

**Town of Boscawen
Duston Island Task Force
116 North Main Street, 4th Floor Meeting Room
DRAFT MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 10, 2026 at 5:00pm**

Present: Lorrie Carey, Denise Pouliot, Elaine Clow, Gary Waters, Josiah Morrow (*Remote*), and Katie Phelps

Excused: Mason Donovan

Guests & Advisory Members: Paul Pouliot

Virtual Attendance: Josiah Morrow was attending remotely as it was not reasonably practical that he attend in person. All votes will be by roll call vote.

Lorrie Carey called the meeting to order at 5:03pm. Roll call completed.

Approval of Prior Meeting Minutes

The Task Force members reviewed draft meeting minutes from July 13, 2026.

Motion made by Denise Pouliot to approve the meeting minutes from July 13, 2026 as presented. Seconded by Elaine Clow. Roll call vote – Lorrie – yes, Denise – yes, Elaine – yes, Gary – yes. Josiah – yes. Motion passed.

Interpretive Panels – Graphic Designer and Fabricator Selection

Chair Carey announced that Maja Design, a graphic designer and fabricator, referred by the NH Division of Historical Resources, had been secured. The panels will feature silhouette backgrounds rather than plain square designs. She confirmed the total cost for three panels, including graphic design, fabrication, project management, and delivery, is \$7,075 — favorable compared to prior research estimates. Chair Carey noted that the designer requires text and images submitted separately, and that the Division of Historical Resources must review and approve the final layouts. Chair Carey confirmed that the Town of Boscawen is leading this effort and welcomes contributions from other organizations.

Native Presence Interpretive Panel – Content Discussion

The committee engaged in an extended discussion about the content of the Native Presence panel, with significant debate over the representation of the Pennacook people. Denise Pouliot noted that there was a word limit of 200 words but over 13,000 years of history. Gary Waters expressed strong dissatisfaction with the current draft, stating it did not sufficiently highlight the Pennacook people who lived on the land. He presented a brief narrative referencing the Pennacook Confederation, their population, territory, villages, and relationship to the Abenaki. Ms. Pouliot defended the existing draft, noting it referenced Pennacook trails, the location, name translations, and a fortified village. She pointed out that some of Gary's information may be inaccurate and that the Bureau of Ethnology documented many variations. Paul Pouliot provided historical context, explaining that "Abenaki" and "Pennacook" are largely interchangeable terms referring to the same people, shaped by colonial documentation and Jesuit records. He referenced scholars such as David Stewart Smith and Lisa Brooks, and noted the matriarchal societal

structure often overlooked in historical narratives. Mr. Waters insisted that the opening sentence should explicitly state that the Pennacook lived, hunted, fished, and farmed on this land for millennia. Chair Carey proposed restructuring the paragraph to open with "The Pennacooks lived here on this land, hunting, fishing, and farming for millennia." Elaine Clow stated that she was generally satisfied with the original draft but acknowledged the complexity of the history. Mr. Pouliot suggested that the term "Abenaki" could be replaced entirely with "Pennacook" throughout the panel without loss of accuracy, and offered to write a sidebar explaining the etymology of "Abenaki/Wabanaki." Mr. Waters objected to the paragraph referencing major battles, preferring to focus on villages rather than warfare. Ms. Pouliot disagreed with removing the battle reference, arguing it demonstrated the Pennacook's civility and their defense of their homeland against the Haudenosaunee (Mohawk). Mr. Pouliot explained that the battles with the Haudenosaunee, while significant, also weakened the Pennacook as colonial pressures increased, illustrating the complexity of the period. Chair Carey proposed a compromise to shorten the battle paragraph rather than remove it entirely, and to add the farming/hunting/fishing language into the second paragraph. Ms. Pouliot suggested inserting "Hunting and fishing occurred along the Merrimack, where vast gardens of corn, beans, squash, and sunchokes were grown." Chair Carey confirmed that the committee agreed to restructure the opening sentence and add the farming/hunting/fishing language, keeping the panel within approximately 200 words. She noted that all sources must be cited and suggested QR codes could link to additional information, including resources at the Boscawen Historical Society and the indigenousnh.com research collaborative. Ms. Clow confirmed that the Boscawen Historical Society has relevant displays and documentation that could be referenced.

Native Presence Panel – Photographs and Visual Content

The committee discussed what images to use for the Native Presence panel, given the absence of photography from the relevant historical period. Rodriguez artwork and a village scene illustration will be explored as image options. Image sources must be documented and provided to the designer.

Hannah Duston Panel Revisions

Josiah Morrow reported on changes made to the Hannah Duston panel following the previous meeting's feedback. He confirmed he had shared the previous meeting's discussion with the executive committee. The only change the Dustin Family Association was willing to make was a typographical correction regarding the numbering of women and children for consistency. Chair Carey confirmed that the source citation would be the Dustin Family Association. Mr. Pouliot raised a question about whether it was accurate to refer to "two Native families," noting this may be speculative based on headcount alone. Mr. Morrow acknowledged uncertainty and agreed to check available records. Mr. Pouliot also raised a question about how Samuel Lennardson came to be with the party from Haverhill and noted timeline inconsistencies. It was noted that the "two families" reference was not a critical issue and would not affect the vote.

Elaine Clow made a motion to approve the updated Hannah Duston panel language, seconded by Gary Waters. Roll call vote – Lorrie – yes, Denise – yes, Elaine – yes, Gary – yes. Josiah – yes. Motion passed.

Hannah Duston Panel – Visual Content

Chair Carey asked Mr. Morrow about available photographs or images for the panel. He noted that they had not yet sourced images and finding three images may be difficult. Chair Carey suggested using two images from the Dustin Family Association and one photograph of the Boscawen monument, potentially including a photo with a train in the background to tie into Commercial Street.

Historical Marker Language and Grid Formatting

The committee briefly reviewed the updated historical marker language and discussed the challenge of fitting it into the state's required grid format. Katie Phelps confirmed that the updated marker language for option four incorporated changes from the last meeting: changing "native" to "indigenous" and adding "then" after "and her midwife." Ms. Pouliot noted she had attempted to fit the text into the grid but found it difficult and stopped to avoid inadvertently altering the language. Mr. Morrow agreed to attempt fitting the text into the grid, acknowledging it would be his first attempt and would take a few weeks given his busy schedule. Chair Carey clarified there is no urgent deadline for the historical marker.

Panel Design – Visual Style and Silhouette Backgrounds

Chair Carey shared examples from Maja Design's portfolio to illustrate the visual style options for the panels. Examples from the designer's portfolio featured a panel with a 3D cutout silhouette extending beyond the panel border. Chair Carey suggested the mill district panels could feature a silhouette of the Commercial Street mills. Ms. Pouliot proposed a collage concept progressing from a canoe to floating logs, the Hannah Duston monument with a train, and industrial buildings — representing the timeline of the area's history. The designer will be provided with the narrative content and will propose layout options, including silhouette or cutout designs. The collage/timeline concept will be shared with the designer as a suggestion.

Next Meeting Date

The committee discussed scheduling the next meeting to finalize the Native Presence panel. Urgency was noted due to the EPA grant deadline of September 30th. TA Phelps proposed meeting on Monday August 31st at 6:00 PM. Attendees confirmed availability.

Future Plans – Site Development, Events, and Public Engagement

The committee discussed longer-term ideas for developing the island site and engaging the public. The question of panel placement and whether Boscawen owns the land near the road break at the island entrance was discussed. Additional maps have been requested. Chair Carey suggested future Conservation Corps volunteer cleanup of the wooded back section of the island, potentially next year, coordinating with Concord's development on their side of the river. Ms. Clow said that the Boscawen Historical Society previously worked with the Conservation Corps to clean up the area and that Ben Wilson was the contact. Chair Carey proposed partnering with the Penacook Historical Society for reenactments and living history events, referencing similar efforts by the Pentacook Historical Society on their side of the river. Ms. Pouliot suggested a bronze canoe sculpture at the waterfront, designed to withstand flooding and positioned at the average high watermark, to serve as an interactive, selfie-friendly feature. A school art panel project for the railroad bridge was proposed, engaging students in creating weatherproof panels about local history to deter vandalism and build community connection. Mr. Pouliot supported

the school project idea, referencing a similar successful project in Kittery involving the Piscataqua and the shipyard.

Action Items

- Revise the Native Presence panel draft based on discussions and email to all committee members for review before the next meeting.
- Provide source documentation to the designer for all text and photographs/illustrations.
- Attempt to fit the historical marker language into the state grid format.
- Source two images/photographs for the Dustin Garrison House Association panel.
- Inquire with the Dustin Family Association about whether a historical website or resource page can be created or linked for the QR code.
- Confirm panel placement location.

Denise Pouliot made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:22pm, seconded by Josiah Morrow. Roll call vote – Lorrie – yes, Denise – yes, Elaine – yes, Gary – yes. Josiah – yes. Motion passed.

Next Meeting: Monday, August 31, 2026 at 6:00pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by Katie Phelps