

Metropolitan Beaches Commission - 10-31-2023

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SPEAKERS

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Chris Mancini, STH/STB 00:01

Good morning everyone. Welcome to the Metropolitan area Beaches Commission hearing Annual Hearing. I'd first like to welcome - my name is Brendan Crighton the state senator from Lynn and chair of the committee joined by my co chair Adrian Madaro. But first, we'd like to kick it over to Chris Mancini, the executive director of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, for a few remarks. Good morning, commissioners. Good morning, everyone. Good morning to everyone on the teams meeting. Thank you all for being here. This is our first annual in person hearing since before the COVID pandemic. So we're really glad to be back in room 222 here with our with our commissioners, I know we have several of our commissioners joining us via the team's meeting. We can't see you, but we will be able to hear you. And the way our hearing will work today is we'll have a few opening remarks from our commissioners. We have one small addition, adjustment to the agenda, the presentation on rainfall and green infrastructure is going to be moved to the front of the meeting, Kate England will present briefly in the beginning, and we will push back each of the agenda items by 10 minutes from there. So if you're following along on the agenda, that's how that will work. In place of Kate England presentation at the end, we'll have a few remarks from Bruce Berman towards the end of the of the hearing. So with that, just a few kind of housekeeping notes. We are going to hear testimony today from the green infrastructure director from the City of Boston, of course, from Commissioner Brian Arrigo from the DCR. There will be some I'm sure some question and comment from the Commission. At that point, we'll then move to some community stakeholder testimony from some of our partners. And then we will have a period where we will open this up to public testimony and comment. Whether you are here in person, if you've signed up in person to speak, please use the sign up sheet at the front. And if you are joining us by teams simply use the raise hand function. And we will call on you to speak at that point, so we will try to alternate between in person and hybrid at that point. So yeah, we are here to hear about the

future, about collaboration on investment and priorities on our region's public beaches, something we all care about. And so with that, I will turn it back to our co chairs to kick us off. Thank you so much.

S

Senator Brendan Crighton 02:33

Appreciate all of your work on behalf of Save the Harbor and the Commission and also your work in the district. Chris is a constituent of mine. So he's my favorite person in the room, for that reason, but thank you, Chris. It's an honor to be the chair, co-chair of this commission really proud of all the work we've done. This brought us to this point today. And all of you in this room, whether you're on the commission, staff, or concerned members of the public that are here, your continued efforts to break down barriers at the beach or accessibility over the past couple of years and with a particular focus on racial equity, and language equity, your work has identified concrete actionable steps to help address very complex, long standing issues that impact our beaches and beyond. I look forward to the honest and thoughtful discussions that we've historically had here on the commission and also very excited to welcome our new-ish DCR Commissioner Brian Arrigo Brian's a Senate alum with and North Shore resident, we've worked together for many years. And it's great to have you in this new role, traditionally a role that unfortunately in recent years have seen a lot of turnover, but I know you're committed here for the long term. I forget how long the contract you signed - a few decades. But we are excited to work collaboratively with you, with your team. I'm confident we're going to make some long overdue and drastic changes and improvements that'll make a big difference in the lives of our residents. With that, I'm going to turn it over to my good friend another former staffer in the building my co-chair Adrian Madaro..

A

Adrian Madaro 04:12

Thank you Senator. Good morning everyone. Happy Halloween. It's wonderful to be back together in person for the first time since COVID. We've been joined by a lobster and shark today so that makes things really really special. And Chris, just do I'll let the record reflect that the senator was very clear you're only his favorite person in the room because you're a constituent, so if you lived in East Boston you wouldn't be his favorite person but that's alright. You my favorite person everyday as long as your taking care of Boston beaches. Anyway, but all seriousness, good morning, folks. Pleasure to be here today for those joining us virtually. Good morning. As you know we're here today to listen and learn from DCR and my good friend who grew up right next door to East Boston, Revere Brian Arrigo. Brian, just a belated congratulations, you couldn't be a better person for this job. Having adeptly steered Revere through some really difficult years during the pandemic and of course representing the oldest public beach in America, you're taking a keen eye and a really focused approach on DCR properties. And we're all really excited to be working with you and your team at DCR. So, like I was saying, We're gonna listen and learn and discuss ways to bolster the region's beachfront communities through strategies to enhance coastal defensive and resilience. These strategies will help us preserve and expand access to our public beaches, which are absolutely critical open spaces and natural resources for the Commonwealth. I think of my district and Constitution Beach we're community that's effectively an island surrounded by water and Constitution Beach is really the only point of access for my constituents to get in the water and to enjoy what is our best natural resource around the community. We'll also discuss capital improvements to our public beaches, which helped to increase engagement in use, and we

know that like many of the Commonwealth's assets our public beaches are in need of ongoing infrastructure upgrades and improvements. We've had great success in working with this commission and partnering with DCR to upgrade our public beaches, including Constitution Beach and looking forward to continuing that collaboration. Like others on the Metro Beaches Commission, I represent an environmental justice community comprised of a Latino majority, a working class majority, and immigrant majority. So when we talk about DCR properties, especially Constitution Beach, these are really critical resources for our communities like ours, in the metro beaches area, that our community knows all too well the importance of having culturally accessible programming in public spaces. So we're constantly looking to partner with you all, to find ways to improve and add multilingual signage on our beach so that all families no matter what part of the world they come from, can enjoy them. So that's why I'm really glad to be here today for this hearing, which will give us an opportunity to begin to collective discussion on investments for necessary repairs and enhancements to the metropolitan beaches. Really looking forward to hearing from you, commissioner and from my colleagues on the Commission. Thank you for making time to join us today. Thank you to my commissioners, fellow commissioners for joining. And without further ado, why don't we go around, introduce ourselves and make some comments, please take it away.

S Susan Hamilton, DCR 07:19

Hi, Susan Hamilton, I represent DCR from the Commission and I will leave the comments to Commissioner Arrigo.

J Joan Meschino 07:28

I'm State Representative Joan Meschino representing Hingham, Hull, and Cohasset. And I just wanted to say we had a wonderful meeting with the Commissioner down in Hull and we appreciated that you fearlessly came down without staff. He trusted us that much to come down and have a great conversation with the board to honestly to building a good relationship. Good working record to make sure [unintelligible].

J Jessica Giannino 07:53

Good morning everyone Jessica Giannino, state rep for the sixteenth suffolk, which includes the City of Revere, a lot of Revere representation up here, and also Saugus. I'm really excited to continue to work on this commission. My other role in the house. I serve as the vice chair in the committee of children's families and persons with disabilities. So accessibility is incredibly important to me, and I think that we did a lot of great work last session and I look forward to continuing to this year.

M Mercy Robinson 08:21

Hello, my name is Mercy Robinson, I am the Executive Director for South Boston En Accion. So a lot of what was discussed in this document really fits well, personally with me.

K Kerin O'Toole 08:36

Hi my name is Kerin O'Toole and I'm representing the city of Quincy. I was appointed to this last week so I look forward to getting caught up with this. I also live on Wollaston beach so I'm very excited to be part of this.

T Tackey Chan 08:54

Hi Im Representative Tackey Chan, second local district representing Quincy.

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 09:00

We have a few commissioners joining us by teams, Seamus, would they be able to introduce themselves? So if are a Metropolitan Beaches Commissioner on the team's meeting, if you could just speak up and introduce yourself to let us know you're in the room.

B Bob Tucker 09:18

I'm Bob Tucker from the Friends of Lynn and Nahant Beach.

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 09:20

Is Nicole there?

K Kristen McCosh 09:20

Hi, I'm Kristen McCosh from the Boston Disability Commission.

B Bob Tucker 09:38

I don't know if you heard me out Chris but I'm Bob Tucker.


C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 09:40

Yeah we got you Nicole you're raising your hand if you'd like to introduce yourself.

B Bob Tucker 09:46

Thank you.

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 09:50

 Chris Mancini, STH/STB 09:50


I see Nicole McClain from the Northshore Juneteenth Association. She's the community representative from Lynn. I believe I saw Barbara Bishop as well from Winthrop. Barbara okay. Any other any other any other Metropolitan Beaches Commissioners joining us by by teams?

 Chris Byner 10:19

Sorry. Good morning Chris Byner, Vice Chair.

 Chris Mancini, STH/STB 10:24

Hi Chris good to see you

 Maureen Mazrimas 10:25

Maureen Mazrimas, Friends of Wollasteen beach.

 Chris Mancini, STH/STB 10:31

Hi Maureen, great to have you here. And if you didn't get a chance to introduce yourself, you know, you'll have obviously a chance to speak at some point to make sure you let us know you're here. If you are a part of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and other folks feel free to introduce yourselves in the chat. So yeah, so I'm just gonna move us on to the next phase of our presentation. We all know we have some of the cleanest urban beaches here in the country here in the in the greater Boston area. It's not perfect everywhere, but we also had one of the rainiest summers since 1955 - the rainiest summer - and we really started to notice those impacts, both in the media and at the beach. So we're really delighted to have Kate England here from the green infrastructure director, formerly with DCR, from the city of Boston, and like I said, we've adjusted the agenda slightly. But really as we're looking at keeping our beaches clean, as we're facing increased effects from climate impacts and looking to adapt for that, I think these are some of the ideas that we can all even in our South Boston East Boston, some of our cleaner beaches we really need will be looking for ways to address these impacts. So Kate, thank you so much for being here.

 Kate England Green Infrastructure 11:49

I don't actually know the correct way to stand. There's so many people. Okay. Thank you all so much for allowing me to bump up in the agenda, they scheduled a budget hearing at 11 so I have to be there for that. So as Chris mentioned, Kate England, I'm the Director of Green Infrastructure for the City of Boston. How are we advancing slides? Oh, beautiful. Okay. So I'm going to talk to you a little bit today about our changing climate and stormwater. So Chris, kind of teed up nicely that we had an incredibly wet summer this year, anybody who lived in Massachusetts, you know, will tell you that it was wetter than we've seen in the recent past. So to give you an indication, we had 13 of 19 weekends in between June and October that were rain, measurable rains over a 10th of an inch of rain. And we also received over 20 inches of

rain in July and August. And to give you an indication, Boston typically sees 40 inches of rain, 44 inches of rain annually. So we received over half of our average annual rainfall in just two months. And you know, this is an issue that is going to become more and more common, we know that we live in a part of the country that is going to be seeing more increased frequency and intensity of storms, so why is that problem for us? So there's two problems with this. The first is a quality issue. And the second is a quantity issue. So the water quality issue is something that we see in urban areas. For those of you who have walked down a sidewalk, you have probably seen all of the litter and sediment and maybe not seeing nutrients, but all of the kinds of yuck that exists on our hard surfaces in the city. When we get these large, intense storm events, all of that pollution is washed off of our hard surfaces and enters our storm drain system, many of which discharge at our beaches. So our water quality issue that needs to be dealt with is we need to find a way to be removing pollutants pre-treating our stormwater before it gets to our discharge points at our public water bodies, whether they're rivers, lakes, or ocean, or bay beaches. The second issue is a quantity issue. Our storm drain systems are designed to manage approximately five inches of rain over 24 hours. This summer we saw several rain events where we received an inch or two inches in an hour or two, which means that our storm drain systems are not sized to manage that amount of water at any given time. So our systems become overwhelmed and we see flooding in our neighborhoods that then results in very fast moving discharges at our downstream beaches. So one of the other problems that we have to deal with is, you know, we can't go through and upsize every pipe in the city or in our various cities - we don't have the space for it, we definitely don't have the money for it. And so we need to find a way to relieve that pressure on the storm drain system without doing major pipe upsizing, because we can't size our pipes for the 100 year storm, it just doesn't make sense and we can't afford it. So thankfully, we have green infrastructure. And green infrastructure is a wonderful approach to kind of improve stormwater management in our urban areas, or even at our downstream, points where water is discharging before it gets into our water bodies. So green infrastructure features plants and soil and other natural materials to remove pollutants from stormwater and also allow stormwater to absorb back into the ground. I'm going to show you a couple of examples of green infrastructure we have in Boston, just so that you can see, you know, what might be possible in your districts. So just a couple of examples of green infrastructure features that you may have heard of rain gardens, bioswales, green roofs, constructed wetlands, porous Paving Materials, and tree pits or tree infiltration trenches. And so all of these features, you can tell it well, most of them are vegetated, which means that, you know, we're adding some really nice green space to our cities. But they're, they're functionally very simple, right? They're, they're depressed areas that water can collect in and absorbed back into the ground. And they most of them do not take up a lot of space and actually add a lot to our city. Next slide, please. So here's some of the co-benefits of green infrastructure. So in addition to managing stormwater and removing pollutants, which they definitely do, and that's kind of their primary benefit, there's also all these additional benefits. So I'm not going to read the list. But you know, we can be increasing our tree canopy using green infrastructure features, we can be reducing our urban heat island effect, we can be addressing some of our environmental justice issues, access to nature, food security, air quality. So green infrastructure features have a lot of benefits beyond just the stormwater management side. Next slide, please. So a couple of beautiful examples of green infrastructure that we have in Boston. So this is a bioswale that is located in Nubian square in Roxbury. As you can see, it is on a very busy roadway. So there's a 10 foot wide sidewalk on this side, a porous asphalt bike path on the other side and then the roadway. So these are features that can easily be fit into our existing streetscapes, parkways, or city streets and they are able to capture runoff from sidewalks as well as let water absorbed back into the ground. It also helps reduce flooding on our streets and sidewalks during storm events, which is really great. Next slide. I know I'm clicking through a lot of pictures, but this is a another vegetated swale and

bioretention area at the Jackson Mann community center in Allston. This one is located between a roadway and a parking lot. So this feature is installed adjacent to a parking area, it's capturing all the runoff from the parking area and pre treating it before water goes into the storm drain system. It's also at a school and a community center. So we're using it for environmental education, which is wonderful. Next slide. This is a rain garden in the Peabody square area of Dorchester, it's like right near Ashmont T station. This feature is capturing runoff from this lovely little pocket park. As you can see, there's benches and monuments and there's this nice little like seating area around it. So this pocket park has this beautiful large green infrastructure feature in it, it's capturing runoff from all of the hard surface around the park. And as you can see, there's quite a bit of storage capacity in there. So during a large rain event, this very heavily paved neighborhood is draining to this feature. And all of that runoff that might be sitting on the sidewalks or the streets is ending up in the rain garden instead. Next slide please. You're gonna have to click again, this is a video because videos are beautiful, and I love them. But this is a bio retention feature that was installed at one of our schools. It's the Roxbury Rafael Hernandez Elementary school I just wanted to show you, you can see there's bird song birds flying through Oh, no. Sorry, the presentation is shared. So I'll make sure that but you can see that there's beautiful native vegetation. There's lots of birds and pollinators and other things that have made their homes here. And this is in a very densely developed neighborhood in Boston. So even in an area that's largely paved, we're still seeing that habitat value coming from these features. Again, also at an educational facilities or students are able to learn next slide. I think they have like one or two more. For areas that you have lots of available space, you can do constructed wetlands. So this is a constructed wetland in an urban park. This is Harambee Park in Dorchester. And this wetland is actually draining several acres of Dorchester coming in using the existing storm drain system and then we've intercepted we basically like punched a hole in the pipe and like diverted runoff from the pipes into this area. So this large wetland area is managing many many acres worth of water and is also just this beautiful feature in this park. Next slide please. So this is the example shoot the there's a before and after here, that's not happening. But this is an example of a park that I wanted to show because you may have noticed in a lot of these pictures that trees feature pretty heavily. And so I like to mention this because trees are not only essential to the function of green infrastructure because a mature tree can take up 50 to 100 gallons of stormwater during a storm event, which is not a small amount of stormwater. But trees also benefit from living in green infrastructure, because especially in their juvenile years, when they're trying to establish they need a lot of water. And so one of the main issues that we have with street trees, or just trees in urban areas is that their first like one to five years of life is a really difficult time for them. And if they're not getting enough water, then they don't establish root systems and they die. And so these features these trees were planted in a storm water infiltration trench are getting lots and lots of water, they're getting it from the roadway, as well as the the permeable pavers at the surface. That before after we showed you the trees when they were first planted. And then this is what they look like. Now after only five years of growth, I know you've actually been to the site with me, so you've seen it. But this, this is a really impressive project that our tree warden in Boston, who doesn't love anything loves this. So I really appreciate when Max is like I've never seen trees put on caliper inches like the trees in Central Square. Next slide, please. And I think that really this one was my last one. So I just wanted to show this side by side comparison. This is also in Central Square. And I know I pointed this out and we're on site, the two trees that you're seeing on the screen, and I'm going to use my hands to play this one and this one are the same tree species. They're both honey locusts. They were planted on the same day from the same nursery and they were the same size when they went in. The tree on the left is planted in a stormwater infiltration trench, which means it's getting a ton of water from the street and from the surface. And the tree on the right was planted in Park land. So it wasn't even planted in like a sidewalk or a tree pit. It's just planted in standard soil. This picture

was taken last year during the drought that we had, because I know we talked a lot about lots of rain this summer. But last year, we had extreme drought. And so you can see that the grass has yellowed and that the trees are really struggling. But that the trees that were planted in the storm water infiltration trench are green and growing and happy. And the main reason for that is drought doesn't mean no rain, it means little rain, right. And so every drop of rain that falls during a drought is captured by a green infrastructure feature and given directly to the trees or plants that are planted in it. So these trees were able to get more water than even their directly adjacent neighbors because they were planted in a green infrastructure feature. So I think that's it for me. The last is just my contact information. But I appreciate you giving me the time to speak today. Happy to answer any questions about green infrastructure, or even just brainstorm ideas about where and how they can go. Lovely to see my DCR Colleagues again, and thanks for your time.

A

Adrian Madaro 22:43

Questions or just a quick comment, I was hoping that you would slide on central square, I think it was in your initial days when you were just hired by the city that we took a central square and it was remarkable to see how well the trees are doing in the Stormwater drains versus the ones that are just planted in the park. So I think those were really great examples of the possibility of green infrastructure, I was really happy to see the investments that you were the city are making and the other neighborhoods. And I think there's a lot more to come. Thank you for your work and look forward to continued partnership.

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 23:18

Thanks. I appreciate it. Yeah

J

Jessica Giannino 23:20

this is a quick question. So I think these are all wonderful, but who's in charge of maintaining them with the DCR the DOT or our DPW? Is because locally, I think anytime there's a piece of property that all three entities are involved in can get really confusing. So who would be in charge of you know, maintaining, making sure the roots are, you know, blocking sidewalks all that good stuff?

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 23:40

Yeah. So actually, I love that you asked that specific end piece, which I'm going to answer and then I'll answer the who kind of maintains it piece. So green infrastructure features. One of the main reasons that we love planting trees in them is that the primary reason that trees heave your sidewalks is because they're resource starved, they're reaching for water and air. And so your roots are reaching up towards the surface, which is not their normal, like growth habit. But when you plant trees in a stormwater feature where the water and the void space between the stone is down, their roots follow the normal growth pattern and they don't heave sidewalks. And we Boston is relatively new to installing green infrastructure only in the last decade or so. But there are cities and towns cold weather climates, you know, in Canada, New York and

others that have been doing this for several decades. And they're seeing that their mature trees are not heaving their sidewalks their sidewalks at all. And as far as who maintains them, so in Boston, it's me or my new office. But the the way that we did it when I because I used to work for Boston water and sewer which is not technically a city department. It's a subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. So some of these were built while I worked for Boston water and sewer and so we did agreements between the City and Boston water and sewer to determine who owns the tree or the vegetation who owns the sidewalk repair or the you know, the hard surface, who cleans out the drains and the way that we divided it was a You know, Boston water and sewer does what they do, they clean out the structures in the pipes. So the catch basins and the drains, the Parks Department was responsible for the street trees, which is what they would have normally been responsible for. And then Public Works is responsible for any repairs to the sidewalk. And so for a site where maybe DCR and mascio t and others have cross jurisdictional ownerships, it would be a matter of deciding kind of who was responsible for which piece and we did an MOA, which I'm not saying you have to do, but sometimes it's nice just to have it to, you know, this is what we said we were going to do. But that's kind of how we did it. Let everybody do what they're good at. And don't ask someone to take on a task that they aren't, like, equipped to do. Yeah. Yeah. So

J Joan Meschino 25:45

I think this is fantastic. I love all of the examples that you've given, I would imagine sort of, like pocket parks and drawing people in about the cost benefit analysis. Are you tracking some of those costs? In fact, that could be positive relative to avoiding a gray infrastructure or Yeah. So I just want to elaborate a little bit.

K Kate England Green Infrastructure 26:15

Yeah. So I mentioned that I started doing these installations about 10 years ago with Boston water and sewer. And at the time, I had to do a cost benefit analysis for every single one that I wanted to put in because it was green versus gray. Right? It was, why don't we just put in storm drains, why is that not sufficient. And explaining to folks you know, through numbers and also showing like, you know, calculated benefits, sometimes there were, you know, air quality increase, or, you know, improvements or, like measured temperature decrease, you know, those kinds of things, they weren't always a monetary benefit, was really necessary to help people understand that, like, a catch basin does not provide the same amount of stormwater treatment pollutant removal, that a rain garden or bio retention feature does. So if your city's regulatory, you know, responsibility is to reduce a pollutant type, you're going to get more pollutant removal by using green infrastructure than you would by using a catch basin. And so the cost benefit went beyond just money. It was we called it the triple bottom line, which was, you know, economic, social and environmental benefits. So those three benefits all amalgamated together to show this is a better option than just a straight pipe system. But we do also have some assessments that we're doing about money saved, maintenance on these features, is actually not terribly difficult, despite the fact that some people are concerned that it's different. And it might be harder to maintain their natural systems. So once they're up and running, they largely manage themselves. There's some work that needs to be done every year, seasonally. But you know, just showing people what the actual cost is to do that maintenance. So to give you an indication, this past year, I spent about \$100,000, restoring, I want to say it was like 15, green infrastructure features in the city of Boston. So features that

had been built previously, that had not gotten a ton of maintenance over the last, you know, five or so years, and had kind of started to degrade as they do when they get no maintenance. But I was able to fully replant and restore them for under 100,000, which was apt not to mention them just getting regular maintenance as part of that budget as well. So it wasn't such a scary number. And we were able to kind of show people that it is worth the money that you're spending. And we have some good information about what it cost to maintain a storm drain system. And the capital cost to replace the storm drain system is significantly higher than it is to replace a green infrastructure feature. So there's that kind of life cycle cost benefit to there was a long way to say I have numbers, I'm happy to share them. And we're going to be putting together a monitoring program as well that we'll be doing air quality, temperature, you know, native species, number of native species and all those things as well.

A

Adrian Madaro 28:48

We has a question from East Boston Commissioner Chris Marchi, maintenance of rain gardens be managed, these are seemingly maintenance intensive features. Have we made any progress toward having you job training for green infrastructure?

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 29:01

Oh, my gosh, I love that question. Yeah, so the long and short is I work with power core every Wednesday. And they go out and they do maintenance with me in these green infrastructure features literally every week. But we're also working on creating a City Academy and other, you know, kind of youth employment and youth training programs. The primary goal of my program is to have this be community led, community maintained, and ultimately community constructed. And so we have been looking at contracting and you know, how we hire folks to build and maintain our infrastructure. And this area in particular is one place where I view community like small businesses as being essential to building and maintaining this stuff. And so the short answer is the rain gardens are not terribly labor intensive to maintain, just to want to dispel that quickly, but also acknowledged that they are a different type of maintenance, right? So it's not like hiring a catch basin cleaning company where they Go out and they, you know, use their truck and they vacuum sweep out your catch basins, you do actually have to, like manage plants. And so we do seasonal maintenance, we do a spring maintenance visit where we basically wake them up from the winter. So we remove leaf litter and all kinds of things that, you know, got in there during the winter. And then throughout the summer, we do like every couple of weeks, we go out and we remove litter, we weed, you know, we check to see if there are any bald spots that need additional plants planted. And then in the fall, like really close to winter time after the leaves are off trees and off of most of our plants, we go out again, do a large cleanup. And so that is all being managed through, like I said, Power Corp maintenance contractor that I have. And then we're piloting a green infrastructure volunteer program right now. So three of the sites that you saw up here, we're working with community groups within those neighborhoods, to they're adopting the green infrastructure in their neighborhood. And I think we talked about this at the East Boston announcement back in October last year. But the goal is to launch this volunteer program citywide in the spring of this coming year. And it allows community members to to get involved in green infrastructure to, to help give us an extra set of eyes on these features. So we get notified faster, if there's something wrong with them. We are allowing folks to do planting events. So if a community group is really, really excited about planting, you know, we will purchase plants and provide

them so that they can plant the idea is pride and ownership. And you know, that sense of, you know, my community is doing something for me, and I want to give something back. And so we're basing it on volunteer programs that exist in other peer cities that have been very successful. And so I view maintenance as a multi pronged, you know, kind of approach. So we've got the contractors, we've got the power core jobs program for youth, you know, we've got the volunteer program, just really trying to get everybody involved as much as we can,

A

Adrian Madaro 31:56

if you can get us information on the power core and on the volunteer branch would be great for us to get it out to our neighbors and constituents.

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 32:02

Absolutely. And like I said, we're working on a City Academy too, which is basically another direct job pipeline training. And I'll get you some information on that too. Sorry, no, I took a lot of time.

S

Senator Brendan Crighton 32:12

For commissioners who have questions online, is there a way?

C

Chris Mancini, STH/STB 32:14

Uh yes, we have a question from Barbara Bishop from Winthrop, technically, how can we convince the DPWs to change the base of sidewalk trees from asphalt to the permeable surface, and what's the best approach to maintain old sidewalks while allowing green infrastructure?

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 32:35

Yeah, so we're actually working on this right now with our with Commissioner McCosh, who's on the call our city of Boston disabilities Commission, we have an issue of sorry, issues maybe not the right word. When we replace sidewalks and we have existing street trees, there's a lot of damage that gets done to the existing trees. And so that's generally a push and pull between public works and parks. And so one of the things that I'm working on is trying to create systems that are better for our street trees and acknowledging that when we do work, like replacing sidewalks, if we have smaller trees, for example, that were planted in tree pits, like you know, not storm water features, but just standard city tree pits, maybe it's okay to remove those trees create a better environment for new trees, and then really intensively plant along our new sidewalk. And so the reason that we're doing that is because we were still losing trees when we do replace sidewalks. And so it's better to be proactive about creating this good environment for trees to live in when we have the opportunity. And then as far as asphalt and other material like surface material types. Currently, the city of Boston requires five foot clear concrete for walking zones, which I think is probably pretty standard across the

Commonwealth. And so one of the things that we talked to their disabilities commission about was, you know, on sidewalks where that five foot clear is prohibiting us from having street trees, and when I say prohibiting, I mean the five foot clearzone It takes priority over planting a new street tree for example, that street tree pit would like kind of cut into the five foot clear. I've worked with our disabilities commission to allow for poured in place porous pavement, meaning porous asphalt, porous concrete Resin bound stones, and like permeable rubber non paving that is consistent. No like joints are unlevel pieces like pavers have, but you know materials that still allow water to pass through. And so what we're looking at now is allowing part of that five foot clear to be made up by a poured in place material. And so that is one of the ways that we are hoping to, you know, to guarantee accessibility on our sidewalks and in our walking pads while still allowing for trees to have that healthy environment that they need and Commissioner McCosh is the first to say this all the time that trees and shade are part of accessibility, that trees and sidewalks should never be in conflict. It's really part of making a sidewalk accessible. And so I love that that mentality from her and her team. And we've really been able to, to make some forward progress in an area that I think previously, we hadn't made a lot of progress, because I think public works and parks, we're just not coming to an agreement on anything. So I'm really excited. We're going to be piloting that, this this year as part of the US Forest Service grant that the city of Boston got. And so we should have some sites to show you, hopefully, in the next year or so. That was a long winded answer. I'm sorry, I will get shorter.

C

Chris Mancini, STH/STB 35:41

We do have some public comments, but we're going to ask the folks to hold their comments until the public testimony portion. But we will get answers to everyone's questions, I just want to be sensitive to time as well.

B

Bruce Berman 35:56

I just want to thank you for this. And I think it might be helpful to the - Bruce Berman -might be helpful going forward, if we get copies of sort of the memorandum of agreement they match. Many of the communities and the DCR might find them useful. And also, it might be useful going forward as the commission goes into the communities to talk about resilience and see if you might be able to stay longer?

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 36:26

I'm happy to it's my life's work. So showing up for these kinds of events is no problem.

B

Bruce Berman 36:32

I'm familiar with the concept.

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 36:34

I love it. Yeah. So I would love to and I'll see what I can do about finding some of our previous

Love it. Yeah. So I would love to and I'll see what I can do about finding some of our previous MOAs and other things just so that you can see how they were phrased and how they've been enforced. Yeah,

S

Senator Brendan Crighton 36:44

One more question. I appreciate the presentation, fascinating stuff and fairly open to recreate some of that throughout our different communities. So in Lynn and Swampscott we have particularly challenging issue on Kings Beach, we have the highest bacteria count often the highest bacteria count, familiar for everybody, for everybody. We've had a task force over the past year or so trying to look at all differences with the land base treatment base. Really everything's been on the table. But one of the solution, one of the major construction projects to allied with the wetlands. So because they're diverting stormwater to, to, you know, that come up in terms of do that we want to allow our kids to be swimmable, which is not almost every day of the summer, could we divert some of that storm water to reduce the bacteria counts? I think some of the concerns that we had were around whether or not even be allowed through different environmental permitting agencies. Could you just walk through briefly how you were able to overcome any of those hurdles, if they were there?

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 37:42

Yep. So I'm actually going to give New York example just because theirs is really appropriate for exactly what you're describing. Because the wetland that I showed is not on the coast a little bit farther back, it's close. But it's not like you know, right there. But New York City has started putting in wetlands or salt marshes, right adjacent to the ocean. And they allow both stormwater from land as well as providing resilience for high tide from the ocean side. And my understanding is that they did have to go through special permitting to do that. But that the the result of that was the they were meeting their stormwater requirements. And the main issue was that they were building out into water. And so my guess is for us in Massachusetts, chapter 91. And like our wetlands mass EP review, and probably our main process, and other things, too, would would be our main kind of hurdles. And I know that we've seen projects go through chapter 91, that were restorative, like kind of marshland restoration on the coast. So there is some precedent there that we can point to as this is a similar project to this particular location, except that it's also going to be managing stormwater. And then as far as the like, I guess, the long story short is the permitting that I have gone through for each and every one of these gets easier every time I do it. So the early ones that I did about 10 years or so ago, were very difficult. And now I'm able to point to other examples and projects that are our regulators are familiar with. And so they're like, oh, yeah, we saw I remember that one from a few years ago. And it's actually working really well. And so I think that that's probably our best bet at this point for doing some more coastal resilience, you know, wetland features. And I'm happy to share some of the permit applications that I have from like, when we did some of these just to show you kind of how we how we phrased and like the examples that we cited. And then the conversations and meetings that we had with regulators for largely, we love what you're trying to do here, like we actually appreciate that this is, you know, a real restoration of a natural environment, you know, a kind of returning of our beaches to their their kind of previous form. And so I think the regulators want to help want to work with us. It's just a matter of making our case and then having precedent examples. So I'll share some information with you all and They will say the permitting has been easier lately than it was in the past. So

S

Senator Brendan Crighton 40:04

I don't see any more questions to the commissioners, I see a hand in the back. We're gonna wait for the public comment period for members of the public who would appreciate your interest. So, Kate, thank you so much.

K

Kate England Green Infrastructure 40:14

You're very welcome. Thank you. Happy to be here. Thanks for the time.

A

Adrian Madaro 40:23

Commissioner Arrigo, you're up!

C

Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 40:30

Happy Halloween, everyone. Good morning. Thank you all for inviting me to speak. And thank you for your advocacy for all of our residents to have access to our beautiful beaches. My name is Brian Arrigo. I'm the Commissioner of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, joined today by a few members of our team, most notably our Universal Access Program Director, Tom McCarthy, who does tremendous work. And I would I would ask anyone to take a trip out to his office and see the tremendous work that his staff does. I did it a couple of weeks ago and just amazing work that gets done through our Universal Access Program. I want to start by saying that the Healy-Driscoll administration, and our team at DCR have the same goals that all of you do, ensuring that metropolitan regions beaches are welcoming places for all people. All residents, regardless of their race, ability, language, or income. These beaches truly do belong to all of our residents. And all of our residents should be able to access them safely and have fun. My team and DCR and I are committed to working with all of you on achieving this, one of the things that we really focus on early on, is improving the way that our agency communicates. I truly believe that communication breeds trust and for us to communicate across the agency, with the public with legislators, municipalities and partners, like all of you, we truly want to be good partners. And we want to hear your thoughts on how we can do better and make the improvements that we need to do and make and truly not only hear your thoughts, but then take action based on the feedback that we get, as most of you know, and it's been noted. Prior to my appointment, I served as the Mayor of the City of Revere, and I was able to work alongside DCR to improve access to Revere Beach, America's first public beach and transform it into a welcoming place where what I love most about walking Revere Beach or running it early in the morning was hearing a number of languages from all over the world anytime you were down there. So I'm certainly no stranger to our metropolitan politan beaches and the challenges that they present but also the opportunities that we have to ensure that they are vibrant, accessible and welcoming. Over the last six months, I've had the pleasure of meeting almost all of you and visiting our beautiful beaches everywhere from Kings Beach to Nantasket. And I truly appreciate the partnership that that we have have formed when we last met at Carson beach for the release of your report in May. I think it was my second or third week, I was heading into my first summer as commissioner. And I have to report back that I've learned an awful lot in the last six months. And we have as a team a lot of great ideas about

how we can improve our beaches for the 2024 season. And we are focused on that because we know that access to open spaces, especially beaches, truly do build healthy communities. As we prepare for the next summer, the Healey-Driscoll administration is committed to working together with all of you and our community partners on how we can remedy systemic injustices that have resulted in our lower income disabled, black and brown communities having unequal access to our beaches, parks and green spaces. And we know we all know this that the communities that are represented here today bear the brunt of the climate crisis. And we truly believe and I think everyone here believes that every person needs access to clean water to swim in to cool off in and experience the fun that we we can provide at our at our public spaces. In terms of our budget, Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll showed their commitment to environmental issues in the fiscal 24 budget by allotting a record 1% of the state budget to support the agencies of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. The increase that we saw, in our budget at DCR, is the highest the agency has seen in the last eight years. And that aids us not only in operating and maintaining our properties and programs, but also allows us to hire additional staff, including staff focused on environmental justice, the new funding that you're supported, will help us better carry out our mission of protecting, promoting and enhancing our commonwealth of natural cultural and recreational resources, including our beaches for the well being evolve. So I would just want to take a moment to thank all of you for your support, and everyone's support, you know, universally anywhere I go anywhere. People say you need more money, we need more resources. And, and Governor Kelly has truly committed to that and the legislature has committed to that as well. So I want to thank you for that. And as we, you know, look forward to hiring and recruitment. I just want you to know that our focus is on equity and diversity and it's truly because we need to make sure that our staff represents the communities that we have have property, and that includes hiring lifeguards and aquatic staff. This administration committed to doing everything that we can to ensure that families have a safe experience when they visit our beaches. That's how did that effort we hired a record number of lifeguards in 2023. exceeding our goal by over 60 lifeguards we had a total of 766 lifeguards who kept our visitor visitors safe at our coastal and inland beaches across the state. And to reach that number. Governor Healey and Lieutenant Governor Driscoll approved the highest hourly wage that the Commonwealth has ever offered to lifeguards paying up to 22 to \$24 an hour, in addition to sign on and retention bonuses, that allowed lifeguards to earn an extra \$1,250. We're building on those efforts for next summer. And we're certainly aimed at having another successful season. We're going to this year, be able to start our recruitment a little bit earlier than we have in previous years. And we're partnering with colleges, school districts, municipalities, community organizations, local elected officials, our seat delegations, as well as running a robust communications plan through our communications department. In terms of capital infrastructure, we have committed to investing in our metro beaches for generations to come. And the last five years, DCR has put \$32 million into capital improvements on our DCR metropolitan beaches. That includes a number of things that I'll list \$2.8 million for stormwater improvement \$1.5 million for a sidewalk replacement and improved accessibility at Wollaston beach \$750,000 For railing replacement and Lynn shore reservation 540,000 towards rehabbing tennis courts and basketball courts at tenean and constitution beaches, \$500,000 for emergency storm repairs at Nantasket, \$250,000 for a replacement of benches, receptacles and bike racks at Nantasket as well and millions towards deferred maintenance. This year, we're also wrapping up a \$3 million investment at Sullivan field on Revere Beach that will create a unique experience for all visitors of all ages. And I'm really excited about that one. We're also launching a major redesign of Revere Beach Boulevard and ocean Ave that will provide climate resilient approach that we heard a little bit about green infrastructure. We're going to be implementing some of those some of those ideas to the parkway. Its design, enhancing pedestrian and cyclist access, improving the Parkland improving and preserving the beautiful historic features of America's

first public beach. Some of the projects that we have in the pipeline that I hope you're aware of are you know, we just had a contract for shore production, shore protection assessment down in Hull. We're installing 39 solar light fixtures at Nantasket we're replacing playgrounds at both constitution and Castle Island. We're extending the restroom at Castle Island and reappointing the ward bathhouse at Nahant beach. And finally, I want to mention and give a shout out to the collaboration that we've committed to with the city of Boston to apply for a FEMA grant funding for the final design permitting and construction of a climate resiliency project that will block the flood pathway along Conley street enhanced Tenean beach and improve Neponset River Greenway in terms of providing an improving access inclusive and inclusivity something as something as simple as signage as we know can make a very big difference in the last several years DCR installed 160 signs at our beaches that include a QR code, that one can when scan can translate into nine different languages Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, traditional Chinese, Arabic, Cape, Verdean, Creole, Mandarin and Russian. This summer we also installed new shorebird protection panels at our beaches, explaining to beach goers that they are sharing the beach with piping flow verbs. And these panels are also available in multiple languages via the QR code. And we're working with Save the harbor and Save the Bay on signage for our metropolitan beaches that will welcome beach goers in multiple languages that do not require a QR code. I think that's really important to to call out and to acknowledge that, you know, having been the mayor of Revere, I know that not everyone has access or is going to use a QR code but to the to the effect that we can provide multiple language signage in in, you know, in real life. That's important. And we're also looking at using some new environmental justice mapping tools that our team is designed that will allow us to better understand the language access needs in the communities that are surrounding properties and beaches. And as we work through, building out and installing additional signage, we want to make sure at the end of the day that everyone has the ability to access and enjoy our beautiful beaches, no matter what language is spoken. In addition to ensuring that our non English speaking residents can safely access and enjoy our beaches, we're also working toward and investing in making our beaches more universally accessible. As I mentioned, Tom McCarthy, the head of our universal access program is here with us. And UAP is really focused on providing recreational opportunities to people of all abilities at properties, including our beaches. This year, we invested in more than \$300,000 and new beach wheelchairs and beach mats that includes 363 feet of mat at Nahant beach 264 feet of Revere Beach, 198 feet at constitution 132 at Nantasket 99 feet at Carson beach. And we also included 40 new beach wheelchairs, including new chairs, a Carson and Pleasure Bay. And across the state we've invested in a total of 4700 feet of beach mats at 26 beaches. These are really critical tools that allow visitors with limited mobility to access our beaches. All of our beach wheelchairs, thanks to the work that Tom does were in service this year and were kept in good condition throughout the summer. Tom and his team have worked directly with Chris at Save the harbor and Save the Bay to make sure that they have their seasonal staff surveying DCR beaches for accessibility from a visitor's perspective and produce accessibility audits. We are in the process of of looking at that information and learning a little bit from that information and helping it us helping use it to make our capital investments as well. I'm really proud and I think the team that dcr. And all of you should be really proud of the work that the universal access program does. And we're committed to working with all of you and all of our communities and partners to raise awareness.

A

Adrian Madaro 53:42

Can everyone on teams please mute?

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 53:47
Thanks Adrian , Appreciate that.

A Adrian Madaro 53:49
All the day's work.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 53:53
So yeah, at the end of the day, we're really proud of the work that gets done through UAP. And again, I I would ask folks to help us make sure that we're raising awareness about that program and that we're offering programs to everybody of all abilities. It's part of our ongoing work To make our beaches more welcoming to our families, and people of all backgrounds. We're also committed to continuing to invest in the better beaches program and work with our partners on multicultural programming that fosters a sense of community and builds trust with with our neighbors. Over the last summer we permitted over 100 special events at our metropolitan beaches through through this program. These events included everything from concert series to the beach - just Befest family family game nights on the boardwalk, abilities dance Boston events, Stonewall sports, beach parties literary literary projects and a lot more. We look forward to continuing this program and hosting even more inclusive programming next summer. And we're certainly committed to that work. And we look forward to it. And I'm also open to hearing more ideas about how we can improve our permitting process. I know that can be sometimes a challenge. And we want to make sure that we're allowing and open to allowing new people and new organizations to participate. One item that I want to touch on as well was transportation to beaches. And in terms of transportation, we recognize that many, many families rely on public transit, in getting to our spaces and, and using the T to be able to do that. And this is something that we're committed to working with the MBTA on. I meet regularly with GM Ng, and we've already discussed and have talked about, you know, opportunities for us to collaborate on messaging making the public more aware of how to access Metro beaches using public transportation. I'm going to move to water quality testing. And I'd like to talk about our commitment to ensuring that our residents have clean healthy water for recreation. In the Water Quality Report Card. Annually, we saw that we're on the right track with a 93% water quality rating in the region's beaches in 2022. But as was mentioned earlier, last summer's climate change driven record rainfall that resulted in unsafe bacteria levels in our water bodies for long periods of times, May 2023. A really tough year for swimming. So as part of our commitment to clean water, we conduct regular water quality testing at all of our waterfronts from Memorial Day through Labor Day, in accordance with DPH regulations. The EPA required tests that we do that are also required under DPH regulations has a 24 hour incubation period before it can confirm as a result. As soon as a result is confirmed, our contractor loads it up in our parks alert page. And we've used that as a way to make sure that people know you know the condition of the water quality. Staff works with our testing contractor to ensure that our website and app are are updated as soon as we get attached back. Unfortunately, there is a 24 hour lag. But we do we are committed to continuing to make sure that folks know in an effort to alert the public of the water quality testing results in a timely manner we've as I said use the park alerts page to update any waterfront closures. And we've also worked with DPH on their newly updated water quality data page as well. Our Park alerts page has been certainly a

learning process. I think this is the the first year that we tried to roll that out and we continue to we will continue to modify and adapt. It has been a great way to alert the public with real time updates on Park and waterfront closures. This year our communications team is also working with our aquatics division lakes and ponds and parks operation staff on several water quality videos, to use social media and other forms of media to get the word out about how they can help the public can use our spaces safely. I will say that our collaboration with DPH is truly critical so that we can provide the public with information about where our water quality as soon as we get it. And when we get a test back that shows bacteria levels that exceed EPA and DPH threat thresholds. We do post No swimming signs and our red pen and flag with the universal no swimming symbol to alert the public that the water isn't safe for swimming. As soon as the test show acceptable ranges we we will remove those signs and change the red flags to blue flags, alerting the public that the water is swimmable. Additionally, when testing results indicate high bacteria in in our water lifeguards remain on the beach to inform visitors that it's not safe to go in the water. As I mentioned earlier, water safety and water quality is absolutely a top priority for this administration. And that's why we've been so invested in our lifeguard lifeguard recruitment and ensuring that we're working with DPH and our our other partner agencies on smooth water quality testing and public notification process. I guess in closing, I know there'll be questions and we'll have an opportunity to take those but I wanted to just go and show my appreciation for the opportunity that you've given me today to provide an update in some of the ways that we look forward to extending access to our metropolitan beaches, and ensure that they are truly welcoming spaces for all all people. And of course, there's always going to be more work to be done. And there's always going to be ways that we can improve. And we're committed to doing that. And that's why our team is here. And we're we're here to learn and to listen and to take your feedback and ultimately produce results and improve for the betterment of everybody in the Commonwealth. So thank you for your support. Thank you for your commitment to our beaches. And happy to take any questions.

S

Senator Brendan Crighton 1:00:49

Thank you, Commissioner, we appreciate your testimony. At the outset, you talked a bit of communication. And I have to say that phenomenal, we really appreciate that. The local side of it, but also on a commission to you having an open door and being incredibly accessible and your entire team. So thank you look forward to continuing that. Once you just to quickly ask a question and open it up to my co chair and fellow commissioners. You talked a bit about water quality water testing, towards the end of the presentation, obviously, over the past several years, just commissions are very active and looking at those testing procedures as well as the flagging data. And you would reference a 24 hour lag period. It's it's very problematic in the sense that you know, when those flags go up, and when that notification is made available online, it's always it's always late and certainly inaccurate. When you when you look at it really only if we had two back to back rain days, would it actually be an accurate reading of bacteria accounted for only really happen for that second day. So for us, you know, looking at the flags, and I'm sure most folks, you know probably already made aware of this, but there's you know, just not a level of trust in that they are accurately telling us whether the beach water is safe, they may lead some people ignoring the flags may lead to people skipping the beach day when the fact the water is very clean, not as big an issue that we have major issues in Kings because it's Kings is pretty much close every day. But for Long Beach in Nahant or Constitution beach, having that inaccurate information creates just a ton of confusion. I know it's a it's in short of a testing system can come back results faster. No, it's a difficult one to overcome. The commission has recommended in the past that looking at alternative approaches such as historic rainfall may lead to more accurate representation as to whether the bacteria is in fact

in the water so we can raise x amount on this day, you know, the next day, the beaches and swimmable, I guess I would just encourage you to ask that, you know, under your administration, take maybe a deeper dive into looking at that if the system right now is so flawed that really the public can't trust it in where we're losing good beach days and also putting people in harm's way on potential bad beach days, maybe an alternative approach is considered. And just another issue referenced lifeguards alerting swimmers. Something else to consider for beaches that don't have lifeguards, like at Kings. Because even if the red flags are there, we still have people swimming, families swimming there all the time. It made this may already exist, but some type of public awareness being made. Maybe not by lifeguards, but other DCR staff. And it was challenging to interrupt someone's beach day, but it could help alleviate the problem that we see in my district.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:03:37

Yeah, so I would say one thing I would like and maybe one takeaway is for us to, to convene with DPH and talk about the testing and talk about the process and that historic kind of looking at the historic data rather than, you know, kind of relying on a contractor and getting maybe lab results or getting, you know, that information. You know, one takeaway I would like is maybe for us to convene with DPH and talk about that, that protocol. And I don't know if those regulations are like if, if those of DPH regulations or, you know, I want to make sure we're all all on the same page.

S Senator Brendan Crighton 1:04:16

So that sounds good.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:04:18

And then on King's speech, I would just say, you know, the the administration and Governor Healey is committed to to working through DEP and working with the cities and working with you to to make that up. Hopefully, eventually I clean space and clean water.

A Adrian Madaro 1:04:37

Thank you. Appreciate. Thanks, Commissioner. I also want to elevate the senators point on the red flag issue. There have been instances of constitution beach where the water was not safe, but red flags weren't up. Conversely, there have been times when red flags have been up when the water is perfectly fine to swim in. So this commission would love to work with you, your team and DPH to try to tackle that issue. because these these, and I know you know this intimately, in Revere but this these resources are too precious for our communities to not have that accurate information. And speaking of information and insight agenda we discussed briefly, the commitment DCR made to multilingual signage. Again, having been mayor Revere, you know how important this is in a diverse community with folks from all parts of the world. My district is like that. The senators district is like that. Representative Giannino's district is like

that, right? I mean, many of us have constituencies where folks don't speak English as a primary language. What is the update on the commitment that DCR made? I mean, prior to you even taking the role on that multilingual signage? Or what's the timeline looking like?

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:05:49

So we are we're committed to improving signage just across the board, right, including the QR code, which we've done, we've rolled that out. Last summer, we've committed to additional signage that's in multiple languages, kind of in real life signage that's in multiple language. And that's a commitment that we've we'll we'll follow through on and we'll we'll have that ready for this summer.

A Adrian Madaro 1:06:12

Excellent. Thank you. And I do appreciate your sensitivity to not only relying on the QR code, because there certainly is a technology divide in neighborhoods like ours. Also just want to talk specifically about constitution Beach, really excited to hear about the playground that is in dire need of some TLC. So we'd love to catch up more offline about that and learn what the plans are. But would also welcome you to come up and join me at constitution beach boardwalk and there are some significant infrastructure upgrades that are needed. We took a walkthrough with Chris Mancini with save the harbor recently, the partnership between the MBC and DCR has yielded some really wonderful investments over the years at constitution beach, but they have become a little outdated at this point, that we have masonry that's falling apart, pretty much none of the water features work anymore, and want to give a shout out and thanks to Tom McCarthy and your team at the Universal Access Program. It was in partnership with you and your team that we got ADA mats for constitution Beach, however I visited a couple times this summer, they are in need of some of some investments too. Not only were they not in the right places, they weren't going to the water and I had a meeting with a couple of constituents who are wheelchair bound who appreciate the investment but were really disappointed because they couldn't actually use them. Or if they were using them, they couldn't even get to the water. So we'd love to take another look at that and see how we can improve it. It's been some years since we've done that at constitution beach and also would love to figure out a way to work with you on accessible wheelchairs for constitution beach, and I'm thinking up those constituents that I've met with it would be life changing for them to have that type of access. So without further ado, I want to turn it over to my fellow Commissioners. I'm sure they have comments to representative.

T Tackey Chan 1:08:06

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks commission for for coming by. I'm sorry, I missed the beginning, I had to take an emergency call. It's great to have someone has both kinds of experience Middle experience to kind of see both sides of the challenges as well as budgetary, as you're aware budgetary department the state has regarding funding agencies and we have a history, you know, the DCR has been relying for a long time and it's reflected in the budget, that Quincy, DCR is has about - Quincy is about 20% of our property actually belongs to dcr. And it's very important to us, obviously, I welcome you to to come visit Quincy. Rep Meschino beat me apparently we need to beat me apparently and we want to bypass us straight to Hull..

But obviously, was welcome to come visit the city. And obviously the beach is important. But you know, obviously it's such a big landholder in our city, the delegation is very interested in talking to you about you know, not just the beach, but the whole the whole infrastructure associated because you have two major roadways, very heavily used [unintelligible] bunch of open land parks close to the beaches plus it'll give us structure for now we have the streetlights. So treatments a big problem in our world. But you know, I hope we can make some time to visit.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:09:25
Absolutely, absolutely.

M Mercy Robinson 1:09:27
I do have a question. You mentioned about the parks at Carson beach. Does that include the green fence?

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:09:36
I don't know the answer to that right now. But I can make sure that we get that information back to the to the Commission for sure.

J Joan Meschino 1:09:48
Thank you for the visit. 30 to 40% of my I've got islands like forts, I've got sea walls, I've got beach and I have one for texture pack. So I just want to uplift chairs remarks, again about the signage. Please don't forget places like that Nantasket, the whole Friends of Nantasket beach are actually very active because they can encourage more diversity to come to Nantasket Beach, you probably see more people than any other beach. So don't forget places like Hull, Nantasket Beach, where we really do actively want to make it more welcoming. And the Friends are really taking steps and strategies towards that, and I don't think any of those signs but don't go by, don't go by me. Other thing I wanted to circle back to also was on the access. So also keep in mind, we have been grateful for the mats that has helped tremendously. But I'm not sure people know how to access the - to access the wheelchairs, and people are still going to Hull, our party, because we also have them for the town as well. And they've already been breaking there. So I'm not sure folks know that they're available. So I just would encourage them to give thought to that. And the last, the last piece on how to say is that it will be Thank you DCR put tremendous amount of investment in restoring that seawall and the access points, they kind of see. So I just, I don't know what you do about that. I don't know if that's when he quit sort of at the back. But I feel like there's only one spot along the DCR, where they really can get on. Again, I think good signage, or I don't know how you reach people, but give some thought to how people see that and know that or even maybe how we think about what parking is available in -when you're seeing the space, it's kind of its unique space. The other thing I wanted to sort of circle back on relative to Hull was one of the reasons we invited the commissioner down was he's got a reservation is a town and the town has been doing a tremendous amount of economic investment, and just wanted to thank you publicly for your

willingness to be a partner. I know that seems to be a little controversial. But but that is the relationship we're really looking to have. And because of that we've got this the same way in terms of your comments about climate, you know, Hull, Nantasket beach is a very good spot. Its the investments that you make in partnership with the town, literally preserve the beach, as well as provide access, as well as all the co-benefits. So we all know about. So I did just want to say, you know, as you're thinking about how you're hiring, keep this in mind the fact about the equity piece as hugely important. But please keep in mind, also that that partnership that that economic investment piece and that climate piece as well.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:13:06

No, thank you. And one thing that I want to note is, you know, I mentioned \$300,000, we invested in mats and, you know, some new wheelchairs, that's not a one time commitment, right. And so that's those are, that's programming and investments that we're we're committed to making as as long as I'm Commissioner. And I think as long as governor Healey's here we're going to continue to make those investments in the UAP, in accessibility, mats, in signage. And so we're six months in, but we're we're committed to making those those investments, and that's not going to go away.

J Joan Meschino 1:13:45

That's fantastic, too, that a lot of our communities have Friends groups, and you'll see a lot of commissioners come from those groups, houses of relatives. They're excited about the programming piece around accessibility piece. So how you get on we have a great community hanging on beach. So those are places we would be delighted it to partner with you in terms of getting the word and sharing and pushing where we think better and getting feedback and all that stuff. So those Friends groups are there for you as both advocates pushing and boots on the ground observing. So keep that in mind too.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:14:33

Absolutely. So I mentioned communication at the beginning. And and, you know, I think that the investment in communication allows us to build trust in folks and know that we're reliable partners. And, you know, we do have so many great organizations. There's so many great folks that are that want to be helpful to our our mission and to everyone's mission here. And to the extent that we can leverage those partnerships and really invest in them is there really important for, for my tenure here as commissioner, it was mentioned, I was on the other side for a little while. So I understand some of the challenges and the opportunities, but friends groups and, you know, organizations that want to support us, we, we need to do a better job of communicating building trust, and then following through, and we're committed to doing that.

J Joan Meschino 1:15:23

I would also like to give a quick shout out to Boots on the Ground. Your teams on the ground, listen Nantasket are tremendous. And it's nice to see that. So from the top connecting down, I just wanted to shout out to Kevin Conway in Nantasket Beach where they really, they have a

great work plan, they, they've got the hustle, and they really care deeply about these spaces, and have real ownership around them. So we really just should give a shout out to all the boots on that.

C Commissioner Brian Arrigo, DCR 1:15:52

Thank you. Thank you for that comment, because our folks just across the agency, I've been blown away at how many mission driven committed, you know, truly caring folks we have in our agency and the folks that are boots on the ground are you know, across the board amazing.

S Senator Brendan Crighton 1:16:09

I don't know if there are any commissioners that have chimed in and tried to ask questions online remotely.

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:16:29

Commissioner, Nicole McClain from Lynn just offered a suggestion. Commissioner Arrigo, we know you were up in doing the North Shore tour a couple weeks ago, but wasn't able to transfer that to you know, any visit up to perhaps as we do look at getting signs up there. So just reading what it says, it's great to have a visit, perhaps an event where local orgs could help with installing a new sign regarding the meaning of the plaque, education.

A Adrian Madaro 1:16:59

Should just highlight to that Nicole is not only the founder of the North Shore Juneteenth Association Commissioner, but she is also a city councilor at large, in the city and has been doing tremendous work, to raise awareness and take action as well. With that thank you, thank you. Next we'd like to welcome up community partners and stakeholders. We have former commissioner Coleman Nee the CEO of Triangle Inc, Edward Galan the co founder of a Trike called Funk, Veronica Robles director and founder of Veronica Robles Cultural Center, and if anyone else is here, as part of this group, come on up.

C Coleman Nee 1:17:44

Morning, Happy Halloween,

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:17:45

Edward and Veronica will be testifying via Teams

A Adrian Madaro 1:17:48

So no panels, individuals? Okay. Sorry. The floor is all yours.



Coleman Nee 1:17:54

Thank you. Thank you very much, Senator. And I would love to tell you that I'm being environmentally friendly, but I just forgot to print my speech out. So I'm gonna have to use my computer. Thank you for having me here. It's great to be here today. Commissioner, thank you for the your comments and your commitment to investment and accessibility. That's great. And Tom's Good to see you again. And former commissioner Murray. Thank you. Well, my name is Coleman Nee, CEO of Triangle Inc. I do want to thank this commission that I've been involved with for many years now and its staff and supporters for the important work being done to ensure that our beautiful Greater Boston beaches are safe, accessible, and available to all of us. Triangle Inc is an over a 50 year old organization we were established by business leaders and families who believe that we're all people with ability. Since those early days we've rapidly expanded to provide youth and adults with innovative career leadership and safety skills needed to live more independent, dignified lives. We have a School to Career Program or empowering people for Inclusive Communities Program. We equip high school students with disabilities and reach graduates with the tools to start careers and serve and lead their local communities and we have nine beautiful homes in Malden, Melrose Peabody Danvers Redding Stoneham, and Saugus soon to open a 10th. And we provide support to about 46 people to help them enjoy more independent and dignified lives. That's who we are. What we're connection to the beaches commission is that the beaches are a great - a great natural and free resource for our community, a community that, in many cases doesn't have a lot of money. And, and this availability of the beach is is can be a very powerful resource for them, particularly as they're looking to recreate during the warmer months. I'm also a former lifeguard at Carson beach from 40 years ago so I have personally I have a strong connection with the beaches that have seen huge improvements and investments in that time and driving by I see the amount of people who use and recreate the beaches. It's heartwarming, and I really applaud the commissions efforts to make these great public resources available to all, especially those who work and live in the communities but have not historically been able to enjoy the beaches for many reasons. Triangle is proud to be part of the recent efforts through funding from Save the Harbor/Save the Bays Better Beaches grant program. With that support we've engaged in connecting the disability community to our beaches for several years now. Each summer we partner with DCR Universal Access Program to host a signature event entitled Beach Ability. This event brings nearly 200 people with disabilities and their families for a fun filled day at constitution beach in East Boston through music and dancing games and accessible recreational equipment, including - floating and sand wheelchairs. And the event really highlights the availability of this amazing resource in our own backyard. We're very fortunate this year to be joined by a trike called funk as well too, which - our our members and participants are still talking about how much fun they had with those guys. And - in 2019, one of our earliest grants from Save the Harbor Save the Bay we examined accessibility of regional public beaches, and triangle staff members supervised our individuals from our residential homes. As they conducted assessments of local beaches around North Shore and East and East Boston, we identified some important areas that can be easily addressed for the short and long term and for our residents. It felt great in helping them make their local beaches easier for people with disabilities to access. From these efforts earned from the valued supportive save the harbor Save the Bay and DCR's Universal Access Program. And most importantly this commission, we were able to identify three areas where our beaches could be more accessible, inviting for the disability community. First off, and it was glad to see this in the Commission's presentation. Increased funding for DCR is universal access program to ensure equal access

and outdoor recreation and Massachusetts state parks and beaches. This includes more investment in specialized recreation equipment for uses at beaches and skating rinks, and adaptive recreation programs, and also a targeted marketing campaign by dcr to highlight the beaches to disability, programs and schools. We would also recommend a preseason accessibility audit at all of the Metropolitan beaches to ensure that the equipment and facilities are in good working order the equipment is available, and that it can be accessed throughout summer. And, and to your point representative that, you know, it's great to have MobyMats and equipment but if it's if it's been seeing too much love over the years it might need to be replaced in order for people to use them. And then the other suggestion we have is that a preseason disability and ableism training be offered for all beach managers and workers including lifeguards to ensure that persons with disabilities are understood and respected and feel welcome at the beaches. Too often our society overlooks persons with disabilities everything from physical building design to basic language. And it's our hope that targeted short term trainings can better prepare the staff for the coming season and help them feel equipped to provide an enjoyable enjoyable experience for everyone. We would like to bolster the already robust amount of accessible equipment at DCR's Boston Harbor public beaches increased funding for the maintenance and upkeep of Moby mats, both floating and sand wheelchairs that are vitally important for people with mobility issues. We also recommend to look at those during the summer I mean if the mats are covenant Sam that she has done have work in shops or wheels, the beach at least beaches then suddenly closed off to people in our programs who arrive expecting use DCR's awesome equipment. And other recommendation relates to staff training. And again, I mentioned this about ableism. Many organizations including Triangle offer workplace trainings for staff members to learn how to better understand disabilities provide language guidance when talking about disabilities, and ensure that our local beach policies and practices refrain from ableist practices that may inadvertently be institutionalized over the course of many decades. Finally, our last recommendation hold on one second here. Our last recommendation is sadly in phasing. And and we hold on here. Many in the disability community do not feel like beaches are a welcoming place for them to visit. And prior to hosting beach ability. Several of our own participants and older community members had never experienced a sand on their feet or their waves or their body. Despite living for decades within a mile of the shore sometimes even closer. To boost the usage of DCR as Universal Access Program at local beaches, we suggested a broad outreach and marketing campaign. Again, this highlights MobyMat, accessible bathrooms accessible parking sand and floating wheelchairs in each of the area beaches. campaign should target service providers like Triangle but we have many providers like ourselves in all of the regions of Greater Boston, as well as special education programs at local schools, community centers, YMCA, any number of other partners serving the local disability community. So to close my remarks, I again I would be remiss if I didn't applaud DCR's efforts and leading the charge for disability inclusion or beaches, and throughout the many recreational facilities they operate across the Commonwealth. I also really want to thank save the harbor Save the Bay for their steadfast support of Triangle's recreation initiatives to help us break down barriers, together with these two partners have never been more proud of our organization that we've been able to serve as an example, for disability inclusion at the beach. The recommendations here today for the Commission are often in that spirit of hope. And and that 1000s more people can have the same experiences in the future. And I'm happy to take any questions. Thank you.

A

Adrian Madaro 1:25:50

Coleman Thank you, always great to see you. Great to see you. Many years of service, whether advocating for veterans or for our disabled community, it's a pleasure to partner with you. And

in particular, from the East Boston standpoint, thank you so much what you do at Constitution, beach Piers Park sailing center, Triangle, and you personally have been consistent in your support of the community. And we're grateful.

C Coleman Nee 1:26:14
Thank you. Good partner.

A Adrian Madaro 1:26:15
Thank you. One thing I just want to flag because I think this is actually an opportunity to partner with you at Triangle and also with Commissioner Arrigo and DCR. There have been, in addition to the comments on the accessibility issues at the beach, there have been erosion issues and landscaping issues that have also prevented folks who are mobility challenged for accessing the entire property of the beach. I'm sure you hear about that from folks in the neighborhood that you work with through Triangle. So perhaps when we schedule that walkthrough with you Commissioner, Arrigo we can have Coleman out there and look at this holistically from from all angles.

C Coleman Nee 1:26:53
I would love to join i - We do hear that from from people on the beaches. And in fact, I think at the last commission meeting, you heard testimony from Andrea Gail Bennett from from the Disabled American Vets who, who said that in many cases in the beaches that she was going to, there was a difference between whether I'm a participant or spectator, depending on the condition of the physical. Yeah. And I think that's that's important. And we'd love to look at that with you, sir. Thank you.

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:27:19
Can I ask that we acknowledge Veronica Robles she has a time constraint. I want to make sure she gets her commwnt before she has to leave.

A Adrian Madaro 1:27:32
Hi Veronica are you with us?

V Veronica Robles Director/Founder, Veronica Robles Cultural Center 1:27:38
Hello, hello, everyone. Can you hear me? Yes. Hello. Can you hear me? Yes. Can you hear me? Okay, thank you so much. My name is Veronica Robles, founder, co founder and executive director of Veronica Robles Cultural Center. Its mission is to promote Latino arts and culture as engine for stronger communities and economic growth. Our vision is to to work on a more creative, just and equitable Boston. So we open in activist spaces where our community has no

access, or are not familiar with. And I'm here just to provide my testimony about working with Better Beaches, they have allowed us to bring our community first Latino community and families, artists and entrepreneurs to the Constitution Beach, which many people don't know even that they are live in East Boston they're not aware of this resource natural resource. And we've been bringing our community together there and activating the space. Also this year, we were able not only to bring together Latino community, but the multicultural community, community bipoc artists, youth we bring in a lot of youth to work with or with the different community members that we have in East Boston from different ethnic backgrounds. And I just one recommendation that I would like to do for DCR is the permitting process. Really, there is a way for us there are we would like to do more things in - in the beach, or these spaces is to have a more accessible system or platform for us to navigate and be able to to work in and use the spaces. I'll read more. So I'm just trying to be brief and mindful for everybodys time. And thank you very much for giving me this opportunity to to support and I continue working with DCR and Better Beaches. And thank you everybody for the efforts everybody's doing to again, work together to make all the beautiful, waterfront and open spaces to our communities.

A

Adrian Madaro 1:30:10

Veronica thank you bring so much cultural diversity we have in East Boston, you're always a wonderful partner, whether it's at Constitution beach or anything going on in the neighborhood. So thank you for your comments. Thank you for your collaboration, and we look forward to continued partnerships in the months and years ahead. Next, we'll hear from Edward Galan.

E

Edward Galan 1:30:41

Good morning. Are you able to hear me? Yep. Yes. All right. Well, again, pleasure to be here. My name is Edward Galan. I'm a co founder of a Trike called Funk along with my co founder, Aaron Meyers. And yeah, and also, I want to thank Coleman, for kind words. You know, we also had a really wonderful time collaborative and few and we hope to do it again. So today, I just want to talk about the profound impact that the better beaches grant has had on our business and in turn that you know, the impact that our creative venture or Trike called funk has had on the community. So to tell you a little bit about who we are a Trike called funk is kind of centers around this one of a kind, front loading cargo tricycle that we've converted into a mobile marketing vehicle, performance platform. It's equipped with its own portable dance floor, sound system, DJ setup, and we even have our own power source. That means we can go almost anywhere. So we really go all over the place. From performing arts to visual arts, we create interactive arts experiences around the trike, public spaces with the aim of unleashing people's creativity, making connections between them and building community. And we also tried to amplify the cause, products or services of our sponsors, and create a paid gig opportunities for collaborating artists. So we launched in the summer of 2021. And we've had the honor of receiving the better beaches grant for the last three summers. And I can just say that, that has been so critical to our business. I mean, going back to our first summer, in 2021, working with better beaches. You know, that summer when we were at Constitution Beach, our very first gig. We that was when it really kind of all came together for us. And we realized sort of our niche, we, we were able to figure out, okay, this is what we want to do. We want to be out outdoors, family friendly, community oriented events. And it really cemented for us to that this, that we wanted to support organizations that were environmental stewards in our community. So that led to us working with a bunch of other folks including Harbor Keepers, Boston Harbor now, and

the city of Boston parks department, for example. So that grant, really just accelerated our business set us up for success. And since then, you know, we've worked with over 70, plus other organizations, we've done 170 activations, 290 hours of Interactive Arts experiences, while providing 85 hours of free, give back hours to our communities. And we are most proud of we've been able to create 113 paid gig opportunities for local artists with whom we collaborate and share our revenue. And I just want to say that it's been really amazing to be able to serve and be in the spaces that, yeah, are just so well maintained, and curated, you know, Constitution Beach, Carson, Wollaston, Revere, Malibu Nantasket, we've been able to be at all of these speeches, doing our, you know, fun, interactive mix of music and dance, and working with a bunch of different groups we've gotten to work with. For one series, we did a collaboration with some of the organizations in the Boston bike community, so we got to, we got to bring bikers over to the beaches. We've got dance groups to come and do performances DJs visual artists, so we were really just, it's really important when we talk about bringing diversity inclusion to the beaches to bring in different. Yeah, people from, from the communities that we come from, you know, I'm Dominican. Aaron has extensive international experience, we try to bring the fact that we are lovers of diversity and culture. And we try to create environments that are open and welcoming to all different types of people. So for instance, me as a DJ, I'm playing music from varying from merengue, salsa, camp, samba, bhangra, we want people to hear their music as part of the soundscape of our city and our and you know, our beaches. Because we think that that is that makes it a more welcoming environment. And yeah, one of our highest aims is really to be a bridge and a connector of different cultures throughout our city, so I just can't say how I just want to say I'm super grateful to, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Better Beaches grant, you know, program. And in terms of recommendations, I the only thing I would say, is echoing maybe what Veronica Robles mentioned, which is making the process of getting permits a bit easier. But other than that, we've just had a really wonderful experience. And yeah, great grateful to be here. So thank you.

C

Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:36:40

Thank you. We have a few public comments if that's all of you, and then just want to be mindful of time, we're getting close to the end of our two hours. So the public can, you know, keep your comments brief. Save the harbor, as you know, we're managing the commission for the legislature and working closely with DCR, we will continue to work with you and with all the folks in the room to make sure these comments get to the right place, and we can address them. I'm glad Eddie, Veronica and Coleman could be here, you know that your comments really illuminated the triangle partnership here, triangle, but the partnership between DCR save the harbor and the commission that better beaches program really is a three way partnership that has led to almost \$10 million in investment in our communities. And I think Eddie, the way you put it all that all that has come out of a couple of small grants. And just thanks to all the commissioners for your investment in your advocacy for that program, and to the DCR permit admin on the ground staff for all their work, we did a we did a survey of our participants last year and this year and in between worked closely with with the DCR staff to like, you know, on our part on their part of everyone's part to kind of troubleshoot a couple issues. And we went from having 100% People saying it was really difficult to navigate the permit process to I think less than 25%. It was like a vast increase in one year. So this collaboration works. So for public comment, Aliya, who's the first person with the raised hand on, is it Jen constable from the town of Hull.

J

Jen Constable 1:38:17

Good morning. Thank you, Jen Constable town manager for the Town of Hull. I just want to first thank the commission for your work including the Breaking Barriers report. I also want to thank Commissioner Arrigo for his comprehensive update this morning. It is greatly appreciated. And I think one of the first steps in improving communications with municipalities as well as the Commonwealth broadly. I cannot reiterate enough that communicate communication equals trust. And with that said, I want to encourage both the commission and Commissioner to continue to work with local municipalities. You know, many of the Commonwealth features are located in municipal gateways and overall in our local economies. And one way to improve that communication is for DCR to play an active and equitable role in establishing MOUs and MOAs with municipalities that would just ensure efficient and effective communication. I'd also like to encourage DCR to include local municipalities in transportation with discussion in some cases, this is no mending transportation gaps. In other instances, it might be just a little bit different marketing relative to transportation, but including municipalities, and I think is really key in closing those gaps. Thank you.

C

Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:39:50

Thanks Jen, next we'll move to the room Jack Murray.

J

Jack Murray Boston Harbor Now 1:39:56

Thanks, Chris. Jack, Murray Vice president of partnerships and operations at Boston Harbor Now. as a legislative partner of Boston Harbor Islands partnership, we work at the intersection of the public, private and nonprofit sectors to ensure that Boston Harbor, its waterfront and Harbor Islands are accessible and inclusive and that these special places are properly adapted to the threats of climate change. We've already submitted comments for the record. So I'll be very brief, but did want to take an opportunity to commend the work of the Commission, Commissioner Arrigo, you and your team Susan, Tom, others in our colleagues at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, Chris. Bruce, you do amazing work in helping to provide some of the safest, cleanest and most accessible urban beaches in the United States. And although we've done great work since 2016 2006, right, we know that there's there's still much more work that needs to be done. Commissioner Arrigo alluded to it in his comments, when we talk a little bit about his budget, I would just like to emphasize that the agency cannot fulfill its mandate at the beaches or at their parks without the resources. And a previous iteration of my career, I had the good fortune of spending a little bit of time at dcr. And I remember back in 2008, this commission was responsible for a \$6 million a line item in DCRs budget that year, specifically designated toward beaches. And with that money, we're able to hire an additional 40. Staff, beach managers for some parks, supervisors, lifeguards, and laborers. Were also able to buy equipment, beach rakes, new vehicles, I think we're able to even buy some, some chairs, Tom, and leave you with one message is do not underestimate the positive impact that this commission can have on the commission and the agency and its ability to fulfill its mandate. The recent legislative report on DCR also talked about a billion dollars in deferred maintenance, and backlog and we would ask this commission to do whatever possible and working with EPA with DCR with ANF with the leadership here and in the State House and with Healey Driscoll administration to identify some interesting infrastructure needs that DCR may be able to work toward in contributing to funding for beach infrastructure to welcome those diverse audiences

and contribute to district wide resiliency approaches for our shoreline. And speaking of that Senator, I would like to thank you again for sponsoring Senate 458 An act to promote nature based approaches in the Commonwealth and will continue to work with your office and others is that legislation works. Its way out through the process. And finally, thank you Secretary Nee for your comments in pointing out the great public, recreational and mental health benefits that our beaches provide our communities. And so with that, thank you very, very much for your time and continued good luck with all of your work.

C

Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:43:40

Alicia Grimaldi on teams.

A

Alicia Grimaldi 1:43:45

Hi, can you hear me? Okay, great. Alicia Grimaldi. I am the beach program coordinator at the Environmental Protection Agency region one which covers all of New England. Thank you, everyone. It's really good to be hearing from so many people that are so passionate about the beaches. One thing I just wanted to clarify is I heard a few comments about beach water sampling. And I know it's a little bit of a confusing issue. I know that there's a lag time between the actual collection of samples, sending it to the lab and getting the results. But there is the possibility. So the beach program has been going on since the year 2000. We have a very, very long data set. And as a result, states towns jurisdictions are able to look at that long data set and say, Okay, if there's X number X number of inches of rain, over X number of hours, we know that this beach is going to be impaired for bacteria, so we're going to close it preemptively. And they they can do that and they do do that. And it's a great tool to overcome the barrier of the long sampling time. So I just want to make sure that if you see a flag and oh, this is you know, this is old, this isn't relevant. Like that's not That's not the case we do allow. And Massachusetts does do pre-emptive closure. So I just wanted to clarify that for the record, thank you.

V

Vincent 1:45:07

Thank you for having this hearing. I happen to be a historian who actually has friends in Winthrop and revere and other places. And there is another piece here that I see has not been touched on, which is actually interesting given that we're in the 250th anniversary of the United States and the events here. And that is the battle of Chelsea Creek. This whole area was actually a battle scape with hundreds of British troops, continental or Massachusetts troops. And not also noodles, Island, hog Island and others were part of this. A British captain not knowing or understanding the tide, lost his ship, the Continentals or Massachusetts, really, under the orders of President Warren attack to ship we had no navy and we were one nothing against the British Navy. And this area, of course, includes parts of northern now orient heights, Belle Isle Marsh was actually the scene of part of this battle. Livestock were slaughtered or removed, hey, it was a substantial and significant battle and really quite also a morale boost. Because after Bunker Hill, which had been a bloody thing, this was actually a clear short victory, and part of the whole Boston Harbor campaign. And so I would think that given this as the 250th anniversary, there is now a state commission with a million dollars to do some seed money, that that could be integrated into this and be another way of kind of bringing in people

from different backgrounds, and kind of celebrating what was an interesting victory, this often overlooked, it was considered important enough, the National Park Service worked with Massachusetts in 2009, to look for the remains of the ship, they were not found. But it is certainly an important part of this whole mentality. People don't realize the Siege of Boston was an active battle scape, not just a series of individual incidents. And this was part of that. So I would hope that you would consider this as part of it because it includes all these cities, Lynn and Revere, and Boston and all the different neighborhoods in parts Belle Isle Marsh was an important part of this campaign. So I'd be happy to work with you, as a historian, I'm doing some writing and presentations on this, and have some affection for it live in Winchester, as I say the other win haven't been to Winchendon yet. But hopefully this helps you with thinking about it. Because there's a dynamic there that a lot of people kind of say, well, this is a wetland, it's nice, and they want to go to the park. But it actually was part of how we got to where we are, and the victory of Massachusetts forces truly. And thank you.

A

Adrian Madaro 1:48:01

Thank you, that is a very beautiful piece of history, we are very proud of East Boston.

J

Joan Meschino 1:48:08

But just I'm so excited you said that. Honestly, representatives coming up on this commission was actually starting to work on that and pick up a gun. And I'd love to connect with you afterwards. Because you know Hull is actually starting to have a lot of those conversations because already making plans for so the art crowd that harbor picks on intuition and great violent battles that have happened there. So I'm delighted that you brought that up,

V

Vincent 1:48:38

I believe Grape Island down by Weymouth, but down by Weymouth was part of this. There was really an incredible campaign. This was a very active battle scape as well as a place of commerce.

J

Joan Meschino 1:48:50

The goals that I've heard them state is that we often think of like Lexington Concord, which certainly is important. But I think that the whole Room is really thinking about how to engage more people how to bring them to the different areas of like the Harbor Islands like Riesling Grape Island, to really understand and appreciate how things happen there and why there's so in addition to all the other things that we value, so I just wanted to thank you for bringing that up - a lot of that work is happening. We'll be delighted to connect with you

V

Vincent 1:49:23

I'd be happy to work with you further on that. And I've actually identified there's about 12 different events, several of which people don't know even I as a historian learned that they in 1768 in Faneuil Hall, there was a convention debating the future of Massachusetts. Samuel

1768 in Faneuil Hall, there was a convention debating the future of Massachusetts, Samuel Adams and James Otis lost. The real governor was ignored. But it really was the first chapter of the last stage to independence. And John Hancock jokes that we are independent in 1774 of the British Empire and England. Notice he makes that distinction and the big event in 1774, which will be next year 2024 is the Suffolk resolve that was the direct predecessor of the Declaration of Independence. So there's a lot to celebrate a lot to, it's an opportunity to teach people about this sense of self government and autonomy that people just assumed, as we I think still do today. I'll leave you with this thought that I've often said. We think we're slow. And we're still ahead of the curve nationally. Thank you.

J Jessica Giannino 1:50:25

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just like to say that this is a really big deal in Revere right now, as well. The Revere historical societies have been looking at this as well as the Friends of the [unintelligible] burial ground I don't know if you are familiar with Jeff Perlman, [unintelligible] Revere but we've been in touch, trying to get something put where like Sleds Millis to commemorate the battle and talk about how rich that history is the city of Revere, so I'd love to connect with you and connect you to the Historical Society in Revere to work on that.

 1:50:49

That would be great. Clearly, I've been surprised, frankly, about one out of 100 people know any of these things. Most often it's one of those out of 75 who know of Suffolk Creek falls, which by the way, Paul Revere's longest ride was actually from Milton to Philadelphia, and the Suffolk Resolves, endorsed by the Continental Congress, and John Adams says, rather nicely, always concise and to the point that he was one of the happiest days of his life, because now America had the back of Massachusetts, think about how profound that is. And these are all pieces that go to that and a broader Tableau. And it's because of how the environment has been changed, that we've kind of lost some of that awareness. So a few plaques and a few signs and a little bit of public education through the schools. I think I could help that. I'd be happy to work with anyone.

A Adrian Madaro 1:51:39

We look forward to following up more offline on that. Thank you,

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:51:44

I want to acknowledge Andrea Amour on teams. And then we're going to see if we can have a little more time for that. I'm trying to get to all of them.

A Andrea Amour Save Kings Beach 1:51:55

Thank you Chris can you hear me okay?.

A

Adrian Madaro 1:51:59

Yes, we can.

A

Andrea Amour Save Kings Beach 1:52:01

Wonderful. So my name is Andrea Amour. I'm the founder of a local grassroots group called Save Kings Beach. And I'm going to try to keep my emotions calm here. But frankly, like I am, I'm really, really frustrated by the lack of attention that basic human needs are getting in this conversation. At King's Beach, what hasn't been said in this meeting, King's beach was closed 91% of the days this year because of high bacterial count, because of raw sewage directly flowing under the beach. And Commissioner Arrigo if you're still in the in the, in the room, you actually walked through that sewage. And so to have that happen, and have you not discussed directly the issues that are happening at Kings Beach just makes me so upset. Because we have asked over and over and over and over again, to have warnings against this because like the reality is that people are getting sick at these beaches, people are getting sick at Kings Beach, I got sick at Kings Beach, people are getting sick at Nahant beach we have we have anecdotes of repeated sinus infections, of rare bacterial infections in people's guts ,we have a man who developed sepsis and almost died this past year. So all of these things that are being discussed, these are important too. But we cannot forget the basic, like the basic function of beaches, which is to be able to go in the water. Kids want to be able to go in the water. And right now if they go in and they tumble and they get a mouthful, they're probably going to get some kind of gut bacteria right. Nahant beach close or north of the bathhouse was closed 55% of this year and DCR still collected dues. Nobody was turned away. There were no like physical beach closers. Like it It's mind boggling to me that we're not discussing big protecting our citizens and making sure that people are safe and healthy. And I really really I was so hopeful when I saw a Arrigo and the beach Commission's come to Kings Beach and look at the outfall but to have that not be a serious priority. The way that things were scheduled this morning just makes me like I just I'm honestly like in disbelief that this isn't being discussed that people getting sick isn't being discussed that the fact that people are going in the water and no one is stopping them. No one's stopping people and when no one is flagged. I can tell you that no one is going no one's stopping anyone at Kings because there are no lifeguards because everyone is assuming that Kings Beach is unsafe except for people who don't know Kings Beach is unsafe, like me who went in there and got repeated bacterial infections. So truthfully, I mean this with all due respect, cuz I know that everyone in the room cares about the beaches. But truthfully, we are not doing nearly enough to protect citizens to prioritize health and to especially in an environmental justice community like Lynn be able to help allow everyone access to a basic resource like a beach. Thank you very much.

S

Senator Brendan Crighton 1:55:07

We appreciate your comments. I do just want to say for the record that the commissioner did speak, at length about water quality as well as flagging, my line of questioning was based around Kings Beach. So I don't know if that didn't come through. With limited time here today, we could fill, you know, six hours worth of public hearing just on you know, one of the many issues that came, so I apologize if that didn't come through to you. But I can assure you that your delegation as well as Commissioner Arrigo, and other folks are putting all of our efforts, quite frankly, behind making sure that the water is clean. So the landside issues have been

taken care of potential treatment options looked at. But more importantly, I think in the immediate term, making sure that people aren't swimming on beaches that are unsafe. And you know, to your point in the lifeguards, I agree. That's why I asked the question to the commissioner, you know, at Kings without lifeguards, can we have a public awareness? Can we have DCR folks go down there and let folks know that it's unswimmable. So I applaud your work. I think the work you've done with your organization, as well as partnering with other organizations has really lifted this up and gotten the attention. That's much needed to get action to happen. So thank you, and just want to just clarify a few points there.

C Chris Mancini, STH/STB 1:56:15

I went out of order on our list there. So Edward DeVoe before we come back into the room, I apologize for skipping you Edward.

E Edward DeVoe 1:56:25

Thank you very much. Yes. Thank you for the opportunity. I really appreciate your leniency here. And first and foremost, I'm a member of the Beachmont improvement committee, a neighborhood group within the city of Revere. actively working with the current commissioner on many, many subjects as he was the mayor. And some of my comments, most of my comments are relative to the the DCR and the commissioner's job. And first off, I want to do a shout out for providing for your organization providing a little bit of coverage daily on a daily basis for Short Beach, a very little beach within the DCR purview, if you will, and making sure that that beach is maintained and kept up to par on a regular basis. Secondly, I want to do a shout out on the popups that took place at Revere Beach this year. And I think it was one of if you will. And to say that we do need more of those sorts things with the development that's taken place down the beach and the transformation that occurred. There are very few places for people at the beach to go to to get, you know, low cost, if you will quick food, or to rent chairs, or umbrellas or things for the beach, or even to buy things for the beach. So we need more of those pop up stands to appear at the beach during the summertime. And I'd like to see some more and hear about more about programs with that. And then the last one has to do with it's not directly a beach, but it is indirectly related to beach. And it has to do with the issue that the commissioner is well aware of. We've had many conversations with this during his term as mayor and that is the seawall along the Winthrop Parkway that goes from Winthrop to the beginning of Revere Beach, although it's not right at a beach, it connects three beaches, Revere Beach, short beach, and Winthrop beach. And it's a major Thruway coming out of Winthrop to Revere Beach. And it's it's in a very bad state of decline. And and we have been trying to get information relative to the repair, replacement, whatever of that area and to get a true assessment of what is the current state of that because when we look at it, we have very grave concerns about it falling into the ocean, similar to the wall that fell into the ocean out near Swampscott. And this has been a long standing concern. So we've not really heard much about it. We keep hearing, something's going to be done about it, but nothing yet has been done about it. So I guess in the interest of time, I will ask that, you know, we don't need to go into all the issues. But I would like to request the commissioner to maybe set up a meeting with us. So we can have further conversations about this and better understand what's being done about that that situation, and also about the popups on the beach. Thank you very much.



S**Senator Brendan Crighton 1:59:18**

Thank you very much. Appreciate your testimony. Just in the interest of time. I know we still have a few other folks looking to comment. We did have an item on the agenda today not gone to so we're going to pause that part of the hearing for a moment. And I'd like to welcome our good friend, Bruce Berman, to make a few comments to the Commission and the public.

B**Bruce Berman 1:59:39**

I'm going to keep it brief. And those of you who know me know that you can talk to me later. I've been a - I served for almost 30 years as Director of Strategy and Communications at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. I've been involved in a lot of public processes in the city, in the region nationally on the Hill. At this commission is the most collegial and productive public process, the most effective public process that I've ever had the privilege to be involved. And I have to say that it's sort of funny to sit around the room and look at people who sat in on meetings when they were staffers who are now terrific folks like Michael Morrissey, or Bobby Travelmate here, or Jack Harlow, or Carlo Basil, or Tom McGee, who are now serving as the chairs of this Commission. And I'm confident that that this Commission will continue respectfully to hold DCR accountable to the Legislature, because that's its job. Today, I'm here to just let you know that I'll be stepping down as lead consultant, a position that I've had for more than 15 years, I think. And I'm doing it for a lot of reasons, but primarily because it's time with the help of the staff at Save the Harbo/Save the Bay and the hard work of all the Commissioners, we released a terrific report that I think can serve as a blueprint for improving public access to people, everyone to these spectacular resources and I'm counting, we're all counting on you to implement it time. And we also this summer, T'ed up the next phase of the inquiry that the Commission is doing, and that's about climate. It's really about like what we're going to do to protect our communities, make sure that people still have beaches, because a Bay State without beaches is not my vision of a Bay State. So thanks to all of you. I'm not going to shout out anybody by name because it's gonna take too long, but I want you to know, and I say this from the bottom of my heart, that sometimes if you're really really really really lucky, Life's a Beach. Thanks everybody. Are you outta your mind. Keep appauding. Okay, all right. Do a selfie video. Okay, start the applause again. Thank you everybody.

A**Adrian Madaro 2:02:40**

Bruce, on behalf of the Commission and all communities that benefited over the years and continue to benefit from the incredible work of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay you so much for what you've done for what Patty has done. You referenced this a bit but I was a younger staffer working for my predecessor Cardinal Baeza when we first met. And I was struck by your commitment, your relentless advocacy, your dedication to our region's beaches to our climate, to equity. It has been an absolute privilege to partner with you in this work, Bruce.

B**Bruce Berman 2:03:17**

And I was struck by the fact that you did all Carlos work for him. And made him look great.

A**Adrian Madaro 2:03:24**

Richard P. DeCicco 2:03:11

Well, he worked very hard to but what I will say is that really and I just want to say thank you, I am grateful for everything you've done for always being a sounding board on these issues, for helping us really, actually improve the Metropolitan beaches in the region more broadly. I look forward to staying in touch I know never be anything but phone call away. But you went Patti wishing you the best in this next stage of your lives. Thank you, Bruce.

S Senator Brendan Crighton 2:03:53

I'd also just like to take the opportunity to say thank you to Bruce first just for the record. Patty's my favorite she always will be. By you have been up in the CSL 18 years. 17 of those years I spent with you, I spent 17 years those were advisors, staffers he didn't say to being state rep to be on the commission to becoming chair. It has been an honor to work with you. I certainly have learned a ton you've helped develop some skills that were so strong with me be early on and a great friend to Rob. And I think, you know, I think your career, you had a unique ability, I think to raise awareness issues in a forceful way, in a strong way, never backing down but in a way that brought people together. So whether it's you know, Boston Harbor, whether it's water quality, whether it's you know, climate resiliency, access to the beach programming, you name it, you've done it, you've elevated the issue, you've elevated the issue to Kings Beach for us, certainly locally and countless other issues that have come up throughout my career that we've been able to bounce off of you and come up with I think good solutions to. Other than my wife I think you're the person that texts me frequently. I don't want to say I hope that continues by somehow but your communication throughout in just years if you saw something you would offer a helping hand and I think that's what's made you so effective throughout a long career so forever grateful and wish you and Patty the best as well. Yes, please take them.

A Aliya STH/STB 2:05:44

Alright, so we have Ralph DeCicco.

R Ralph Decicco 2:05:46

Just trying to make sure Can you hear me okay. Hello. Hi, Ralph Decicco from the city Revere and the chair that can be via commission disabilities and the ADA Coordinator. Just a couple of comments. First, I wanted to thank the Metropolitan beach commission for having this also to the DCR Commissioner. Brian Arrigo. Just a couple of comments, I'm glad to hear that we're getting 264 more feet of the beach mats on the beach. As you know that work worked with him in the past, that was a big area of need down that beach. And the only issue that we will have is hopefully those beach mats will be durable. And the issue that we were having in the past with them is when they would go clean the beach, they would either not pick them up or they would get ruined. So hopefully that will be resolved. And Will Will they will last not only for Revere Beach, but most of the beaches, because that is a great need for for people for accessibility issues there. Another concern that we have on Revere Beach and I'm sure most beaches, but the crossing to get from one side to the other. I'd like to see possibly and I don't know if it's in the works of getting more APS signalization. Especially for people with low vision. They need the the APS signalization in order to cross the beaches to get from one side to the other. It's extremely dangerous for not only people of all abilities, but especially people with disabilities to

be able to cross these bridges, these roads safely. And also, I heard that the DCR is buying more Beach Buggy chairs and hopefully those will be coming to Revere. And that will be centrally located along with hopefully a place for residents that are going to be using these to store their mobility devices safely. So that when they do go to the chairs, they will be able to keep them safe and not worry about having to come back that they're not there. That's something that a bunch of us commissioners, from different cities have been talking to talking about on our weekly calls, trying to find ways that we possibly wanted to have a meeting with DCR to come up with some ways to discuss that. And another thing that I've had conversations with with Save the Harbor Save the Bay in meetings before is possibly for not only Revere beach, but mostly most beaches in the metropolitan in the state is having what's called Quiet family areas. As we know, not only children that are autistic, sometimes you know they want to be able to go to the beach, but they need to be segregated a little bit from noise and from a lot going on because of of issues that they have. So it'd be nice if we could try and designate some family quiet areas on the beaches. I know you know beaches are loud or whatnot. But if we can try and designate some of those areas, it will be beneficial to those types of families with with children, young adults, and even some seniors that want to just be able to go down there and relax in a quiet area of the beach such as they do in some ballparks and stadiums throughout the United States. And I thank you for your time and I look forward to possibly having further conversations with the DCR commissioner or someone from his agency. Thank you

M

Maria Lyons 2:09:38

Hello, thank you for letting me speak and thank you to this wonderful commission. You do great work for years now. Also. Thank you Bruce. I think my family first met Bruce years ago at courageous sailing when he introduced fishing to the kids and my kids are all grown up now but they still have fond memories of Bruce Berman and courageous sailing so Thank you, Bruce. I am a resident of Port Norfolk, I represent the environmental issues for the Port Norfolk Civic Association. I'm also a board member of the Neponset River Watershed Association and the Neponset River Greenway council. So first of all, I'd like to thank the DCR for the beautiful work at Tenean beach, the playgrounds, the tennis court, the basketball courts look beautiful and further Neponset Greenway trail itself, which brings people from Hyde Park Mattapan Dorchester directly to Tenean beach, and the new extension will continue it to the north as well. So that's all greatly appreciated. The city of Boston also has some plans that they're working with the DCR to improve the climate resiliency of the city of Tenean beach and the beach itself. These are all greatly appreciated. However, the main resource the beach cannot be used due to the sewage contamination. I you know, I share the frustration of the woman from King's beach. There are permanent no, no swimming signs at Tinian beach. Now that's how bad it is. When will this be fixed? The the mostly minority visitors to the beach cannot swim there. This is a prime example of environmental injustice and a waste of a great resource. You know, we've received the grants from the Save the harbor, Save the Bay for Teneans beach day, multiple years, we had a great crowd with a fantastic event. And we had to continually tell the little ones especially to get out of the water because they could get sick. This was really upsetting and sad. And you know, I hate to even have a Tenean beach day again because of that. So I you know, my question. I've asked this multiple times to the Boston Water and Sewer Commission, because I think they're the ones that need to do the fixing. But I never get an answer. When will this be fixed? So today I'm asking the state, why isn't the state demanding the State EPA org? There's some someone here from the federal government as well, the federal EPA, why aren't they demanding that the city fix this as well as up in Lynn as well. So I sympathize with my colleagues in this problem. I don't understand why it's continuing. Tenean and Kings Beach are the only two beaches that this is really happening to

this level. And as far as I've heard, Boston Water and Sewer knows what the problems are. And it needs to be fixed. So why isn't the state demanding that they be fixed? Thank you very much. That's it.

A

Aliya STH/STB 2:09:56

And we get one more person Maria Lyons.

A

Adrian Madaro 2:11:34

I want to thank all those who provided some public testimony want to thank our guests today for joining us, my fellow Commissioners, Bruce once again and thanks to you. We'll miss you but we know the the organization is in steady hands with Chris Mancini and the team at save the harbor. And one last official welcome to the Commissioner from Quincy Kerin O'Toole, look forward to working with you. I believe this concludes our hearing Senator any more remarks?. Thank you. Happy Halloween everybody!