

**Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Partnership Office, 408 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 217, Boston, MA**  
**Wednesday, December 2, 2009, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM**

Maureen Cavanaugh, Chair, welcomed all and members were introduced. The minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting were approved.

**Planning for the Annual Meeting**

A nominating committee was formed to identify candidates for Chair, Vice-chair, and for Advisory Council representatives to the Partnership. Pat Morss, Elizabeth Solomon and Suzanne Gall Marsh volunteered to serve on the committee.

Several members' terms are expiring. All are eligible for re-nomination. They will be contacted to see if they are interested in continuing. The Chair will call members that have not been actively participating.

Several ideas were given for speakers for the annual meeting: Lisa Brooks, Harvard University, history of Native Americans in New England; university students in a landscape architecture class working on a project focusing on the Harbor Islands; Allen Gontz, University of Massachusetts, archeological research on Rainsford Island; Joseph Bruchac, Nodakina Education Center, Abenaki storyteller and author; speakers from National Park Service (NPS) and New England Aquarium, on Citizen Science; and Department of Conservation & Recreation (DCR) on Georges Island Visitor Center.

Ideas for meeting locations were also given: University of Massachusetts–Boston; Northeastern University; Boston Children's Museum; Boston Public Library and Battery Wharf. The Steering Committee will discuss options.

**Messaging Workshop**

Louise Millet, facilitator, opened up discussion about how the Council could effectively communicate with the public about the park. She reviewed the purpose of the council, which is to make recommendations to the Partnership on issues related to park management. She said the specific task was to gather input from constituents - park users and potential park users – to come to understand the “voice of the customer”. It was suggested that it may be beneficial to put a slant on the “voice of the customer”; to perhaps change it to the “voice of the owner” as that gives the message that the public owns the park. It was thought it may help to personalize it, if someone sees the park as “their” park; they might be more likely to go out and see it.

The Council reviewed the current draft of the elevator speech. It was noted that an element of personalization was missing; perhaps add that Advisory Council members are your representatives. There was a suggestion to add to the last sentence, “We also help people make connections with the park and can represent your interests.” Also, the mission of advocating for improved public access seemed to be missing. There

was a suggestion to add text to the second sentence as follows, "...provide outstanding visitor experiences and improve public access."

There was concern the elevator speech was too academic, hard to read, and didn't flow naturally when spoken. A suggestion was made to start the approach differently, perhaps with "Have you ever been to the Harbor Islands? Can I help you get there?" It was recognized that the needs of different groups may require a different approach. Bruce Jacobson said for a message to be effective it needs to be short and succinct. It has been found that if you present more than three things at a time, the message will be lost. There was a suggestion to break down the message to three bullet points that could be used by members in their own words. Bruce, Louise, and Maureen will work to refine the message.

Louise attempted to have the group identify target audiences for the council to address. There was a suggestion to get the list of non-profit groups that have applied for subsidized tickets or any groups that have received a permit for visiting the park with their group. There was an idea for each member or interest group to contact two groups, one that had visited the islands and one that had never been, to find out about their experiences or what barriers they encountered that kept them from visiting. The council discussed how to put some structure to this process. It was recognized that the approach will be very different for the individual groups. Two teams were created to pilot the process. Charlie Norris and Karen O'Donnell will reach out to The Boston Harbor Association and John Anderson and Victor Brogna will contact the Elliot School in the North End. Bruce and Louise will work with them.

### **Ask the Superintendent**

Bruce Jacobson, NPS, responded to several questions. A summary of answers are below:

- ✧ NPS is working on compiling 2009 visitation statistics. Statistics will be discussed at an upcoming Operations Committee meeting.
- ✧ NPS funded the design for a new pier on Georges Island. NPS, DCR and Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA) are actively looking for funding for the construction of a new pier for Georges Island; a new pier will cost approximately \$22M. The whole project can be tackled in a series of phases, so improvements to the pier can happen incrementally.
- ✧ Bruce agreed that the timed ferry tickets in use this year, seemed to improve visitor experience. He said there were also improvements made with the interisland ferry system. Bruce mentioned that it is a continued struggle to fund the interisland ferry; last year DCR contributed \$175k and NPS contributed \$20k. This coming year's financial contributions are in question from both agencies, due to budget constraints.
- ✧ Bruce announced an upcoming meeting on January 12 to prioritize capital funding projects for submission to NPS.

- ✧ Bruce said the park receives feedback from visitors in a variety of ways. NPS holds a visitor experience survey once a year. DCR and BHIA have mechanisms in place for feedback to get directly to them. He said visitors can write or call the park. Also, as part of the upgrade of the park website, there will be an online comment form available.
- ✧ Bruce reported the Partnership is looking at the way it functions. He said the Planning Committee will recommend that the Partnership change the structure of having standing committees to calling committees together on an ad-hoc basis.

A member suggested incorporating Castle Island into the park because of DCR financial woes. Bruce Jacobson responded there has been no discussion of DCR relinquishing any properties.

A suggestion was made to reinstate familiarization tours for the Partners and Advisory Council members this spring.

A member suggested the Council investigate new technologies to streamline communications and perhaps reduce the amount of formal meetings.

#### **Public Comment**

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm.

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council  
12-2-09 Meeting Attendance

MEMBERS PRESENT (X)

1. John Anderson*	X
2. Jennifer Bender	
3. Victor Brogna	X
4. Maureen Cavanaugh, Chair	X
5. Theresa Czerepica	X
6. Maria Freddura*	
7. Sean Glennon	
8. Bill Hale	X
9. Mel Harris*	
10. Mary Anne Hendricks*	X
11. Rick Kasseli*	
12. Greg Ketchen	X
13. Steve Kirk	
14. Phil Lemnios	
15. Dale Linder*	
16. Rob Moir*	X
17. Chris Montgomery	X
18. Pat Morss	X
19. Charlie Norris	X
20. Karen O'Donnell*	X
21. Bill Reardon	X
22. Peter Rosen	
23. Claudia Smith-Reid	
24. Elizabeth Solomon*	X
25. Lauri Webster	
26. Matt Wolfe	X
27. Vacant Seat	
28. Vacant Seat	

\*pending member

OTHERS PRESENT

Marc Albert, NPS	
Richard Armenia, NPS	X
Kelly Fellner, NPS	
Diane Haynes, BHIA	
Bruce Jacobson, NPS	X
Carl Johnson	
Susan Kane, DCR	
Steve Marcus, FBHI	X
Suzanne Gall Marsh, FBHI	X
Jim Peters, MCIA	
Tom Powers, BHIA	
Joel Reck, BHIA	
Mary Raczko, NPS	X
Chuck Smythe, NPS	
Dawn Tesorero, NPS	
Tara Weaver, NPS	
David Weinstein, TIOBEC	

BHIA – Boston Harbor Island Alliance  
DCR – Department of Conservation and Recreation  
FBHI – Friends of the Boston Harbor Islands  
MCIA – MA Commission on Indian Affairs  
NPS – National Park Service  
TBHA – The Boston Harbor Association  
TIOBEC-Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center