

# East Boston

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### MBC Holds Workshop on Constitution Beach

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By John Lynds

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A lot has improved at Constitution Beach since the Metropolitan Beach Commission (MBC) was formed in 2006.

At the time the beach lacked a bathhouse and concessions, the water bubblers didn't work, there was a huge sinkhole at the southern entrance of the beach, the tennis courts needed to be replaced and residents complained that Constitution Beach had become a haven for teen drinking.

"We've made a lot of strides since 2006," said Rep. Adrian Madaro. "It certainly did not look like it did today. A lot of those investments were the result of community conversations, listening to residents and the incredible advocacy from Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. Today we have a new concession stand, new tennis courts, a bathhouse, handicap accessibility on the beach, free kayaking. All of these things were ideas from this community that were shared with the MBC and we were able to work with DCR and other partners to make these ideas a reality. We have yet another opportunity to do the same thing. While our beach is looking incredible it is not without issues."

Last week the MBC, now co-chaired by Rep. RoseLee Vincent and Sen. Brendan Crighton held a public hearing at the Orient Heights Yacht Club to see what more can be done to improve Constitution Beach.

The hearing began with an update on the beach by MBC members, followed by a workshop where residents were asked to provide ideas on improving the beach.

During the workshop residents got a chance to tell MBC members what has improved over the years. Residents said that the addition of the bathhouse, new tennis courts,

concessions, and the fixing of the sinkhole have made the overall experience at Constitution Beach a lot better. People testified that the overall cleanliness and water quality has greatly improved and the beach gets a lot of use during summer months.

However, one item of concern among resident still is the patrolling of the beach by State Police.

Other suggestions at the meeting were adding more programming to the beach like expanding the free kayaking, swimming lessons, and other water activities, such as a floating dock.

MBC member Chris Marchi said Eastie's geographic location as an island in Boston Harbor lends itself to more water activities and programming.

"If you travel around East Boston there are 12 to 15 miles of shoreline and waterfront," said Marchi. "For us, for people living in East Boston it's a matter of how do we get people down to the water and it would be a great thing to investigate what level of waterfront activities are needed to bring the neighborhood to the next level."

Others said having more community-wide events that expand past the beach's dusk closing time could keep late night problems to a minimum. It has been shown with the creation of the Greenway Extension that reactivation of land that is underutilized has a positive effect on reducing negative impacts like public drinking, muggings and assaults.

With the summer officially being only eight weekends long some suggested weekend concerts, theater on the beach like Shakespeare in the Park, bonfires, and other activities could not only raise money for beach upkeep, but also serve to make the beach less attractive for people up to no good.