

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor, Boston, MA  
November 19, 2013 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

**Attendees:** Maureen Cavanaugh and Charles Norris—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Jane Ellis and Phil Griffiths—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); Susan Kane and Jack Murray—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Marianne Connolly and Fred Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Giles Parker—National Park Service (NPS); Jim Scully—Thompson Island Outward Bound (TIOBEC); CDR Jason Smith—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Jack Murray, Acting Vice Chair, opened the meeting. A quorum was present. Jack welcomed Giles Parker to his first official Partnership meeting as Superintendent. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the September 24, 2013 meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

### **National Park Service Update and Priorities**

Giles thanked all whose efforts maintained park operations during the federal government shutdown in October, noting that although the shutdown impacted visitor services and education programs, it highlighted the strength of the Partnership as Boston Harbor Islands was one of the few national parks that were open. Giles said that as the park's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaches, the Partnership continues to make improvements enhancing the facilities and visitor experience and there is much still to do. He said that it is time for NPS to submit internal funding requests, and wants to put together a Partnership project priority list. He asked all Partners to submit their high priority projects. Giles asked Partners to identify staff members to serve on the Marketing, Planning, Finance, and Education Committees as he hopes to reengage and reinvigorate the committees.

### **Marketing and External Affairs**

Mike Dyer, Boston Harbor Island Alliance Vice President for Development and External Affairs, said that he started at BHIA in September, although he was on the Board of Directors prior to that. Mike stressed that the Partnership should be looking for ways to collaborate more, especially with branding. The park is on its way to its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which means it is a great time to build better brand awareness and attract visitors, especially locals and intergenerational visitors. Mike noted that all organizations in the Partnership have their own individual goals as well, which is great for the group as a whole, and that they must find ways to help each other succeed in these individual goals. Mike stressed the importance of reinvigorating the Marketing Committee that can begin with thinking of broad ideas for the 2014 season.

Marianne Connolly asked whether the Partnership planned to reach out to mayoral elect Marty Walsh soon. Phil Griffiths said that they planned on it, but it would be great for the Partnership to reach whole, and offered to draft a letter for the chair.

Suzanne Gall Marsh, Volunteers and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, mentioned the January 1<sup>st</sup> Friends trip to Spectacle Island.

### **State of the Park: Resource Stewardship Strategy**

Marc Albert, National Park Service Stewardship Program Director, gave a presentation about the development of a Resource Stewardship Strategy for the park, a program-specific strategic plan that will help the park to achieve and maintain the desired resource conditions. He explained that the NPS planning processes flow from broad-scale general management planning through progressively more specific strategic planning, implementation planning, and

annual performance planning and reporting. Here at Boston Harbor Islands we have the park's enabling legislation as guidance for planning efforts, Boston Harbor Islands General Management Plan (2002), and the Boston Harbor Islands 2016 Strategic Plan (2009). Marc explained that the NPS Northeast Region is helping the park prepare resource condition assessments that will help inform the development of a State of the Park Report, a snapshot of the status and trend in the condition of a park's priority resources and values. The State of the Park Report also highlights key management issues, accomplishments, and challenges, and will help inform the development of a Resource Stewardship Strategy.

The process is as follows: Now through spring, background information for natural and cultural resource condition assessments will be gathered from various Partnership organizations. NPS will facilitate a workshop in the spring, then the draft State of the Park Report will be completed, with the final approval and publishing of the report expected in summer 2014. The resource stewardship strategy is scheduled to be published in fall 2014.

Additionally, all national parks are now required to have foundation statements. This planning document summarizes what is most important according to the park's establishing legislation, purpose and significance statements, primary interpretive themes, and summarizes fundamental resources and values critical to maintaining park's natural, cultural, and experiential value into the future. This planning effort for Boston Harbor Islands Foundation Statement is scheduled to begin in 2015.

Jack Murray asked whether the park's resource stewardship strategy and foundation statement would enhance funding coming our way. Marc responded that yes, the plans can be used to help justify fundraising proposals. Giles Parker mentioned that having one can help support internal funding requests as well as help partner organizations with their funding proposals. Marianne Connolly asked whether harbor-wide water quality is included as a resource, to which Marc replied yes, although the park boundary stops at low tide line, water quality has a great impact. Susan Kane added that the resource bibliography will be a very helpful management tool. Charlie Norris claimed that sea level rising must be taken into high consideration and that preparedness be factored into the planning process. Suzanne Gall Marsh, Volunteers and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, asked how the strategy differs from the Partnership's 2016 Strategic Plan. Marc said that the resource stewardship strategy is program specific and will only address cultural and natural resources.

### **Water Transportation**

Phil Griffiths said that the water transportation sub-committee met on November 7<sup>th</sup>, and reviewed ferry ridership raw data from the past summer. In summary, 2013 was a bit slower than 2012, but there is still a growth trend over 2011. The ferry contract expires after the 2014 season. The committee's goals include: to develop different scenarios for levels of service to inform options and pricing for 2014 (by January); to finalize the ferry schedule (by March/April); and to plan for 2015, and prepare a request for proposals (by spring).

The Partners discussed. Phil asked what the desired length of a contract might be, particularly since the waterfront is constantly changing. Giles mentioned that a handful of other parks have gone through this lately, so it might be helpful to look at those. It was noted that having a designated dock on Long Wharf is desired. Jack Murray asked if we are reaching ferry capacity. Susan Kane responded that occasionally at busy times, visitors will be left at the dock. She added that there are issues of reaching island capacity on Spectacle, but that Georges can typically handle more visitors than it gets. Jim Doolin asked whether capacity days were always weekends, and Hugh said that yes, on a nice Saturday tickets sell out on many runs. Charlie Norris suggested finding ways of incentivizing travel during slower times.

### **Advisory Council Report**

Maureen Cavanaugh said that there would be an Advisory Council meeting on December 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the New England Aquarium's Harborside Learning Lab. Phil Colorusso, US Environmental Protection Agency will give a presentation on the health of Boston Harbor. Maureen asked Marc to present his planning presentation there. Maureen said that members are very interested in becoming more involved, and will encourage member's participation in Partnership committees.

### **Other Business**

Marianne Connolly suggested that it would be a lost opportunity to not consider the possibility of a 2024 Boston Olympics. Jack Murray said that DCR has already been approached by some consultants.

Fred Laskey suggested the Partnership send a letter of thanks to Mayor Menino as he was a great supporter of the islands and harbor.

CDR Jason Smith mentioned the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boston Light coincides with the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NPS and the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boston Harbor Islands national park area in 2016. He said the Coast Guard has started planning for a 2016 celebration of Boston Light. Planning

### **Public Comment**

Mary Raczko, National Park Service Partnership Liaison, explained that she was on detail this summer but is now officially back. She thanked Murray for acting as Vice Chair. She asked Marianne Connelly for a Nominating Committee update. Marianne announced that the Nominating Committee suggests that Arthur Pearson continue as Chair and Jack Murray serve as Vice Chair. A quorum was not present to take a vote, so the election was tabled until the January meeting.

Suzanne Gall Marsh, Volunteers and Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, stressed the importance of continuing inter-island ferry service, especially with the popularity of yurts on Peddocks. She reminded all that inter-island service used to run May through October in past times, and that the shoulder seasons are great times to be on the islands.

Suzanne mentioned the draft DCR volunteer policy that was under public review and asked how the new policy will mesh with the NPS Volunteers-in-Parks program. Mary said that she had not yet reviewed it in depth, but did not expect there to be conflicts. Susan Kane said that one joint program has always worked very well. Jack Murray reassured that there will be analysis of both policies to make sure they can coexist

The meeting was adjourned.