

Chris Mancini Sets 2022 Goals for SH/SB

by Rick Winterson

Since April of last year, Chris Mancini has been the Executive Director of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (which we'll abbreviate to "SH/SB" in this article). SH/SB is the community group located on the Fish Pier in South Boston that has had such a hugely positive impact on our shores, beaches, and harbor waters for 35 years. Chris, a dedicated environmentalist himself, joined SH/SB in 2016 as their Vice President of Operations and Programming. In October of 2019, he was appointed their Acting Executive Director replacing Patty Foley, who decided to retire after devoting 21 years to SH/SB. Chris then formally assumed the position of Executive Director as of April, 2020.

Chris is originally from Rochester, N. Y. Even as a young man, he was attracted to a career in environmental issues and challenges. He thinks what finally triggered this decision



Chris Mancini at SH/SB headquarters on the Fish Pier.

was moving to Poughkeepsie, which is located in the Hudson River Valley. Scenically, the Valley was still beautiful, but at that time Hudson River water was polluted and outright foul. His constant question, "Why can't I use this river?", led to that decision.

Chris received his BA degree from Vassar College in 2002; he moved to Boston in 2004 and was awarded an MA degree in 2007 from Tufts University's Department of Urban and Environmental Planning. His work record is impressive: Right after

graduating from Vassar he taught Grades K-12 about Hudson River ecology aboard the Sloop Clearwater. He went on to become Director of Education on New York's field-based "The River Project". In Newport, Rhode Island, he worked in a program entitled "Sailors for the Sea" for five years. For the next five years, Chris served as the Executive Director of "Groundwork Somerville", which (very briefly stated) creates and manages green space activities in Somerville for all to enjoy.

Chris and his wife Abigail have a daughter named Mae. They recently moved to Swampscott and believe it or not, are engaged in cleaning up King's Beach shared by Lynn and Swampscott. The Mancinis are a talented family. Abigail works as a Librarian at Lesley College and is a quilter as well. Young Mae enjoys basketball, gymnastics, dancing, and – unicorns! Chris plays drums, banjo, guitar, and the piano; he once belonged to a group called "The Country Hicks".

In discussing accomplishments at SH/SB, Chris says that protecting the Boston area's shores and beaches comes first, followed by opening up the Harbor to everyone – those with no English speaking ability, people of color, the disabled, and so on. After that comes making these folks into a generation of long-term Harbor stewards. Chris is in favor of opening up the Harbor Islands more completely. He stated, "We have already paid for a clean Harbor and saved these Islands, so we are entitled to use them." Chris also mentioned an environmental planning reference called "2022 Climate Resiliency

Toolbox" – a methodology for protecting recreational resources (primarily beaches) in coastal communities.

Local beaches under the SH/SB oversight extend from Nantasket through Quincy, across all of Boston, and out to Winthrop, Lynn, and Nahant. During this interview, we joked about country music played many, many years ago on WBZ by a DJ named Nelson Bragg from Milo, Maine. Bragg's lead-in proclaimed his WBZ broadcast stretched from "Coast to Coast! Nantasket to Nahant!" Perhaps that could be the basis of a modern-day slogan for SH/SB.

When asked to summarize the SH/SB aims, plans, and goals for 2022, Chris stressed three overall targets in simple but emphatic words:

A.- Sharing equally the entire Harbor and all its beaches with everyone in Greater Boston and Vicinity.

B.- Continuing the clean water campaign, which so far, has resulted in 90% to 100% utilization of most area beaches.

C.- Working jointly with (many) others, such as the Boston Harbor consortium, to slow down and eventually eliminate destruction of beaches by climate change.

Chris also asked us to mention the SH/SB fundraiser, called the "Harpoon Shamrock Splash". This is a light-hearted winter plunge that raises money to support many SH/SB free activities on our public beaches (the Better Beaches Program). This plunge will take place during a weekend in early March – still wintertime – on a date and at a location to be announced soon. Please watch for it.



SH/SB Executive Director Chris Mancini looks out on a clean Boston Harbor.



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