

Executive Summary

Metropolitan Beaches Commission Hearing – Wollaston Beach

Kennedy Senior Center 440 E Squantum Street Quincy, MA

Thursday August 2, 2018 6:00pm-8:00pm

Quincy Commissioners Senator John Keenan and Doug Gutro opened the meeting by thanking participants for their time and their commitment to this incredible community resource. Commission Co-Chairs Senator Brendan Crighton and Representative RoseLee Vincent both expressed their appreciation and desire to learn about the issues that affect Wollaston in order to understand what issues are shared across the region's beaches as well as what is unique.

Commissioner Susan Hamilton of DCR encouraging everyone to offer as much feedback as possible so that we can continue to improve Wollaston Beach.

Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and MBC consultant David Spillane of Goody Clancy introduced the Commission, explaining that it was first created to help improve the user experience on the beaches. It was made permanent several years later when it became clear that there is a need for sustained focused attention on these natural resources. The growth of community groups and partnerships such as Friends of Wollaston Beach and Discover Quincy has been incredible in this time. Berman mentioned that Wollaston Beach is one that meets the standards of the Boston Harbor clean up case – being open nearly every day. Finally he announced that as a result of advocacy by the MBC and other stakeholders, \$20 million was appropriated as part of the environmental bond bill to fund capital projects on the region's beaches to address remaining persistent pollution and water quality concerns.

After this, Berman and Spillane gave directions for the break out groups. Participants made five groups of approximately eight people each.

Needs and Opportunities

- Noise and safety– while much improved, some concerns remain over safety at night and loud noise from traffic and loud music.
- Dogs and dog waste are still a problem.
- Trash and recycling barrels, including the solar compactor style that seagulls can't get into, and more regular emptying of the barrels are needed.

Capital Improvement

- Concerns raised regarding confidence in sewer system and particular outfall pipes.
- Need for better upkeep of recent capital improvements including the seawall

Events and Programs

- Programs and events are some of the best things about the beach. Additional events such as movie nights, and adult-oriented events such as dance lessons were suggested.
- Need a centralized place to communicate everything happening at Wollaston.

Connections and other Initiatives

- Walking paths and pedestrian access are excellent. Some walking paths could be extended and sidewalks improved.
- While the beach is somewhat bike friendly, there is need for more bike racks, bike sharing, and a dedicated bike lane on Quincy Shore Drive.
- More robust public communication about the water quality improvement is necessary.
- Sand, while well maintained and groomed by DCR, is increasingly rocky. Efforts to remove of sand from Quincy Shore Drive after the winter storms was praised, although a few remaining areas were highlighted. Longer term issues of erosion, shallow tidal zones as sand gets pulled out, and a need for dredging to retain access to the Yacht Club were also mentioned.

Amenities

- Existing amenities such as restaurants and restrooms were highly praised.
- Additional vendor amenities including umbrella and chair rentals, kayak rentals, and food trucks and/or push carts especially at the north end of the beach were requested.
- Aesthetic improvements including more shady spots, more seasonal plantings, and better maintenance of grass beds are needed.

Staffing

- Most attendees praised Wollaston Beach's Beach Manager by name.
- Lifeguards were also praised as going above and beyond to steward the beach.
- A need for more lifeguards at the north end of the beach was expressed.

In summarizing her group's feedback, president of the Friends of Wollaston beach Maureen Mazrimas said "although many issues seem to be same as 2014, on balance much has been improved."

After each group had presented their work, a discussion opened about the process to get more food vendors such as carts or trucks at a DCR beach – how vendors are selected, what the decision making criteria are, how to get the word out to other potential partners on the beaches, and more. It was generally agreed that the MBC should work to connect DCR's information about the vendor selection process to community groups who can spread the word to a wider audience.

Keenan gave an update on the effort to increase ferry services, particularly from Squantum Point Park, saying that in partnership with the City of Winthrop, progress is being made. One participant praised the Saturday ferry service from Squantum to Spectacle Island.

Gutro thanked everyone for attending, saying how exciting it is to see the progress that has been made in the last ten years, as well as to see that momentum is not slowing down.

Hamilton particularly thanked the crowd for their kind words about Wollaston's Beach Manager, and promised to share the comments with her personally.