Racial Justice MBC Transcript

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**SPEAKERS**

Barbra Kelly, Adrian Madaro, Mercy Robinson, Doneeca Thurston, Joan Meschino, Nikki Sanders, David Spillane, Rich Ackerman, Niki Ghosh, Antonio Barletta, Chris Byner, Magdalena Ayed, Abdi Ali, Philip Chong, Alex DeFronzo, Patricia Williams, Maya Smith, Ghiz Benzerjeb, Shavel’le Olivier, Michael Myers, Bruce Berman, Chris Marchi, Andrea Baez, Chris Mancini, Rita Lara, Brendan Crighton, Sarah Francis, Adriana Paz, Stephanie Burke

**Bruce Berman** 00:00

I also want you to know that there's a link to the meeting agenda in the chat, which will be helpful for all of us to follow what's going next, but also, for you to find out when you're going so that you can be ready. We do have two Maya Smiths.

**Chris Mancini** 00:25

Yeah Maya's in on her phone.

**Bruce Berman** 00:32

You can never have enough Maya Smiths. That's my experience, we should clone her.

**Bruce Berman** 00:44

Chairs, Chris, shall we start?

**Chris Mancini** 00:48

Yeah, let's get started.

**Bruce Berman** 00:51

My name is Bruce Berman, I'm the Director of Strategy and communications for Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, and along with David Splaine, have served as lead consultants to the to the Beaches Commission since its inception. I have to say that I'm happy to see you all here. I am convinced that the work that we're beginning today together will actually have a tremendous impact. The Commission has been effective and I think that I'm very much looking forward to hearing from you. We are on a tight schedule, so if you don't mind, I'm going to introduce Chris Mancini and then we'll hear briefly from the chairs if that's the right way to do this. Does that work, Chris?

**Chris Mancini** 01:41

Yes, that's great. I'm just going to pull up a slide here, which just closed on me, so give me just a few seconds.

**Chris Mancini** 01:57

Thank you all. Good morning. Thank you all so much for joining us. We're really excited about the meeting today and to have everyone together in this zoom. I am Chris Mancini. I'm the Executive Director of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and thanks for joining us here today for our first hearing and our forum on the state of diversity, equity inclusion on the region public regions.

**Chris Mancini** 02:27

So our goal today is to have a frank and open conversation about what is working and what we can do better on our beaches, to improve racial equity and justice in our public spaces and increase access to our public features. I'm going to leave this background on the Commission up here so you can read as I'm talking.

**Chris Mancini** 02:46

I just want to emphasize that today is one step in this ongoing process. This meeting will be followed by additional meetings, which will include focus on access for people with disabilities and a virtual Summit, which will present our preliminary findings. We'll be reaching out to everyone here to join us at that summit, and to help spread the word in all of our communities in order to continue this public engagement process.

**Chris Mancini** 03:09

Following the summit, the Commission will share a report of our findings and recommendations with the Legislature, the Administration DCR and the public. This is what will hopefully serve as a roadmap for improving access and increasing diversity, equity and inclusion on our public beaches going forward.

**Chris Mancini** 03:25

We are very lucky to have so many incredible leaders, stakeholders and residents from all nine of the beachfront waterfront Communities that the MBC collects, here with us today.

**Chris Mancini** 03:37

As we hear from our panel, and from public comments, I just want to set a few expectations for the meeting. It is a Zoom meeting we are recording and we know that we've all been doing this long enough to know to keep yourself muted unless we're actively speaking just to cut down on background noise. We do have two hours set aside which seems like a lot, but we know that time can go very quickly and so we're just going to ask everyone to try to be concise and keep to the agenda.

**Chris Mancini** 04:05

We will have an open public comment period at the end, at which point I hope we'll have time for questions and conversations. We'll be able to lay out her plan for next steps and more opportunities to share feedback and ask questions.

**Chris Mancini** 04:17

Our main priority here is to listen to you the folks from the communities who are sharing your perspective, and so we're asking that for those who are not testifying, to keep that in mind and stay open to hearing what is said and without interruption judgment and defensiveness. As a moderator, I may ask folks to hold responses until later in the hearing.

**Chris Mancini** 04:37

Our goal is really to create a safe space where people feel comfortable sharing and speaking up their honest feedback with us. So you know our goal, we're here to listen and learn so that we can use these notes as a takeaway to build our plan for inclusivity and what's being said today will be part of the foundation in that plan towards equitable and accessible beaches. So with that, I would like to turn this over to welcoming remarks from our co-chairs. Commissioner, Senator Brendan Creighton, from Lynn.

**Brendan Crighton** 05:12

Thank you, Chris, for the introduction and a lot of the folks on the Commission have heard this from me many times, so forgive me for repeating myself but it's been an honor to be a part of this Commission since the outset. I had the privilege of serving under staffing, Senator McGee, now the mayor of Lynn, when he was here and got to know Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and all the great work they do.

**Brendan Crighton** 05:34

It's been an honor to later serve as a State Rep on the Commission, and now to serve as the Chair for me really comes full circle. I'm so proud of the work that the Commission has done. That's a testament to all the commissioners that are here today and those that have served in the past, as well as our partners over DCR.

**Brendan Crighton** 05:54

But just as importantly, the community members that have come out and voiced their concerns, they've given us great ideas, constructive criticism, and really helped lay out our reports that have translated into action at the legislative and administrative level. And that's really, you know, again, why we're here today is not for us, as you know, commissioners necessarily or as politicians to talk which we want to do often, But rather to listen.

**Brendan Crighton** 06:23

Our work on water quality, on beach maintenance, on programming, and many other issues around the beaches have been so crucial but just as crucial is this focus on equity and inclusivity. And, you know, for me, I think of beach access as one of the more important things for access for all. It doesn't necessarily just mean physical access, but having folks know what's available at the beach and having them know that they wanted there and that there is this tremendous resource that just sits outside of our door. So with that, I'm going to turn it over to my co-chair, I will say, Rep Madaro and I had an agreement to not wear ties, and he's violated that, so we're already off on a rocky start. He's a great guy, and I'm excited to have him as our new Chair,

**Bruce Berman** 07:10

Chris, can you take down screen sharing so that we can get a bigger view of the speaker?

**Adrian Madaro** 07:17

Thank you, Senator and good to be with you all. I mean, you decided to wear a jacket, I had to wear a tie. So you know, it all balances out. But welcome, everyone to the first Metropolitan Beaches Commission Hearing of 2021. Very excited and grateful that we're able to come together this morning for such an important dialogue.

**Adrian Madaro** 07:36

Just by way of background, I'm the State Representative from East Boston, I've had a lot of involvement with the Commission, dating back to my time, like Brendan as a staffer for my predecessor. And, you know, throughout my time as a State Representative, and I could just say, as someone who was born and raised in East Boston, I have seen firsthand the results of the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and investments from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay as our beach Constitution Beach in East Boston, or Shea's Beach for those Eastie folks on the Zoom has absolutely transformed. Not only with improved water quality, but improved access, more concessions and amenities, things that as a kid growing up in the community, we could only have dreamed of, and now they are reality.

**Adrian Madaro** 08:19

Today, we're coming together for a really important dialogue and one that has been a long time coming. I'm glad that this is the first hearing that we're holding because of course, this is such an important issue. We're here to discuss the state of diversity, equity and inclusion on the Commonwealth's public beaches, from the Senator's district in Lynn, to East Boston to anywhere else at the Metropolitan Beaches Commission touches and we are going to be joined by a number of community members from across the Metropolitan beaches region, including a number of constituents of mine from East Boston.

**Adrian Madaro** 08:51

I do just want to say how grateful I am that you're all here excited to hear from you. This is going to be a really helpful dialogue for us to build on and ensure that our beaches can be a place for all that are inclusive, that are equitable, and that are welcoming. So without further ado, I'll turn it back over to Chris and we'll get things going. But thank you all for being here.

**Chris Mancini** 09:14

Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you, Senator. We're pleased to have you join us, Representative Madaro as the new Co-Chair and it's it's been great working with you. So just before we get to our community testimonies, I just, you know, ultimately, our goal really is to help and we have several tools at our disposal, including our Better Beaches Grant program. And so to speak to one of these I'd like to introduce Maya Smith, Save the Harbor's Director of Partnerships and Program Development, to talk a little bit about the Better Beaches program and what that means and how it can help.

**Maya Smith** 09:48

Hello, everyone, I'm Maya Smith. I'm as Chris just said, the Director of Partnerships and Program Development with Save the Harbor, and I manage our Better Beaches program as well. We work with the Department of Conservation and Recreation to award grants in our community. We award about $200,000 annually to organizations, individuals, creatives, anyone with an incredible, unique and safe idea to activate our beaches.

**Maya Smith** 10:23

The purpose here is to make sure that we are having events and programs that are inclusive and are reaching out to our community members of color, specifically making sure that we're activating not just the folks who live right on the harbor, but making sure we're bringing out folks from Mattapan, Roslindale, like all of Boston's neighborhoods, and all of the communities that we work with, along Boston Harbor.

**Maya Smith** 10:52

We have an RFP out now that I'll put in the chat and we are looking for your ideas. The application is open until May 14th and I would love to talk to anyone if you have ideas on how to bring some of this conversation to the beach and have equitable and accessible programming. Hopefully, it's stuff that's fun, too. We also love fun stuff. So if you have a cool idea, please reach out to me, I'll also put my email in the chat where the RFP is as well.

**Chris Mancini** 11:33

Thank you, Maya. We will be following up after this meeting with a fairly detailed email on future hearings and outreach that you can have that RFP and share it in your network. So without further ado, I'd love to get right into this and start hearing from all of you. To start this up, first I'd like to introduce Andrea Baez from Winthrop's Commission for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations, as well as the Lynn YMCA. I know Andrea, you have another commitment at 10 o'clock. So we'd love to hear from you.

**Andrea Baez** 12:09

Thank you so much. I apologize. Our new Y opens Monday, so we are just running at full speed ahead, but thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to on behalf of the Commission and behalf of Winthrop. We are so fortunate in the town of Winthrop to have two gorgeous beaches that are in our town. In my opinion, as a longtime resident, and as somebody who speaks with residents pretty regularly, we don't have the beautiful amenities that Constitution Beach has acquired over the years. We don't have the ability to have people come out to our very small seaside town and enjoy our beach because we don't have a lot of restaurants, we don't have a lot of spaces for people to be able to come and also enjoy. So if you are not from the area or know somebody who is from Winthrop, you know I have lived there my entire life. It is the most unbelievable community but there is an equity issue in regards to- I am from Winthrop and you are not from Winthrop.

**Andrea Baez** 13:11

As the Commission, we are working tirelessly to figure out what we can do to better our community and you know better reach for people to come and enjoy this beautiful wonderful seaside town. And our beach is absolutely one of those places where we do fall down. I think that you know, Ural Beach has lack of parking. You know, families don't want to schlep with kids and bags and coolers to be able to set up for a day at the beach because anybody who has children knows that it is not just a simple beach bag and a chair. It is quite the the ordeal to get yourself and your family packed up to go, and so public transportation, yeah, it's wonderful that we do we do have buses that access the beach, but to be able to pack everything up to be able to get your family there for the day, it's quite impossible for some families. So ways to figure out how we can perhaps shuttle people maybe from they're coming from Orion Heights, maybe they're coming from other parts of the region, to be able to get them to be able to use winter beach absolutely would be a fantastic opportunity.

**Andrea Baez** 14:15

I also would love for Winthrop to also be able to take advantage of different programs such as kayaking or other things that happen on the beach as a draw to the beach as an activity that families could come and enjoy on our beach. You know, I think accessibility is really the biggest thing is how do we get people there? How do we make people feel comfortable?

**Andrea Baez** 14:37

Save the Harbor and DCR are wonderful. I think that if they could help us as a community spearhead events that happen on the beach. Our movie nights were extremely successful when we did run them, but that was far and wide, that was broadcast through DCR far and wide and it was well attended and people enjoyed it, but for us to be able to move forward and be able to make our beaches accessible, we really need to make them truly accessible. I think of people who are not able bodied, we don't have options for them to get down to the beach. So you can come and pull up to the beach and you can look at it from the top, but we don't have accessibility, such as in Nahant Beach, where you can wheel somebody down on a wheelchair. They also have the opportunity to utilize the beaches.

**Andrea Baez** 15:24

We have this beautiful treasure in our community and we want to make sure that Winthrop is known and is a community that is welcoming folks with open arms. I think that starting at our beaches, especially this time of year, especially after the year of 2020, where people have been confined and people have been, you know, in homes, the beach is a beautiful, wonderful open space for people to be able to use and utilize. I think that figuring out ways to open that accessibility, pour it up and let people know that Winthrop is for you. There are things for you to also do in town. As you come, there are restaurants but to make them accessible to others will make our beaches more valuable.

**Chris Mancini** 16:11

Thank you so much, Andrea, for your time and hope you can stick around a little bit for part of the hearing until you have to open that amazing new Y, which looks fantastic. I know it's been a huge effort. Speaking of Lynn, next up is the Director of the Lynn Museum, Doneeca Thurston.

**Doneeca Thurston** 16:29

Hi, everyone. Good morning. I like Andrea, we're not opening a new building, but we're opening a new exhibit this weekend. So I'll have to duck out a little early myself. So yes, I'm the director of Lynn Museum/LynnArts right here in downtown Lynn. I grew up here in Lynn, I actually grew up down the street from Senator Crighton's house. I was very good friends with his younger sister growing up, so it's been nice to maintain that connection over the years.

**Doneeca Thurston** 16:55

You know, growing up going to the beach, you know, Lynn Beach is a heavily utilized free natural resource for members of the community. For those who don't know, Lynn is very much a majority minority community, we have dozens of languages that are spoken. I think we could really benefit. We have some interpretive panels along Lynn Shore Drive that could benefit from being translated into other languages, or maybe there's a QR code that's available so folks can learn the history of the beach.

**Doneeca Thurston** 17:22

Being a historical organization, we have tons of photographs from folks who have been using the beach for centuries, literally. And so I think that folks will really benefit from learning that history, as well as just basic signage, having, you know, that signage and other languages. You know, primarily, usually, if we have something that's put out to the city, it's an English, Spanish, Haitian, Creole and Russian. Those seem to be the primary languages that are spoken here in the community. You know, with the Red Rock Park series that happens during the summer, it's, I think it's a well populated program. I don't think they were able to do anything last year with COVID, but I think it would be really awesome to see different types of musical genres that would appeal to a wider group of folks. Perhaps it's, you know, a Merengue band that speaks to you know, the Dominican population. Maybe it's more Haitian style music, just something that's more expansive and inviting to more types of people to really celebrate the folks that are here in the community.

**Doneeca Thurston** 18:25

In terms of accessibility, I know that there are some ramps that make the beach accessible, but I think some directional signage in addition to more ramps will be beneficial for folks that not only are in wheelchairs, but for strollers. I mean, the beach is heavily utilized by families. Like I said, it's a great free resource. Lots of people having, you know, family gatherings, birthday celebrations, that really lend itself in the Red Rock area, specifically down towards the end, there's kind of like a makeshift fishing pier. Lots of folks gathered here in the mornings to fish and hang out, it would be great if we could maybe have some fishing poles installed so folks can enjoy themselves. With the park itself, I don't know what the process is to reserve space.

**Doneeca Thurston** 19:07

You know, my family personally has been going to sunrise service there for generations. I'm just wondering, you know, for faith based groups and community groups, if there was more transparency on how they could reserve the space or better utilize it, especially right now.

**Doneeca Thurston** 19:22

Still, in the height of the pandemic, folks are looking for outdoor space here in Lynn to do programs, to do events that are safe and accessible to all types of folks. The playground down towards the rotary is another like very popular space. I feel like there's never a parking spot that's free down by that playground. If possible, expanding the playground to welcome more children and then adding elements that speak to children that might be on the spectrum as well.

**Doneeca Thurston** 19:49

And then with seating you know, we have tons of seating along Lynn Shore Drive, which I think is really great. Perhaps adding a specific rollerblading lane or a bike lane because folks don't tend to bike or rollerblad, specifically on the street, it's usually on the sidewalk. So if there was some sort of designation, because I know with COVID, in the height of the pandemic last year, I know they were trying to deter folks from using the beach, especially with all the cones that were along Lynn Shore Drive, but people were still using it. So if we could just, you know, create safer lanes of different types of you know, modes of transportation, whether you're walking, jogging, biking, rollerblading, that would be great.

**Doneeca Thurston** 20:28

Then water quality. I mean, I know that it's a whistlin beach. I know, the same body of water as Swampscott and Nahant, but for some reason, there's the odor, and I mentioned it to Chris in a conversation it has to do with algae. Perhaps maybe there's some workshops to help educate folks about the water system here, and the algae that comes certain times of year and why you know, the beaches the way it is, but overall, I mean, the beach is amazing. DCR I think does a great job. Where we're located here in downtown Lynn, DCR actually owns the property, so we have a great relationship with them. I know how many properties they manage. So I mean, I can't even imagine, but it's, you know, it's a great resource. Having Lynn Beach, I think, you know, the community loves it, and I think if there are ways to grow and create more opportunities to have more folks feel safe, comfortable and welcome, it can only get better. Thank you.

**Bruce Berman** 21:21

Doneeca, this is Bruce. I just wanted to know that afterwards, you should reach out to me, and I can give you some guidance on water quality and also on the algae. They're both issues there and we're trying. Thanks.

**Doneeca Thurston** 21:34

Thank you.

**Chris Mancini** 21:35

Thanks Doneeca. In case I didn't mention it before, the order of the agenda. Last time we met, we did go from south to north, so today we are going from north to south in order. So with that, I'd like to introduce Anthony Barletta, the Town Manager Nahant.

**Antonio Barletta** 21:54

Thank you, Chris. Thank you, Commission. Thank you, everyone on the call, really appreciate being part of this today. And it's always nice being at the front of the line once in a while. You know, we love being a host community of the Nahant Beach Reservation with DCR, great partners there and with the city of Lynn, I used to work for the Department of Conservation Recreation, worked with the Beaches Commission for a long time there. So we're very proud of that.

**Antonio Barletta** 22:27

The town of Nahant has a lot of progress to make in this area. Our biggest limitation is parking. We have two beaches in town. You know, after you get over the causeway, we have two beaches in town and parking's really limited and most or all of our parking require a resident sticker. We're trying to find ways to encourage folks to come into town and you know, we only have two or three businesses we don't have much to offer, but we do have some beautiful parks and some beautiful beaches.

**Antonio Barletta** 23:06

I really want to take the opportunity today to promote an event that we're putting on. One unlike that Nahant has done in the past. We are going to be hosting the wall, the traveling Wall That Heals; it's a two-scale replica of the Vietnam Memorial Wall. We're going to have it in Nahant at our lowlands Short Beach parking lot, men softball area, as well as our Veterans Memorial Park. We're looking for 150 volunteers. We have quite a few already, volunteers from all over. This event is going to be open to the public. We're going to be creating a parking lot in town that's going to be free and open to the public, so folks can come into Nahant and enjoy the day. You know, take a walk through the the visitor center, temporary visitor center, then take a look at the wall, enjoy the beach, grab a sandwich and walk around town, enjoy what we have to offer.

**Antonio Barletta** 24:21

To volunteer, if anybody's interested in volunteering for that, go to alpost215.org, and the event is July 15th to the 18th. So we'd love for the Metro Beaches to push that information out as much as possible. Help us get the word out. Help us encourage folks to come to Nahant. See this, be a part of this opportunity.

**Antonio Barletta** 24:56

The volunteers on the last day, Sunday, the last day, we're gonna have a Beach That Heals event where the volunteers will have a beach party, you know, right across the street from the memorial wall. That's a small step we're trying to take with kind of, you know, not that we have gates but opening the gates and encouraging people to come into town and take advantage of the beautiful property that we have here and the views and try to create, you know, like I said, our biggest limitation like was mentioned for Winthrop is parking. So creating a space for people to park for free and spend some time here in Nahant, that's what we're trying to do.

**Antonio Barletta** 25:45

So again, alpost215.org if you're trying to volunteer and all the information about the event is on there. Hopefully we can push the information out through this Commission and get as many people here in July as possible. In a safe way, of course, we will be mindful, of course of you know the pandemic and social distance guidelines. And we'll have all that worked out, but again, please come in and enjoy the town.

**Chris Mancini** 26:16

Thank you so much, Tony. Next, we move down to Revere. Ghiz Benzerjeb, you're up.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 26:25

Morning, everyone. First of all, thank you for having me and thank you, Jessica for inviting me to this meeting. I'll just get right into it. So I have some notes written down for 1,2,3,4,5 points that I want to hash out.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 26:40

First off, would be accessibility for disabled people. I do frequent the beach a lot. I bike along the beach, I swim in the beach, I fish at the beach, and I have even slept at the beach during the day because I felt like it and it was nice. So what I noticed when I'm going on my bike rides to the beach and going all the way down to my fishing spot, which is at the very end of Revere Beach, I don't see a lot of beach mats, none at all. So when I looked online at DCR, on the website, I noticed that it did say that there were supposed to be beach mats. So I just want to kind of emphasize maybe sort of a connection with the information that's offered online so that it is matching what is happening on our beaches, not just Revere Beach but for everyone. It would be really unfortunate to say someone came from, you know, the other side of the country going to America's first public beach thinking that it was going to be accessible for their wheelchair, or their triplets stroller, you know, and they weren't able to get there completely. So there was one.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 27:40

Also, some more beach mats, something like Doneeca said, having more signage in different languages, as well as who to call when you are in need of a beach wheelchair. I did see on the website on DCR that beach wheelchairs are available at certain beaches, and it says how much is exactly available and who to call. There's not a lot of people who have access to very easy technology. I know for myself i'll use it as an example, I still have a Blackberry. I might not be able to access that kind of information right on the beach. I might not have service, you know, the screen won't load that kind of stuff. So making sure that that particular signage for improved accessibility is there, effective immediately.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 28:25

On top of that, maybe DCR can bridge a sort of connection with the local Autism Society of America to plan beach days for affected families as well. Taking your kids to the beach is a whole struggle, and on top of that, if they do have any sort of special needs or disabilities or are somewhere on the spectrum, not just kids, even adults, being able to feel comfortable with DCR informing them. This is a great section of the beach to post up at. This is our phone number of this lifeguard and the manager that's on deck that day, if you need any help call us immediately. This is the part of the beach where the waves aren't as wavy, if you will, sorry, it's a little early in the morning, but just very nice calm water so that the parents aren't freaking out that their kid might drown. Even going as far as to have special life jackets as well for kiddos on the spectrum or adults on the spectrum.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 29:23

Secondly, using Revere Beach as a cultural hub. We have a really awesome bandstand. Say we had a Latin Night, say we invited local artists to post up on the bandstand and this can be for literally everyone along the North Shore and they can perform imagine dancing bachata and merengue the night away on Revere Beach on a nice summer night. These activities can be very safe in regards to you know, minimizing transmission as well.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 29:50

A lot of people are getting vaccinated too, so encouraging beachgoers hey, get vaccinated, we're going to do a lot of these programs out here. This is going to be really exciting for you maybe, you know, start doing it. We can also boost a little bit more signage about getting vaccinated too so that our beachgoers are as safe as possible for as long as possible, until they need the booster next year.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 30:14

I know next week will be so that's basically Muslim Christmas Hanukkah or Kwanzaa. I know a lot of people out here in Revere of Arab or Middle Eastern descent, love the warmth and love the beach. Imagine we had a little eat celebration, a couple hours during the day, we have some food, some tabling and everyone is there to enjoy it. We don't really have a YMCA in Revere, not that I know. We have like a youth zone kind of moment, but nothing that's super age inclusive. So really capitalizing on this free natural, beautiful resource to get the community together would be sublime.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 30:52

Also conservation efforts, I know for myself and my uncles, my uncles are Algerian, they didn't know that they needed a license to go fishing on the beach. They also didn't know that they needed measuring tapes to, you know, measure their striped bass, they get really excited about it. And they just literally did not know that they might have needed to release it. I have seen them once, I did tell them, they're like, nah, it's fine, doesn't matter. Because of course, they're all Algerian men, they don't really know about this stuff. In other countries, it's totally fine to just fish. And whatever you catch, you take home and that works for them. But it's definitely not how it flies out here. So maybe offering some added resources in promoting conservation.

**Ghiz Benzerjeb** 31:32

Again, with technology. There might be some old men and women who do not even know how to get on the internet, maybe have some sign up sheets over there where you can actually give them their fishing license, give them that freshwater, give them the saltwater license. And they'll feel all the more encouraged and excited to give them you know, a nice little measuring tape that's, you know, 13 inches. So you know, it's 13, you can take that flounder, home, that sort of stuff, and interrupt this up, just kind of using the beach as a giant tabling effort. Put up a popsicle stand, you want to hear what the kiddos want, and you want them to feel safe out there. I know it's been a little bit of a rocky relationship in regards to use that and Revere Beach considering what happened last summer, just really trying to make sure that we're hearing what these young kiddos have to say. They're the future of the beach as well. And I know there's a lot of young people out here who really want to make Revere and Revere Beach as best as it can be and really just optimize and capitalize on this group effort that is being born. There's nothing like a pandemic to really get you going and get you outside and be involved in your community. Yeah, that's all I have to say. Also, thank you to all the other speakers, you guys gave me some great ideas. So it was fun going last.

**Chris Mancini** 32:53

Thank you guys, really, really appreciate you being here. And a lot of these ideas are fantastic and really things that we can start addressing in the short-term as well and things that are right in Save the Harbor and DCR's wheelhouse. So thanks for being here. Next up, i'd like to introduce Abdi Ali from the EC Anti Racism Coalition. Thanks for being here, Abdi.

**Abdi Ali** 33:13

Thank you, Chris. Good morning, everyone. And thank you, Rep. Adrian Madaro for the invitation to testify and uplift the voices of our community in East Boston in this very important hearing. By way of introduction, my name is Abdi and I am a lifelong resident of East Boston and leader and organizer of the East Bay Anti-Racism Community Coalition, a grassroots community led that's fathering racial justice, equity, inclusion and belonging in our our neighborhood.

**Abdi Ali** 33:49

As you all know, like COVID really highlighted the importance of having open public spaces, like beaches and public parks, when we were all locked down, these public spaces really helped us tremendously to get some fresh air, to get some exercise done, and most importantly, to really stay safe and sane. And so it was still beneficial to our mental health. But oftentimes, communities of color do not have a voice in these spaces. In fact, we feel not welcomed and some instances, we experienced racism in these spaces.

**Abdi Ali** 34:26

So, for example, I have lived most of my life in East Boston, and I consider myself a civically engaged resident of East Boston, and yet we really do not know folks who really manage open spaces or public features. And that's true for most of our community. And so it really is important that when we think about diversity and inclusion, that we are inviting people who are most impacted, who lived in the neighborhood to be part of that so we need to look at structurally start opening these spaces in these leadership spaces and invite communities of color, especially people who have been historically overlooked to be part of that. So oftentimes decisions are made without having a seat at the table. So we really need to look at structurally and start opening up those sixes and invite. So we can be part of that and really talk about issues that are impacting us or making us feel unwelcome.

**Abdi Ali** 35:29

For example, I know that we have a lot of elders in our neighborhood, mostly from Northern Africa. During Ramadan, right now, folks are taking a lot of walks. Towards the end of the day, I have experienced or saw that in East Boston, we live in a very interesting place, which is really fascinating. So there's a green way that connects us to Constitutional Beach, and sometimes when folks are coming back, our folks who manage the park will close the park at a certain time. And I do know I saw an elder one time who couldn't be able to get out. And, you know, the state Truman was there, who, you know, we were very close to the end of exiting, and he closed the gate. And so she had a lot of back pain, and she didn't feel comfortable walking back. And she was very nervous about that. And, you know, the officer just left. And so this elder looked for help asking me another young couple of men to help her get out and really have her and maneuver that. So that's really not living in dignity. So we really need to think about people who are managing in these spaces should be really not really restricted, but really think about ways in which they can dignify people and allow folks in certain time of the day to leave the park and not close.

**Abdi Ali** 36:59

Another instance we see is that they use sirens sometimes to get us are ushered out of the park, we know that communities of color do not have a good relationship with law enforcement. That really creates trauma, and kind of really makes us feel unsafe. And we especially hear sirens, so it's important that we really think about overly policing in these spaces and need to really restructure and making sure that we come up with a public safety guards that are really welcoming and inviting, you know, inviting, especially we also have to diversify those buys right?

**Abdi Ali** 37:35

People who come in to manage these spaces, we need to see them speak, you know, languages that are other than English, so they can communicate our residents. Because most of our residency Swanson speak more than one language, or do not say English or English, not their first language. So it's important that we think about those things. The other aspect that we really want to highlight is that this lesson has become an I'm sure Linda's experiencing the same thing.

**Abdi Ali** 38:04

Everywhere is experiencing the same thing gentrification, right, when we have gentrification, you know, and new projects that are coming into our neighborhoods, it makes really harder for folks who live in the neighborhood field along so it's important that we are cultivating belonging. So when you rebuild new luxury apartments in front of the harbor, typically, you would have folks really hiring concierge or door mens and installing cameras. And that really is basically telling us you're not invited here, and it's actually across the racial line. So it's working people of East Boston, so that includes our white working families, that includes our people of color, that don't feel welcome in the space. So we really need to tackle that.

**Abdi Ali** 38:52

I know that our youth who grew up going to these waterfronts are not feeling welcome right now. And that's across racial lines. And so to coordinate that we come up with a way in which we do tell these developers that are really developing the waterfront to make sure that they are thinking about inclusivity and welcoming to our environment, welcoming to our residents. I talked about the overly policing so sometimes we do have police patrolling, I know that that's something that we would like to not see in our parks because it's a recreational spaces. So it means that we should be relaxed and should be enjoying.

**Abdi Ali** 39:32

The other thing that is really going to resolve on Tony's problem, which is transportation. I think I we live in East Boston, of course Lynn has the same thing. Communities that are immigrant and rigueur also has communities are immigrants. So it's important that we provide transportation, the state should be providing a free public transportation that's transporting East Boston residents to Nahant because our kids, most of our neighbors are undocumented, so they do not have the ability to drive. So if we want to think about really inclusivity, we need to include and open those spaces for communities that do not have their drivers license. So folks in our neighborhoods cannot afford to have a car. So that will help them to take the bus for free and really go there in the park. And that will really also reduce the problem of parking spaces, I think we need to provide a free public transportation to the Suffolk teachers.

**Abdi Ali** 40:35

Also, we need to think about engaging our youth, youth are important. They can help us bridge the gap. For example, if you know if we give an opportunities, for example, summer opportunities, our youth can invite us. So we at least know folks in the leadership so we know our youth are working there, they can invite our families can really build a bridge there. So it's important that we start hiring and creating opportunities for students of color in our neighborhoods.

**Abdi Ali** 41:07

The last thing I want to really highlight is cultural activities are really important. So when I hear any music being played in the neighborhood, that is culturally liberal, and to me that's inviting to me, I feel comfortable, so we need to stop asking for people's permission, but we really start encouraging folks to really these organizations to music that are cultural, well relevant and inviting and welcoming. So folks feel that they're culturally valued, and that they are welcomed.

**Abdi Ali** 41:44

The last thing I wanted to actually highlight is science. I know that East Boston is a multiracial, multicultural neighborhood, and it's important that we have language, accessibility and ensuring that our signs are bilingual. So our folks can lead with what is expected of our communities in terms of the rules that are being put. And again, it's important structurally that we open up for communities of color to be in a leadership position so we can advocate for our communities in the space. Thank you so much for having me, and I really feel this is an important conversation as you go along and talk about diversity and inclusion.

**Chris Mancini** 42:31

Thank you so much, Abdi. And thanks so far to everyone who's spoken, I'm really pleased to say that we are ahead of schedule. And so I actually would like to take a brief moment to recognize some of the elected officials who joined us here today. And I'd like to Senator Crighton, if you'd like to take the mic for a moment.

**Brendan Crighton** 42:50

Yes, thank you, Chris. Just briefly don't want to interrupt but wanted to say thank you to Commissioner and my friend, Senator John Keenan, who's been on the commission for quite some time now and has been a tremendous leader and advocate for all of our beaches. So thank you, Senator Keenan. I'll turn it over to our Chairman. Thank you.

**Adrian Madaro** 43:15

Thank you, Senator, and Abdi, thank you so much for those wonderful comments. Want to just recognize some colleagues from the house, we have representative Giannino from Revere, Representative Moschino from Hull, Representative Chan from Quincy and Representative Biele from South Boston. Thank you all for being here, commissioners.

**Chris Mancini** 43:32

Yeah, and thanks so much. Also a quick thing to some of the Save the Harbor board who joins us as well our chair, Michael Leon, Malene Welch, David Spillane, and actually have next also on Save the Harbor's board, the program administrator from the Police Activities League and Boston Center for Youth and Families, Chris Byner.

**Chris Byner** 43:55

Good morning. Let me just start by thanking elected officials. And of course, I'm would be remiss if I didn't thank you and Bruce, Chris, over at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the rest of the staff, all the amazing work that you guys have done. You know, I'm excited to be here, and just want to say thank you for allowing me to just share some thoughts real quick.

**Chris Byner** 44:17

For those who don't know me, my name is Chris Byner. Many people in the city do know me. So you know, I'm a program manager at the Police Activities League. I've been a public servant here in the city of Boston for almost 30 years now. I've just cut my teeth on doing gang intervention work, and work primarily, with bosses in the streets and families the most of my professional career here in Boston. I love Boston. It's an amazing city. I'm a lifelong resident of the city. Graduated from South Boston High School, made lots of great friends there and continue to spend ample amount of time in South Boston lived in Dorchester for quite some time. And actually, I still live in Dorchester on the other end of Dorchester closer to Lower Mills now.

**Chris Byner** 45:04

So, you know, I just want to start by saying, you know, that I'm just grateful that, you know, we have some great beaches here in Boston, especially in Dorchester in South Boston. And you know, for a black man, you know, in his 50s, I gotta tell you, you know, I didn't spend a whole lot of time going to the beaches as a young person. I can think about the time, the times when I was in high school, and Carson Beach wasn't accessible to me, because I was a bad person. I didn't feel comfortable there.

**Chris Byner** 45:40

Now, I will tell you that fast forward, now, times have changed tremendously. I've enjoyed my time on going to Carson Beach, going to Malibu beach, going to Tenean beach. But I will tell you this, that there are a lot of families, a lot of young people who look like me who don't hold those same sentiments. And I think that one of the things that we can all do is Abdi really highlighted a lot of them. But you know, one of the things is not really just thinking about the folks who were in close proximity to those beaches, but really thinking about the entire city, and how do we intentionally engage many of the organizations, community based organizations, housing developments, etc, to, you know, sort of access the beaches, a lot of people don't even know about Tenean, Malibu and Carson Beach. And, you know, that's sad, because they're amazing spaces, I enjoy going to all three of those beaches.

**Chris Byner** 46:41

In fact, you know, as Carson Beach, as I told you growing up, I would never have gone there. But now, and I see a lot of amazing things happen. But yet, and still, there's still, there's still a lot of work to be done. That's why this hearing is critically important. And that we're having this conversation around being more inclusive. As you think about Boston, Boston is a very walkable city, there's great transportation. However, those beaches, although all of them, ironically, all along the red line, are not the easiest places to get to. And so I think that you can be strategic in terms of partnering with places like Boys and Girls Clubs, Ys, community centers, housing developments, to bring the elderly into some of those spaces and take advantage of them.

**Chris Byner** 47:30

I also think that you have to partner with not only some of the places that I just mentioned, but some of the cultural institutions who can help. I think program a lot of those beaches on, you know, I've gone to some of those activities that have taken place at all of those beaches, and while they're fun and exciting, I don't think they're representative of the great diversity that Boston has become.

**Chris Byner** 47:57

We have to really think about how do we strategically partner with some of the cultural institutions that exist within Boston in which there are some amazing cultural institutions that will enable us to bring some of those folks down some of those programs and activities down to some of the beaches to endorse that in South Boston, because, you know, as I've stated, you know, those beaches, you know, for me, they're amazing.

**Chris Byner** 48:24

As I think about beaches, you know, we're having this conversation coming on the heels of everyone is sort of been, you know, dormant for the last almost year and a half, right? And so, we've been challenged with not only this public health pandemic, but the social injustice, pandemic, as well as the economic pandemic that exists. And so, for us, I think it is going to be critically important for us to ensure that equitable access to the beaches to public spaces to nature exists, because what better place to have inclusion and equity than the beaches, I mean, across all socio economic lines, to think about, you know, places where people can just be free.

**Chris Byner** 49:14

I want to say this as well, you know, although people you know, from different communities go to these great spaces, you know, they're also silos. So we have to think about some activities that we can we can do when we're at those beaches, that'll bring people together that will encourage people to, you know, sort of just celebrate each other and more than anything, I think, the safe spaces that are created that these pieces will enable us to all become better at sitting to become better.

**Chris Byner** 49:49

I'm just grateful that these conversations are happening, you know, I will continue to go to all those beaches. Because again, I enjoy it. And I think that we can do ourselves a great service by highlighting the fact that we've got to engage those you serve in agencies, you've got to engage those cultural institutions. And not just in close proximity to those beaches, but really reach out, I heard it earlier, but really reach out to places in Roslindale, as far away as Mattapan, because there are a lot of people who are not experiencing the beaches like they should. And one is because their lack of knowledge and lack of awareness, but also because they don't feel comfortable. Historically, it hasn't been a place where people of color have been welcomed. And so that is changing. But certainly as we're having this conversation, we know there's a lot of work that needs to happen for us to truly get to where we need to get to.

**Chris Byner** 50:46

So again, just just thank you for allowing me to to be a part of the conversation today. And certainly, I look forward to being part of the solution as well, as we continue to move forward and make those spaces more equitable. Thanks.

**Chris Mancini** 51:05

Thank you, Chris. That's fantastic. Appreciate you being here. And moving right down to Quincy, I'd like to introduce the President and CEO of Quincy Asian Resources, Philip Chong. Thank you for being here.

**Philip Chong** 51:18

Thank you, Chris. Thank you so much for having me. Quincy Asian Resources has been in the community since 2001, serving the Asian immigrants and pretty much everybody in terms of access navigation supports. So as a city, we have lots of the Asian and immigrants living in the city, with the largest Asian population per capita in Massachusetts. And we have beautiful beach in the city, and is something that you know, assessable in terms of the proximity, but at the same time that the the water quality is very important, the access amenities. And with the last 20 months, the safety is also really a concern, especially for the the anti hate, anti Asian hates the numbers at the attack, we want to see more diversity equity.

**Philip Chong** 52:22

I also want to echo our community members talking about the parking, we do have parking, but at the same time, we should look into family hours, that are more friendly to family with kids, that is allowing them to have access to the beach, have more availability for the parking.

**Philip Chong** 52:45

Public transportation is also something that is key. The other thing that we also should look into is I think other members also brought it up. It's about the culturally sensitive activities. You know, what we can bring to the beach and then also expand the diversity, equity for people color for Asian and the BIPOC community?

**Philip Chong** 53:12

For example, we can we look into like you know, paddleboarding, about bathrooms changing place, I think this is key for family with kids, you know, having a changing place, having a bathroom, or something that can rinse off the sand before getting to the car. I have two daughters, so my car is extremely dirty. So I've suffered definitely. So something like that. Something like this, you know, small and nuances really create a high touch for the community. But at the same time, I think this is a great opportunity to voice you know how we think we can do more, how we can expand the access to increase diversity and equity. So thank you so much for having me. Appreciate that.

**Chris Mancini** 54:02

Thank you so much, Philip. appreciate your feedback, and look forward to following up with you on some of these ideas. Next, I'd like to introduce Dr. Michael Myers from Hull. Thank you for being here. Dr. Myers.

**Michael Myers** 54:14

Thank you, Chris. I want to actually thank Jason McCann, for thinking of me to speak before you all so quite an honor, and recognize Joan Meschino. We've been neighbors and friends and residents for some time.

**Michael Myers** 54:31

I want to first start by, we use these terms diversity, equity and inclusion as if they're synonymous, and I happen to have been married to an international expert on diversity and she distinguishes the terms diversity and inclusion by saying that diversity is being invited to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance. So today I want to talk a little bit about the dancing. It's interesting to kind of come after everyone else's testimony here. I think Hull has almost too many riches. We have clean beaches, lots to do, a history of Paragon Park, you know, the amusement park that was there, we actually have a very interesting history of diversity. It's not the proudest chapter, I think, in the Bay State, but Hull, as you all know, historically was a summer destination for Irish, Italian and Jewish families who were frankly excluded from coming to Cape Cod. And through the years, Hull has maintained its appeal to diverse racial groups to ethnic groups. This is really evident in the summer on Nantasket beach when you see young people and families come down.

**Michael Myers** 55:57

I have been a 10-year resident of Hull, Massachusetts. I have been in Boston, since 1981. Hull is very interesting. We have about 10,400 residents 0.46% of whom are African American, which is like 50 people. So I am one of the 50 speaking to you, as a resident who lives in and love this magical Peninsula. I moved here in October 2011 with my architect husband, we live in a modern contemporary home, I have survived 10, very cold and windy winters, loved every moment.

**Michael Myers** 56:35

I'm a founding member of the Hull Pride Committee, and I serve with Jason, my husband, Bobby, and with Jason's husband, Chad. So we already have this beach community that comes alive. As soon as the temperatures hit 70 degrees, people come out, you know, people come to Hull. They love coming to Nantasket Beach.

**Michael Myers** 57:00

So I want to harken on some of the things that people have talked about making Hull itself appealing to ethnic groups and racially diverse groups. This really has to do and is very much connected to the Black Lives Matter movement. You know, Hull has a very, very visible police presence, and this is really activated in the summer between the Hull Municipal Police, and the Massachusetts State Police.

**Michael Myers** 57:33

I think all of us can appreciate after the year we've lived through as people have talked about this, not just the pandemic, but the kind of racial conflicts that we've seen in this country. There's a lot of fear and concern and heightened sensitivity, you know, just by seeing the police around.

**Michael Myers** 57:53

I think the one thing I get that we want to enhance public safety, but and I also get the mission of the police to protect and to serve. But I think there's an important balance that needs to be achieved. So for instance, two things I think, practically to help this would be whatever we can do to raise the consciousness of law enforcement through better training about, you know, just their physical presence and the kind of human reaction it creates. And people think Hull has also done a really good job with the bike police patrol. So I think, you know, they can put people on bicycles and have them cycle instead of having the squad car sitting out, you know, again, the police officers really kind of get into the community and are seen as community workers, if you will, and not law enforcement and surveilling, you know, and keeping the peace. I think that will go a long way.

**Michael Myers** 58:56

I think the other thing I'd like to speak to is, again, that access from the perspective of getting to Nantasket. I mean, pretty much the way that you get there is by car. We are a big advocate for the ferry and maintaining the ferry service, especially on the weekend. Even maintaining a trolley or some other service that can pick people up from the ferry stop and Pemberton Point, and you know, take people down to the beaches, I think whatever we can do, Boston Harbor Cruises, you know, rotate in that area, and the more that we can do to build the kind of public transportation and access to the ferry system, and through the trolley system, to the beaches, I think it's important.

**Michael Myers** 59:47

I don't know whether Hull will ever get beyond 0.46% of African Americans who live there, year round. I'd like to see that happen of course, but I do think that we can do a lot more in the summer to announce and present Hull as a welcoming place that's always been historically, by, you know, inculcating in the police in the law enforcement some aspect of what their physical presence is doing, doing more on bike patrol or on foot, and then whatever we can do to maintain the ferry service, and access from the ferry to the beaches, I think that would be great.

**Michael Myers** 1:00:30

So thank you again for inviting me to speak. And it's not just about being invited to the party, but as being asked to dance. It's about inclusion. And that's very important. So thank you very much, again, for having me.

**Chris Mancini** 1:00:47

Thank you so much. Dr. Myers. Really appreciate it. And thank you for yes, you know, correcting my oversight and not kind of laying out that.

**Michael Myers** 1:00:54

That's all right.

**Chris Mancini** 1:00:55

...that difference. But I really, really, yeah, that said, no, it's incredibly important. I really appreciate you being here.

**Bruce Berman** 1:01:03

Dr. Myers, there's a lot of people that would like to dance with you. Thank you very much.

**Michael Myers** 1:01:08

Yes, everybody wants to dance.

**Chris Mancini** 1:01:11

Yeah. So thank you so much, all of our of our panelists, I'm really pleased to say we're still right on schedule here. I would like to enter the kind of public comment period of our meeting. And we do have several people who have pre registered to speak.

**Chris Mancini** 1:01:28

This is, however, an open comment, I hope people will use the chat, we're going to do our best to get to everybody. And if not, at the end of this meeting, we'll be laying out opportunities to follow up with Save the Harbor and the commission individually, opportunities for written feedback, and we will stay here at the staff as long as there's folks who have stuff to say. So with that, I would like to enter the additional comments. Adriana Paz, from the Human Rights Commission, Adriana are you still here?

**Adriana Paz** 1:02:02

Yeah, I'm here. Hi, everyone. Thank you, Doneeca for the invitation. Thank you for the opportunity. I just want to say, it's good to go last because what I can say here is that I agree with all the ideas that were brought up. I feel they will contribute greatly to the inclusion aspect of what we're trying to do here.

**Adriana Paz** 1:02:28

I want to stress that availability of materials in the different languages, not just what's available at the beaches, but what just the grants, the opportunity to apply for these grants and knowing that it's available, should be accessed in different languages. And the outreach to the organizations that are POC led will be vital in bringing in the kind of diversity that we want to these spaces, to the events.

**Adriana Paz** 1:02:58

Also, I'm a supplier diversity specialist, I'm also always looking for ways to include small businesses and how we can amplify their voices and opportunity, creating pop up shops, for those who want to start businesses and don't know how, this is a great opportunity to do so having, you know, small little shops around the beaches.

**Adriana Paz** 1:03:22

And given that small, you know, a smaller sense of what a business looks like. That would be a great start and having diverse foods and you know, things related to the beach available would be great in it. It's great for families so they can go to the beach, enjoy, go for walks, enjoy the water, but also eat there and they're contributing to the economy.

**Adriana Paz** 1:03:47

I would love to see youth led programs in the summer as well and have science programs or just programs where they're taught about the importance of beaches, and take ownership of the beach would be important. Having our youth walk around, seeing our youth around the beaches where they are available to answer questions for families that are there for folks that are there. That would be terrific as well. I think that is it. It's communication, youth led program and some sort of way of amplifying small businesses that I would love to see.

**Chris Mancini** 1:04:30

Thank you so much, Adriana, I really appreciate you being here. I believe. Yes, Mercy. I see. I see your comment and we will get to you. So thanks for registering that. I think Carlos Prudencio had a schedule conflict, I just want to check if he's here. Alright, in that case, Carlos you are here to jump in but I will move along to Rich Ackerman from the Harpoon Brewery and also a Commissioner.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:04:58

Good morning, everyone. Thank you so much. I want to echo everything that Adriana said, I love what I'm hearing here. I think this is a great meeting, we're hearing some amazing ideas. So I appreciate it.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:05:09

Fellow Winthrop residents, Barbara, great to see you. Andrea, I know how to hop off the call, but it's great to see you there too, and supporting our beaches. Again, big thanks to Bruce for asking me to be here. Eric, here, unable to attend. He's on some lavish Beach, not in the area, but enjoying himself in the warm sun. So I'm filling in and I'm very happy to be here today to talk a little bit about the diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives we've taken here at Harpoon Brewery and how it really ties in to Save the Harbor and this group in particular.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:05:40

So just a little background in 2018, Dan Canary, and myself and a handful of us at the organization had been talking for a long time about the importance of diu within the organization and how we need to really changed instead of our profession that we sit in within the brewing industry, which I'm sure many of you are not shocked by our young, white bearded males, we are very well aware of this. And we do not want to follow suit with this, especially when we live and work in communities that are much more diverse than what we have here at our organization. We formed the diversity, unity and equity group. That's an employee run group here in 2008, and we knew we weren't done.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:06:22

Anyone knows Dan Canary, he's a very impatient man in a good way. And he really wanted to make this always at the top of our mindset as an organization and become the strategic plan within the organization to change the way that we operate.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:06:37

In 2019, we applied for a grant through the Brewers Association, which is the national body of breweries across the country, to really focus on diversity within the industry and really changed the way we think. And we were one of eight winners to get this grant. And we hosted in 2019, what we called hot for a career fair, the first of its kind at the brewery here in the Seaport District. And it really offered a lot of opportunity to target the different communities in and around Boston, to get different applicants to come into the building, learn about who we are, understand what we do, apply and work with us. It was a huge success. And we were very happy to have the people that came and the partnerships that we had, including Career Collaborative, City of Boston Diversity and Boston Pride.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:07:27

Then there is a dumpster fire, which we call 2020. And this really changed everything for us and what we thought we could continue to do and get a lot of momentum going. So we needed to come up with new ideas to keep this going and make this top of mind for everybody inside and outside of the organization, in particular with the industry that we're in. So in March of 2020, myself and Dan Canary partnered with the Brewers Association that's in Massachusetts specifically called the Mass Brewers Guild. We have over 200 breweries in Massachusetts that this guild serves, and they're all different sizes. We surveyed the guilds, participants or companies to find out why or how can we be a better resource to get diversity and inclusion top of mind for every one of the breweries within Massachusetts. The two main things that came up were resources and money. So Katie Stanchion at the guild and myself came back to the drawing board and said, what can we do to really offer resources out to all of our breweries here in Massachusetts, and in hopes to go nationwide.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:08:32

So last month, we're very excited to announce what we created as hopforwardequality.com. Hope forward equality is a website specific to the industry, but I will be sharing it in the chat here. It is a free resource for anyone that's specific to the industry to learn about different things that can help with job postings, book suggestions, inclusion initiatives. And it's for all levels, from employees to executives. We're going to be having a training series that's going to get rolled out. And then we also have a piece that's called Black Brew Dialogues, which is a video series where we're actually going to have going into the breweries and talking about the importance of diversity and inclusion within these breweries and what we can do to really force this understanding that we can't just be accepted by being white young males, and we have to change the mindset.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:09:27

There are resources out there at all different levels. We, this guy is not the expert. I know that for 100% fact but what we do know is our partners are. We've been very fortunate to have some of the same partners that we had with Hartford career fair, including the Boston Office of Diversity, Boston pride, but we've also made a few more partnerships including Verta Meyers and the YWCA. We're continuing to grow those partnerships, who will then provide the resources for the site to go to, again, I'll be posting that link here in a minute.

**Rich Ackerman** 1:09:59

We recognize we have a lot more to go and that this is only the first step. One of the reasons why I want to speak today is that one of the most exciting things that I have to announce in regards to this is that we also took the funds that we made from this year's Harpoon Shamrock Splash, we're gonna be using it specifically for the support for Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. So this is really big initiative that we're moving forward with, with Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, but on top of that, we're doing it as an organization to change not only the industry, but the beaches that we reside in. So thank you very much.

**Chris Mancini** 1:10:34

Thanks so much Rich.

**Chris Mancini** 1:10:36

Yeah, thanks for your support of the Harpoon Shamrock Splash of course, it helped us raise over $50,000 for the grant program this year and Harpoon is hiring for a number of great positions at every level. So I want to put a pitch in there. They're an employee owned company, and while I've never worked there, I've worked with the people who work there, and they're a great group. So I know I want to bump someone up, Barbra Kelly from the Condon Community Center, I know you had a conflict. Just make sure everyone else is muted.

**Chris Mancini** 1:11:36

Oh, we're losing it. You're muted again.

**Barbra Kelly** 1:11:44

Hi, we're actually partners here at the Condon Community Center. So we're located right in the heart of South Boston. And we're located actually adjacent to a public housing, so probably 95% of our clientele here, are low to moderate income families that we share knowledge, do not take advantage of the beaches, that guy walks away from them. And at some point, they're really just even ignorant to the fact that they're there, because they don't really go outside of the local area too much.

**Barbra Kelly** 1:12:39

We have been trying, even before this initiative to take advantage of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay trips, and expose them to these things. As that has happened, then we do realize the inequities that do live there and the obstacles that do live there. We want to do it in a safe manner, right. So we're always nervous and, and we've run camps and we've brought our camps down there and so then we look at, (inaudible), where we're like, you know, snapping life jacket preservers on all of our kids that are in our camp. And noticing that, like, there are a couple of other children just in that close proximity to us that don't maybe have access to those floatation devices, don't have access to those life jackets.

**Barbra Kelly** 1:13:53

We really would like to see maybe some kind of resources put into an initiative that similar to the way that Boston police have ramped up bike safety and provide helmets and the help centers have really stepped forward in safety and have provided car seats. We're thinking maybe it might be worthwhile to invest for families going unprepared to waterfronts, to maybe have lifeguards at the stands have availability of life jackets for younger children and just make it you know, able to put some parents might not...

**Chris Mancini** 1:15:03

Your audio, we've gotten most of it Barbra but your audio is breaking up.

**Chris Mancini** 1:15:17

Barbra, I'm so sorry.

**Barbra Kelly** 1:15:18

And I just think that we always just again have an eye on safety, and when it comes to equity, that's just something that we're seeing is that the people that don't go on the beach often and may be acquainted with some of these safety hazards are prepared in a way that other people joining these activities are... There's also another thing that we noticed that the beach that when you guys talked about you know, translating a lot of the signage so that when the...

**Chris Mancini** 1:16:50

Barbara I'm gonna... It's really breaking up. We caught most of it.

**Barbra Kelly** 1:17:02

Yes. Yes, we can hear you.

**Bruce Berman** 1:17:07

First of all, figure out how many life jackets you guys are going to need. That's a great idea.

**Chris Mancini** 1:17:35

We can catch most of it, but it is really, really broken up and choppy, so we're losing the thread. But we caught most of the life jackets. That would be fantastic. No, thank you so much. And sorry, you know, a year later and we're still dealing with the technical difficulties, of course. But thank you so much. Yeah, but again, not really improved. So it looks like there's still a lot of background noise. I don't know if you're able to mute on your end.

**Chris Mancini** 1:18:20

All right, I'd like to move to our next, we'll follow up with you, Barbra. But I'd like to go to Magdalena Ayed Harborkeepers in East Boston.

**Chris Mancini** 1:18:36

Magdalena, are you still here?

**Chris Mancini** 1:18:45

Alright, so I will go to Rita Lara from the Maverick Landing Community Services.

**Rita Lara** 1:18:52

Hi, I'm Rita. I want to, you know, thank Save the Harbor for inviting me to share a few comments. At first I thought well, I'm not sure what to say and then, you know, when I began to reflect I realized, wow Maverick Landing is in the heart of a mixed-income housing community. It's about 80% affordable, and a great majority of the kids who live there don't know how to swim and don't have a lot of access, or they have about as much access often as their parents have. Um, and in thinking about what the access is from Maverick Landing, and for, you know, other public housing developments, um, it kind of brought me to my experiences growing up in housing development in Lawrence.

**Rita Lara** 1:19:45

My parents are immigrants. They came in to this country 1969 and you know, everyone is talking about the language access and the cultural access. On so many levels, there are so many points of, you know, problems around access and inclusion, and especially for children who sort of rely, you know, the children have as much access as their parents do.

**Rita Lara** 1:20:23

I was thinking about that as one of the speakers, I think it was Chris Byner talked about, you know, these are places where people can be free. And I got the opportunity to take lessons with Piers Park Sailing Center. I had just said, you know, there's such an incredible sense of freedom with being on the water. And there's this expansive state, right, that is sort of created just when you're out there. And how important is that, to housing developments and right into families who live there, and their children, who, you know, the thing with housing developments is they can become really insular, you're sort of in this in this space, and in a bit of a fishbowl, um, you feel a bit identified by the outside world, right? As living in poverty, and all these things create the sense of othering and separation, in addition to all the structural forms of racism and othering and separation that happens.

**Rita Lara** 1:21:28

Specifically when it comes to East Boston, I have to really, first of all, appreciate some of the commentary that you Abdi and Alex from East Boston shared, and it was all really, really spot on, specifically, when it comes to sort of even access to the waterfront, um, years back there was, you know, almost no, you know, no access, and then, you know, the waterfront points, and then when we create access, it's really favoring, you know, access for our new neighbors who are coming in, um, and these, you know, and oftentimes, the access to the waterfront almost looks a little private, and people kind of going on strolls in East Boston might say to themselves, Oh, am I allowed in there? And so, what is supposed to be public access actually looks, you know, looks quite... I'm sorry, noise. Um, so, you know, I think we need to think about, you know, how do we then create these spaces that look private and make sure there's an awareness and that they aren't that, yes.

**Rita Lara** 1:22:45

You know, you can take a stroll on this waterfront, this is your waterfront, too. And, you know, I think things like signage, I think things like, you know, definitely language access signage in multiple languages. I think making sure we examine how we communicate things, thinking about things like the digital divide, and making sure we reach especially to institutions where people who struggle with access live like in low-income housing developments. I think that's, that's really important.

**Rita Lara** 1:23:20

Barbra Kelly talked about this, but I think it is really important, just floating devices. You know, kids don't know how to swim, they need floating devices, and they definitely don't have those. So making those available would be huge.

**Rita Lara** 1:23:32

So all these things and even just right, we live in this unreality now, especially where we're online a lot, and it's like there's a world out there and there's an ocean out there. And even things like so say a Maverick is fortunate enough Maverick Landing, the, you know, the community's fortunate enough to be located right next to this beautiful park and a lot of people take advantage of LoPresti Park and love being there and that's a great place to create a point of access around other bodies of water and other trails and other little walks you could take and Conservation Beach as well, like hey, you know, here's how far Conservation Beache is from you know, LoPresti. Here are the ways you can get there in multiple languages. I think if we had some of this information, and in pockets near or inside or you know, made it accessible to communities, then then definitely that would be an invitation to the dance, as Dr. Myers talked about, which also deeply resonated with me. And I think that's, that's all I have to say and thank you so much for the invitation.

**Chris Mancini** 1:24:46

Thank you so much, Rita. I see Magdalena is back in. Magdalena from Harborkeepers, Magdalena Ayed.

**Magdalena Ayed** 1:24:53

Thank you so much, Chris. And thank you for this opportunity to share some of the experience that we've had as an organization. My name is Magdalena, I'm the Director and Founder of the Harborkeepers. We're a coastal community resiliency organization, very grassroots in East Boston, we spent so much time on the waterfront. I'm so happy that you have given us this opportunity, because a lot of the work that we do we're able to do the work because we really roll up our sleeves and build partnerships and get out there. But I think we do hit some, you know, challenges in the sense that, you know, the waterfront, to a large extent, for the most part in East Boston is largely accessible, I wouldn't say that it's wholly, you know, equitably accessible, we're working on that. And we work on that through partnerships, and through seeking more funding and resources in the community.

**Magdalena Ayed** 1:25:47

One of the things that I think is really important is to notate how the DCR, obviously, you know, important state agency, are the main, you know, the managers, per se, are the stewards of a large part of our waterfront, but they're underfunded. I mean, clearly, you know, providing more funding and support to the DCR is really critical for us to be able to do our work. So we're local organizations who are out there, doing Coastal education, building resiliency, but we need to be able to have the comfort in knowing that our state partners are well funded, because that actually will, you know, kind of set us in a position to always struggle, right? Deliver our activities and implement our events.

**Magdalena Ayed** 1:26:31

And one of the things that a lot of people have expressed in our work and programming is that they want to feel safe in waterfronts. And there's not, there's really not enough resources, like Rita was saying, from signage, to, you know, wayfinding signs to knowing that a particular coastal area is going to be clean and safe. I mean, I can't tell you how many drug needles we find in our cleanups, and it's so disappointing each and every time. So, you know, safety is really important. And the question is, how are we supporting local organizations and groups who are out there doing the work? Are we supporting them enough? Are we also not just in terms of funding, but really providing, you know, critical support mechanisms to help them do their work.

**Magdalena Ayed** 1:27:18

So I think, you know, a lot of it has to do with a support mechanism, that goes two ways, how we're spending our funds in, you know, in and around a metropolitan beaches, in our coastal areas. And essentially, you know, the community engagement piece, and we're dealing with very vulnerable populations, people who don't speak English, people who might not be able to get to the waterfront, people who are just really hardworking who might not have the time really, to participate in any event or activity, you know, we could do better in terms of a city in terms of a state to provide opportunities and make it a little bit easier for people who are more inland to come to the waterfront, to feel comfortable participating in events.

**Magdalena Ayed** 1:28:03

Some of the activities that I've seen in the past are just very, like, for example, you know, clearly we support artistic work, but like funding, for example, you know, an artist that will be there for half a day, and then the piece, you know, like, I think those kinds of funds should go more really to local groups who are there every day or like, you know, who are there every week, let's say, or sort of around the clock, right? They're always out there sort of engaging communities. That's how we want to sort of fund this kind of work from the ground up, right, make it sustainable, right. So it's not like a one off project. It's like, it's a constant mechanism of support to local groups and nonprofits.

**Magdalena Ayed** 1:28:49

And the DCR, frankly and a lot of our state agencies as well, they're underfunded. And that could mean public works. It could mean Parks Department for the city of Boston to help clean, you know, pick up the trash that we we clean up hundreds of pounds of trash, but then they don't have the resources to pick it up. Right. So that's, so coordination, I guess, is what I'm saying is better coordination, better funding, a support mechanism, and creating more, you know, accessible and equitable waterfronts and essentially resilient waterfront as well through continued funding mechanisms to the city of Boston and the state, to do research and studies on, you know, vulnerable neighborhoods that flooded. I don't know how much, Chris, you want me to provide? I don't know how much time I should. I should spend talking, but...

**Chris Mancini** 1:29:39

No, I appreciate that, Magdalena. I mean, we're gonna have a lot more opportunity to engage in this. And of course, we know you very well, and so we'd like to keep the information coming. If you don't mind, I wouldn't mind moving on because I know we have a number of other folks who would like a chance to speak but thank you so much for being here and for giving that on the record, and we'll definitely be following up.

**Chris Mancini** 1:29:58

I think Cannon had a conflict and so he may not be here from Eastie Farms. In that case, I'd like to move on to Alex DeFronzo from Piers Park Sailing Center.

**Rita Lara** 1:30:12

Thank you, Chris. I hope this isn't too much East Boston talk for everyone else.

**Chris Mancini** 1:30:19

We're glad to have you here.

**Adrian Madaro** 1:30:22

And for the record, there's never too much East Boston talk.

**Alex DeFronzo** 1:30:32

Yeah, thank you, Rep. Madaro, thank you, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and the Metro Beaches Commission for holding all this testimony. It's really been incredible to hear, especially the panelists and some of the public comment has been so helpful.

**Alex DeFronzo** 1:30:47

And just, I guess a few quick things I would hit on, one is access and getting to the beach. You know, the DCR beach format is pretty similar from (inaudible) beach, there's a little bit of grass, and there's a parking lot. And a lot of it's very car centric. And there's some of the beaches that are accessible by T, like you can get to Constitution from the Orion Heights T stop, you can get to Carson Beach from JFK UMass, but it really doesn't feel like you're supposed to because you have to traverse a lot of car infrastructure to get there. So you know, I know the mentality around this is changing, but really thinking about pedestrian access, and getting from the T to the beach, I think is important.

**Alex DeFronzo** 1:31:28

Cultural relevance, I know a lot of people have already talked about making, you know, the communities of Boston feel welcome at the Metro beaches, we need music, and we need food that represents the different cultures from our communities. And the concessions are awesome, but sometimes people want something different than a burger or hotdog. And, you know, as Abdi said, in his testimony, I think music on the beach from different cultures is going to make the beach feel like a place that's more welcoming.

**Alex DeFronzo** 1:31:59

A lot of people have talked about the police, I think the state police presence on the beach is uncomfortable, especially mounted state police. You know, for some people, it's nice to see a horse for other people, it's very intimidating and uncomfortable. And when there's issues of public safety, of course, it's important, but just kind of the general patrol and presence maybe is not as necessary. And then more youth voice you know, in forums like this is always important because young people love the beach and use the beach.

**Alex DeFronzo** 1:32:31

And you know, just close it out by saying that I think the work Save the Harbor is doing is working really, really well. And the programming from Better Beaches on our DCR beaches is always when the beaches seem to be the most welcoming and inclusive and diverse. And just thank you to the Metro Beaches Commission and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay because I think the progress that we've seen over the last 40 years, but especially in the last 20, a huge deal of that is due to the work of the Metro Beaches Commissioner and Save the Harbor. Thank you.

**Chris Marchi** 1:33:08

Thank you, Alex. And continuing our move once again, from north to south. Sarah Francis from Dorchester.

**Sarah Francis** 1:33:19

Hi, so I'm actually new to all the whole process. Paul used to be the Dorchester person and I am new so I'm not sure what you'd like me to say. But I love everything that I've heard so far. I particularly liked the idea of the pop up kiosks. So I live a 10 minute walk from Savin Hill Malibu Beach, and basically no one knows that we exist. No one knows that it's five minutes from a subway. And that's something I'd like to do something about. We don't have very many planned events that I see at the beach. And it isn't as well used as I would like to see it. The parking lot is very rarely full. We do have a lot of people who are local who used the beach but not as many as again, I'd like to see. So you let me know what I need to tell you.

**Chris Mancini** 1:34:17

No, no, this is a public forum like if you have feedback on equity and access in Dorchester specifically, you know, we'd love to hear and we can also, you can also submit written testimony and we can follow up afterwards.

**Sarah Francis** 1:34:29

Great.

**Bruce Berman** 1:34:34

We just asked two questions. What's working and what could we do better?

**Sarah Francis** 1:34:40

Okay, so what's working is the beach is really clean and it is accessible. There's parking and it's five minutes from the T. So that is what's working. What's not working, I would say is sort of an understanding that the beach is there. So it's not that there isn't access, when I speak to people, they just have no clue that this great beach is available and five minutes from a T that they can get to. What else is not working? I guess I'd like to see more, there is a good amount of diversity, but I'd like to see more groups using the beach.

**Chris Mancini** 1:35:22

Fantastic, we love we love to see the same thing. I mean, it's a big, big goal of the Better Beaches program, and definitely, what we're looking at. Thank you so much. I'm sure we'll be talking talking more in the coming days. I'd like to move on to Nikki Sanders, the Chair of actually the Scituate Committee representing the South Shore.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:35:47

Thank you. Hello, everyone. I just want to take a moment to do what we do at the beginning of every DEI committee meeting here in Scituate. And that is a tribal acknowledgement. The acknowledgement that we are on stolen land, that the land that we're talking about, the beautiful beaches and the beautiful towns that we live in were not ours originally. And here in Scituate, it was originally Wampanoag territory. So I always like to acknowledge that.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:36:16

Also, it is Asian and Asian Pacific Islander Celebration Month, so I hope that everyone's participating in that. So anytime you have an open forum or audience, I hope that you mentioned that or mentioned something that you know about those things. I had a wonderful conversation yesterday with State Rep Meschino about this exact issue and many other issues. She's been very supportive, in many, many ways to situates DEI efforts.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:36:47

Obviously, transportation here in Scituate, we have I think seven beaches might be more, we have seven beaches and I've been here for about six years and I didn't even know about two of them until two years ago. So they're private little coves, there's larger beaches that the mom's like there's the beaches that the surfers like and there's plenty of space for everybody. But if you've ever traveled to Scituate, you know that it's a big winding road, beautiful ride through the woods. And we do have two commuter rail stations, I don't know if everybody knows that. But we do have commuter rail stations. And then from there, it's a hike to the edge of the water. So there's a gap in getting to the commuter rail station and then getting to the water.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:37:48

Some suggestions that I have for collaborations, I was happy to see that Boston Center for Youth and Families was here. I'm also President of Scituate Pride and we had a conversation with Janae Johnson from DCF. And she's looking for specifically for children from the LGBTQIA community that have aged out of care and activities for them over the summer and things for them to do to keep them preoccupied. Boston Urban Pride also is doing a celebration this year. I'm trying to collaborate with them to come down and maybe do something with us on the beach. And I think Stephanie Burke is here to tell you more about what pride is doing specifically.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:38:36

Another collaboration, I think is important is the Metco connection because some of these towns do have Metco. It's very, very easy to contact the Metco director, or to simply call them or attend one of their meetings and say, you know, we have this many parking passes for, you know, every single day, or every single week, and we'd like you to use them. And this is what the towns decide to do.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:39:04

Libraries. I know when my son was little, we spent a lot of time in the library, which I love the library, but one of the wonderful things the libraries have is you can get tickets, free tickets to the Aquarium or to the Science Museum, or, you know, any of the many historical sites and museums that we have here in Massachusetts. And maybe we should also do that for beaches, keeping in mind that we may also need to include parking, and towns can limit based on their traffic, how many of those they'd like to give out to the library kind of connection system, and then people can simply it comes with, you know, maybe it's in collaboration with the MBTA and it comes with, sorry, I have allergies and a really bad headache. And it comes with you know, a MBA ticket and a trolley ticket that the town has and then beach parking and that's part of your beach day pass to whatever town.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:40:03

Internships. We need to keep our young people busy, and I think a wonderful collaboration would be between our young people and our elderly. And those collaborations can include beach cleanup, so we have shipshape day in Scituate, where, basically, you go to the town hall, you get some trash bags, and then you go back home and walk the block in your neighborhood that they give you and you like pick up trash and sweep things and fix flowers. And I think that would be wonderful to have for teenagers to come and join with the elderly and maybe do that together.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:40:39

Another thing is like information and pamphlets. So we talked a lot about languages, I thought all the contributions say were amazing. I've been scribbling away. But information is really important, especially if you're not from the area. So where do I go to get something to eat? Where do I go to the bathroom? How long can I park here? You know, if I want to surf or fish, what are the best times a day to go where? When's high tide? When's low tide? I'm married to a woman who fishes all the time and actually has a fishing school and so she's always talking about high tide, low tide and which beach to go to based on what and so people like her could do little pamphlets that say, you know, high tide today is whatever.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:41:27

Another thing that someone mentioned is measuring fish. And what if at wherever it's like on Peggotty Beach, here, we have a spout that you can rinse off your feet and hands and your kids before getting in the car. But what if next to that you just had a board that you know, measured out 13 inches and then you can just put your fish right up to it. And know which ones you can keep and throw back. So to have something like that is really simple. And encourage fish people who love to fish to come.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:41:57

Police presence. I know that Dr. Myers talked about this being not overly done, but I think it is important particularly in places like Hull which we love Paragon Park, obviously, because we have two young kids. But it does make you feel a little bit more comfortable because like it or not, there is a drug epidemic that is going on. And it's absolutely everywhere. And parents just feel better if they stay at the beach, past sundown. If there is some sort of a presence, even if there's a friendly presence, or hello, how's everybody doing presence? I think that's important. One of the main, free parking, people talked about bus tickets and volunteer. So if you volunteered so many days, maybe you then get this beach pass day, or several of them based on the days you volunteer to clean up or walk around, giving pamphlets or information to people, maybe then you get free parking or you get an MBTA ticket or something of that nature. I'm just trying to run through everything because I have a lot.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:43:10

Advertising. So one of the things that I noticed was that I didn't know a lot about what's going on here. And a lot of people here are in the know of what's going on around them. So how do we place all of that in one place so that everybody has access to everything? And you know, maybe I don't want to go to the beaches we have here. Maybe I want to go to Revere because I know they have the sand sculpting or maybe I want to go wherever. How do I know when that's happening? Not everybody reads the news. I don't look at the news or read the newspaper. I haven't done that since before law school, because I have kids. So like not everybody has time to look it up. So my 12 year old son does that for us. But how do we find out these things? And where do we go, we press the button and we know everything that's going on along the coastline for the summer.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:44:04

Janae Johnson I mentioned, and then one other thing I want to mention. I'm pressing my headache because it's given me more of a headache. We have to be cognizant, if we are inviting bodies of color to a space that is predominantly white, we have to be cognizant of the fact that they may not feel comfortable. And we should not invite them if we're not prepared for them to enjoy themselves as we enjoy ourselves. Right. So one of the efforts needs to be concentrating on how we are creating communities on the water close to the water that are welcoming. Do we have elderly and teenage representatives because the young people doing absolutely everything? Do we have elderly and teenage representatives at the beach like okay, I'm going to take this week you take that weekend every day.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:44:57

I'm going to go and walk around and say hello, that's it, say hello to someone, and they'll say, here's a pamphlet in the bathroom or whatever, you know, but don't insert yourself unless, you know, someone's really asking you because it might be me and I already lived here. So I don't know. But I'm just saying, you know, we need to create spaces that people will feel comfortable. So I'm sure once they have their beach pass from the library, and the free parking pass for the day, and the kids are all packed up, and they get there, and then they unpack and relax, they certainly don't want to feel unwelcome.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:45:31

And we need to create spaces, keep that in mind, as we're inviting people to communities that are predominantly white, and currently don't see people of color on their beaches, that we're keeping in mind creating a space somehow that, you know, had, they have the best beach day of their life, just like everyone else is having. So we need to keep that in mind.

**Nikki Sanders** 1:45:56

I'm super happy that Stephanie works here because she's amazing. And she's gonna tell you everything that's going on and such with this summer, I hope you all come because it's going to be fun. Thank you.

**Chris Mancini** 1:46:07

Thank you, Nikki, we have a few more folks I know who are registered. And I would like to get to everybody, I do want to take a, we're getting close to 11:30, so I do want to take a few moments now to just talk about the follow up and next steps before we start to lose those but again, we will be saying and keeping the conversation going.

**Chris Mancini** 1:46:31

So Bruce, will you just introduce David and we can do our next steps and then we will get right back. And Stephanie, you will be up next.

**Bruce Berman** 1:46:39

I want to thank everybody for an awesome and really interesting discussion. And especially to thank Chris who has really, really, really focused us at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay and it's been a terrific asset. We're lucky to have him. Um, there's a lot more to this conversation. And one of the ways that we're going to move it forward is by circling back with all of you, and turning to all of you to ask you to reach out to other folks to share with us at what I think we're calling a, what's that word, I always forget a summit.

**Chris Mancini** 1:47:22

Our summit. Yeah.

**Bruce Berman** 1:47:25

But before that, and inspired in some ways by comments from from our staff, and others, we're also going to try to find a way to allow people to participate and share their thoughts in an anonymous fashion.

**Bruce Berman** 1:47:41

So I'm going to ask David Spillane, who is in many ways, the architect of the commission, who has served as lead consultant since we started to talk a little bit about our plans for the survey. And then as far as the summit goes, we'll be back. David.

**David Spillane** 1:48:02

Thanks, Bruce, I just want to say it's been exciting to be part of the commission's work since 2008, in my role as a board member at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. And I think through every one of these cycles of engagement, we've had, you know, public comment input really as being the foundation for all of the work we're doing as it is today.

**David Spillane** 1:48:21

It's been exciting to hear the comments this morning. What we will be doing shortly after this meeting is reaching out to to all of you, looking for your help and connecting us to some of your networks for an online survey that we hope can supplement some of the conversations we've already had today, in terms of, you know, attitudes, and experiences of people in your network about the beaches that can supplement and amplify many of the things we've heard today, that ultimately becomes a very important part of the commission's work and the record that the Commission can share with DCR and the legislature so expect to see that, you know, coming in the next you know, couple of weeks, I believe all Marlin Martinez at Save the Harbor/Save the Bay is going to be coordinating the work. So if you do have any specific ideas about the survey, please reach out to a Marlin I believe a Marlin is going to include his contact information in the chat. Thanks.

**Chris Mancini** 1:49:38

Thank you, David. So yes, and I know we have a few more comments at the end, but I wanted to get back to the public comment. And so Stephanie Burke, from Century Pride, thank you for being here.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:49:49

Thank you for having me. I'm Stephanie Burke, thank you, Rep. Meschino for inviting me to speak. I actually wasn't planning on speaking too much of the events that we have. I'm here in Scituate but because it's come up for ideas, one just really quickly, we have a music bandstand series throughout the summer and first friday nights, we have a big gathering that brings some attention to our businesses downtown.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:49:49

So one of my, one of our goals is here, and one of what I should definitely tried to do was work with what was already existing in our town and what already had an avenue for us to be more welcoming and be more inclusive. So any efforts didn't, you know, live or die with Nikki or I and what we've done is we have found music for every month. So we have a band where the lead singer identifies within the LGBTQIA+ community for June for July, we have a Cape Verdean band to celebrate Cape Verdean Heritage Month. In August, we have for Jamaican Independence Day, we have reggae music, and then in October, we're working towards music for Hispanic Heritage Month. So I encourage everybody to look in the avenues that are already existing to go ahead and figure out how you can work with the towns or cities to do that, but really why I'm here is I am Scituate pride, I'm part of the reason I got involved is the void of support and visibility for our youth. That's really a big passion of mine.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:51:24

I'm different from a lot of people. And since I grew up in California, and while living in California as a teenager to young adult, I worked with historically underserved youth.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:51:34

During the summer, one of the big things that we did at the last session of camp as we called it is we took children to beaches. And this is something that everyone talked about being very, literally has not come down the whole time the whole hearing. But um, it was something that everyone thought, you know, built up and said, this is such a special event for camp, this is a great time to you know, this is something that you're going to find really special.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:52:04

And even though I had attended the camp, I always went to the earlier sessions, so I didn't experience it as a camper. And the second the children stepped off the bus, you knew why this was special, you could see it in their eyes. So many children for the first time were experiencing the ocean. So many children for the first time were touching the sand. And to me, the realization came as we would later gather and do our serendipities as we would call them. And realizing that though these children live less than five miles less than 10 miles from the oceans, this was their first experience with it, despite being you know, and some were six and seven years old, but others were 14 and 15 years old.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:52:44

And as these conversations occurred, you know, you realize removing these children from their environment and discussing the ocean and and its greatness and how it connects lands, you could see the exploration in their minds grow. And though the educational side of it was limited to my knowledge of Geography at the time, the possibilities in their minds of, you know, what was allowed to occur when you when you talk about all the possibilities and the lands that it connects and the different opportunities there is for growth.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:53:18

So I just I really want to speak about the importance of figuring out ways to remove the youth from their environment, and what they are most used to seeing every day. And my realization came as a young as a teenager that wow, through other serendipities that I've learned, this is why you feel your opportunities are limited to teacher to store owner to store worker, to athlete to short or drug dealer because your life exists between 35th and 41st and international.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:53:52

And so there are so many barriers that are beyond our control that we need to sit down and evaluate as municipality as a state, which ones we do have control out after to help people overcome those barriers. And so many of them were identified today, transportation, parking language, I mean, those are ones that we can control and organizations can control and then taking it a step further and figuring out how we can over calm the invisible, you know, barriers.

**Stephanie Burke** 1:54:24

And a lot of you know, topics of intersectionality came up today as well and you know, being able bodied. So the more intentional and strategic we can get in providing equitable app access for our youth and focusing on that. Whether it be through the school summer programs that we discuss, whether it be through reserved passes for schools that are available through the schools because and having designated spots because I know from speaking with parents of kids, you know, part of the issue is that we help We always have intention to go to the beach. But by the time we actually get out there, after I get off work or something happens, all the spots are filled. So figuring out how we what we can do to, you know, address these issues of intersectionality, what we can do to help families, and just basically do it with the intention of providing a different environment for our youth moving forward. So thank you for allowing me.

**Chris Mancini** 1:55:23

Thank you so much. Definitely really appreciate all this information and feedback. I know I'm going to just change the order slightly. I know Shavel’le Olivier has a hard stop at 11:30. And so I'd like to invite her to speak next.

**Shavel’le Olivier** 1:55:37

Good evening. Good evening. Wow. Good afternoon, or evening. It's almost afternoon, everyone. My name is Shavel’le. I am Mattapan resident, and I'm the Executive Director at Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition. And we have been a Better Beach grantee for the past three years. I was introduced to Save the Harbor/Save the Bay through another biking friend of mine when he applied for the grant back in 2016.

**Shavel’le Olivier** 1:56:02

In that grant proposal, we proposed rides to beaches, the beaches of South Boston and Dorchester, which I had no idea existed. And I probably went there when I was younger, but I went there via car, and I never biked there. So during this event back in 2016, I'm 23-24 years old. This is the first time that I'm discovering what Tenean Beach is and where it is, and how very close it is to my house in Mattapan, maybe about a 30 minute bike ride for me, maybe shorter for those who ride faster, and maybe more for those who ride slower. It was the first time that I ever went to Malibu beach, I know there was a person here who talked about access there, I can get there from Mattapan. And it was the first time that I went to Carson Beach and the first time that ever went to Castle Island. But I didn't know those things were there. And I didn't know I could get there if it wasn't for someone else showing me that I can get there. But all those things are far away from the Mattapan community.

**Shavel’le Olivier** 1:57:02

And so after that bike ride, we started to do more bike arrives to the beaches to let people know how to get from Mattapan, which is further away from the beach by bicycling, I'm not saying by T, or by driving by bike cycling, as many people mentioned on this call transportation access is a thing. We can create all these things that you all are saying. But I'm still focusing on trying to figure out how to get my community to the actual beach, the community who do not drive like me, I'm not a driver, I bike and I take the T. How can I get those individuals who look like me, who use the same transportation options as me to those beaches.

**Shavel’le Olivier** 1:57:44

And so we created an event called there's a Mattapan Food Fitness Coalition. And we have an event called Mattapan On Wheels. And this event is, you know, having residents explore places that they've never been by bike. And so we've been hosting this event for coming up on 11 years, and the past three years have been riding to these beaches, and lots of individuals are amazed that maybe how close or how far depending on your level of biking, and speed, how close or how far these places are.

**Shavel’le Olivier** 1:58:15

And there are efforts as you all know, or may not know in the bicycling advocacy world of trying to connect and get more bike lanes around and connected them to green spaces and blue spaces. And there is an effort on Morsi Boulevard to change the way that that street design looks to accommodate more cycling. And that will be super awesome because then individuals like me that can get on and upon the trail from Mattapan right through Pope John Paul Park, right through Tenean Beach, which I know is a little bit off road to get to there. And then safely ride on Morsi Boulevard to get to Malibu Beach was which is on the opposite side. And then also safely get to UMass Boston and then continue riding the path to Carson Beach and Castle Island.

**Chris Mancini** 1:59:05

Thank you so much Shavel’le. Your event has been great and that's what we love about it. You're literally connecting people from from the inland areas to the beaches. I know it's 11:30. I know we may start to lose some folks. But again, we'll stay here we'd like to keep hearing feedback. And up next seems Niki Ghosh from Hull House.

**Niki Ghosh** 1:59:25

Well, yep, first of all, thank you very much for the opportunity to speak to all of you directly. Yeah, my name is Nikki. I am a Hull resident and I host a weekly radio show on WBRS 100.1 FM. And we do a weekly podcast as well that we do all the recording all the production we do everything straight from Hull.

**Niki Ghosh** 1:59:43

And so one of our big goals, you know, as we are hopefully safely coming out of this pandemic is to expand from digital media and online work and radio work and get into creating real life spaces. And so, one of the avenues that we're kind of exploring right now is the posibility of doing a music festival on the beach and incorporating a surf component to that as well.

**Niki Ghosh** 2:00:05

And so I think kind of the general thing that we've kind of been talking about here is this idea that I've, I've kind of liked this phrase, you know that sometimes the door isn't locked, but that doesn't mean that it's necessarily open. And so although Nantasket Beach is publicly accessible and open to anybody, it's about creating those spaces and finding those ways to bring more people in and bring young people in.

**Niki Ghosh** 2:00:26

I'm always shocked when I hear about people that live 2,3,4 towns over and say they've never been to Nantasket beach, you know? And if that's their closest beach, I'm like, how is that possible? And so one of the things we want to do is just create that space for, you know, both the community here Hull locals and residents.

**Niki Ghosh** 2:00:43

This past weekend, we had a neighborhood cleanup day that was organized by the Straits Pond Watershed Association, and just being out there and kind of talking to people about what we're doing. A lot of the locals are like, yeah, this would be awesome, we would love to see this in our own backyard. And I think within that day of the cleanup itself, you know, just having that sense of community that we haven't really seen in a while, it struck up as emotions of yeah, of course, is something that we would like to see. But also just to people that feel like, you know, they don't get to see the kinds of events that they would like down here.

**Niki Ghosh** 2:01:12

I was also out to eat later that night at one of the restaurants on the strip and I was talking to our server about live music, because they're hoping to have live music at the venue soon. And she was telling me, you know, even if we have live music down here, it's just not the kinds of music that I wouldn't want to listen to particularly. So it's like, what do you listen to? And she's like, I like rap music, I would love to see, like rap music. And I was like, well, why can't we do that? You know, a lot of our connections and guests that we've had to our podcast are in the hip hop sector. And, and it's just, you know, just thinking about these different ways that we can bring a little bit more relevance and things that people don't necessarily see down on Nantasket in this particular area.

**Niki Ghosh** 2:01:48

And I think with the current climate of the world, you know more than ever, it'd be so important to have a meshing of cultures and find ways where people can feel like they're comfortable and in ways that they feel like they would be genuinely interested in things that are going on in their own backyard.

**Niki Ghosh** 2:02:04

It's just one of those gaps that we would, you know, like to play a part in seeing how we can bridge and just breathing new life into Nantasket. There are so many young people here and so many people that are looking to get out and looking to be a part of things. So how can we create meaningful events and meaningful spaces and genuinely and authentically create places that people want to be a part of. And so that's a little bit of my pitch, and I'll leave it at that. But thank you so much, again for the opportunity to speak here. And it's been a wonderful morning, just hearing about all the ideas everybody's had.

**Chris Mancini** 2:02:37

Thanks so much, Niki. Patsy Williams, would you like to say anything? I know. You're on our list, but not sure if you're prepared to speak. All right. Sorry?

**Bruce Berman** 2:02:58

She's muted.

**Patricia Williams** 2:03:00

Oh, well thank you for inviting me to speak. I had probably the same comments that everybody else had about signage, have various languages in signage and in making people feel more welcome, having pamphlets or giving pamphlets out. I also like to mention that I'm one of the 50 black people who live at Nantasket Beach and it is more accessible. A lot more people come in the summertime. But I'd like to see more people come and walk the beach in the fall in the spring and to educate a lot of the residents at Nantasket about different cultures and black people.

**Patricia Williams** 2:03:52

One of my goals is to set up a welcoming committee for every new person who moves to Nantasket to give them information about the restaurants, beach, tides, fishing, to help them feel more welcome because I remember when I moved here, I felt people made me feel very unwelcome. And I've lived in a lot of places. I lived in Concord, Massachusetts in the 1990s and I was one of 10 black people who lived there, but they had a welcoming committee. So I was able to become a girl scout troop leader and get my children involved. So I would like to get more of the residents in Nantasket involved with people who come to the beach in the summertime, and have them feel safe and not think of them just as people who visit this seaside town but have them looked at as just human beings who want to enjoy the beach who want to interact with the residents.

**Patricia Williams** 2:05:01

I also agree with having ethnic foods on the food stands and minority businesses appearing on the beach and having a lot of lifeguards of different color on the beach. And a lot of people working on the beach in these food stands who are black people or other other ethnicities. Not sure if I'm saying it, right. I just want the beach to be more inclusive, and the people at home to not just tolerate people who come to the beach, but welcome them, be more welcoming to people who are on the beach. I've had people come up to me and you know, where are you from? Where do you come from? Don't ask me it and I reject those questions. Before I didn't, and I'm like, why are you asking me? You know, I don't know what color I am. I'm a human being. So don't ask me stupid questions. Just accept me the way I accept you. So just to have people in the area who live in the area of these beaches Hull. I'm not sure about Scituate, but I've been to Scituate beaches, Cohasset beaches, just have people be in the area be more welcoming to other people who come.

**Chris Mancini** 2:06:22

Thanks, Patsy. I mean, the welcoming committee. It sounds like maybe that's an opportunity for the Friends of Nantasket Beach. I know Jason and we will make sure that we can connect you and just full disclosure Patsy's daughter Joye is one of Save the Harbor's core staff, is our Operations Manager.

**Patricia Williams** 2:06:42

I'd also like to thank Joan. I've met her at the Lifesaving Museum. She's a very nice lady. I'd like to thank her for everything she's done. There's a article in the newspaper that she wrote about what she is doing the projects that she is doing, trying to initiate on the beach. And I hope everyone knows about it. It's in the Hull Times. So maybe not everybody knows about it. But it's a very interesting article, what she's doing to include people to make the beaches more accessible. So Thanks, Joan.

**Bruce Berman** 2:07:16

Joan, if you'll send us a link. We'll be glad to distribute that to the Commission.

**Chris Mancini** 2:07:25

Thank you. Thank you. And Mercy Robinson, you're up.

**Mercy Robinson** 2:07:31

Hello, thank you for having me. My name is Mercy Robinson. I've been newly appointed Executive Director at South Boston En Accion. Everybody talked about great points, and a lot of it reflected on what we already had come up with within the community. We definitely would like to see elderly chairs or accessibility for elders and more shaded areas. Having a little sensory area for our younger children our toddlers or babies having a secure area for them. Also, maybe even a doggie area like a little sliver, a part of the beach for South Boston has a very growing puppy population doggy population, I think almost, if not all households, the majority of the households have dogs. But we would also if there was a way for there to be stargazing nights, we have a good stretch of beach. I mean, all beaches are perfect for looking up at the sky, especially our youth, especially with everything going on with Mars and the prospect of going to Mars, there's been shows have an insatiable appetite for them to get to know what's actually out there. Not just out in the sky, but also in the water.

**Mercy Robinson** 2:08:55

And also, let me see what other point they really wanted me to bring about. We at South Boston En Accion, we're planning on doing a lantern lighting. We also have a good portion of our Asian population. And we, as a group decided, you know, it'd be nice to get everybody in the community together safely and do a lantern lighting and saying goodbye to 2020 and bringing hopes for the future. So that's what we plan to do as a community. And I don't know if anybody else wants to join in. I'll definitely leave email in the comments in the chat in case anybody wants to say, hey, you know what, we want to do that down at Nantasket. We want to do that up at Revere Beach. I think it'll be a good bonding not just to bring people to the beaches, but to bring all sorts of community all sorts of walks of life together. And yeah, thank you for having me, everybody had great points.

**Mercy Robinson** 2:10:05

And a lot of it rendered with us here about what we can do for our beaches, we also want to try to partner up with DCR and do a youth cleaning of the beaches and having that be a monthly, a weekly thing where they go out and they not just the youth, elderly, everybody go out and clean the beaches. So we all know how important it is to keep our beaches clean and safe. Thank you.

**Chris Mancini** 2:10:32

Thank you so much Mercy, I really appreciate you being here. And congratulations on the new position. Really glad to connect with you. I know Maya and I would love to talk with you more about your new role. And a lot of your ideas are really kind of great candidates for for the Better Beaches program and some of which have come up before. So it'd be really great to talk to someone, if you don't mind sharing your email.

**Chris Mancini** 2:10:57

And of course, we are at the end of our list of requested speakers. If anyone else would like to speak, please raise your hand and we'd love to give you that opportunity. It is over time however. And so I do want to let folks know it is okay to step out and get on to the rest of your day at this point.

**Adrian Madaro** 2:11:18

Chris, I'd love to just jump in real quick just to say thank you to all those who came today for such an important dialogue, especially want to thank all the East Boston folks who were on today who shared wonderful insights. Clearly, we've made a lot of progress on our beaches, but when it comes to the issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, we definitely have a long way to go. And I want folks to know this is just the beginning of this dialogue. This is certainly going to be a focal point for the Metropolitan Beaches Commission this year and moving forward. And we look forward to partnering with all of you to ensure that our beaches are able to be enjoyed by everyone in our communities, and that everyone has access and that everyone feels comfortable and welcomed at what really are some of our most important public spaces in the Metropolitan beaches area. So just again, grateful for all of you for being here. And thank you I look forward to continue dialogue.

**Chris Mancini** 2:12:15

Thank you, Rep. Madaro and Senator Crighton, would you like to say anything?

**Brendan Crighton** 2:12:20

I think Adrian said it all. I appreciate everyone staying on for so long. But you know, every testimony here today was so valuable. And I really appreciate your time and your work on this.

**Chris Mancini** 2:12:34

Fantastic, I thank you all for being here. This is an incredibly important conversation to Save the Harbor to the Metropolitan Beaches Commission and our work is just beginning. So you know, we've got the some raw material here, we have more steps to do. We'll be, we're already starting to see some themes emerge, of course, and we'll be putting together a draft report. And we'll be sharing that back with all of you to make sure we got it right on and then that will and in the meantime, we've got the Better Beaches grant RFP open at the moment.

**Chris Mancini** 2:13:09

Maya, if you want to make sure your email is in the chat as well, you can always reach out to Maya Smith. And we really look forward, thank you to all the commissioners for being here and all the members of the organizations and the public.

**Bruce Berman** 2:13:26

Thank you, Chris.

**Chris Mancini** 2:14:02

I think you're really good at this. You're on top of all the comments and everything. I was in awe.

**Joan Meschino** 2:14:11

I'm happy to hang until until everybody's dropped off. I just think it's important that you know, someone from the Commission stay on right to the end. And if there's any last things in the chat that we see. And in some ways I feel like this is it's technologies about access, but also can be about barriers. But one of the pieces I love is that you don't have to interrupt and you don't have to be brave enough to step forward. When something's being recorded, you can share your comments in the chat and it gets saved forever and it's part of the record and so I just I think it's like such a great mechanism.

**Joan Meschino** 2:14:46

So yeah, it's an important one. But the testimony was fantastic. Absolutely fantastic. I mean, it always is but I you know, when I was but you never know what you're going to hear and I just feel like we heard some, as you said, some really important themes. And some really interesting ideas. Right? Not just here are the problems, some really interesting action opportunities. So, yeah, so that was good. And it's always nice to be on the Metro Beaches Commission, because there's so much goodwill and good spirit. And I will say, again, I've said it before, but I'll say it again, is that this is one of the most effective commissions I've ever participated in. And that was what I had said to the people that we invited was, they will actually listen to you and they will actually internalize it, and they will actually do something with it. So it's worth it's worth time spending time. Yeah, so well done, my friend well done.

**Chris Mancini** 2:15:47

Thank you for saying that. I know Maya's already getting some grant applications that address some of the things that people brought up. So we got a little more time there. But thank you, I think we're down to staff at this point.

**Patricia Williams** 2:15:59

All right. And I'm going to excuse myself, but it's wonderful to see you all bye.

**Chris Mancini** 2:16:06

Bye. Thank you all so much for being here for this. This was was fantastic. I can't believe we stopped so close to the schedule. But yeah, so you know, immediate next steps. As soon as we stopped it, you know, the recording will get thrown up to the cloud or wherever it goes. I know Marlin, you're on next steps in terms of turning out a transcript for that, which we'll make as a resource for all of us. We want to do a little bit of editing to it just to make sure it looks you know names are spelled right and if you take out some of the ums although those should be deleted flat section this won't be part of the transcript. And as he did you start to see a couple of things emerge. We're able to take some notes and you know, obviously we heard a lot about transportation language. So I think I'm excited about I think there's some some action items we can get to work on. Joye were you saying something?

**Chris Mancini** 2:17:07

I was gonna say I'm gonna stop the recording now.