



## A Better Beaches Meeting

By Rick Winterson

You don't have to be told how important beaches are to the South Boston community. And you don't have to be told that our beaches are top quality, with virtually 100% successful quality testing. But (as it must) the work on further beach improvement continues.

Twelve years ago, the Massachusetts Legislature established the Metropolitan Beaches Commission (the MBC). The MBC took an in-depth look at the public beaches owned by the commonwealth and managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (the DRC). The non-profit organization, Save the Harbor/Save the Bay (SHSB), which began 35 years ago, was asked to play a leading role in the MBC's inquiry and as a consultant. A meeting to gather South Boston community input took place Monday evening (May 6) at the Tynan School/Community Center. Despite double playoff games (Bruins and Celtics) that evening, approximately 50 South Bostonians showed up to give their input. Rep. David Biele was

on hand, as were Bruce Berman and Tani Marinovich, who was appointed the President of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay earlier this year. She has previously served as a Director in the Charles River Watershed Association and the Esplanade Association.

Monday evening's MBC meeting opened with remarks from State Rep. David Biele, followed by an update from SHSB's Bruce Berman. Perhaps most striking were the tables of water quality over the past several years. These tables showed a virtual 100% passing grade for the Harbor and Bay waters along the beaches of South Boston.

The next hour of the meeting was spent in taking inputs from the assembled residents of South Boston – community input was the ultimate reason for having this MBC meeting in the first place. The meeting attendees joined in the exercise with enthusiasm, after being split into two teams. They logged down their thoughts on cards, and fastened them to scratch boards in three categories: “Working

Well”, “Needs Improvement”, and “Missing”.

As mentioned, the water quality improvements are working well, even though more people are using the beaches here. In addition, the business uses of enterprises on the South Boston shoreline, such as the Conley Terminal and the Flynn Cruiseport, are growing. There are many recommendations for more improvements, such as additional lighting along Carson Beach and Pleasure Bay, a shuttle and more parking at Castle Island, pests (rats!) control under piers and wharves, dog control and added food trucks. There were disagreements as well – the use of more food trucks was questioned, as were the effects of warming and rising ocean levels, but there are healthy controversies. The MBC meeting minutes will be assembled and made public shortly. Take an interest in these findings and recommendations. After all, South Boston, with beaches, businesses, harbor views, and 82% of its boundary being salt water, is basically a maritime neighborhood.