

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Independence Wharf, 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA
Wednesday, September 14, 2011, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Rob Moir, Chair, opened the meeting, and welcomed all. He read a list of current vacancies on the Council. He said he hoped that the council could start engaging high school age youth, as their perspective would be very valuable to the park. Rob mentioned that Bill Hale is stepping down, and that James Martell from Peddocks Island Association is interested in a seat on the Council. He introduced Megan Glenn and Jay Schmidt who have also expressed interest. Lou Gainor requested information about the nomination process. The minutes from the June 1, 2011 meeting were approved.

Bruce Jacobson introduced Hugh Hawthorne, NPS Youth and Visitor Services Director.

Summer Review

Bruce Jacobson led the group in a review of the summer season. Members were asked to share their experiences.

The Council members quickly created a long list of happenings:

There was a notable increase in programs and events. Highlights of successful programming included:

- o Civil War 150th Commemoration, including a daily dispatch
- o DCR monthly lectures in Hull
- o Native American Festival
- o Boston Harbor Island Alliance sponsored 150 free programs
- o Let's Move Outside
- o Island Alliance's Spectacle Island Fun Run
- o Berklee Rock Concert
- o Art Encampment on Bumpkin

Several infrastructure and operations successes were noted:

- o Boston Harbor Island Pavilion was opened and well received
- o Temporary dock solution found for Georges Island (keeping island open to public)
- o Peddocks Island opened
- o DCR 2010 staffing levels maintained, and rangers were particularly accommodating
- o Long Island Head Light transferred to NPS
- o Thirty new moorings installed
- o Two gift shops opened in the park by Eastern National (Pavilion and Georges Island)

Other mentions:

- o Thompson Island broke records in numbers of youth participating in programs
- o Tribal Scholars Media Institute held on Thompson Island.
- o Mass Memories Project
- o Boston Harbor Island Alliance Gala soggy, but fun
- o National Geographic Trails Map produced
- o National Marine Educators field trip
- o OLLIE classes at UMASS Boston about the islands
- o Waterbird monitoring
- o Clam seeding on Thompson Island
- o native bee inventory and monitoring project

Council members also identified issues/problems:

Water transportation/Access/Resources

- No access on Georges for recreational boaters, a suggestion was made to utilize a temporary “camel” docking system
- Drop off fee was charged to some private boaters at Spectacle; thought it was supposed to be free
- New Spectacle marina operator’s service unclear, would be helpful to have a “dock hand” to communicate with boaters
- Ferry was often late, one member reported it was 35-45 minutes late on both legs of one trip
- No dinghies available on Georges Island
- Inadequate signage on Long Wharf
- Request for more shoulder season access
- Request for more access to Long Island, including the dock
- Visitors seen taking buckets of sea glass off of Spectacle Island

Amenities

- Jasper White Café on Georges Island ran out of food, many choices on menu were not available
- Suggestion for Jasper White to provide free docking or launch service
- Trash overloaded on Georges Island
- Need to better educate visitors on Carry-on Carry-off policy
- Need more logo items on sale in gift shop

There was discussion of all the issues, particularly about the status of Georges Island pier and the new marina operator. Tom Powers, Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA), also gave an update on park infrastructure improvements. He said Peddocks Island renovations are the fourth major undertaking since the national park’s designation and follows the opening of Spectacle Island, Georges Island improvements (Visitor Center, maintenance building, outdoor cafe and energy improvements), and the opening of the Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion on the Rose Kennedy Greenway this year. He reminded all that BHIA brought water, power, sewer, and communications lines to Peddocks Island in 2005. The next phase of construction involved demolishing unsafe buildings and stabilizing those that can still be saved. That phase is complete, and DCR and BHIA plans to provide yurt camping on the island and rehabilitate the old guardhouse into a visitor welcome center, caretaker lodging, and meeting space by next season. Construction has begun. He mentioned that Peddocks float and dock were damaged in the recent storm, forcing the early closure of the island to the public, though construction workers still have access. He said BHIA and DCR continue to search for funds to rehabilitate the chapel; it will not be included in this phase of the project.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment

