

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Partnership Office, 408 Atlantic Avenue, Suite 217, Boston, MA
Wednesday, December 7, 2011, 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
As Corrected

Bruce Jacobson, Superintendent, opened the meeting and welcomed all. The weather delayed both the Chair, and the scheduled speaker, so the agenda was re-ordered to accommodate.

Winter Program Updates

Hugh Hawthorne, NPS Youth and Visitor Services Director, gave a presentation of activities scheduled for the winter and spring. The park is not closed after the ferries stop in the fall, land-side “islands” are still accessible and special cruises are planned every month. The Veteran’s Day cruise in November was very successful, and free for participants. He invited all to the next cruise, a winter wildlife tour hosted by bird experts, and said details and reservations for the trips can be found on bostonharborislands.org.

Birds of the Boston Harbor Islands

Rob Moir, Chair, arrived and introduced Wayne Petersen, Massachusetts Audubon Director of Important Bird Areas. Wayne gave a presentation about the birds of Boston Harbor. He explained that the Boston Harbor Islands provide significant habitat to breeding and migratory birds and the park is designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA) by Massachusetts Audubon. He showed several slides of breeding birds, and briefly described monitoring projects run by NPS and Take a Second Look (TASL). Council members had many questions, many of which were about how bird populations are doing. Wayne said it varied widely from species to species and recommend they visit Mass Audubon’s website to download the most recent “State of the Birds” report.

Membership

Rob Moir, opened a discussion about the membership process of Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council. He distributed a list of current members and candidates and a comprehensive summary of the process. Rob said the membership procedures needed to be clarified, and that the council needed more opportunity to give input. The process is summarized below:

1. Council notified of vacancies and expiring member terms at a quarterly meeting.
2. Interest groups identify candidates to fill vacancies.
3. Interest groups present candidates at a quarterly meeting where recommendations also taken from the floor. Council members have an opportunity to comment on the proposed slate.
4. At the next quarterly meeting, park superintendent (Designated Federal Official for the council) announces the candidates to be recommended to the NPS Director.
5. Appointments made at the discretion of the NPS Director.

Council members discussed and—while some recognized that this could add time to the already lengthy appointment process—the council agreed to proceed with the process as described.

The following new candidates were presented to the council:

Candidate	Interest Group	Affiliation
Susannah Corona	Municipalities	Town of Winthrop
Carl Johnson	Education	Public High School Teachers
Megan Glenn	Business & Commercial	MA Oyster Project
Lou Gainor	Business & Commercial	Mass Marine Trades
Jay Schmidt	Business & Commercial	Pearson Education
James Martell	Boston Harbor Advocacy	Peddocks Island Assoc.
Victor Brogna	Community	North End Waterfront Residents Assoc.
Teresa Czerepica	Community	Mystic River Watershed Assoc.

The Advisory Council endorsed the slate as presented; there were no other recommendations made from the floor.

A Nominating Committee was formed to identify candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair elections at the March meeting. Maureen, Rob, and emeritus member Pat Morss volunteered to serve.

Bylaws Discussion

Rob Moir proposed a change to the bylaws that would allow members to serve more than two consecutive 3-year terms so as not to lose their participation. Some members expressed support of the idea, however opinions were diverse.

Elizabeth Solomon expressed concern the idea was presented as a “done deal” and asked what the impetus was for the change. Rob clarified that the intent was to bring the idea to the council for their opinion; the idea was brought because of the concern the council could prematurely lose active members that had much to contribute.

Suzanne Gall Marsh said she sat on the original Bylaws Committee during the formation of the council. She wanted to make sure people knew that the creation of the bylaws was a very thoughtful process, and membership issues were discussed at great length. She said it is very important to not become a closed, stagnant group, and to continue to encourage new people and organizations to participate.

John Anderson recommended the council proceed carefully so as not to create unnecessary work, or solve a problem that may not exist. He suggested the council designate a smaller group to review the bylaws, as it is always a good idea to review periodically. This group could take a closer look at the bylaws and report their findings and recommendations back to the council. The council agreed that more discussion was needed. It was suggested the bylaws discussion be taken up after the annual meeting.

New Business

Members suggested future meeting topics. They requested updates on the activities of the Green Action Team, the Water Transportation Committee (including the ferry schedule), and Peddocks improvements. Bruce said he hoped the Advisory Council would host a public meeting about the Peddocks project. Managers are targeting a March/April timeframe for the meeting

Public Comment

There was no further public comment.

