

**Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston, MA
November 15, 2016, 3:00PM – 4:30 PM**



Attendees: CDR Brad Kelly—United States Coast Guard (USCG); Michael Creasey and Giles Parker—National Park Service (NPS); Commissioner Leo Roy, Priscilla Geigis, and Susan Kane—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Frederick Laskey and Marianne Connolly—Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA); Austin Blackmon—City of Boston; Richard McGuinness—Boston Planning and Development Agency (BPDA); Kathy Abbott and Phil Griffiths—Boston Harbor NOW (BHN); Arthur Pearson—Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center (TIOBEC); Jocelyn Forbush—The Trustees of Reservations (Trustees); Maureen Cavanaugh, Elizabeth Solomon and Heather Deschenes—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council (AC).

Arthur Pearson, chair, opened the meeting, a quorum was present. The minutes of the meeting held on September 20, 2016, were approved.

Partnership Membership Status

Giles Parker, NPS, gave an update on the status of nominations for Partnership members. He said that most seats are nominated by agency and appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. The exception is the USCG, whereby appointments are done by the Commandant. CDR Kelly will follow up to confirm that process and appointment. NPS has reached out to each Partner organization for their nominations, and some the packages have already been received. When NPS receives them all they will be forwarded to the Secretary for vetting and consideration.

Arthur Pearson made a motion to establish a nominating committee to identify and recommend candidates for chair and vice-chair of the Partnership. Kathy Abbott seconded the motion. **The motion was approved.** Arthur asked for volunteers to serve on the committee from four sectors: federal, state and city governments and a non-governmental organization. Elizabeth Solomon requested that the committee include a seat for the AC. Arthur asked the Partnership if they approved of the request. A motion was made to include a seat for the AC on the nominating committee, and it was seconded. **The motion was approved.** The following members were selected to serve on the nominating committee: Michael Creasey (federal); Priscilla Geigis (state); Rich McGuinness (city); Arthur Pearson (NGO); and Elizabeth Solomon (AC).

Partnership Listening Sessions

Michael Creasey reported that he and Giles Parker were holding listening sessions and met with members from 6 different organizations so far. He said the meetings were meant to stimulate conversation about the how the Partnership works and generate ideas about how it could best move forward. Michael said autonomy of individual organizations was clearly valued, but it was universally thought the Partnership is uniquely positioned to have great impact on the city and region if it were to act collectively. It was recognized that this could be challenging in a landscape that is sometimes competitive, but that the

potential benefit of coming together to activate common initiatives is great. There was interest expressed in figuring out how to leverage existing networks to form a coalition that could propel the islands and region forward. There were ideas expressed to increase cross-marketing efforts, and to expand and diversify audiences. There was a desire to keep innovative and an interest in learning from global examples of how similar partnerships have come together and created compelling landscapes. Michael noted that parks can be places of revitalization and for coming together, for creating dialogue and that we should take advantage of our strengths.

Michael said the general consensus about Partnership meetings was that while the presentations from the different organizations were helpful at times, they did not lead to any follow-up and no action was created as a result. There was interest in discovering where initiatives of the different organizations might intersect with each other. It was suggested that the Partnership meetings could help facilitate this process by providing a forum where the various conservation efforts, business endeavors and other initiatives of the organizations could be shared. It was believed there could be value in hearing about the successes, challenges and the lessons learned from each. Learning about each organization's role and position would help other agencies identify where they might be able to compliment the efforts.

Partnership Moving Forward

Marc Albert facilitated a brainstorming session to build upon the September meeting to look at how the Partnership could move forward in a way that utilizes the collective impact of the individual partners working together. Members were asked to think about what has worked well in the past – where the partnership has worked together effectively to provide a better experience for visitors and/or protect park resources. Several examples were provided: improvements at the Boston Gateway; opposition to LNG storage facility; Boston Light program; trip-planning website (bostonharborislands.org); integrated staff on island; marketing; branding; signage; brochures like the park newspaper and “unigrid”; volunteerism (60k hours in 2016); general management planning process that was inclusive, diverse, and well-facilitated; resiliency planning for climate change; investment in facilities; youth and education program expansion; free access program (25k!); and the 300th anniversary celebration of Boston Light.

Marc asked what needs to be done to continue making advancements collectively. Ideas included: resiliency planning for climate change; strategically seeking long-term funding from state and federal sources; considering dredging opportunities in the harbor; increasing cross marketing activities; evaluating visitor experience; conducting a park needs assessment ; coordinating a strategic planning effort looking at 21st century needs of our communities and access/transportation needs; and creating equitable access by leveraging regional resources.

There was discussion about transportation, and the need to work on landside transportation and parking in addition to water transportation. How can the private sector support access to harbor and islands? How can the partnership work collaboratively to better compete for federal funding? How do we find ways to intersect the islands with the mainland where the experience begins?

Other questions were posed. How can the Partnership intersect with the planning for Boston 2030? There has been talk about equitable access to the islands from all communities for 20 years, how can we think bigger and regionally about how islands can contribute to the success of those communities? What do partner agencies want to see from the NPS under the combined organizational framework of National Parks of Boston?

Water Transportation Study

Kathy Abbott said there has been great interest in having a better understanding of water transportation needs in the region. She said Boston Harbor NOW has stepped up to take on the challenging project of developing a plan for a comprehensive water transportation system for Boston Harbor. Phil Griffiths gave a presentation on the project (attached). He explained that several agencies have a role in water transport already, and that the role of BHN to look at the system in a more comprehensive way and develop a business plan for an integrated passenger ferry system for Boston Harbor. He explained the anticipated framework of how the project will be approached and implemented. He also gave an overview of some other current water transportation activities. Phil mentioned that he was excited about the opportunities that this public-private partnership offers. He assured all that it will be a transparent process, with clear criteria developed for selection of ferry sites. He mentioned that much of the approach is modeled off of a recent study that was held by New York City.

Public Comment

Suzanne Gall Marsh, Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands, asked about the future use of Long Island and how the Partnership and Advisory Council can be involved. She mentioned how FBHI has utilized the island in the past for public access. Austin Blackmon responded that the City of Boston does not yet have a set position and stated that there would be an opportunity for the public to contribute to the planning process. Suzanne suggested that there be a public workshop on the topic and the Advisory Council could assist in some way. Suzanne also asked why the public comment section was removed from the meeting agenda and hoped that it would return. She invited all to the annual New Year's Day trip to Thompson Island. She announced that the Friends have reissued Edward Rowe Snow's first book "*Islands of Boston Harbor*" in honor of all the park's anniversaries.

For a future meeting, Maureen Cavanaugh said that many organizations are actively preparing for changes and asked how the NPS is preparing for changes with the incoming Presidential Administration.

The meeting was adjourned.



A Comprehensive and Integrated Water Transportation System for Boston Harbor



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Project Summary

- Boston Harbor Now to solicit consultants to develop a business plan for a comprehensive and integrated passenger ferry system for Boston Harbor, to include both the inner harbor and municipalities in Massachusetts Bay
- Principle client is the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) and their Water Transportation Advisory Council
- Consortium of public and private funders anticipated
- Request For Information (RFI) in October 2016 asking advice on scope of services. Responses from 11 consulting firms, state agencies and ferry operators (more comments still coming in)
- Anticipated RFP issued late 2016, contract awarded in January 2017



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Anticipated framework for study

- Establish a comprehensive list of potential sites for passenger ferry service
- Compile basic profiles of each site, such as projected ridership demand, physical characteristics, infrastructure, and intermodal connectivity
- Establish criteria and methodology for initial evaluation of potential ridership and other policy objectives in short and long term and rank sites
- Select some number of promising sites for detailed modelling, which may include “point to point” sites, networked sites, seasonal or year round sites.
- If modelling suggests potentially sustainable service, develop a comprehensive business plan for implementing these services



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Project Implementation

- Based on information gleaned from RFI, anticipate 10-12 months, +/- \$650,000
Includes full-time project manager at Boston Harbor Now
 - managing consultant engagement
 - integration with related stakeholder activities
- November - Boston Harbor Now and MassDOT
 - finalizing consultant scope of services
 - confirming funding commitments
 - creating list of potential lead consultants to send RFP
 - establishing management framework, including municipal participation
- December – anticipated release of RFP



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Other current water transportation activities

- MCCA evaluating North Station to Seaport District service
- NPS scoping study for services to the Boston Harbor Islands
- 2016 pilot program connecting Winthrop and Quincy to Boston
- City of Lynn has hired consultants to look at Lynn to Boston service
- Boston City Council held hearing November 3, high interest in new services