

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor, Boston, MA  
September 24, 2013 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

**Attendees:** Maureen Cavanaugh, Charles Norris, and Elizabeth Solomon—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Jane Ellis and Phil Griffiths—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); Toni Pollak and Brian Swett—City of Boston; Susan Kane and Jack Murray—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Andrew Hargens—Massachusetts Port Authority; Marianne Connolly and Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Michael Caldwell and Kelly Fellner—National Park Service (NPS); Paul Lamoureux—Thompson Island Outward Bound (TIOBEC); Keeper Sally Snowman—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Toni Pollak, Acting Chair, opened the meeting. A quorum was present. Toni thanked the Partnership for the morning's gazebo dedication event on Spectacle Island for Krystle Campbell. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the May 21, 2013 meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Summer Operations and Programs Overview**

Jane Ellis shared a preliminary report on ferry ridership through August. Boston's Best Cruises (BBC) ridership was down 13% from 2012. Jane attributed the decrease to three factors: BBC did not provide the commuter boat service from Quincy to Georges this year; Free Ferry Day was rainy (yielding 2,600 less people in just one day); and weather in general, particularly the rainy May and the very hot and humid July. On the positive side, August visitation was strong, and Hingham departures increased 65% from 2012. Jane said this is attributed to the addition of a camper run in the evening, the increased attractiveness of Peddocks as a destination, and increased ridership on the first ferry in the morning. Marianne Connolly asked if statistics on non-ferry accessible islands were captured, and Hugh responded that yes, statistics are compiled every year that include islands not on the ferry system.

Hugh Hawthorne, NPS, mentioned that the Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion located on the Greenway is wrapping up its 3<sup>rd</sup> season after breaking all visitation records. There were over 27,000 visitors in July (a record) and over 25,000 visitors in August. He noted that many people are buying tickets at the Pavilion in order to skip the long lines at Long Wharf. The opening of the Greenway Carousel has already improved the flow of pedestrians. As for island visitation, Georges visitors numbered 20,000 in July and 18,000 in August, and Spectacle had 15,000 in July and 14,000 in August. Island programs were very popular as well. There were 324 ranger-led programs were delivered to over 3,700 visitors in July and 489 ranger-led programs in August were delivered to 7,000 visitors (a record, about 1 in every 3.5 visitors participated in a program). In addition, Jessica Renehan and her 4 interpreters won a DCR interpretation award for their outstanding efforts.

Paul Lamoureux, TIOBEC, gave an overview of Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center summer programs. He reported that the Green Ambassadors program, a joint program with NPS, continues to be successful. This three year curriculum for high school students emphasizes environmental stewardship and helps prepare youth for environmental careers. This year, 40 Green Ambassadors spent 7 weeks doing a variety of projects and career development activities on the islands. Paul said that Summer Connections, also run in partnership with NPS, is a 5 day-a-week summer curriculum program for rising 4th and 5th grade students in Roxbury and Dorchester was also a great success. Other youth programs include Summer Expeditions, during which participants engage in a variety of outdoor activities from kayaking and camping to day trips and Discovery Programs, which are shorter programs

such as college orientations. There are also group scholarships for underserved youth. Altogether, about 6,000 students were served over the summer. Other visitors to Thompson Island included Outward Bound professional programs for corporate events, private events, conferences, volunteer programs, the annual 4k trail run, and a big group from Trip Advisor. In all, about 20,000 visitors came to Thompson, with an expected 2,000-3,000 more through October.

Sally Snowman, USCG, reported that Boston Light visits were slightly up this year, with the last visit of the season coming up soon. There were 2 weddings and 5 engagements on the island. Sally also appeared on the Today Show featuring Boston Light.

Kelly Fellner urged partners to share public visitation numbers with Al Hebb, NPS Supervisory Visitor Use Assistant, as he is compiling visitor statistics for the year.

### **Financial Accountability 2012**

Sarah Waterworth, NPS, presented the 2012 report on Financial Accountability, which was discussed at the past winter's Finance Committee meeting. She reported that since the park was designated on November 17, 1996, the total of the contributions that were reported have reached \$250 million. Each federal dollar has been met with 6 non-federal dollars (well within the required minimum of 1 federal dollar to \$3 non-federal dollars). Sarah said that three categories are tracked: capital, non-capital, and labor. She noted that there were decreasing trends in all 3 categories.

Sarah said that in 2012, expenditures on park operations were over \$10.5 million. She gave a rough estimate that the park generated between \$2M – 4M in local economic activity. Sarah also gave examples of expenditure comparisons from other organizations. Toni Pollak asked how the islands compared to other national parks, and gave feedback that will help refine future comparison reports.

Charlie Norris stressed the importance of accurate visitation numbers, and suggested that the Partnership find a standardized way of obtaining actual visitor counts that includes areas of the park that may not be currently captured.

Jack Murray inquired about Massachusetts NPS capital contributions, to which Mike Caldwell responded that they are probably similar to other states.

### **Designing the Parks Summer Internship Program: Reimagining Peddocks Island**

Kelly Fellner described the Designing the Parks program, hosted by the NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, as a connection for high school and college students to get exposure into careers based in design and planning. This 6 week program challenged the students to envision the future of Peddocks Island. The students reached out to landscape architects and other park professionals for help developing a plan that respected the island's historical context and natural resources while considering conservation, appropriate land use, and the visitor experience. Kelly shared the video that the students made showcasing their work.

Phil Griffiths gave a brief update on construction work on Peddocks. Work on the chapel has begun, with the painting, de-leading, and roof complete. Details are being worked out to renovate the rest of the chapel.

### **Transitions and New Staff at Partner Agencies**

Mike Caldwell thanked Kelly for her service as NPS Boston Harbor Islands Acting Superintendent after Bruce Jacobson's departure. Mike welcomed Giles Parker as the new

Superintendent beginning October 7<sup>th</sup>. He will be the park's 3<sup>rd</sup> permanent Superintendent. Mike believes Giles is a perfect fit for the position.

Phil Griffiths thanked Jane for all her help this summer and welcomed Mike Dyer, newly appointed Vice President of Development and External Affairs for Boston Harbor Island Alliance.

Toni Pollak thanked Phil for his work for the Partnership as Undersecretary for the Environment for Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. She said that the Partnership looked forward to continuing to work with him as President of Boston Harbor Island Alliance.

Toni also mentioned that there is a need to fill the Chair position of the Partnership and the Nominating Committee will report at the next Partnership meeting.

Brian Swett noted that Nancy Girard is the new Commissioner of the Environmental Department for the City of Boston, and she will be invited to future meetings.

Jack Murray stated that DCR Commissioner Lambert has left state service and taken a position at University of Massachusetts. He introduced Kevin Whalen, Director of Administration and Finance for DCR.

Hugh welcomed the new owners of Graves Light, Dave and Lynn Waller. Dave said they have an interest in historical preservation, and are looking forward to working with the Partnership. He said that in the future, they do hope to find ways make the Graves Light more accessible to the public.

### **Advisory Council Report**

Maureen Cavanaugh noted that the Council met two weeks ago and discussed the park's summer operations and the upcoming 2016 anniversaries. She said that there are many vacant seats on the council and they are searching for new members. Advisory Council members are being encouraged to serve on Partnership committees.

### **Other Business**

Fred Laskey noted that the Deer Island Native American memorial statue is scheduled to be unveiled sometime in October. Elizabeth Solomon mentioned the annual Deer Island Memorial will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

Sally Snowman reminded all that in 3 years it will be Boston Light's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, so it is desired to get the island in pristine condition. There are many projects planned. Work on the sewage treatment system has begun and roof rehabilitation will be starting soon. A bad roof leak on the keeper's house from snowstorm Nemo in February is finally being fixed. Next summer, the house will be painted and will receive a permanent new roof, and the tower will receive a face lift.

### **Public Comment**

There was no further public comment.

The meeting was adjourned.