

Dorchester Reporter

The News and Values Around the Neighborhood”

Jasmine Braswell | August 1, 2019

A free party on Saturday will put focus on Tenean Beach

Tenean Beach Day— hosted by the Port Norfolk Civic Association, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, will be held on Sat., Aug. 3, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The free event will be filled with activities for all ages, thanks to volunteers who are working throughout the year to make Tenean a fun and safe beach destination in the Dorchester neighborhood.

Saturday’s event will feature food from the Sausage Guys, ice cream trucks, performances by the Boston Circus Guild, touch tanks from the New England Aquarium and face-painting hosted by Dot Art.

The party – now in its fourth year—usually draws 300 to 400 people. Maria Lyons, who lives in Port Norfolk and helps to organize the event, has been enjoying Tenean Beach since her childhood days in St. Peter’s parish.

“Growing up, we used to go to the beach all the time,” said Lyons. “There’d be large crowds of people there all the time. That’s where you went to the beach if you lived in Dorchester, because most of the people at the time didn’t have houses down the Cape. We couldn’t even afford to go to Nantasket never mind down to the Cape or Maine.”

Water quality has improved at most metropolitan beaches in recent years, including Tenean, although it still lags behind nearby city beaches in Dorchester and South Boston due to stormwater run-off and old pipe connections that drain off into the bay nearby.

“The pipes in Dorchester, there are a lot of them and some of them are very old,” says Bruce Berman of Save the Harbor/Save the Bay. “So, in some cases, pipes that shouldn’t be connected to the storm drains are mistakenly connected to them. Boston Water and Sewer is doing a good job at identifying poor connections, like broken



pipes. But it’s a very, very slow process and as a result when there’s rain the day before the beach is closed, even after small rain [events].”

Still, the beach can and does draw sunbathers and some swimmers. And other amenities, including the sports courts and playground have been re-discovered by new residents and people who use the nearby Neponset Greenway trail.

“The beach itself has been renovated beautifully,” said Lyons. “Nice tennis courts, basketball courts. We’re getting a brand-new playground...it’s a beautiful little area. It has a view out to the water, to the Kennedy Library. So, people all along the Neponset Greenway all the way up to Hyde Park take their bikes and come down and go to the beach.”

Berman says, “The biggest improvement that we’ve seen at Tenean is the free events and programs that the neighborhood association in Dorchester have. Tenean Beach Day is going to be a terrific time whether or not the water is clean enough to swim in.”

Raising awareness is what this day is about and opening residents’ eyes to the improvements to this beach, Lyons says, adding, “hopefully with more attention, you can even get better services at our beach. And hopefully within the next few years, it’ll be hundred percent renewable...we’re hoping that people come to use it.”