

Boston Harbor Islands Partnership
Meeting Minutes
WilmerHale, 60 State Street, 26th floor, Boston, MA
May 17, 2011, 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

Attendees: Maureen Cavanaugh, Rob Moir, and Charles Norris—Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council; Tom Powers—Boston Harbor Island Alliance (BHIA); James Hunt—Boston Redevelopment Authority; Antonia Pollak—City of Boston; David Cash and Karl Pastore—Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR); Bruce Jacobson—National Park Service (NPS); Peg Wheeler—The Trustees of Reservations (TTOR); CDR Nathan Knapp—United States Coast Guard (USCG).

Chair David Cash welcomed all, called the meeting to order, and announced a quorum. Partners and the audience introduced themselves. Tom Powers introduced a new Boston Harbor Island Alliance staff member, Connie Saienga, Director of Corporate and Foundation Giving. There was a motion made to approve the minutes of the March 15th meeting. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Climate Friendly Parks

Marc Albert, NPS, gave a presentation about Climate Friendly Parks Action Plan. He said the plan compliments state and City of Boston goals to reduce carbon emissions. Marc said the Partnership's action plan for Boston Harbor Islands includes a 50% reduction in carbon emissions by 2016 and an aggressive goal of becoming the first "net-0" park in the country. He gave an overview of the planned actions to meet those goals.

Eva VanAken, DCR, gave an update on the activities of the Green Action Team. She said the team is a sub-committee of the Partnership's Operations Committee and is staffed by DCR, NPS, TIOBEC, and park volunteers. She passed out a handout that listed action items for 2011. She said the team desires to produce results, and is starting with items that can be accomplished in the short term. A main focus is reducing waste on the islands. All trash has to come off and it requires lots of money and fuel to do so. It is hoped that expanding composting programs will reduce boat trips needed, and thereby reduce carbon emissions. Eva said Thompson Island expanded composting and recycling programs to their kitchen operation with an aggressive waste reduction goal and that Georges Island started a pilot Bokashi composting project, a much faster method than traditional composting methods. It is hoped that the composting program on Georges can be expanded to include food vendor operations, though it will be challenging with the types of food waste generated. Seafood should not be composted and attracts seagulls and other unwanted scavengers. Summer Shack does use compostable plates and cups. The utensils and condiment cups are not currently compostable.

Carolyn Lewenberg, TIOBEC, explained how Thompson Island incorporates the composting program into their educational programs. Youth receive information on how and why to compost and then engage in activities like separating recyclables and scraping plates and weighing the waste. Both volume and weight adds up pretty dramatically in a short time. Eva VanAken said there is a trash research day scheduled

for Georges and Spectacle where recyclables will be sorted out and trash weighed to help determine how much impact a recycling program would have on the islands.

Bruce Jacobson invited all to the grand opening of Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion on June 2. He said the Pavilion was designed to be a “net-0” facility. He reported that budget constraints called for the reduction of solar panels, only 1/3 of the panels originally planned made it into the final designs. To complete the project as planned, BHIA worked with Broadway Electric who purchased the needed panels in exchange for management of the electricity produced. David Cash said the state is working to replicate this type of public/private partnership throughout the state.

Karl Pastore suggested the action team follow up on a fluid recycling system he heard about involving Clivas to see if it any practical value for the islands.

David Cash said that in order to reach the park goal of “0-net” energy, energy generation will have to be a part of the plan. He reminded all that solar panels are installed at Georges, Spectacle, and Peddocks Island (though currently not operable on Peddocks). David said he hoped that there will be a wind-generation feasibility study developed for Peddocks Island. One of the issues the study would need to address is if wind energy production is consistent with terms of Article 97 of the state constitution. James Hunt mentioned a grant-funded windmill project that is underway at Moon Island. He also said potential park and state partnering opportunities exist on Long Island, which has plenty of roof area for more solar panels, and is near other islands and connected to the grid.

Bruce Jacobson mentioned a third windmill was added to Deer Island. He said the circular design of the new windmill is the first of its kind in the country. Bruce said MWRA used an analogy to describe the operation of this new model of windmill by comparing it to the standard windmill design by saying it was like the difference of a jet engine compared to a propeller airplane. David Cash mentioned MWRA captures power from turbines in pipelines and methane that is harvested and repurposed.

Bruce mentioned a proposed project for several windmills off the coast of Hull. He said there were early concerns about them negatively impacting the view of Boston Light, a National Historic Landmark, but that a visual impact study has shown impacts may be minimal.

A question was asked if tidal power generation was being explored. Bruce responded that it was looked at in a previous study and was not feasible at the time. He did not know how technologies may have changed since then.

David Cash asked if there were kiosks available to the public that showed photovoltaic production at Spectacle and Georges. Eva VanAken responded that there are kiosks, but they were not designed as public displays. She said that on average, 90% of the produced electricity is used.

Water Transportation

Tom Powers said higher gas prices have led to Boston's Best Cruises (BBC) and other boat companies that operate in the area to raise their fares. He noted that so far, park ferries have been spared this gas surcharge, but that BBC has raised costs \$2 a ticket on their other lines of business. He said BBC is trying to hold off increasing park ferry rates, but that Partners should be aware of the future possibility. Partners noted that a \$2 increase would have a much more substantial effect on ferry costs than it would a more expensive whale watch. Partners requested that BBC provide information on price increase as well as aggregate information regarding park ferries as a percentage of their total business costs. Tom said that BBC reported an increase of \$1 per gallon and \$1 million increase in overall gas costs for their business. He said Boston Harbor Island Alliance has a request out to BBC for more data specific to park ferries.

Susanne Gall Marsh, Volunteers and Friends of Boston Harbor Islands, asked how gas surcharges might affect the interisland shuttle. Tom Powers said BBC has not yet initiated a park fuel surcharge, and he does not have specifics.

Vivien Li, The Boston Harbor Association (TBHA), reported on a harbor-wide boat operator meeting called to address concerns about impacts of boats travelling at high speeds through significant zones in the harbor. She noted many islands are impacted, and that Spectacle Island Marina was particularly affected. Charlie Norris noted that it was a productive meeting as operators were receptive and open to discussions. He noted that operators are faced with a variety of schedule challenges through no fault of their own. For example, an LNG tanker travels through Boston every 5-10 days and shuts down harbor traffic for a half-hour to 45 minutes. This alone can have a disastrous ripple effect on a schedule throughout the day.

David Cash mentioned an electric-powered water taxi relatively new to the harbor. There was a comment that it is being piloted this year by Rows Wharf Water Taxi and operates silently, holds 12 people, and is a bit slower ride than comparably sized traditional vessels.

Financial Disclosure Reports

Bruce Jacobson reminded all that the Partnership is a federal operating committee and Partners are considered special government employees. He passed out a handout that explained what this means. He said Partners, if they have not already, will soon receive an email from Washington, DC, instructing them to fill out a financial disclosure report and take an online ethics training class. Bruce explained that these are legal requirements of serving, and Partners cannot serve or meet until these requirements are met. He said that as a government employee, he fills this out annually and that it is not overwhelming. He noted that in the past, state employees could turn in copies of the disclosures they submit to the state, but now the online federal version is the only format that is accepted.

2011 Marketing Plan

Emilie Kendall, Boston Harbor Island Alliance reported on the park marketing plan. She said the goal is to increase awareness and ferry ridership, She said they have an aggressive target to build ferry ridership to 120,000 riders in 2011. In 2010, ridership

increased 30% over 2009, and the 120,000 target for 2011 represents an increase of 15% over 2010.

Emilie said that marketing dollars are limited, and she thanked the partners for their commitment to public events, and recognized that events cannot happen without their support and assistance. She mentioned the very successful events in April.

Emilie said the marketing strategy includes targeting specific audiences, taking specific events and going deeper with them, and includes evaluations of how we are doing. She mentioned that Boston Harbor Island Alliance is producing a new public service announcement with funding from a donor. She reported that MBTA signs, and banners for the Northern Avenue Bridge and Quincy Shore Drive will happen again in 2011. She said they are working on a library pass program with BBC (buy one ticket, get one free), and that BBC is planning to run a special for half-price ferry tickets via Groupon and Living Social on certain weeks.

Antonia Pollak suggested reaching out to schools during college orientation. She also said walking clubs and mothers groups are growing increasingly popular. She offered to help Emilie make connections so that park events could be added to City of Boston's event pages and included in the city's event brochure.

Eva VanAken, DCR, commented that off-peak times are ideal for offering specials, because boats often sold out in the morning, but run half-full or less at other times of the day, particularly during the week.

Vivien Li, TBHA, suggested looking into Clear Channel donations of billboard space. She also suggested exploring cross-marketing opportunities with Camp Harborview and other city sponsored Long Island events.

Charlie Norris suggested promoting the Boston Harbor Islands Pavilion as a gateway. He said that it is not currently clear how to get there, and suggested posting an aerial map view on the website to help visitors.

Maureen Cavanaugh offered help from the Advisory Council to expand the library pass programs into the suburbs.

A suggestion was made to make connections with USO New England a very large organization.

David Cash suggested getting an article in National Geographic Magazine. Emilie said the National Geographic Trails map is complete, and did make National Geographic listing of the top 10 parks.

David Cash congratulated Island Alliance on the success of their arts programming like the popular Berklee concerts and said getting a really big name performer would be a huge draw for Georges Island. He also said he thought the sports connection was

something that could be expanded also, and invited Emilie to contact him for more specific ideas.

Advisory Council

Rob Moir, Chair, announced the upcoming meeting on June 2. He said there will be presentations by Stephanie Schorow about the story of four intrepid women who vacationed on the Great Brewster Island in July 1891 and by Dr. Lauren Nolfo-Clements about the mammals of Bumpkin Island.

Mass Memories

Suzanne Gall Marsh invited all to bring their stories and photographs to a Mass. Memories Road Show on September 17 dedicated to Boston Harbor Islands. She said the event is part of a state-wide public history project to document and archive photos and stories for future generations. Suzanne said the event is sponsored by Mass Humanities, University of Massachusetts-Boston, and Volunteers and Friends of Boston Harbor Islands. She encouraged Partners to become sponsors by helping to promote the event. Suzanne mentioned that there is no financial commitment to becoming a sponsor. She mentioned they are looking for volunteers to help staff the event.

New Business

Tom announced BHIA awarded the Spectacle Island Marina and Harbor Islands Moorings contract to Hingham Harbor Marina.

David Cash announced that the July meeting of the Partnership will be the last one at WilmerHale because the conference room floors are undergoing a year-long renovation. Stephen Olesky, Partner at WilmerHale, has sponsored the meetings here since 1997. David Cash, Chair, offered to send a thank you letter on behalf of the Partnership.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned.