



Metropolitan Beaches Commission
The State House
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Planning Meeting
March 18, 2013

Senator Thomas McGee
Co-Chair

Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein
Co-Chair

Representative Carlo Basile
First Suffolk

Kip Becker
Boston University

Barbara Bishop
Speaker DeLeo's Office

Representative Garrett Bradley
Third Plymouth

Representative Nick Collins
Fourth Suffolk

Mark Cullinan
Nahant Resident

Paul Grogan
The Boston Foundation

Douglas Gutro
Quincy City Council

Carol Haney
Revere

Senator Robert Hedlund
Plymouth & Norfolk

Representative Bradford Hill
Fourth Essex

Senator John Keenan
Norfolk & Plymouth

Manny Lopes
East Boston Neighborhood Health Center

Chris Marchi
East Boston Community Advocate

Joan Meschino
Hull Resident

Paul F. Nutting
Savin Hill Shores

Daniel O'Connell
Massachusetts Competitive Partnership

Samantha Overton
Department of Conservation and Recreation

Senator Anthony Petrucci
First Suffolk and Middlesex

Robert Tucker
Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beach

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Commission Co-Chair Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein opened the meeting by saying how enjoyable and productive the first MBC was. She noted the great friendships that formed during that time, as well as the fun the Commissioners had visiting each other's beaches. She also highlighted the importance of the timing of the MBC in 2006, and pointed out that the timing of this inquiry was important as well. Representative Reinstein said Senator Jack Hart, former Co-Chair of the MBC will be missed this time around, and reminded everyone that Revere Beach is the center of the universe.

Co-Chair Senator Tom McGee spoke next. He said the reconvening of MBC is an opportunity to inspire people to become more passionate about these wonderful natural resources and to continue that great momentum from the first MBC. He said we can't just do a commission, issue a report and be done. Strengthening these beaches is a process, its about moving forward. Even now, too many people still take these resources for granted. It's crucial to get people engaged in improving their quality of life and beaches are a part of that, so that the next generation can share stories with their children the way we get to do now, these issues need to continue to be addressed.

Senator McGee stressed that water transportation to the Harbor Islands and the region's waterfronts are a key piece of making sure people have a great experience, and that the issue is of critical importance to many communities including Lynn, Winthrop, Quincy and Hull. He also pointed out some of the successes from the last round of hearings like the \$21million renovation of the Nahant Causeway.

Patty Foley from Save the Harbor / Save the Bay thanked the legislative members and their staff for making time to tackle this project again. She said how great it is to have the opportunity to partner with local government on improving Boston Harbor, the Harbor Islands, and the beaches. They belong to all of us.

Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor / Save the Bay asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves and share one or two reasons why they are present:

Paul Nutting from Dorchester spoke about the need for these recreational outdoor spaces to escape the hectic lifestyle that goes with living in the city. He would like to see the Harborwalk and waterfront path connected.

Paul went on to say that he's fortunate enough to travel, but there are a lot of people who can't. Their Maine, NH, and Florida is at the end of the block at the beach. They will get down there at 8 am and won't leave until 8 pm. People need this.

Samantha Overton from DCR said that she's here on a professional level and as a mom. Her first picnic with her oldest girl was at Castle Island. She asked if the public meetings in the beachfront communities could be held around 4pm. That way, users of the beach and not just those people who live in the neighborhood, can attend.

Barbara Bishop of Winthrop, Legislative Aide to Speaker Robert DeLeo, said there are exciting things happening in the town and they need promote the new ferry more. She said that beach restoration is important; they've had flooding and the beach is rocky. Barbara also said she would like to see more people, kids in particular, go to the beach. Kids don't use it as much as they should. Ultimately, their goal is to get people to go to the beach.

Joan Meschino from Hull spoke about the fact that Nantasket is a shared beach. She'd like to see continued effort to support the DCR to protect the beaches. She said they're very lucky to have a fantastic staff at the Nantasket Beach Reservation. She thinks the MBC this time around has a great opportunity to promote the beaches as regional gems. Places like Hingham, Scituate and Weymouth flock to Hull for the beach. Through continued momentum her hope is that MBC can convince Hull that a "Friends" group would be beneficial.

Mary Jo Meisner, Vice President of The Boston Foundation on behalf of Paul Grogan of The Boston Foundation, said there's nothing more important than the seminal change in life on Boston Harbor as a result of the work Save the Harbor / Save the Bay, Conservation Law Foundation and others did. She feels the challenge of talent retention is a noteworthy issue to be addressed by the MBC; the quality of life that Boston can provide is of chief importance as it relates to keeping talent in the region and to our economic future.

Chris Marchi of East Boston discussed how Constitution Beach, though small, is the only access East Boston residents have to the water. He stated they have a long way to go connecting greenways and beaches, but it's a necessary step in order to get people to visit the beach and other open spaces. He also said it's important to find ways to bring all these recreational opportunities to people who live in landlocked communities. Chris said he wants to advance family exposure to the outdoors.

Adrian Madaro for Rep Basile said that at Constitution Beach there have been new investments in concession stands, playgrounds, tennis courts, etc. He now sees the beach packed with people. He is looking forward to working with MBC.

Manny Lopes of the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center reflected on his childhood in Revere. He spent his summers at the Revere beach house – which he realized when he was older was really the MDC bathhouse. His mother was a single parent and worked six or seven days a week. The beach was his escape. He wants to make all the beaches in the area a great place for families and make sure that kids know it's a fantastic place to come and play.

Mark Cullinan of Nahant said that everyone in the room knows their beach is a gem and is truly a gateway for their community. It's worthwhile to invest in entrance to communities, such as the Causeway in Nahant. He also acknowledged the millions of people living in the area whose only release are these beaches. Mark expressed hope that someday beaches will have transportation access to the Harbor Island beaches.

Bob Tucker from the Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beach recognized the Causeway project finally came to fruition after years of pushing from the community. In addressing issues on the beach, particularly the problem they had with algae, he's seen results through cooperation from DCR and Friends groups, Save the Harbor / Save the Bay and the MBC.

Kip Becker from Boston University said he has tremendous memories of the legislature working very hard with state agencies. He recounted Senator Hart's passion for the MBC and its work. Kip discussed the tangible proof of improving health of the harbor: his sailboat started to grow algae, he was catching more fish and the seals were coming back. He said that in each community, people would say how they went to the beach as a family, but they no longer could because of pollution. Now they're coming back and he said it's the result of this Commission. He said he wants to rekindle an important relationship that people have lost - the one they have with the water.

Carol Haney of Revere said she has been on the beach for many years. As a child she spent her time on the beach and there was so much to do and look at ... horseshoe crabs, etc. Then as the years passed, she saw raw sewage being pumped out of Lynn and she could not go to her beautiful beach. It's now used all the time again because it's clean. She would also like to see a playground and an amphitheater at Revere Beach.

Kerry-Anne Hollingshead spoke on behalf of Rep Bradley. She said that focusing on creating opportunities for economic development and revitalization is important to the Rep during this Commission.

Peter Brennan, Senator Hedlund's Chief of Staff expressed the Senator's sentiments that he is looking forward to working with the Commissioners and returning to the beaches.

Ruthie Dollarhide of Sen Keenan's office said that people in Quincy are afraid to put their big toe in the water on Wollaston Beach. Water Quality and a more accurate flagging system are important in changing that perception. From an economic development standpoint, Wollaston Beach and Squantum Point Park are important.

Doug Gutro, Quincy City Councilor said that DCR has done great job with the seawall and landside improvements. He stated that his experience with the last Commission inspired him to start Friends of Wollaston Beach. He spoke about the investments over the last 20 years, but said that further investments need to be made. Water transportation is critical especially with the big development projects in Marina Bay and Quincy Center, both of which could both benefit from transportation. Addressing issues of water quality is also important for Wollaston Beach.

Daniel Fishman of Representative Reinstein's office said he was looking forward to working with the

Commission.

Jessica Yazhari from Rep Hills' office referenced the Representative's interest in waterfront investment since Ipswich and Manchester-by-the-Sea are in his district. She said she was happy to be working with the MBC.

Brendan Crighton, Senator McGee's Chief of Staff said he enjoyed working on the last Commission and is looking forward to working on it again.

Anthony Coletti is an intern for Senator McGee. He's from Long Island, NY, so he is familiar with coastal communities. He said the work of the MBC is exciting and that he is looking forward to working on it.

Steven Smalley of Senator McGee's office said he is excited to work on Commission and see what can be done to improve beaches in the area.

Jake Bombard from Rep Collins' office said the Representative is very happy to be a Commissioner. His district includes Castle Island, Pleasure Bay, Harbor Walk and Harbor Islands. They have a lot invested in the welfare these beaches and he's looking forward to the working on this.

Patty introduced David Spillane of the architect firm Goody Clancy. She said David was an integral part of the first MBC and said she's proud to announce that he has since joined Save the Harbor's Board. Patty informed everyone that David's time is pro-bono and thanked him and the firm for that donation.

Review of 2007 Findings and Recommendations

Bruce said the more than one thousand people who participated in the community meetings had a lot in common, but most evident was the love they shared for their beaches. Bruce recalled the ongoing concern in 2005-2006 that funds invested in capital projects weren't being leveraged effectively. Bruce echoed Rep Reinstein's sentiments that the timing was very good during the last MBC inquiry; the new administration embraced these beaches and was willing to work together make the necessary improvements.

Bruce went on to say that if all we do is try to solve short-term problems, we miss an opportunity for greatness. He called attention to the importance of making sure the gains made thus far are protected; he said he was struck by how beautiful Quincy looks with the new sea wall and walkway as well as the dramatic improvements in Nahant on the Causeway. He pointed out that it's a unique chance to go town-by-town and prioritize further investments opportunities that government could make in partnership with the private sector.

David discussed a three-part agenda for the MBC: where we were, where we are and where we're going. Although advancements were made, there is still work to be done; the progress in 2006-2007 was the short-term picture. Missing was synergy between the beaches, the communities they're in and the economic opportunities that exist. David said one key to successfully engaging the public is to find out what residents have to say about the beaches they love. At community meetings during first MBC inquiry, attendees documented their likes and dislikes about beaches on post-it notes or "stickies". He

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said people have a tendency to more clearly express their emotions when they write out their thoughts and hand in the stickies. In his experience, with the use of flip charts, one loses all of the important info – the relationship people have with their beach, in their own words. Additionally, the stickies are a way for people who aren't completely comfortable speaking in public to share their thoughts.

Commissioner Gutro asked if discussion about extreme weather preparedness and sea level rise would take place. Bruce that he expected that this conversation will happen at individual community meetings.

Commissioner Mark Cullinan also asked Bruce to talk about water quality and beach flagging

Bruce talked about how Save the Harbor / Save the Bay takes a hard look at water quality on DCR beaches. Each year, working with the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA) and a team of independent scientists to make sense of the data, they let people know how the beaches are doing. Although there's always work that can be done to improve quality, he said we're doing a pretty good job of it. One thing that continues to be a problem, however, is the flagging system currently in place. When tests are conducted daily at a beach, it's 24 hrs before the test is ready. If the test comes back positive for bacteria presence, the beach must be flagged on the day the results come in, at which point two tide cycles have likely dispersed the bacteria. Save the Harbor has asked for flexibility on a day they know beach is going to be dirty (i.e. when there's at least a 1/4" of rain there's a high probability that the beach will be dirty). However, the law still requires that a flag is flown the day after the sample was taken, which indicates to beach goers the water is unsafe to swim in on a day when it might actually be fine. Conversely, it doesn't inform people that the water is dirty on the day the sample is actually taken. It's something to keep in mind and perhaps address with the Department of Public Health this time around.

Bruce said he expects to hear from the Beaches Science Advisory Committee at Save the Harbor / Save the Bay with technical recommendations for increased flexibility in beach management that will allow town managers who know their beach is dirty to work with DCR.

Work plan and timeline

Bruce and David discussed the two upcoming hearings on Beacon Hill, April 8th and May 13th.

The hearing in April is to obtain DCR's perspective and narrative on where they've been, where they are now and where they're going. Bruce mentioned that he already had a very productive meeting with DCR in February to lay the ground-work to help them tell the story. DCR Commissioner Ed Lambert and his staff will provide testimony about staffing and budget, beach management and focus on innovative and highly successful models of management on these beaches, known as "complex models" or "cluster models".

Bruce talked about providing the government with some suggestions for economic development opportunities and capital investments. Large projects, such as Squantum Point Park in Quincy or smaller ones like the Pickle Barrel in South Boston near McCormack Bathhouse could be put to use for any number of things if there's a plan in place by the time there's money in the budget. It would be better to be ahead of the curve on this than behind it. Rep Reinstein underscored the importance of making sure we

have blueprint in place when money becomes available.

David and Bruce went on to discuss the significance of programming on the beaches and its importance in MBC. Save the Harbor / Save the Bay raises money through events like Cupid Splash and Swim for Boston Harbor to support beach programs. But it's unreasonable to think that a small non-profit will be able to provide funding to friends groups to run high end events on beaches forever without some sort of support from the government.

After the hearing in April, CPA firm Raphael and Raphael will meet with DCR to get final numbers on staffing and management.

Next, Bruce went over the plan for the May 13th hearing. Panels include Water Transportation, Boston Harbor Islands and Youth and Families program. Bruce said challenges and opportunities will be discussed with regard to water transportation. He noted how some of the smaller communities could benefit from seasonal connections to the Boston Harbor Islands and the tremendous transportation enhancements and economic development opportunities that would result. However, those investments have yet to happen.

Bruce talked about the Boston Harbor Island beaches. He said they are remarkable but sometimes difficult for DCR to manage. Challenges include sand loss at the swimming beach at Spectacle Island, which is filling in the marina and washing up on Treasure Beach.

Bruce talked about the schedule of eight community hearings to happen in June, July and August. The first three in June will be for Revere, Lynn and Nahant and South Boston. The remaining hearings will be scheduled at convenience of chairs and then the legislative and community Commission members. Patty Foley highlighted the importance of legislative members getting list out in next couple of weeks so we can plan accordingly.

The budget data analysis by Raphael and Raphael and water quality results portion will be ready to go in late May. A press conference around that time will attract attention to this effort.

Closing

In closing, Rep. Reinstein said we've made great strides on these beaches for all our families and friends; who have truly benefited from public and private sector investments in our beaches. Friends groups have made a real difference even in tough economic times.

Sen. McGee closed by saying the MBC was a big success in 2007. The Commission identified real needs and DCR tried to meet the goals established by the MBC even though it was a tough economic climate. Sen. McGee said the MBC kept key goals at the forefront, which helped to make it a successful effort. He said that last time, we got to good, and that this time we can protect the good and get to great. Linking viable economic development goals is beneficial to everyone; he feels water transportation in particular will build the public's passion for the investment in our beaches and Boston Harbor. He said water transportation has the potential to become a priority that's not going to be able to be put on back burner regardless of the state of the economy.

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