

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
Environmental Protection Agency
5 Post Office Square, 15th Floor, Boston, MA
January 17, 2012, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

Attendees: Maureen Cavanaugh and Charles Norris—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Tom Powers—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); James Hunt—City of Boston; David Cash and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); James Doolin—Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport); Marianne Connolly for Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; Michael Caldwell and Bruce Jacobson—National Park Service (NPS); CMDR Jason Smith—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Vice-Chair James Hunt welcomed all, called the meeting to order, and announced a quorum was present. Jim complimented the choice of the new meeting space and added that it is a great example of a green building. Partners and the audience introduced themselves. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2011 meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.** David Cash, Chair, arrived shortly after.

Green Action Team Recommendations

Marc Albert passed out a copy of the Green Action Team's (GAT) recommendations to increase the traction of environmental sustainability efforts and to advance environmental leadership goals of the Partnership. The Operations Committee had reviewed the recommendations and presented them for Partnership for review. Marc noted that there were some errors in the document that was distributed and that he would send Partners a revised copy for review. The revised copy is attached. Marc summarized key points from the report, and added that there was synergy with both city and state-level goals.

The Partners discussed. It was noted that carbon emissions are notably low for operations on the islands and that water transportation is by far the major contributor of greenhouse gasses. David Cash stated that energy development on the islands could help offset emissions. There is already a start on some of the islands with windmills and solar panels; a new wind development project on Moon Island is underway. Potential sources for funding could include state, city, and private organizations. Mass Energy was suggested as a possible grant source. The Partnership tasked the GAT to scope out a feasibility study for becoming a carbon neutral park, what actions might be included and how much the feasibility study would cost to prepare.

Call to Action

Bruce Jacobson reported that the Planning Committee recently reviewed the NPS "A Call to Action: Preparing for a second century of Stewardship and Engagement." The Committee found much in common with this document and the park's strategic plan; twenty-two actions were identified that had particular synergy. The Committee recommends these for additional focus by the Partnership. Bruce distributed a discussion draft of "Boston Harbor Islands in 2016: A Call to Action" for Partners to review. Bruce said that that the document does not represent all of what park managers are doing, and it is hoped that new energy behind the initiatives will lead to more collaboration with organizations and communities to help move them forward.

The Partners discussed. Tom Powers noted that many of the stated goals were already well underway or results surpassed targets. Bruce said that milestones were added to the document to show continued movement forward, instead of goals simply listed as complete. Jim Doolin stressed the importance of affordable access, particularly for urban communities, and expressed concern that focusing on many other things might reduce focus on improving access. Bruce agreed that much needed done in that area, it is a primary objective of the Partnership.

He said the “Call to Action” can be used as a tool for managers to prioritize current and future actions. A motion was made to adopt the discussion draft as presented. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Ferry Service

Tom Powers said Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) is proposing drastic cuts to service to reduce their deficit. MBTA proposes to eliminate ferry service entirely; if passed, there will be severe consequences for the islands. All of the park’s ferry docks are owned by the MBTA, access from Quincy is via a commuter boat, and the loss of commuter income will heavily impact the boat operators in the harbor which will affect all their other operations. Tom encouraged all Partners to submit comments from their agencies to MBTA and for all to attend one of the 21 upcoming public hearings and do the same. Bruce Jacobson distributed a draft copy of his statement supporting the retention of commuter boat services for the MBTA public hearing scheduled for February 13.

Tom Powers said managers and Boston’s Best Cruises continue work on developing the ferry schedule for the upcoming season. He presented the draft along with Bill Walker, Boston’s Best Cruises. A major development is the reopening of Peddocks Island; ferry service to Peddocks will be substantially increased. Service from Boston to Georges and Spectacle Islands will also increase; an additional 70,000 seats will be added throughout the season. Inter-island Service will also be increased in the summer season, and a new interisland boat added. All shuttles will run 7 days a week. There will be one shuttle between Georges and Spectacle Islands. There will be a second shuttle that will service Hingham, Grape, Bumpkin, and Peddocks and a third shuttle that will services Hull, Peddocks, Georges, and Lovells. There will be no additional charge for transfer to any interisland shuttles this year. Ferry prices will increase by \$1 per ticket to the following: \$15/adults; \$11/Seniors & College Students; and \$9 Children. If gas prices rise, a gas surcharge may be inevitable. Tom mentioned that schedule adjustments were made to the spring schedule to ensure timely arrival, and that the fall ferry schedule will be reduced to Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays to be more consistent with demand. Karl Pastore said DCR is still reviewing the proposed schedule, and weighing the operational effects of both the increases and decreases in service.

Tom mentioned that this schedule does not include Boston Light tours. This year, Boston Light tours will leave from Central Wharf, and it is expected that this change will increase visibility of the tour, as well as demand. Bruce added that there is also a public ferry to Thompson Island.

Advisory Council

Maureen Cavanaugh, Vice-chair, invited all to the annual meeting of the Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council on March 7, 2012.

Park Updates

Bruce Jacobson reported the park conducted programs at the Pavilion in association with First Night, which was well received. There was also a New Years eve boat tour of the islands from Long Wharf that went as far as Little Brewster. He said the Winter Wildlife tour held yesterday was well attended and successful. Hugh Hawthorne said that the “Bringing Youth to the Islands Committee” will be reactivated soon. A date for the next meeting will be forthcoming. Hugh invited all to the next winter cruise on February 18.

Public Comment

Suzanne Gall Marsh, Volunteers and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, distributed boat cruise flyers for Friends trips this season.

The meeting was adjourned.