston waterfront area in the context of the Boston Waterfront Plan.

LCDR Scott White asked if private boaters' usage was tracked. Bruce replied that rangers do have a system of recording, and that NPS has entered into an agreement with University of Idaho to track visitors more systematically, including recreational boaters.

### **Advisory Council**

Maureen gave a summary of the September meeting of Advisory Council, where the Council was tasked to review summer operations. She said the largest complaint was from recreational boaters about not being able to access the islands easily. The Partnership discussed the collection and administration of fees collected by the marina operator.

Maureen added that the Chair of the Advisory Council asked to establish a nominating committee.

No new business was raised. The meeting was adjourned.

*Next meeting: Wednesday, October 19, at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, during the evening session of the 2011 Science Symposium.*