

Beach commission to sound out Hull residents on ‘their’ Nantasket

ALLAN STEIN | 2/7/2019



Until one has strolled barefoot along its sandy crescent curve and watched the blazing moon rising at low tide after sunset, one has yet to experience the rare natural beauty of Nantasket Beach in Hull.

Returning beachgoers often describe the beach as a “gem,” a magnificent place to sit and relax on folding chairs, toes dipped in the sand, or splash around in warm blue-green water in late summer.

Many residents consider Nantasket their personal refuge – worth preserving at any cost – a place like no other.

Bruce Berman, who grew up in Longmeadow, outside Springfield, remembers his family’s yearly visits to Nantasket when he was a boy and thinking it was Cape Cod, vast and magical.

“I know Nantasket is a wonderful beach,” said Berman, spokesman for the nonprofit environmental advocacy group Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. “It’s amazing how much people know about their beach. People are passionate advocates for the beach.”

Founded in 1986, Save the Harbor/ Save the Bay leads and manages the Metropolitan Beaches Commission (MBC) for the state Legislature. The MBC was created in 2006 to make findings on metropolitan Boston’s 15 public beaches in eight communities from Nahant to Hull, all of which are managed by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation.

The MBC will hold a public hearing on the “State of Nantasket Beach” on Tuesday, Feb. 12, from 6-8 p.m. at the Nantasket Beach Resort in Hull. All are welcome to attend.

“We expect a good turnout. We want to hear from people who love and use the beach and what they think is going well, what they think is important, and take what they think to heart,” Berman said. “While not everybody will agree on everything, at the end of the day it’s important [the commission] can agree on what we hear,” he said.

MBC co-chairs are state Sen. Brandan Crighton of Lynn and Rep. RoseLee Vincent of Revere. Hull’s MBC members include state Sen. Patrick O’Connor, Rep. Joan Meschino, and Jason Mc-Cann, a member of the Planning Board and Community Preservation Committee.

“I’m looking forward to hearing directly from South Shore residents about what they’d like to see on their beaches, what’s working well for them and what could use some improvement,” O’Connor said.

“Personally, I’m concerned about the upkeep of seawalls, maintaining the high water quality level at Nantasket Beach, and ensuring our public transportation and ferry services operate at a satisfactory level for customers,” he added.

Meschino said she hopes the hearing will draw a large turnout from Hull and across the region – people who are concerned about Nantasket who will “come and share what they love about the beach, why it’s important, and that they value having that wonderful open space – things we can be doing better. We’re very excited.”

McCann said the Feb. 12 forum will encourage people to speak out on any issue related to Nantasket – “what is great [about the beach], what they enjoy, what needs improvement.”

“Anything that comes up,” he said, will be included in the discussion. “Every comment that we receive will be used to build that study.

“It’s not just something that we do for recreation, it’s a part of our everyday lives,” McCann said about Nantasket. “There are so many different issues and concerns. People are always thinking about the state of the beach. It’s not a hearing for a hearing’s sake. It’s real action. I just hope people who are interested will attend.”

Berman said the forum is the second of eight scheduled hearings to solicit public input on how to preserve and improve the area’s beaches. The first hearing, which was held in Quincy last summer, drew 75 people.

All public comment will be reviewed by the commission and included in a final report to be presented to the Legislature later this year. Berman said it is hoped the report’s findings will spur increased state funding and support for Nantasket and other public beaches.

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