

Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council
Meeting Minutes
Wilmer Hale, 60 State Street, 26th floor Boston, MA
September 29, 2014, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Elizabeth Solomon, Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed all. The minutes of the June 11, 2014, meeting were approved. Council members and audience members introduced themselves.

Bylaws Review

Elizabeth Solomon said the Council's bylaws had not been updated since the Council's origination. She said the current review process began in March. She reminded all that at the June meeting of the Council, the Bylaws Committee was tasked with providing clear recommendations for changes to the bylaws to present at this meeting. She said the current draft (attached) reflects those recommendations.

Council members went through the proposed changes line by line, and caught an additional technical error. They discussed some of the proposed changes with more depth. The proposed deletion of the paragraph that gave consequences for not attending 3 consecutive meetings was one of those discussed at greater length. It was decided that the deletion would stand. Although it was certainly expected that members attend meetings, it did not seem there was a lot of power behind the consequences. It was also thought that attendance matters could be better dealt with administratively, so it didn't have to be in the bylaws. The proposed change to the quorum had previously been discussed at great detail. The new text designated a quorum as half the voting members being present. This number will change as the number of officially appointed members changes. Currently, there are 14 appointed members, so a quorum would consist of 7 members present at a meeting. There were 7 officially appointed members at the meeting today, so quorum was met.

A motion was made to accept the changes to the bylaws as recommended by the bylaws committee with the addition of one change to the last sentence in Article VI paragraph 3, Project Manager will be changed to Superintendent. **The motion was unanimously approved.**

Park Update

Giles Parker, Superintendent gave an update on summer operations. He said visitation and camping was way up and that the number of program offerings and program participants were also up. Giles said it was the first year of operation under a new ferry contract and that the vendor Boston Harbor Cruises (BHC) had a very successful year. BHC had served the islands before, but it was many years ago. Charlie Norris added that boat capacity and marketing efforts were up and that there was incredibly good weather on the weekends. Giles said that MBTA service to the islands was expanded from Hingham and there was also increased BHC ferry service to Peddocks Island and the other camping islands. Jane Ellis asked how ferries ran without scheduled return times. Giles said there it was necessary to run sweep boats in the afternoons and by the end of the season large groups did have scheduled return times.

Giles said that the food vendor on Georges and Spectacle Islands, Rita's Catering, was new to the park this year and unfamiliar with island logistics. They faced a few management challenges, but feedback about the quality of food was good and park managers are working with them on improvements for next year.

Giles reminded all that the park ferries run through Columbus Day, public tours will be offered at least once a month throughout the winter, Stewardship Saturdays run all year, and the landside islands are open year round.

Giles said that Thompson Island completed construction of a waterfront pavilion and work on Little Brewster Island continues. The USCG invested over \$1.7 M in infrastructure improvements to Boston Light Station in preparation for the 300th Anniversary in 2016. Work is scheduled to be completed in Spring 2015.

Giles reported that Liza Sterns was hired as NPS Youth and Visitor Services Program Director and that Sarah Waterworth has taken a new job as Administrative Officer for Saint Croix National Scenic Riverway in Wisconsin. Giles reported he and other park partners went to Governors Island in New York to learn more about their partnership operations and visitor services.

A question was asked about recycling on the islands. There is no current comprehensive recycling plan. The islands do have a carry-on, carry-off policy. Lauri Webster who had worked on a waste management report for the islands spoke to some of the operational complexities and cost of moving waste and recycling around as well as dealing with compost on these small islands. Council members recommended better communications to visitors, an educational effort about the policies and what they can do to help.

Kelly Hurstak asked about the success of retail operations, and if it was a source of revenue that benefited the park. Giles said that Eastern National runs the retail operations and this year reduced locations to just Georges and Spectacle Islands. They had previously operated out of the Welcome Center on the Rose Kennedy Greenway also. He said that the contract includes a return to the park after a certain threshold, but that threshold had never been broken. Members made suggestions about items that may have more appeal to visitors. Walter Hope suggested the park look into getting some cost sharing grants through that DEP to reduce plastic bottles, perhaps to fund bottle filling stations.

Giles said that marketing efforts were strong this year, and that Boston Harbor Island Alliance's efforts to get more visibility for the park were amplified by other partner and vendor efforts, particularly in social media. Walter Hope said the park and agency logos on the ferries were well received and the park branding important. Elizabeth asked about the public awareness campaign and if outreach efforts were broad and inclusive, not just targeted to the upper middle class. Giles said that the marketing team currently is focused on outreach to families and millennials, but that a broader reach is desired.

New Business

The council members discussed next steps for the council, what role the council can take, and how members can contribute to achieving the park's goals, to expand council membership, and how to foster youth involvement. The discussion will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

Charlie Norris reported that Julie Wormser, The Boston Harbor Association (TBHA), gave a presentation to the Partnership on how climate change may impact the Boston waterfront. He updated them on work TBHA is doing on the topic.

Public Comment

There was no additional public comment.

The meeting was adjourned.

