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BUDGET CUTS MAKE WAVES FOR BEACH LOVERS

LEAH DEARBORN | April 12, 2017

LYNN — An algae problem may be blooming along the Lynn shorefront.

In the first meeting of the year for the **Friends of Lynn & Nahant Beach** Wednesday night in a packed room at **169 Lynn Shore Drive**, the topic for discussion was the impact of budget cuts by the **Baker administration** on Lynn and Nahant beaches.

State **Department of Conservation and Recreation** (DCR) Commissioner **Leo Roy** served as a guest speaker.

“We’re in challenging times. We’re trying to do the best we can with the funds we get,” said Roy. DCR budget cuts totaled almost \$6 million for staff and operations.

The cuts may jeopardize a yearly algae removal program that has been in place for more than a decade.

He said funds for algae cleanup, which will begin within the next week, are

available to cover the months of May and June. The budget for the new year is not yet finalized, but cleanup funds from July 1 forward have yet to be accounted for.

The \$150,000 price tag on algae cleanup comes from paying overtime for personnel to work along with the tides, as well as disposal services.

Friends president and longtime resident **Bob Tucker** called the cuts a failure of the administration to serve the city of Lynn. He said if the algae isn’t cleaned up, it could possibly lead to the cancellation of outdoor events such as the **Red Rock Summer Concert Series** and the **Kids’ Day Festival**.

“This is a gem for us. This is truly the people’s beach,” said state **Rep. Dan Cahill**, referencing the days before the algae cleanup program. “People would come to Lynn and roll their windows up. It was embarrassing.”

State **Sen. Thomas McGee** said when he was first sworn into office, the grass along the beach was three feet high and algae was left rotting in the sun.

“I hope you understand the importance of this. It’s key to our economy, it’s key to our quality of life,” he said to Roy.

Roy briefly addressed other topics at the meeting, including the possible privatization of the DCR parking lot at **Nahant Beach**.

He said the department is considering sending out a request for proposal to determine whether there’s potential for the lot to generate more revenue under different management. No changes have been set in stone, however.

“Unless we can make more money, we won’t do it,” said Roy.