

EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES OF HEARINGS

Lynn and Nahant – August 2, 2006

Commission Co-Chair, Representative Anthony Petruccelli opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, explaining the purpose of the Commission and describing the Commission's afternoon tour of Nahant Beach. He said he looked forward to the end of the process, and giving a report to the Senate President and the House Speaker with the Commission's recommendations. He then introduced the Commissioners who were present. Senator Thomas McGee noted that many beaches in the area have unique challenges and that the Commission's goal was to understand both regional and local issues at the beaches.

Panel 1 – Elected Officials

Lynn Mayor Edward Clancy Jr. explained that due to the socio-economic conditions in Lynn many residents cannot vacation in Maine or Cape Cod. He said that therefore the local beaches are a necessity, not a luxury, and additional resources are needed in order to maintain them. He criticized the current administration's neglect of the beaches and asked that the Commission establish a record of that neglect. Representative Steven Walsh discussed the Lynn Shore Drive restoration as a strong model for other work that could happen on the beaches. He also mentioned that algae cleanup has been improving odor. He then explained the public safety hazard posed by the Nahant Causeway, which is reduced to only one lane in heavy rain, and also that Nahant had to lend its public safety squads to DCR during the summer, leaving the town without coverage. He discussed the lack of resources and funding available, and mentioned that there had been no bathroom on the beach for six years.

Richie Lombard of the Nahant Board of Selectmen continued the discussion of the Nahant Causeway, explaining that the Causeway is undermined and the drainage systems are gone. He also described a few accidents that could have resulted in deaths and stated that Nahant, the smallest town in Massachusetts, cannot fix the Causeway, and that the state should be fixing it instead. Senator McGee remarked that the Causeway and the entire beach are part of an ongoing discussion about capital improvements. Nahant Selectman Mike Manning, went on to explain the town's interest in managing parking along the Causeway, and resistance from DCR. He also described a lack of first aid kits, drinkable water and sanitary facilities on the beach. He suggested that simple changes could be made with great effect, such as emptying trash barrels in the evening instead of the morning. He also suggested that visual inspection would be a better strategy than scheduled clean-ups.

Panel 2 – Public Safety

Nahant Police Chief William Waters reiterated that the Nahant Causeway is a disgrace from a public safety perspective, that the road is obstructed by snow in the winter and water in the summer, and that the Nahant rotary is subject to severe flooding. Sergeant Edward Nardone of the Lynn Police said that the Lynn Police Department enjoys a strong working relationship with both the Nahant Police and the State Police, and that the only public safety issues in regards to the beaches in Lynn are residual traffic problems at rush hour.

Major Kevin Kelly of the State introduced himself and said that he has jurisdiction over all of the beaches from Winthrop to Hampton Beach. He described several issues that were raised at a Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beaches meeting in April, and how he dealt with them. These issues included truck traffic on Lynn Shore Drive, and pedestrian and crosswalk safety. Major Kelly described responses to both issues which improved the situation. He also described a stabbing on July 3rd at Red Rock, and the police response that

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

followed. He concluded by noting that for each 4th of July thousands of people come to enjoy the wonderful beaches, and that he personally considers them a part of his home.

Panel 3 – Community

Robert Tucker, president of Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beaches began by describing his organization and its history. He described a strong partnership with DCR which had resulted in a landscaping contract for the beach, a summer concert series, and a total of \$11 million of improvements put into the beach. He also expressed frustration with the recent reduction in DCR's budget and staff, and disappointment that a commitment had not been made to maintain the beach after so much money was put into improving it. Kip Becker of Boston University asked about the structure and budget of the Friends, and Mr. Tucker replied that funding came from membership fees and sponsors, and that their budget was about \$10,000.

Michael O'Callaghan, owner of the Tides Restaurant on Nahant Beach agreed with everything said before him, but pointed out that there was no one clearly in charge of the beach. He also remarked that a new look needs to be taken at the beach, and that he hoped the Commission would actually do something with their findings. He also mentioned that workers from DCR do the best that they can, but that they have to use failing equipment.

After the testimony, Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay introduced himself and explained that the Commission wanted to hear both the good things about the beach as well as the bad. He introduced David Spillane of Goody Clancy, who explained the procedure for the breakout sessions. The meeting attendees then separated into two discussion groups.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After breaking into groups, each person was asked to write down three things that they loved about the beaches, and three things that they thought were problems. After the groups reconvened, representatives from each group presented the sum of all their group's comments.

For positive comments, the groups reported that the beaches provide a lot of access for a lot of people, that the police provide a safe environment, that the environment and habitat were enjoyable and that the bike paths were great. They also mentioned that they liked the community involvement and programming, partnerships with DCR, the visual aesthetics of the beach, clean water and reduced algae. Challenges mentioned included traffic, a lack of a master plan, maintenance, dogs on King's Beach, trash collection times, and lack of rule enforcement. They mentioned that King's beach was closed for two weeks due to bacteria, and had no available bathrooms. They added that there is a lack of public outreach about available programming and resources, that the Ward bathhouse was a great facility with lots of potential but now remains closed, that there should be more visible lifeguards, that there were no public bathrooms and that there should be a better cleanup of the beaches.

Mark Cullinan and Jerry Lambert from DCR explained that the algae buildup on the beach hinders the raking trucks, which in turn limits some aspects of the regular beach cleaning.

Bruce Berman pointed out that the Commissioners are volunteers, that the Massachusetts Legislature has approved funding to pay the Commission's consultants and technical staff, and that Save the Harbor has leveraged the Commonwealth's funds by securing outside funding to support its staff time. He said that the Commission would complete 8 meetings by the end of the first week in September, and asked attendees to

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

come to a second meeting to review the data collected. He closed the meeting by saying that Commission had been asked to come forward with short, medium and long term suggestions, and then to present them to the legislature to be considered in the state budget process.

Revere – June 28, 2006

Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein opened the meeting by thanking the attendees for coming, by introducing the members of the Commission, and by thanking Save the Harbor/Save the Bay for the work they've done on the beach and for their help leading the Commission's inquiry. Senator Jack Hart, Commission co-chair, stated that the Commission's work is extremely important, and that they were here and to come up with real solutions for the problems that face our beaches today. Representative Anthony Petruccelli, Commission co-chair, explained the evening's schedule: that there would be a series of panels testifying made up of elected officials, public safety officials, businesses and non-profits, and that following the testimony the audience would break into groups for facilitated discussions on what is good and bad on Revere Beach, and in what direction the Commission should be working. Senator McGee also spoke, saying that he knew everyone in attendance was there because they felt strongly that the available resources were not being used to their fullest potential, and that everyone's comments were important to the Commission. Jackie Woods from Representative Robert DeLeo's office read a statement on behalf of the Representative, saying he had deep appreciation for the work of the Commission, and that he hoped that the legislators, non-profits, and business leaders could work together to help maintain these fantastic resources.

Panel 1 – Elected Officials

Mayor Tom Ambrosino opened the testimony by saying that Revere Beach should be able to serve as a model throughout the Commission's inquiry, as the city has used productive partnerships with DCR and the Revere Police to make significant improvements in maintenance and public safety. He said the biggest needs of the beach are financial, and that other needs such as improved maintenance and sand sifting all trace back to the availability of resources. He added that the MBTA parking lots generate revenue for the city, and that this model could be replicated through paid parking meters along Revere Beach Boulevard, and in other beach communities.

A number of Revere City Councilors and other local officials spoke, and added comments about traffic and gridlock on the boulevard being an issue, especially from city-goers using the boulevard to park. A number of councilors mentioned the sand blowing over the wall and onto the street, the poor quality of the sand, the need for a sanitizer, the trash on the beach, the hope that local companies would be permitted to bid on landscaping on the beach, the prevalence gangs on the beach, and the need to preserve Revere Beach as a beautiful national landmark. The potential for additional revenue to be raised from paid parking in lots and along the Boulevard was also repeated. Representative Reinstein added that forming the Revere Beach Partnership a few years ago was a positive step, and that many of the initial goals set forth by the Partnership had been met.

Panel 2 – Public Safety

Representatives from the Revere Police Department and the State Police spoke about public safety on the beach. They explained the support they give the beach in the form of extra patrols during special events, an effective unit that deals specifically with gangs, and the extensive use of plain clothes officers on the beach. They said one of the challenges they face is that many officers already work overtime, and though they'd like to send more officers to the beach to create more visibility for the police force, they can't. They added

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

that if the police received some additional revenue from the beach, they would be able to provide more resources to keep the beach safe.

Panel 3 – Non-Profits

Representatives from Revere Cares, the Revere Beautification Committee, and the Revere Beach Partnership spoke next about the success of the youth kayaking and fishing programs, the sandcastle event, the concerts, the winter “passion plunge”, and other efforts to bring families down to the beach. They also spoke about challenges along the beach including crime and drug use taking place around the MBTA station, trash along the beach (though Kelly’s Roast Beef was specifically applauded for their efforts to keep the beach clean), the unsanitary and inadequate public restrooms, the lack of lighting, broken water fountains, the need for the pavilions to be repainted, and the need for more police.

Panel 4 – Business Community

Next, the developer of a residential project on the beach and the owner of a beachside deli/ice cream shop gave their different takes on issues affecting the business community. The developer expressed concern over noise on the beach late at night because there is no curfew for cars on the Boulevard, and suggested that a “quiet zone” or curfew might help. The deli/ice cream shop owner said if a curfew was considered, to remember that local businesses make a lot of their revenue at night. She also spoke about the need for area-based permits for beach vendors, to reduce competition with existing vendors.

After the panels finished testifying, the Revere Harbormaster stated that the two biggest problems were the poor water quality resulting from discharge from the Lynn treatment plant, and the sand from Revere Beach that drifts into the Point of Pines River and has to be continually dredged.

Chairman Hart then introduced the consulting team that would be assisting the Commission in its work: Bruce Berman and Patty Foley from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and David Spillane from Goody Clancy. Berman and Spillane explained that it was important to hear from everyone who came to the hearing, and that we would do so through facilitated discussions in breakout groups. Attendees then broke into two groups for discussions.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After breaking into groups, each person was asked to write down three things about Revere Beach that were successful today, and three things about Revere Beach that could be improved. Most of the public comments fell into three broad categories: programming, maintenance, and public safety (including traffic and noise). For a detailed breakout of each of the public comments, see *Revere Public Discussion Spreadsheet*.

After the groups reconvened, representatives from each group reported back on the themes of the discussion. In terms of successes, the groups were pleased with the results achieved by the Revere Beach Partnership and programming such as the sandcastle event, they also appreciated details such as the trash barrels maintained by Kelly’s and the landscaping along the beach. In terms of improvements to the beach, the groups reported that they want existing laws to be enforced, and improvements in traffic, maintenance, parking, crime, and noise.

Chairmen Petruccelli and Hart closed the meeting by thanking everyone for their input, and telling the group that their recommendations will be taken seriously as the Commission continues its work through the

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

summer, and that the Commission would take action to develop new revenue sources and make Revere Beach one of the best beaches in the region.

Winthrop – August 7, 2006

Commission Co-Chair Representative Anthony Petruccelli opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining why the Commission was formed, and the Commission's drive to produce results on the beaches. Commission Co-Chair Senator Jack Hart described the Commission's commitment to treating issues seriously and to make recommendations for solutions. Co-Chairman Petruccelli then introduced the Commissioners who were present. Representative Robert DeLeo noted that while he expected much of the evening's discussion to focus on the beach restoration, that he knew there were other concerns as well. He also expressed enthusiasm for the Commission and its work, and for the consulting team from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. He also noted that the issues in the area have shifted from poor water quality to poor condition of the beaches.

Testimony – Town Councilors

Winthrop Town Councilor Thomas Reilly stated that the beaches have deteriorated because there was no need to spend money on them while water quality was poor. He added that the town was trying to explore the potential of the Shore Drive neighborhood. Winthrop Town Councilor Joe Ferrino said that the town had been fighting for an extended period of time for control of Winthrop beach because DCR was not performing cleanups on a regular basis. He described complaints from constituents regarding trash and filth buildup. He also stated concern that the improvements under the Back to the Beaches program would not be completed because there was not enough money. Winthrop Town Councilor Nick DeVento added that he felt the Winthrop beaches had always been secondary to Revere in terms of safety and security resources.

Co-Chairman Hart then introduced Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, who in turn introduced David Spillane of Goody Clancy. They explained that the Commission wanted to document both the things attendees loved about the beaches, and also their concerns. They also mentioned that written testimony and concerns would be accepted by Save the Harbor through Labor Day. Bruce Berman had everyone write down their favorite thing about the beaches as a warm-up, and then the meeting separated into two groups for about 45 minutes.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After breaking into groups, each person was asked to write down three things that they loved about the beaches and three things that they were concerned about. After the discussion groups came to a close, representatives from each group presented the entire group's comments.

For positive comments, the groups reported that the beaches were very close to neighbors and townspeople, they're free, they make people feel a part of a community, and people can walk along the shoreline. They also said that the sunrises, smells, mornings, afternoons, evenings and storms were all wonderful to experience on the beach, that the State Police patrols have been improving, that there were cleanups in the spring, and that there was an American flag flying from the breakers, which were achievements in and of themselves. Concerns included the lack of a maintenance schedule, snow removal from the sidewalks, no shelter or seating on the beach, poor drainage leading to bug problems and sand erosion. Other concerns included a need for more trash barrels, better dog enforcement, badly broken sidewalk, a lack of businesses, ongoing damage from storms, and a lack of maintenance of improvements. Suggestions and requests

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

included amenities such as water fountains, a bathhouse, swimming lessons and occasional visits from a ranger to teach about the tide pool and to treat the beach more like a park.

Discussion broke out regarding dog enforcement on the beach, and Co-Chairman Jack Hart asked Joseph Orfant of DCR to inquire about doggie-bag dispensers. Options for enforcement, such as more funding for the town dog-catcher or a dog owners' committee were also discussed. Co-Chairman Hart also agreed to have the American flag on the breakers replaced. Joseph Orfant also noted that many of the amenities requested were already a part of the Back to the Beaches program.

Irvin Goldstein, an attendee, inquired if there was enough money to take care of the concerns. Co-Chairman Hart explained that the Commission would be making fiscal recommendations as a part of their report, and that they were putting their reputations on the line to work out solutions. Representative DeLeo stated that money was not going to be a problem for the Back to the Beaches program. Patricia Foley of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay added that the Commission was in the process of consulting an accounting firm to provide analysis of current expenditures. Deb McCadden mentioned a concern about Short Beach being ignored. Irvin Goldstein also suggested that increased news coverage would help the situation.

Co-Chairman Hart closed the meeting by inviting everyone present to attend a meeting later in the fall to discuss the report created by the Commission, and thanking everyone for coming.

East Boston – July 18, 2006

Representative and Commission co-chair Anthony Petrucci opened the meeting by thanking the attendees for coming, by introducing the members of the Commission and giving an overview of the history of the Commission. He then explained the evening's schedule: that there would be a brief testimony from police officers and the Constitution Beach Association, and then following that the audience would split into two groups in order to allow everyone to communicate their ideas. Representative Petrucci also mentioned that after all the data was accumulated it would be summed up in a report. Senator Jack Hart, Commission co-chair, explained how important and serious the work of the Commission is, and that the Commission would take the audience seriously on issues such as maintenance, parking, and programmatic issues. City Councilor Salvatore LaMattina discussed his personal investment in the beaches in East Boston, and mentioned both areas of concern such as Logan Airport and exciting developments such as new bathhouses.

Panel 1 – Public Safety

Representatives from the Boston Police Department and the State Police spoke about public safety in the neighborhood and on the beach. Captain Cunningham described an incident in 2005 where a man was assaulted by a group of teenagers after confronting them about noisy behavior. He described how a zero-tolerance drinking and no trespassing policy was the result, and that so far this summer it has been relatively calm. He added that there are still problems with vandalism and shootings and that both the Boston Police and State Police are short handed. The State Police representatives discussed how difficult it is to keep kids off the beach, and adults as well. They also discussed the possibility of community involvement to give the kids something else to do. They also brought up the need for additional signage regarding trespassing and drinking, and improved lighting.

The issue of closing the beach at night to pedestrians was raised, and Lt. Mills of the State Police asserted that the closing of the beach after dusk was a DCR policy. Councilor LaMattina suggested that the policy

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

was unfair to the neighborhood, and Senator Hart described the closure to cars only at a beach in South Boston as an alternative solution.

Councilor LaMattina then raised the issue of graffiti and how long it remained before being repainted was raised. The State Police replied that they take note of it, but are not required to report it to DCR, who is responsible for the maintenance of the beach. Carol Haney of Revere suggested that there was special paint designed to allow graffiti to be washed off which could be used.

Panel 2 – Constitution Beach Association

Edward Deveau opened for the Constitution Beach Association (CBA) and explained that the mission of the CBA is to approach issues such as cleanliness and maintenance. He said that grass mowing and trash collection have been improving, but are not yet sufficient. He also called for a comprehensive policing initiative to reduce neighborhood disruption from groups of teenagers in order to make the beach more family safe. He also described concerns about the detrimental environmental effects of Logan Airport.

Wendy Zinn continued for the CBA, describing the poor upkeep of the playground which is unsafe for children and the free lunch program during the summer which takes place at the gazebo. She further described the condition of the gazebo as excessively undesirable, and that programs such as her own in which local youth become invested can reduce tagging and other disruptive activity.

Deveau also mentioned that maintenance was infrequent and in certain cases only took place after something became an eyesore.

After the testimony, Senator Hart reiterated that the commission wanted to hear opinions in order to make a strong case for improvements, but not necessarily to assign blame. Carol Haney added that Mr. Lambert from the DCR was very cooperative, and that the problem is money and equipment. Paul Grogan of The Boston Foundation inquired about standards for maintenance, and Representative Petrucci replied that there were none. Councilor LaMattina suggested that a security and maintenance agreement might be necessary for Constitution Beach.

Chairman Petrucci then introduced Bruce Berman, who explained how important it was to hear from attendees both what they liked and what they disliked about the beach, and then described how two discussion groups would facilitate that process.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After breaking into groups, each person was asked to write down three things that they loved about Constitution Beach, and three things that they thought were problems. Most of the public comments fell into three public categories: public safety, maintenance, and environmental concerns.

After the groups reconvened, representatives from each group presented the sum of all their group's comments. For positive comments, the groups reported that the beach during the day was very family friendly, the lifeguards were excellent, the new bathhouse facilities were sufficient and that the water quality had improved. Problems mentioned included public safety, trash and dog waste, negative impact of airport fumes, a sinkhole at a broken pipe which had not yet been fixed, and poor sand quality, with emphasis on public safety and dogs.

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

Quincy City Councilor Doug Gutro thanked the attendees for their input, commenting that the hearing had been very enlightening to him, and that the Commission was a unique opportunity to create the next generation of improvements to the beaches. Chairman Petruccelli then reiterated that every single idea was being considered, and Bruce Berman closed the meeting by asking attendees to come to a second gathering later in the summer to ensure that their ideas were included as the Commission proceeded forward.

South Boston – August 9, 2006

Commission Co-Chair Senator Jack Hart opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and explaining the background of the Commission. He explained that the Commission wanted to hear about the pluses and minuses about each beach, and briefly described the report that the Commission would generate after the hearings. He also mentioned that the South Boston beaches were looking nice, but that there was still room for improvement. He then introduced the Commissioners who were present. He also recognized Karl Pastore of DCR, the regional director from South Boston to Hull, and explained the format of the evening. He then opened the floor for public testimony.

Public Testimony

John Muller spoke about the poor morale and equipment of DCR, saying that they are understaffed and use old and/or failing equipment. He specifically criticized the use of temporary help instead of replacing retiring personnel. Co-Chairman Hart mentioned that \$17 million was granted to DCR for their operational budget as a first step in improving deteriorating performance. Mary Devlin raised an issue about the lifeguards' managers being maintenance staff, and Karl Pastore clarified the management structure for the lifeguards, explaining the need for young lifeguards to be overseen by adults in addition to head lifeguards.

Francis Collins suggested charging for parking in order to generate revenue for additional maintenance, and suggested that solar-powered trash compactors currently being tested by the city of Boston might be a good investment. He also described websites with inaccurate information on parking locations and. Vivien Li of The Boston Harbor Association stated that the water quality and facilities have improved tremendously thanks to the Back to the Beaches program. She also described parking challenges and suggested that people should be encouraged to travel to the beach by T.

Commissioner Daniel O'Connell mentioned the existing problem of revenue generated at state beaches going into the general state fund, and Commissioner and Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein stated that special legislation is required to change that. Co-Chairman Hart clarified that this issue is specific to state-owned beaches.

Thomas Foley said that the trash barrels are not visible from the beach due to the high grass, which encouraged people to litter. Karl Pastore explained that he would not place barrels on the beach itself because the trash would end up in the water. Jim Donovan of Friends of South Boston Harbor mentioned that much of the trash is generated from Sullivan's, and that most of the trash barrels were concentrated there, not along the beach. Nichole Mikshenas said that recent funding cuts have negatively impacted the condition of the beach, and that lifeguards are now responsible for picking up trash.

Another resident discussed both the difficulty of crossing the mud flats to reach the water barefoot at low tide, and the scarcity of parking for both the beaches and Columbus Park across the street. A young woman also raised the issue of water quality, which, despite improvements, remains unclear to the public. She suggested that the swimming advisory system be explained to the public. Another woman remarked that the

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

boardwalk as it exists currently was nice, but only accessible at the ends, and suggested that stairs or ramps be installed at intermediate points for better access.

Alanna Devlin described an incident from this year where she, as a head lifeguard, discovered a lifeguard who had been hired with faked records of lifeguard training and CPR certification, and who could not swim. She stated that she then had all of the lifeguards drill to test their skills, and that the next day she was reprimanded by other head lifeguards, and on the following day she was informed by her manager that she would no longer be a head lifeguard on the weekends. She also stated that two of the head lifeguards had given out false CPR cards. Karl Pastore said that he didn't have enough information about the incident, and agreed to investigate further with Co-Chairman Hart.

Co-Chairman Hart then introduced Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, who in turn introduced Larissa Brown of Goody Clancy. He then explained the format of the breakout sessions, asking attendees to write down three things they like about the beach and three things they would like to see changed.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After splitting into two groups, each person was asked to write down their ideas on individual post-it notes, which were then organized and presented by representatives of each group.

For positive comments, the groups reported that they were pleased with the new bathhouse, water quality improvements, the accessibility of the beach to the South Boston neighborhood, the renovated Mother's Rest, and the diversity of people, ages and uses at the beach. They also mentioned that they liked open water swims held by groups such as Save the Harbor, the harbor walk, and the view of the harbor islands. Challenges mentioned included insufficient lifeguard coverage, scarcity of trash barrels and inconsistent barrel pickup, poor enforcement of beach rules, very poor handicapped accessibility, and insufficient parking. They also mentioned poor pedestrian safety, a need for programming at the beach, scarce vegetation leading to loose sand and erosion, poor and confusing water quality testing, and a lack of personal responsibility and beach etiquette.

Co-Chairman Hart and Bruce Berman explained the current 24-hour testing system where the advisory reflects the previous day's sample, and mentioned a 3-4 hour test currently in development. Co-Chairman Hart then explained that the Commission would make recommendations for the short and long term, in the areas of maintenance, programming, and capital improvements. He then invited everyone to a second meeting in the fall to review the report created by the Commission, and closed the meeting by thanking everyone for coming.

Dorchester – August 10, 2006

Commission Co-Chair Senator Jack Hart opened the meeting by thanking attendees for coming and explaining the history of the Commission. He mentioned the areas already visited, and stated that the Commission was very real, and was going to produce real results. He then introduced the Commissioners who were present, acknowledged other distinguished attendees, and thanked the Yacht Club for hosting the meeting. He then invited public testimony.

Public Testimony

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

William Lynch asked that reason for closing the beaches be explained clearly, and also requested that the report created by the Commission be written in large print and plain English. Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay responded by describing some of the complexities of the existing water quality testing system, and said that although the harbor cleanup had made remarkable improvements in the last 20 years more work remained to be done. Co-Chairman Hart added that the cleanup of the water allows focus to shift to improving the beaches abutting the water. Joe Orfant of DCR then described capital improvements made in Dorchester: a total investment of \$3.5 million which restored the bathing beach, seawall, promenade, and installed playgrounds at Savin Hill and Tenean Beaches.

John Moran of Savin Hill raised concerns about the loss of water due to siltation, at least in part due to the construction of UMass Boston, and stated that the natural shoreline was being turned into a big marsh. He added that drains on the expressway did not function properly, and that they drained untreated storm water directly into the bay. He also mentioned the growth of jimson weed, a toxic hallucinogenic plant, and abusive treatment of landscaping work by maintenance staff. Co-Chairman Hart, Karl Pastore of DCR and Joe Orfant then publicly discussed options for solving several of those problems, including the jimson weed and tree damage. Bruce Berman addressed the possibility of dredging the Bay, stating that it might be expensive, but that it would probably have a positive effect.

Another resident mentioned that stronger oversight of treatment plants was needed, and inquired about the status of the Tenean and Savin Hill Beach bathhouses which he thought were approved for funding but never built. Joe Orfant responded that the Savin Hill project had been stalled at another agency for several years, and he hadn't been able to figure out why; Co-Chairman Hart stated that the Commission would look into it. A woman requested that some trash barrels be available throughout the winter, so that residents weren't conditioned to litter, and Karl Pastore replied that he would work on the problem.

Orlando Perilla from Harbor Point called attention to a small beach between Harbor Point and the John F. Kennedy Library, describing recent efforts to improve conditions and asking for assistance. Joe Orfant and Vivien Li replied that the beach was not a state beach, but that it was actually recently transferred to UMass and that as expansions to the campus and the JFK Library were considered, the beach would be included in the environmental discussions.

Co-Chairman Hart then introduced Bruce Berman, who introduced David Spillane of Goody Clancy, and the meeting broke up into two discussion groups.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After breaking into groups, each attendee was asked to write down three things that they liked most about the beaches, and three things they would like to see improved. The comments were then individually re-organized and presented to all attendees by representatives from each group.

Before the groups presented, Co-Chairman Hart made some remarks, inviting everyone to come to a second meeting later in the fall to take a look at the draft report from the Commission; he also thanked everyone for attending.

On the positive side, the groups reported that people are happy the beaches exist, they enjoy the sand, the improved water quality, the existing boardwalk and the accessibility of the beach. Challenges included insufficient lifeguards, poor enforcement of littering and dog policies, and the need for more timely information about water quality. The groups also mentioned poor maintenance in general, poor treatment of

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

landscaping, a lack of recreational programming, a need for dredging and extensions for the boardwalk, and a lack of federal funding and involvement. Zoning and poor soil quality were also mentioned, although maintenance was the largest issue.

Bruce Berman closed the meeting by thanking the Commission, presenters, staff, and attendees for coming.

Hull - August 17, 2006

Co-Chairman Senator Jack Hart opened the meeting by thanking everyone for coming. He described Nantasket Beach as a local treasure, a “Cape Cod,” and said that the Commission was very serious about making necessary improvements. He introduced the Commissioners present and described the creation of the Commission. Senator Robert Hedlund remarked that he believed Nantasket would be one of the most important beaches for the Commission, as capital improvement projects were just beginning.

Representative Garrett Bradley added that although the first phase of improvements was coming to completion, phase two would be much bigger and would require a coherent plan going forward. Co-Chairman Hart then described the two segments of the meeting, and opened the floor to public testimony.

Public Testimony

A woman inquired about the nature of the upcoming improvements for Nantasket Beach, and Joe Orfant responded by describing the history of the project, including the Army Corps of Engineers’ involvement and the hiring of the current designers, Louis Berger. He added that there was a Citizen’s Advisory Committee (CAC) from the town, and that the project was a once in a lifetime opportunity to ‘do it right.’ Another woman inquired about the inclusion of the Harbor Islands in the Commission’s work, and Patricia Foley of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay responded that the Commission would be briefed on the islands later in the fall, working with the Island Alliance.

A woman from the Beach Management Committee said that current plans for the sea wall involved rebuilding it where it stands, which would require sand replenishment every 3-5 years. She also asked how the contractors were being overseen. Senator Hedlund said that all plans are now on the table, and that Louis Berger would be assessing all potential effects of seawall placement. Joe Orfant also explained that DCR has financial methods of ensuring that contractors completed their jobs in a timely manner. Bill Smyth of the Hull Artists’ Studio Connection brought up concern over unused buildings near the beach, and suggested that they might be used for an entertainment center. Senator Hedlund expressed enthusiasm for the idea, and stated that using those buildings for DCR maintenance storage was not the best option.

Phyllis Aucoin described her concerns about construction closing Hull Shore Drive, which she said has been hurting neighbors and beachgoers. She also submitted approximately 1200 signatures of people against the closures. She asked why money collected at the parking lots goes into the state general fund, and Co-Chairman Hart responded that that particular issue had come up elsewhere and the Commission would likely recommend that the current policy be changed. A man stated that pedestrian safety crossing from the beach to the businesses needs to be considered.

Karl Pastore of DCR responded to concerns about public restrooms and trash, saying that \$150,000 had been added to the operating budget and that DCR was looking at repairs for the bathhouse. Susan Kane, also of DCR, said that bathrooms and comfort stations are supposed to be open until 9:00 p.m. A woman named Judy recommended that sustainable transportation other than cars should be investigated for health of the beach and improved access. A local photographer submitted photos of trash on the beach in the early

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

morning, and suggested that trash pickup crews not leave trash overnight, but instead have pickups in the evening. He also described a local habit of litter, which could be leading to rat problems. Co-Chairman Hart suggested that littering fines be enforced. Another resident stated that a self-sustaining economic model for the beach needed to be developed.

Marc Fourier, Director of Public Works in Hull, described several issues such as drainage, building maintenance, road maintenance and replacement of a run-down bathhouse.

Co-Chairman Hart then introduced Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, who described the second part of the meeting. Attendees separated into two groups, one led by Bruce Berman and the other by David Spillane of Goody Clancy.

Facilitated Public Discussions

After breaking into groups, each attendee was asked to write down three things that they liked most about the beaches, and three things they would like to see improved, and to prioritize them within each category. The comments were then individually re-organized and presented to the whole meeting by representatives from each group.

The groups reported that they appreciated the clean water, beauty, accessibility, wildlife, community integration, and existing improvements that had been made at the beach. Areas of concern included rats and trash, storm drains, lack of DCR-sponsored programming, public safety, wind turbines, buildings in need of repair, and closures on Hull Shore Drive.

State Police Officer Tom Majewski described the police role on the beach, where the State Police is supposed to be the primary presence, but limited funding has made it necessary for the Hull Police to fill in the gaps. He added that the State Police make an effort to keep the area very family friendly, so people walking the beach at night feel safe. A Hull Police Officer added that they didn't have the resources to deal with litter enforcement. Officer Majewski added that parental involvement to keep kids from skateboarding and destroying things would also help.

Co-Chairman Hart closed the meeting by stating his hope that the Commission would 'wow' the attendees both through the recommendations they would make and the results that would follow. He invited everyone to attend a second meeting in the fall to review the recommendations, and thanked everyone for coming.

Quincy - September 14, 2006

Senator Thomas McGee opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. He introduced the members of the Commission present, and then explained that first several officials would share their concerns, then there would be a period of twenty minutes for public comments, and then the meeting would move to a breakout session. Senator Michael Morrissey outlined the improvements along Quincy Shore Drive that had been made so far, pointed out areas of concern that would be resolved before the project was completed, and anticipated some of the public comments including water quality and general maintenance. Representative Bruce Ayers noted the importance of keeping the beach clean and safe as all of the new improvements came on-line. Quincy City Council President Douglas Gutro also mentioned the new Friends of Wollaston Beach group that was being organized, and emphasized that this meeting was about the attendees giving the Commissioners feedback and constructive criticism.

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

Department of Conservation and Recreation Commissioner Stephen Burrington thanked everyone from Quincy for putting up with the construction along Quincy Shore Drive for so long, and said that during his time as Commissioner he hoped to get the maintenance right. He outlined steps that DCR was taking to improve maintenance, including the recent purchase of new equipment and the development of maintenance standards and standardized operating procedures.

City Councilor Leo Kelly added that Wollaston beach was now cleaner than it was before pollution started, and that the beach would soon be some of the most beautiful coastline in the country, a place that Quincy could be proud of. Senator McGee then opened up the floor for public comments.

Public Comments

Ron Connelly stated that he'd like to see more effort in the area of water quality, that an initiative to ensure patrols between the Quincy Police and State Police had never materialized, and that there needed to be a way to ensure that the quality of maintenance is kept high. A woman asked about how DCR was dealing with the very busy traffic pattern on Quincy Shore Drive. Joe Orfant responded, explaining that traffic was the primary focus of the work being done at Wollaston Beach. He described several configurations which had been considered during the planning process, and explained that the new traffic control system was designed to reduce traffic speed to 30 mph without reducing throughput.

A resident added that he would like to see the curbing on the neighborhood side of the south end of Wollaston Beach looked at, because cars race around there and the current curbing makes it very unsafe for pedestrians. Joe Orfant stated that although the curb there might not be under the current contract, that his comment would certainly be captured by the Commission and considered during future capital work. John Dell then distributed material about Sand Rx, a possible solution for sand renourishment, which he had wanted to show the Commission in the context of the Wintrop meeting which he was unable to attend.

Carol Fisher said that although Wollaston Beach is owned by the state, it still reflects poorly on the residents and city of Quincy when it is in poor condition. She also asked why sand was added to the beach in November and December, when it routinely disappeared during the season's nor'easters. Joe Orfant explained that there were environmental factors that limited the window of opportunity this type of work, and that the sand migration was part of the natural beach life cycle. A woman named Karen directed her remarks to DCR, stating that the trash barrels along the beach have been missing during the construction and have resulted in more litter.

Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay then explained the format of the breakout sessions, and added that he knew that all of the people present loved the beach- otherwise they wouldn't be there. He introduced David Spillane of Goody Clancy, who requested that when people wrote down their comments they be as specific as possible. The meeting then broke up into two groups for public discussion.

Facilitated Public Discussions

In two different groups, attendees wrote down three things that they wanted to preserve about the beach, and three things they wanted to see changed. Each comment was then re-arranged and presented to the entire meeting by representatives of each group.

In the category of what to preserve, the groups had comments regarding the natural beauty of the beach, public access, the community nature of the space, available activities, and the growing partnership between

METROPOLITAN BEACHES COMMISSION

Executive Summaries of Hearings

Quincy and DCR. Several people's comments also mentioned the amount of effort being put into the beach recently. The groups reported that there were a number of things they wanted to see changed, including improving the trash and litter maintenance, cleaning the sand and water, better signage, and landscaping maintenance. Several people were also interested in changing the current street lights, improving police enforcement, and adding signs informing beachgoers of the community police number. There were also concerns about catch basins clogging, and requests for more beach events and historical information.

Senator Morrissey described the pros and cons of different street lamps, explaining that DCR had looked into one particular type (referred to by a meeting attendee) and found that the estimated cost was staggering. Councilor Gutro also mentioned that stencils had been done in some areas describing that drains go to the beach, addressing one comment. A woman then asked Carol Haney and Joan Meschino (from Revere and Hull, respectively) what they thought of the issues being discussed. Both replied that they had seen many similarities, and Joan Meschino mentioned that DCR was being very cooperative in Hull.

Representative Ayers mentioned that the Governor's office had as much to do with the issues as the DCR, and Senator Morrissey added that part of the idea for the Commission was to provide strong recommendations to the newly elected Governor in time for their budget decisions. Councilor Gutro added that there would be a meeting of the Friends of Wollaston Beach in the near future, and that there was a beach cleanup planned for the coming Saturday.

Bruce Berman then closed the meeting by explaining that the Commission had completed all of its community meetings, and would next retain a budget analyst and prepare a report over the next few months which everyone who attended all the meetings would be invited to review at a later meeting.