

Residents have wish list for Wollaston, Nantasket beaches

From chair and umbrella rentals and movie nights at Wollaston Beach to beer gardens and better handicap accessibility at Nantasket Beach, residents who frequent the South Shore's two public beaches along with residents who frequent the seven other state-owned Beaches in the Boston area have a lot of ideas on how they could improve.

QUINCY — Kayak rentals, a beer garden and food trucks are just a few of the things residents want to see come to Wollaston and Nantasket beaches.

Parking was also a concern for beachgoers, who said parking is a nightmare at both of the South Shore's state-owned beaches.

The feedback came during a series of hearings in all nine Boston-area communities where there are state beaches hosted by the Metropolitan Beaches Commission. A report released Saturday compiled the comments of more than 500 people who talked about what's working, what needs to be improved and what's missing at the region's beaches.

The Metropolitan Beaches Commission, which is managed by Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, collects information and ideas about how it can improve the region's beaches as part of its annual review of the state's public beaches in Lynn, Nahant, Revere, Winthrop, East Boston, South Boston, Dorchester, Quincy and Hull. It reports its findings and recommendations for improvements and funding to the Legislature, the administration and the public.

Though every community had its own specific wants and needs, several common themes were evident: erosion caused by climate change is an issue at every beach, as is maintenance of the seawalls and other infrastructure meant to keep storm surges and rising seas at bay. Parking management plans are also needed at beaches up and down the coast.

"These hearings provide the region's residents with an important opportunity to share their thoughts on how to strengthen our public beaches with the Metropolitan Beaches Commission, the Legislature and with the Department of Conservation and Recreation" said Save the Harbor/Save the Bay's President Tani Marinovich in a statement. "Thanks to everyone who participated for their time and attention. Working together we are confident that we will continue to see improvements in the region's public beaches from Nahant to Nantasket.

Wollaston beachgoers also want to see more bike racks, a dedicated bike lane along Quincy Shore Drive, umbrella and chair rentals, more frequent trash pickups and movie nights on the beach and other adult-oriented events.

At Nantasket in Hull, residents want better accessibility for people with disabilities, more shady spaces, indoor showers at the Murray Bathhouse and more programs that can take place at low tide as well as at high tide when the water splashes up against the seawall.

The commission will hold a public hearing at 10 a.m. June 4 in room 222 at the State House to hear from DCR Commissioner Leo Roy to hear about the state of the region's public beaches and hear expert testimony on best practices for beach parking management and marine mammal rescue or burial. Then, the commission will release a final report with its findings and make recommendations to the Legislature, the Department of Conservation & Recreation and the public.

"Save the Harbor Save the Bay's successful efforts more than a decade ago to get the state Legislature to create the Metropolitan beaches Commission was the driving catalyst to ensure that state beaches from Nahant to Nantasket - including Wollaston - receive equitable treatment, sustained funding and continued political support," said Doug Gutro, Quincy's representative on the commission.