

BY ALENA KUZUB | December 6, 2021

## COLLABORATION IS THE KEY AT KING'S BEACH



State Rep. Lori Ehrlich (Spenser R. Hasak)

LYNN — The \$5.3 million of funding secured for King's Beach in the American Rescue Plan Act is a result of close collaboration between state Rep. Lori Ehrlich (D-Marblehead) and Sen. Brendan Crighton (D-Lynn).

Ehrlich said that she and Crighton worked together writing amendments to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which was passed by the Massachusetts legislature on Dec. 3. They were both aimed at solving the funding part of the problem, Ehrlich said.

"Which is what usually holds up progress," said Ehrlich.

As a result, Ehrlich and Crighton were able to secure \$5.3 million to be shared between Lynn and Swampscott. Each community will receive \$2.5 million. Swampscott will receive an additional \$200,000 for the replacement of pump stations and the Lynn Water & Sewer Commission (LWSC) will be able to spend \$100,000 to investigate sources of pollution on Lynn's side — secured in the Massachusetts House of Representatives on Nov. 1.

"It is a good start. I am really proud to bring this funding forward," said Ehrlich, adding that her grandmother used to live near the beach.

She said the pressure over the situation at King's Beach with periodically high bacteria counts, sewer overflows and shutdowns has been mounting for several years, with community groups calling for solutions.

"It is just not safe," said Ehrlich, who understands that the situation needs a broad complex infrastructure solution. She said more ARPA money will be coming in the near future.

Swampscott Town Administrator Sean Fitzgerald said the town is grateful to the state delegation for the funding, as the

situation at King's Beach is the biggest environmental priority of the region. He views these funds as proof that North Shore communities are starting to amplify their voices as a region.

Fitzgerald said the situation at King's Beach is not a town or city problem; it is a regional problem that needs to be tackled collectively, with strong cooperation between the local, state and federal government.

"This is the beginning of a long march," said Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald is hoping the extra \$5 million secured by the legislators in ARPA this time will help to strategize priorities for how both Lynn and Swampscott can work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and get the type of investments that will fix the situation.

He estimated that Swampscott will need to invest about \$20 million more in addition to the \$12 million spent since 2015 to repair the remainder of the town's sewer system that may influence water quality on King's Beach, which he expressed in a Sept. 23 letter to Kathleen A. Theoharides, secretary of energy and environmental affairs.

"We really need Congressman Moulton's support and support from the federal government's Water Resources Act to really get the significant funding to tackle these environmental needs," said Fitzgerald. "It is an incredible resource area and it is so important that this generation solves the problem."

Meanwhile, LWSC has been working with a private company, Environmental Partners, on updating its Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination (IDDE) Plan and conducting a search for illicit-discharge sources, which should be completed in February 2022.

In October 2021, Daniel O'Neill, executive director of LWSC, said that all of the city's sewage waste goes directly to the LWSC plant on Circle Avenue, so the raw sewage from Lynn does not end up at the beach. He also laid out three possible alternatives in a letter to the state delegation, on how the situation at King's Beach could be tackled.

Among the solutions was a new combined Lynn/Swampscott outfall-piping system that would extend the pipeline approximately 12 miles into the ocean and cost \$10 million to \$15 million; a new small chlorination/dechlorination facility system to intermittently dose the effluent discharge during certain flow conditions at a cost of \$3 million to \$8 million; or a complete sewer-rehabilitation program, which would include repairing and replacing any pipelines within the tributary area to King's Beach and require \$15 million to \$20 million of funding.