



Boston Harbor Islands Partnership

A Federal Operating Commission for the Boston Harbor Islands

Meeting Minutes

WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26th Floor, Boston, MA

September 19, 2017, 3:00- 4:30pm

Chairman, Fred Laskey
Massachusetts Water Resources Authority

Vice Chairman, Austin Blackmon
City of Boston

Michael Creasey
National Park Service

Claudia Gelzer
United States Coast Guard

Leo Roy
Priscilla Geigis
Massachusetts Department of
Conservation and Recreation

Andrew Hargens
Massachusetts Port Authority

Richard McGuinness
Boston Planning and Development Agency

Kathy Abbott
Boston Harbor NOW

Arthur Pearson
Thompson Island Outward Bound
Education Center

Alicia Leuba
The Trustees of Reservations

Elizabeth Solomon
Maureen Cavanaugh
Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council

Attendees: CDR Brad Kelly—United States Coast Guard (USCG); Michael Creasey and Giles Parker—National Park Service (NPS); Susan Hamilton 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 – Boston Harbor Now (BHN); Jocelyn Forbush—The Trustees of Reservations (Trustees); Maureen Cavanaugh, Elizabeth Solomon and Heather Deschenes—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council (BOHA AC), Andrew Hargens – Massachusetts Port Authority (MassPort).

Call to Order and Introductions – Chairman Laskey

Approval of Meeting Minutes: Chairman made a motion to have minutes from the previous meeting accepted. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed.

Opening Remarks and Comments: Chairman Laskey congratulated Giles Parker for his new position as the Regional Curator with the Northeast Region of NPS and wished him good luck.

Michael Creasey recognized Giles for his work as the Superintendent of the Boston Harbor Islands and his dedication to the many partnerships that were reinforced during his tenure. Giles also played a critical role in the transition into the organizational construct of the National Parks of Boston.

Giles Parker stated his appreciation to the Partnership and the staff of the Harbor Islands.

Fred Laskey congratulated the Boston Water & Sewer Commission for taking home the trophy for the Best Drinking Water in New England at the New England Water Works regional conference!

Partnership Business

Governance Committee:

Chairman Laskey discussed the Governance Committee's role in reviewing the By-Laws and Federal Legislation. The Partnership members were presented copies of the legislation with annotations on discussion topics. We've gone through the legislation and have made suggested amendments for the Partnership to review and approve. Recommendations would be sent to the National Park Service Policy Office.

Giles Parker: Areas in grey will need more research; areas in yellow are correction of names; areas in blue are considerations that no action is recommended at this time.

Elizabeth Solomon: How was the governance committee established? What protocol and standards? It was not in the March minutes. Elizabeth stated that she does not recall talking about who was going to serve on the committee. This is important as it affects many people. Elizabeth understands that this is just changing name, but sets a concerning precedent with the process of selecting committees. Suggests that the proposed changes be tabled and go over who is in the committee, the changes made, and the process of selecting committee.

Chairman Laskey made a motion to table the Board's vote on the Committee's recommendations. Kathy Abbott seconded the motion. The Chairman will reconvene a Governance Committee meeting that includes a member of the Advisory Council.

Special Presentations

Trustees of Reservations Waterfront Initiative: Jocelyn Forbush provided some background on Worlds End Reserve and then introduced Nick Black who is the new Waterfront Planner for the Trustees. Nick provided background on the Trustee's Boston Waterfront initiative that included current research on how to create open space along Boston's inner harbor while meeting both climate resiliency and financial sustainability goals. Four neighborhoods were studied – East Boston, Downtown, Seaport, and South Boston.

East Boston: Pierce Park Two - goal is to develop and open up the harbor in East Boston to link the Greenway and turn East Boston toward the harbor. Efforts to meet standards to prevent flooding in East Boston using storm surge solutions and creation of marshlands.

South Boston: goal to develop Dry Dock #4 as a place to serve Boston at large and provide opportunities to add programing and educational components. City of Boston has already spent funds to repair Southern Pier. The dry dock itself – instead of filling it in, they are proposing a more natural environment that youth could explore and enjoy in a parklike setting.

Fort Point Channel: a potential place to be redesigned to mitigate flooding risks. Ongoing discussions on what we can do reimagine that as area as connected open space.

Susan Gall Marsh, a member of the Trustees and has lived in East Boston provided suggestions including: Gallops Island has been closed for 17-years. Why not investigate with DCR on how to clean-up the island. It's a day use island, not meant to be used with camping and connecting it to East Boston. Think about connecting it to the park, and to the Waterfront, to promote a park partnership.

Marianne Connolly: Regulations on Gallops would be less than on the harbor front and easier to work with DCR.

Jocelyn Forbush responded by saying that this initiative is not an and/or situation, it's an open table to find opportunities and to use our resources for, or sharing our resources for.

Susan Gall Marsh also suggested that we should consider water transportation to smaller islands and expanding the summer season.

Michael asked what the next steps are.

Nick Black responded by suggesting that pieces of the project will start to move over the next 6 to 8 month in terms of planning and acquisition of sites.

Water Transportation Planning:

Alice Brown from Boston Harbor Now provided backgrounds on the Boston Harbor water transportation strategy being conducted on behalf several funders to do this study. Boston Harbor Now is managing a two-part project — the *Comprehensive Boston Harbor Water Transportation Study and Business Plans* and the *Water Transportation Strategy for the Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park* — to study expanded water transportation in greater Boston. After a competitive RFP process, Steer Davies Gleave in partnership with KPFF were selected to lead the study

The nine-month study and planning process will identify sites for new and expanded ferry service by looking at locations within the Inner Harbor, along the North and South Shores, and to the Harbor Islands. Ferry dock sites and potential routes will be analyzed by modelling potential demand, operating costs, and capital costs. The study will also include best practices for incorporating alternative clean fuel vessels and other environmentally beneficial technologies into water transportation services, and will model how water transportation can reduce CO₂ and particulate emissions resulting from riders shifting to ferries and reduce congestion on other regional transportation networks.

Stakeholder Workshops were conducted and common themes found (i.e. having a multi-park experience and a car-less experience). BHN started preference surveys to find out how people prefer to travel. Outreach strategists are handing out surveys on ferries, streets, and downtown areas. Of the people who have taken the survey – over 700 have already been to the islands and over 200 people answered based on how they would like to ferry as though they had never been on the harbor before. Contact abrown@bostonharbornow.org for presentation.

Kathy Abbott: There was criticism from past studies that we didn't cover enough of the user demand info? This study will

Boston Harbor Now Strategic Planning:

Kathy Abbott presented on the BHN strategic Planning process that they recent undertook. She stated that when BHN was first formed a little over a year ago, its focus was what it was going to keep doing in terms of its commitment to the park, climate resiliency, and the Harborwalk. It felt that it was critical to define focus and lay solid foundation for direction of new organization. We set out to do a strategic plan and received a handful of responses to the RFP. BHN asked the Consensus Building Institute and TDC to join together, to build a plan and business model to implement. The primary goals include Planning, Advocacy and Activation. At core are leading planning efforts to develop a harbor that benefits everyone; water transportation study, and a capital plan for the Park. Activate Boston Harbor Waterfront and islands through programs and facilities (public programming, strategic physical and operational improvements, and revenue generating operations). The last goal is to build and develop a sustainable organization; financially sustainable business model, three-year department plans, recruit staff and volunteer leadership.

Andrew Hargens: What standing committees do you have currently?

Kathy Abbott: policy and planning committee, finance, development, capital, park projects and operations, and governance.

Marianne Connolly asked if it hard to differentiate the legislated fundraising mandate in the Park legislation between fundraising for the two merged organizations?

Kathy Abbott: No, the combined organizations and broader scope create potential to raise the bar for overall fundraising

Kathy Abbott introduced Jack Murray as the newest hire for BHN. Jack will serve as the vice-president of park operations and partnerships.

Partnership Roundtable Updates

Chairman Laskey asked for Partnership updates and public comment:

Susan Gall Marsh asked if the federal advisory committees are still suspended by the Trump administration. And looking at the draft for the legislation – there are several areas mentioning the advisory council, and she hopes that any changes are including members of the advisory council.

Michael Creasey responded by saying that they are still suspended and there is a lack of clarity at the federal level as to why and for how long. However, we are told that the Advisory Council should go ahead and prepare for the meetings; however, no timeframe is known at this time.

Elizabeth Solomon asked a follow up question on the suspension of the advisory council - could we schedule something at the beginning of September. Has there been an additional suspension? In the meantime, is it possible for the group to meet... how do we advise the partnership council on the new legislation?

Michael Creasey responded that there was not a date for the length of the suspension, but advised that the advisory councils should prepare for meetings. No timeline given. The “advisory council” cannot advise the Partnership on issues while suspended.

Elizabeth Solomon: She would like to volunteer for the governance committee as a representative of the partnership.

Giles Parker: Elizabeth is appointed to the Partnership separate from her appointment on the advisory council so she would be eligible to serve on the Governance Committee.

Chairman Laskey, Creasey, Austin, Kathy, Solomon, as part of the governance committee

Susan Gall Marsh asked who the designated federal officer was since Giles Parker is leaving.

Michael Creasey responded that he now holds that role.

Susan Kane reported that the Park season went well, islands closed for the next two days for storms. Quality of visitor experience is exceptional. We would like the support of the Partnership on the moorings program. DCR is still working on permits for the moorings. DCR is focused on Spectacle Island structural issues on marina. View moorings as a way for recreation boating access. New position at DCR to help coordinate moorings program.

Austin Blackmon reported that the City is pushing forward for Climate Ready Boston. Moving forward by looking at where we are now to action items. New announcements Mayor will give tomorrow.

Brad Kelly reported that the US Coast Guard is focused on Hurricane Jose. Ports and waterways are clear, limited impact in the harbor and waterway. Encouraging people to tie up vessels. Pulled the dock on Boston Light to end the tourism season. Lighter year for tourism in 2017, probably because of 300th in 2016. Infrastructure issues also played a role in the lighter numbers. Introduced Commander Matthew Denning, and under his purview is Boston Light day to day operations.

Giles Parker reported that from the NPS perspective we had a great season. Stewardship Saturdays program was very successful and we introduced digital story maps that map experiences with resource information. We say an increased partnership with the Green Ambassadors program. Secured over \$600,000 for dock improvements on DCR islands.

Andrew Hargens reported on the Massport waterfront agenda. There is an event on Friday celebrating the Harbor dredging project. Tremendous event to celebrate what's going on in the harbor. Open for use is the Butler Freight Corridor and the new park began operations about two weeks ago. There is a set of eight interpretive panels about the fort, and one includes the harbor islands. Soon under construction is the ICA satellite art facility in the formally condemned East Boston ship yard, opening next June. It will be a public facility within the ship yard, bringing people in by boat. South Boston waterfront transportation center, 1500 park car garage. Possible opportunity to connect the parking space to the islands and water transportation, along with activating the area itself.

With no other comments, Chairman Laskey adjourned the meeting