

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership  
Meeting Minutes  
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26<sup>th</sup> Floor, Boston, MA  
November 18, 2014, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM**

**Attendees:** Maureen Cavanaugh and Elizabeth Solomon—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Phil Griffiths—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); Susan Kane—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Fred Laskey and Marianne Connolly—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Giles Parker—National Park Service (NPS); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); CDR David O’Connell for CAPT O’Connor—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Arthur Pearson, Chair, welcomed all and called the meeting to order. Arthur started the meeting with a remembrance of Mayor Menino. Partners shared some stories that included remembrances of Mayor Menino supporting the park and youth initiatives. Fred Laskey said that when Mayor Menino took office, Boston had one of the dirtiest harbors in the nation. At the time when the Deer Island treatment plant was becoming operational, sewer bills were a galvanizing issue for the city. Fred said Mayor Menino was a firm supporter of environmental responsibility but was also very conscious of city residents’ financial burden. The eventual clean up of the harbor and the Charles River were two great environmental success stories that happened during his administration. Giles Parker commented on the many images he saw of the Mayor attending various park events and the wide breadth of programs he was invested in. Susan Kane said he told many that he didn’t like being on boats, yet came to the islands on many occasions. She was always impressed that he took the time to know the people involved and he always remembered names and what they did. Marianne Connolly remembers his strong commitment to youth and providing them with opportunities, like connecting them to history and the outdoors. Camp Harbor View was one example of the many youth programs he supported. Liza Sterns, NPS, said she met him a few times through working at Olmsted National Historic Site. She remembered that he always mentioned the harbor islands as part of Boston’s Emerald Necklace, as Olmsted once envisioned. The Mayor had such a great impact on the city and the park and his legacy will live on, and he will be remembered.

There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2014, meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

**Water Transportation**

Phil Griffiths reported that Boston Harbor Cruises (BHC) showed a 17% increase in ferry ridership over last year, and this represents a 12% increase from 2012 (a 10-year record high year). The MBTA Hingham service to Grape and Georges Islands was successful. Managers are working with BHC to develop the 2015 schedule and hope to have it finalized by January 1. It is hoped to have dedicated direct service to both Georges and Spectacle Islands, increase capacity to Peddocks Island and to improve service to all the camping islands with the assumption that a subsidy is not supported for the coming year. He reminded all that it remains a challenge to provide adequate service to the camping islands in a financially sustainable way.

Marianne Connolly mentioned that Alison Nolan from Boston Harbor Cruises was profiled in the Boston Globe. A question was asked if there were any plans about service to Long Island due to the pending demolition of the bridge. Options being investigated include using the MV Provincetown III and using the dock at Squantum Point. Arthur Pearson said that the type of service needed for Camp Harbor View on Long Island faces the same challenges as partners do for large events, and regular service to the smaller islands. Susan Kane said that DCR has been providing materials and transport for Boston Public Health Department. She said that the use of Squantum is under consideration, but

is a big issue. It would need a potential rebuild to serve large vessels but could also serve as a drop for utility lines for Spectacle Island, needed as the current lines are currently on the Long Island Bridge. DCR is hoping the area could be developed for park use, and it could help Thompson Island also. Arthur said that accommodating large vessels would be an improvement, but the location is not ideal for groups leaving from Boston. He said that there are locations in the south end of the Seaport District that would be ideal. Susan Kane said DCR is supportive of more public landing space.

## **Planning**

### DCR Resource Management Plan

Jim Baecker, DCR Regional Planner, gave an overview on the preparation of a Resource Management Plan (RMP) for Boston Harbor Islands. He explained that the RMP for the 16.5 DCR islands will be a tool that will provide guidance for management. It will include an inventory and assessment of natural, cultural, and recreational resources, identify unique characteristics and values of a property, and analyze protection and recreation issues. He passed out a handout (attached) that provided more detail. Jim said DCR has been working with NPS and Boston Harbor Island Alliance to help inform this effort and invited all to a public forum on Tuesday, December 9.

Maureen Cavanaugh asked if the public forums for other parks were well attended. Jim responded that in general they get about 20-70 participants and sometimes they hold multiple meetings for one property.

### Little Brewster

CDR David O'Connell said the U.S. Coast Guard invested over \$1.8M for infrastructure improvements to Boston Light Station so far. He said that work is moving forward and the scaffolding was removed from the tower and the light is operational. The rest of the scheduled work is expected to be complete by Spring 2015. The boathouse is in need of major repairs that are estimated to cost \$600k. No additional U.S. Coast Guard funding is identified or expected. Giles said that NPS has submitted a funding request for this work to the National Park Foundation to protect the National Historic Landmark. There is quite a bit of competition for this particular fund; it should be announced in a few weeks if the project makes it past the first round of cuts.

CDR O'Connell said the Tercentennial Committee has produced several ideas for celebrating all the park anniversaries that happen in 2016. The group will soon decide what that celebration will consist of, if it will be a large single event or multiple smaller events.

### Boston's Climate Action Plan

The discussion was tabled.

## **Marketing**

Mike Dyer, Boston Harbor Island Alliance, said he is leaving the organization and he has appreciated the opportunity to work with everyone in that capacity. He announced that he expects to continue to help the park with the upcoming website transition of [bostonharborislands.org](http://bostonharborislands.org). He said the Partnership website has been a key accomplishment of the park, but is in need of updates. The plan is to move to a new platform that will be easier to maintain and will be completely mobile compatible. The information will be consolidated and reorganized to make it easier for visitors to get the information they need to plan their trip to the park. It is expected for much of the work to be done over the winter and the information transferred by March, and the new site ready to go live by mid-April.

Phil Griffiths gave Mike thanks for all the work he did last year and is pleased that he can continue under contract to help with this project. Liza Sterns, NPS, asked who will maintain it after it is built out, and if an operational manual will be provided and a training component. Mike said it will still be the responsibility of NPS and BHIA to maintain it, but it will be a very user friendly environment. Mike also mentioned that the NPS website is also undergoing an upgrade process, which will change the look and involve a reorganization of content.

### **Other Business**

Giles Parker opened a discussion about Partnership function. He said he had sent a survey out to partners and received feedback the Partnership meetings, while a good networking opportunity, have become heavy on updates and some are feeling attendance is beginning to feel rather obligatory. Giles asked for advice on how to turn this around and have meetings be a place of dynamic discussion and problem solving. He committed to polling Partners about topics for the next meeting in advance of the agenda preparation as well as providing some park highlights as well as the prior meeting notes in advance of the meeting.

Giles also spoke about reinvigorating committees, and asked Partners to think about appropriate staff members that could actively participate on planning, marketing, education, and finance committee. He proposed that the committees be action-oriented, to identify projects and accomplish them. It will be important to get the right professionals at the table for the projects and recognized that there will be some overlap and different projects might require participation from members of more than one committee, or invited experts. Susan Kane suggested that regional DCR staff might be better suited than park staff for those committees and to reach out to the Commissioner to make recommendations. Giles will follow up with the Partners on next steps.

Ideas for future Partnership meeting topics included a MWRA presentation about water quality, an issue that effects all of the islands. There was also a suggestion made to invite a representative of the Camp Harbor View Foundation to a meeting of the Partnership.

### **Advisory Council**

Elizabeth Solomon, Chair, said the Council has spent the better part of 8 months on updating its bylaws. It is hoped the draft will be finalized at the December meeting. They are also working on building membership and clarifying what their role should be as the park matures.

### **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.