

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston, MA
September 20, 2016, 3:00^{PM} – 4:30 ^{PM}**



Attendees: Brad Kelly—United States Coast Guard (USCG); Michael Creasey and Giles Parker—National Park Service (NPS); Commissioner Leo Roy, Nick Connors, and Susan Kane—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Frederick Laskey—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Austin Blackmon—City of Boston; Chris Busch—Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA); Kathy Abbott and Phil Griffiths—Boston Harbor NOW (BHN); Jim Scully—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Fran Blanchard—The Trustees of Reservations (Trustees); Elizabeth Solomon—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council (AC);

Jim Scully, acting vice-chair, opened the meeting. The minutes of the meeting held on May 17, 2016, were approved.

Setting the Context: Park and Partnership

Giles Parker, NPS, gave a presentation about the legislated intent and framework of Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area (see attached). The park is comprised of 34 islands and peninsulas administered in partnership and funded on a matching basis of at least three non-federal dollars to every federal dollar. The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership, a federal operating committee, was established to coordinate the activities of federal state and local authorities and the private sector in the development and implementation of an integrated resource management plan. The presentation is attached.

Kathy Abbott, Boston Harbor Now, gave her perspective on the establishment of the park. She said that at the time, there was widespread belief that the park could never work as structured and nothing would ever get done. Looking back on the past 20 years there has been an incredible amount accomplished. Looking forward, with an expanded view of the harbor gateways to the north and south and moving forward with the same energy and initiative, even more can be achieved.

Kathy added that Jodi Wolin has been hired as Vice President of Institutional Advancement for Boston Harbor Now and has a first year goal of raising \$2.9M.

Partnership Moving Forward

Jim Scully, Acting Vice Chair, introduced Ann Latham, who served as facilitator of the next session. Ann led a discussion where partners identified some of their proudest accomplishments and their dreams for the future. Ann asked Partners to identify some of the common issues that all the organizations are facing that would be meaningful to

address in this group. The Partners identified several. The list of dreams and challenges that the Partners came up during the session is attached.

The Partners agreed that the Partnership itself is not utilized as well as it could be to address the issues. The meetings have been mostly of an informational nature, and the board not functioning as designed. It was noted that the general management plan is aging and needs updating. It was suggested that a comprehensive strategic plan for the Partnership be developed. It was recognized that obtaining broader input to inform this effort was essential part of the planning process, and mentioned that it is very important to have an understanding of why people come to the park right now, so that you do not change the things that are most meaningful to them.

There was concern stated about having the funding, time and bandwidth to do it. There was a suggestion for an all-day meeting or series of shorter meetings to first focus on how the idea of collective impact can be used to move the planning effort forward. Shorter meeting sessions seemed to be a better fit for most members.

Other Business

Jim Scully, Acting Vice Chair, asked for any new or other business. There were no topics introduced.

The meeting was adjourned.

Boston Harbor Islands Partnership Facilitator Notes

The following are the notes and observations from the facilitated dialog about the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership going forward. The “Dreams for the Future” and “Issues We Should Be Involved In” sections are organized by the goals from the BHI Strategic Plan adopted by the Partnership in 2009.¹

DREAMS FOR THE FUTURE

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership fosters exceptional learning opportunities that connect people to the islands.

- Total youth engagement
- Want the youth to feel ownership of the islands

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership shows leadership in preserving and restoring treasured resources.

- Develop the potential of Peddocks and Long Islands
- Climate change
- Protect the islands – and the harbor – from sea level rise
- Protect the islands
- Little Brewster infrastructure improvements
- Capital investment strategy across the islands
- Improve World’s End facilities, parking, and water taxi service

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership demonstrates environmental leadership and a commitment to the principles of environmental sustainability.

- Ensure sustainable interaction
- Sustainability, not just resources for us to use and exploit. Set aside exclusive space for natural environment to predominate.

Boston Harbor Islands is a superior recreational destination where visitors have fun, explore nature and history, find inspiration, and improve health and wellness.

- “Circular” ferry system for easier hop on/hop off
- More islands open to the public – Long Island, Gallups Island
- More camping destinations of various types
- On the top of the list of Massachusetts camping destinations
- More year round programs
- Boston open space planning needs 400-600 more acres of land – the islands could be part of that

¹ https://www.nps.gov/boha/learn/management/upload/BOHA_2016_strategicplan.pdf

- More comprehensive waterfront programming integrated into our lives with the islands being strong components of that waterfront
- Be sure everyone benefits, provide more than just camping and recreation
- More recreational boating to the islands, not just in the area
- Build an inn – accommodations for those who don't want to camp

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership demonstrates management excellence worthy of the treasures entrusted to our care.

- Continued innovation in how government and non-profits can collaborate
- Strategic priorities
- What aren't we doing

ISSUES WE SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership fosters exceptional learning opportunities that connect people to the islands.

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership shows leadership in preserving and restoring treasured resources.

- Invasive species
- Climate change
- Sea level increases
- Deferred maintenance
- Shore protection
- Island protection
- Erosion and protection of manmade resources (e.g., forts)

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership demonstrates environmental leadership and a commitment to the principles of environmental sustainability.

Boston Harbor Islands is a superior recreational destination where visitors have fun, explore nature and history, find inspiration, and improve health and wellness.

- Water transit
- Landing space limitations
- Access for maintenance purposes

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership demonstrates management excellence worthy of the treasures entrusted to our care.

- Sustainable funding for operating expenses and capital improvements
- Population growth

- Traffic growth
- Equity and accessibility
- Awareness – collective advertising
- Improving the effectiveness of the partnership
- Everything is more expensive on islands
- Need a shared, clear strategy
- Need to reduce weather dependency
- Don't overdevelop or over crowd islands

POSITIVES

- Everyone here cares
- Islands are amazing
- Islands help to create passionate employees
- Even getting to the islands is a wonderful experience
- Good cooperation among partnership and beyond
- Great variety of experiences
- Differing island identities
- No neighbors i.e., no complaints
- Multiple municipalities to leverage – lots of potential
- Strong waterfront entities e.g., Aquarium
- City has strong, broad vision e.g., the arts
- Many enthusiastic and supportive groups

NEGATIVES

- Difficult to know who pays and to coordinate expenses
- No neighbors i.e., few natural advocates by proximity and less urgency
- Multiple municipalities to engage, sway, coordinate – adds complexity
- Partnership not utilized as well as it could be – not all issues come to the partnership as a whole, not using the committees, not getting enough outside input
- No comprehensive vision for water transit

PLANNING FACTORS

- Need the participation of everyone
- Competing for time of busy people/organizations with their own agendas
- Broader input needed – need to identify what input is missing and how to get it
- Do we need to reflect on previous planning process to learn lessons or has so much changed and so much been accomplished to make that of minimal use
- Lots of components to any plan
- Need a framework more than details
- Need autonomy within a plan
- Need shared sense of collective impact

Boston Harbor Islands: Park and Partnership *Framework, Intent and Purpose*

**Presentation to BHI Partnership
September 20, 2016**



BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS

National Park Area (Framework)

- (34) islands and peninsulas plus landside points required for public access;
- Does not diminish or modify State or local jurisdiction, laws, rules, and regulations;
- NPS authority to enter into cooperative management agreements;
- Authorization to develop visitor use facilities on non-Federal public lands; and,
- Expend funding on matching basis of at least three non-Federal dollars to every Federal dollar.



Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 460 kkk

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS

National Park Area (Intent and Purpose)

- Preserve for public use and enjoyment the lands and waters that comprise the Boston Harbor Islands;
- Manage the recreation area in partnership;
- Improve access to the Boston Harbor Islands; and,
- Provide education and visitor information programs.



Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 460 kkk

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS

Partnership (Intent and Purpose)

The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership was established to coordinate the activities of Federal, State, and local authorities and the private sector in the development and implementation of an integrated resource management plan for the recreation area.



Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 460 kkk

BOSTON HARBOR ISLANDS

Partnership (Framework)

- Federal Operating Commission;
- 13 members (with alternates);
- (12) Appointments by the Secretary of Interior (plus one via USCG)
- Three Year Terms, Reappointed for one additional;
- Federal Advisory Council with individuals representing specified interests in the park to provide recommendations;
- NPS providing support staff; and,
- No Sunset Date.



Title 16, Chapter 1, Section 460 kkk

“The power of collective action comes not from the sheer number of participants or the uniformity of their efforts, but from the coordination of their differentiated activities through a mutually reinforcing plan of action.”

(Stanford Social Innovation Review)

