

Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston, MA
January 21, 2014, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Attendees: Maureen Cavanaugh, Charles Norris, and Elizabeth Solomon—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Phil Griffiths—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); Brian Swett and Antonia Pollak—City of Boston; Jack Murray and Susan Kane—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Fred Laskey and Marianne Connolly—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority; Giles Parker—National Park Service (NPS); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); CDR Jason Smith—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Arthur Pearson, Chair, welcomed all and called the meeting to order. A quorum was present. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2013, meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Water Transportation

Phil Griffiths reported that Boston Harbor Island Alliance received notice from Boston's Best Cruises requesting permission to assign the remainder of the ferry contract term to another operator, and that they are also trying to transfer the lease for use of the dock at Long Wharf North.

Phil said park managers have a two step process in responding. Long Wharf North is an important location for island boat departures; the hope is that space can be designated specifically for the islands. Managers are also talking with water transportation vendors, and conversations are going well. Phil expressed confidence that an operator will be in place for the season start in May.

Phil said one of the lessons learned from this process is how tied our ferry service is to commuter boat service contracts. He also mentioned that there is no interisland subsidy expected this year; it will be a challenge to maintain adequate service to the camping islands.

The Partners discussed. They agreed that dedicated space for the islands at Long Wharf was important and the suggestion was made for organizations to prepare letters of support.

Little Brewster Capital Improvements

CDR Smith said that the U.S. Coast Guard has secured \$1.1M from the Lighthouse Preservation Fund to prepare for the 300th Anniversary of Boston Light. A variety of infrastructure improvements are planned for the tower, keeper's house, outbuildings, and other systems. The work is scheduled to happen in 2014. There is a possibility that because of the scale of the projects, it could mean limited access for the public this year.

CDR Smith said the tricentennial committee just held its 3rd meeting, and the group has produced several ideas for celebrating all the park anniversaries that happen in 2016. He mentioned a few of the early ideas, a license plate, Google Doodle, minted coin, virtual tours, interpretive displays, artist-in-residence, new curriculum, regatta, were among the possibilities. The group is working to refine ideas into a short list of ones to pursue. He did say they expect the Commandant of the Coast Guard to have interest in holding an official ceremony commemorating the event.

Rainsford Island

Joe Bagley, City of Boston Archeologist, gave an overview of Rainsford Island's rich cultural history starting with use by Native Americans. The island was granted to Edward Rainsford in the 1600's, and after that the island was home to a quarantine hospital, summer resort, small-pox hospital,

almshouse, poorhouse, and boy's school. Joe said that there are threats to both natural and cultural resources and they are working in partnership with the state, National Park Service, and Environmental Police to address. Once significant issue discussed was the unauthorized camping.

Partner Priorities

Marc Albert, National Park Service, asked that Partners designate representatives to participate in workshop in April to help inform the development of a "State of the Park" report. The report will be a snapshot of conditions of the park's natural and cultural resources, visitor experience, infrastructure, and possibly the Partnership itself.

Phil Griffiths said Boston Harbor Island Alliance is working on the ferry and interisland shuttle contract, and expanding programs and events. Another project they are working on with DCR is the repair and renovation of the chapel on Peddocks Island. A local labor union and carpenter apprentices are donating a generous amount of their time to the project.

Brian Swett said the City of Boston is planning for adaptations to climate change. He mentioned that the recently passed legislation will make management of Spectacle Island more efficient. The City wants to bring more youth out to Spectacle Island and is exploring ways to overcome money barriers. Improving conditions on Rainsford Island is also a priority this year.

Fred Laskey said that Deer Island has become a very popular destination and they need to expand parking. A salt water fishing pier is also in the works, and could be open as early as next year.

CDR Smith said the U.S. Coast Guard is working hard to prepare for the Tercentennial of Boston Light in 2016.

Arthur Pearson said Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center is about two-thirds of the way towards their capital campaign to improve access and infrastructure.

Advisory Council

Maureen Cavanaugh, Vice-chair, said Phil Colorusso, Environmental Protection Agency, spoke at the last council meeting about Boston Harbor, past, present and future. She invited all to the Council's annual meeting on March 5. She said council members are looking forward to participating in the State of the Park workshop.

Other Business

Fred Laskey mentioned he attended the recent winter wildlife cruise and said that it was well attended and enjoyable.

Antonia Pollak announced she will be leaving City service at the end of February and that she has enjoyed her time working with the Partnership. Partners thanked her for her exemplary service.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 pm.