

Statement of Barry J. Welch, Quincy Recreation Department

April 8, 2013

Metropolitan Beaches Commission

Quincy is blessed with 27 miles of water front, and now more than ever, every day is a beach day.

As the Director of Recreation for the last 32 years, I have certainly lived through the periods of decline, and now the unprecedented understanding of the value of living in a waterfront Community. First, I would like to discuss our most current and visible improvement to waterfront users of all abilities and ages.

The William F. Ryan Boating and Sailing Facility, located at the easterly tip of the 172 acre Merrymount park, where Blacks Creek meets the sea, is bordered on two sides by DCR land to form a natural saltwater lagoon that is ideal for instructional programs with clear ocean breezes.

The William F. Ryan Boating and Sailing program has been a distinctive feature of the Quincy Recreation Department aquatic program for more than 50 years. This program has long afforded boys and girls between the age of eight and sixteen an opportunity in summer months to become proficient in seamanship skills, rowing, sailing, and canoe and kayaking. In recent years the addition of adult kayaks, both tandem and single, and a fleet of canoes has seen a substantial growth in adult participation practically nights and weekends. Mothers who used to just drop their children off now get into a kayak themselves.

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With the initiative of Mayor Thomas Koch and our Quincy City Council last spring, the Department finished a complete rebuild of the facility at a cost of \$185,000. A new pier was built and a handicapped accessible gangway and float were purchased. A newly constructed secure boat storage area was added, and the parking area was rebuilt and guard rails were added to insure the protection of the sensitive environmental areas.

One of the most significant changes, the gazebo near the boat storage area, is now used for instruction and open the public in warm non-boating months to enjoy in passive recreation.

While I am proud and grateful for the physical improvements that have been made through efforts of many in this room, it is the human collaborative and interagency cooperation that continues to encourage a wide variety our uses of our waterfront facilities.

Quincy has no shortage of volunteers that help parlay the improvements to the beach front facilities by encouraging there use in unique ways.

The Quincy Beaches and Coastal Commission is made up entirely of volunteers and appointed by the Mayor, has annually produced the Quincy Beach Guide, a 60 page book that describes the make up and location of 13 Quincy beaches, tide calendar, sun safety tips. They routinely hold special events at the city's thirteen beaches.

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The Friends of Wollaston Beach is another group of volunteers working tirelessly and continually to augment the upgraded facility owned and staffed by the DCR. For example, they spearheaded an effort to get markers placed along the 2 mile long sidewalk to give people a way to plot there walking distance. They also sponsor the Hancock Plunge in January to raise funds for local charities.

Our friends at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay have become and integral part of the activities of the William F. Ryan Boating and Sailing programs. They offer the extremely popular and free summer youth programs that combine recreational activities with hands on environmental education for countless kids from Quincy and the surrounding towns. SHSB has also provided grants to the Friends of Wollaston Beach to ensure ongoing special events and projects.

The MWRA pump station located at the furthestmost end of the Hough's Neck has a fishing pier, and outstanding walking path, with spectacular views of Quincy Bay and beyond.

With the assistance of Thayer Academy, floats were constructed and a site on our Town River now in its second season of being the location where high

school rowing teams from both Quincy and North Quincy High Schools now compete on a club basis.

Through its environmental treasures program, the City of Quincy Park Department conducts monthly walking tours of our beach and marsh areas throughout the year to educate and inform the public of our resources both live and historic.

Our four local yacht clubs, two of which are on DCR land, contribute with special events such as Quincy Bay Race Week and the Lipton Cup Regatta. Both provide on-the-water activity for all ages and have been active for decades.

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DCR land is leased and maintained by the city in Hough's Neck, creating a year round maritime center with meeting rooms for the community and serves as the home for the Quincy Police Marine unit and its boats.

Seasonally, Quincy is a Boston Harbor Island transportation hub. The Harbor Express leaves from Quincy daily to the Islands of Boston Harbor.

The local access channel QATV has created video presentations on the city beaches which include directions and they are shown regularly during the summer months. Water Quality is posted daily on the community bulletin board.