

Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
WilmerHale Building, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston, MA
January 19, 2016, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Attendees: (Members) Charlie Norris (Advisory Council), Rob Moir (Advisory Council), Chris Busch (MRA), Susan Kane (DCR), Arthur Pearson (TIOBEC), Austin Blackmon (City of Boston), Phil Griffiths (BHIA), Fred Laskey (MWRA), Marianne Connolly (MWRA), Michael Creasey (NPS), Giles Parker (NPS), CDR Marc Knowlton (USCG), Andrew Hargens (MassPort)

(Non-Members) Marc Albert, Kristina Bergquist, Sophia Bass Werner, Suzanne Gall Marsh, Mary Raczko, Ruth Raphael, Nancy Stone (BHIA), Nancy Abbot (BHIA), Andrew Petit de Mange, Sue Burke

- 1. Call to Order - Arthur Pearson calls meeting to order.**
- 2. Minutes of last meeting approved**
- 3. Partner Updates**

National Park Service

Michael Creasey – Re-introduces the idea of the Urban Agenda, with 10 model cities including Boston. introduced in ten partner cities focused on (1) making the NPS relevant to all Americans; (2) encouraging a culture of collaboration; and, (3) an internal NPS focus on working as OneNPS. There has been internal meeting between the three units of the National Parks of Boston in order to find ways to create a more collaborative organization. They looked at Boston Harbor Islands Partnership as a model for all National Parks of Boston, seeking to maximize the impact within the Greater Boston area. The combined workforce of the three units is much larger, so we'll be working on ways to work with our partners to utilize talents to maximum benefit. There will be organizational shifts allowing us to maximize the talents of the employees between all three parks. In general, here will be a shift allowing more employees to spend their time working for all three parks.

Marianne Connolly asked if there would be any name changes within the park? Michael Creasey said there would not be any right now, but he likes the branding of “National Parks of Boston.”

Fred Laskey asked if it will require any legislative action and Michael Creasey said it would not.

United States Coast Guard (USCG)

CDR Marc Knowlton – “Tricentennial” of Boston Light will be a huge celebration. Boston Light has a very rich history. The town of Hull ceded little Brewster Island and established Boston Light to protect Boston from Mariners in 1716. Some call her the “Birthplace of the Coastguard.” Sally Snowman is the country’s last USCG lighthouse keeper. There is a Coast Guard Tricentennial Celebration Committee with a lot of time and investment and it’s paying off.

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR)

Susan Kane – DCR has a new Commissioner (Leo Roy) and there are ongoing budget discussions, so they’re adjusting their staffing plans. There are two new proposals for full condition assessment of Fort Warren with a focus on public safety. The assessment will look at

what structural improvements are needed in the long run as well as what interim safety measures need to be put in place. They'll start fieldwork in March and be finished in June. Also, in Partnership with BHIA the new Yurts on Peddocks are moving along well. They're also researching new types of composting restroom units to install with the new yurt campsites.

Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA)

Fred Laskey – there will be a detailed report later in the meeting.

MassPort

Andrew Hargens – Last year was a high point for them, working on a dredging process. They're also working to construct Tommy Butler freight corridor and park. Part of that is a series of interpretive panels in the park about the history of the park and area. This will largely be a passive park that provides interest and connectivity to the rest of the parks in the area. Should be finished by late '16 early '17. There was also a seafood industry assessment with a goal of gauging the demand for seafood, which highlights the need for cold storage and other facilities and access to the airport. The seafood processing industry in Boston seems to be going strong. There is a Grand Prix coming up and they're expecting 150,000 people each day.

Marianne Connolly asked if funding (\$310 million dollars) for dredging is all appropriated at this time? Andrew said they are not quite, but it looks like they will be and all parties are moving along as they should.

City of Boston

Austin Blackmon – the city is happy about the continued operations on Spectacle Island. The mayor's "State of the City" will be tonight so stay tuned. Hopes to see increased investment in the parks, so we'll see how that goes. The city will keep the Partnership informed as Long Island continues to progress.

Boston Redevelopment Authority (BRA)

Chris Busch – BRA is focusing on connecting the waterfront and the greenway a little better, working on advancing the Marine Industrial Park. Also working on update to Downtown Waterfront Municipal Harbor Plan for the development of the waterfront. They're also working on developing Lovejoy Pier into a ferry terminal. They're also working on activation plans for the Charlestown Waterfront (kayak rentals, etc).

Andrew Hargens asked if the city is still pursuing the vessel acquisition grant? Chris said no, it was not really something that the city wanted to take on right now.

Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC)

Arthur Pearson – TIOBEC pretty much wrapped up in November following a new electrical system and it was great for them to stay open longer with better access to heat. There is a lot left to do for facilities, but they have made big steps forward. There have been a few big changes to their senior staff that is worth the Partners taking note of. TIOBEC's new goal is to stay open for at least nine months.

Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA)

Phil Griffiths – BHIA is coming up on its 20th anniversary as it was established with the park. As they begin to think about the next 20 years, they're looking forward to development. The Boston Harbor Association and BHIA voted unanimously to merge their organizations into a new nonprofit to look more holistically at the harbor (waterfront and islands) and develop a vision for the future of the harbor. This allows them to think about the park in the largest context. Many things will also stay the same – they will continue to serve in many of the same roles as support for park operations. A lot of the details are still being worked out, but will go into effect on April 1st.

Charlie Norris, as a TBHA Board Member, added that TBHA is also very enthusiastic, and wanted to add that all activities that the organizations are involved in will continue to exist, and ideally will increase total capacity of the organizations.

Kathy Abbot said she has been very excited about making the connection between the islands and the mainland much stronger and how much potential they have. Kathy Stone said she was reminded of the enduring strength of his partnership and how this will continue to build on that strength. Susan Kane had a comment that the process of having consultants meet with all involved entities to weigh concerns and values, and it was great for them to feel like they had input into the changing of the organization, they felt involved in the process. Rob Moir seconded Susan's sentiment and expressed concern about changing names, and it's important to make it clear that if there is a change of the name does not mean the failure of the previous organizations. That was understood with the involved partners, who will be having a meeting about naming tomorrow. In the new organization, there will be one Board of Directors and an Advisory Board.

Advisory Council

Charlie Norris (on behalf of Elizabeth Solomon) – Annual Meeting will be March 9, 6pm with a panel on the history of the islands. There will be a nomination committee for openings on Advisory Council. They are focusing on membership and there are 3 pending candidates, plus open slots and they're seeking new members. They are putting together a planning sub-committee and are prepared to help with the DCR RMP as soon as their help or guidance is needed.

4. Water Transportation

Phil Griffiths – They have finished the schedule for next summer and it looks a lot like last year's schedule but increased morning trips to spectacle. He will share this as soon as it is in a digestible format. The other piece they have been working on with BHC is some access improvements. BHC is working on staff training and boat improvements, as well as improving communication with the public. There will be another free ferry day on May 7th.

5. MWRA at 30: Then and Now

Fred Laskey presents on the history of the MWRA and the amazing progress that has been made in the health of the Boston Harbor in the last 30 years.

Charlie Norris asks how they feel that they are prepared for climate change. Fred said that they are well prepared for what the climate change models are predicting. There are a couple of sewer facilities in the flood planes that could be in big trouble – so their goal is to rehab wastewater plants every 20 years, and they plan to upgrade them systematically as they go.

6. Partnership Bylaws, Nomination Schedule

Giles says that the NPS is intended to play a role of supporting the Partnership, making it most meaningful for all of our work. We have slipped a little on that – email invitations, etc. They are also working on putting together a nominating committee for chair members etc.

7. Other Business

None

8. Advisory Council

None

9. Public Comment

Suzanne said it was great to have FBHI bring 120 people on Thompson on New Years Day.

Arthur Pearson adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting – March 15, 3-430P, 60 State Street, 26th Floor