

OPINION

EDITORIAL

Positive developments for Lynn's waterfront

Marina fix, ferry prep work encouraging signs



The marina has to be repaired regardless of whether the city keeps or sells it.

There's general consensus that Lynn's Waterfront Master Plan, with its vision of a boardwalk, landscaped open spaces and a mix of new commercial and residential buildings, will take years, likely decades, to realize. But there are some positive things happening now toward that end, to enhance waterfront use today.

Bids for the desperately needed repair of boat slips at the city-owned Seaport Marina were due to be unsealed Monday, after the city landed a \$500,000 state grant which Lynn Community Development Director James Marsh says should cover 80 percent of the project's cost.

The grant is a significant victory for Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy's administration, as well as the city's Legislative delegation, even though city officials including Kennedy and Marsh have serious reservations about the city's continued operation of the 28-year-old marina.

"The question looming is once it's back together what do we do? Do we sell it or do we continue running it ourselves?" Marsh commented recently to *The Item*, adding with no boatyard, restaurants or shops on the marina site, it's a challenge to make it a profitable operation.

Either way, it's clear the marina has to be repaired, and it's especially welcome news for boaters that four of the damaged docks will be replaced this summer. And Marsh is now focusing efforts on ensuring the marina does not again fall into disrepair, and has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for a grant to build a breakwater to protect it from destructive storm surges.

Meanwhile, as the *Item* reported on Monday, city officials are undaunted in their plan to establish a Lynn-Boston commuter ferry service, perhaps as early as 2014. The Lynn Economic Development and Industrial Corp., since 2010, has received more than \$2 million in grants from the Seaport Advisory Council to build a boat ramp and new seawall off Blossom Street Extension, and officials are confident an addition \$2.6 million will be awarded in June for dredging and dock construction. What perhaps bodes well for that prospect is that The Seaport Advisory Council, according to EDIC Director James Cowdell, has committed to hold its June meeting in Lynn.

Even as the state grapples with a staggering transportation budget deficit, with so much money already devoted to preparation for a Lynn ferry service, it would make little sense to pull the plug on funding now.

YOUR LETTERS WELCOME

The *Item* encourages readers to write Letters to the Editor. Letters are subject to editing for brevity and clarity. For verification purposes, all letters must include a signature, address and telephone number.

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Natural gas units ideal for Salem Harbor Station

As both Salem's State representative and House Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy, I wanted to respond to *The Item's* story regarding Salem Harbor Station ("Marblehead questions plan for new Salem power plant," *The Daily Item*, April 9, 2012).

There is no question that the impact of the appropriate redevelopment of this site goes far beyond the borders of Salem which I'm sure is the reason why the North Shore Chamber sponsored the forum and over 250 people attended. The entire region has benefited from decades of affordable and reliable energy. At its peak, this plant could generate enough electricity for over 750,000 homes. Today, with stricter emissions regulations and abundant domestic supplies of natural gas, the plant will be shuttered in June 2014. What's next?

We in Salem believe this is a great opportunity to transform our waterfront. This site is 62 acres and one of only 11 Designated Port Areas in the Commonwealth. For over two centuries, Salem Harbor has been a working industrial/commercial port — starting with fishing and global trade and more recently as a major coal terminal and power plant. Anticipating the closure, Mayor Kim Driscoll convened a panel of experts to devise a vision for future development of the site. Public input revealed priorities of site remediation (cleaning up site and demolishing existing structures) and stabilization of Salem's tax base (the plant has been Salem's number one property tax payer for decades). Additionally, the existing infrastructure of transmission lines and a 30-inch gas hub line coupled with the likely retirement of many more oil and coal units as soon as 2015, make Salem Harbor the ideal location for repowering with natural gas units. Exactly how many other sites within the Route 128 corridor are available for such development? Although needed, how many communities would support a new power plant?

While proud to be recently recognized by the New England Clean



GUEST COMMENTARY/

John Keenan

With development of new gas-powered generation, Footprint is committed to taking down the existing structures (building and stacks) and opening up some 30-40 acres of waterfront to development consistent with Salem's port designation.

Energy Council for efforts to promote renewable and competitive energy in Massachusetts, I appreciate the need to continue to develop reliable base-load capacity at the lowest cost to our businesses and ratepayers, our constituents. By passing the Green Communities Act in 2008, Massachusetts has become a leader in energy efficiency and renewable development; however, we must provide adequate reserve capacity (gas generated power) for a future of a more diverse and variable output (wind usually at its lowest in the summer when energy demand is highest).

With the option of nothing but a padlock on the gate in 2014 and little chance of a site remediation expected to cost somewhere between \$50-75 million, Senator Berry, Mayor Driscoll and I are equally thrilled that Footprint has come forward

and is negotiating with Dominion to purchase the site and develop it consistent with the desires of our community. While by no means a done deal, we are encouraged by positive feedback from both sides — and pleased with extensive efforts to appropriately accommodate the needs of the hardworking employees impacted by this transition.

Redevelopment of this site offers a wonderful opportunity for Salem and the entire North Shore. With development of new gas-powered generation, Footprint is committed to taking down the existing structures (building and stacks) and opening up some 30-40 acres of waterfront to development consistent with Salem's port designation. This is quite possibly Salem's most important redevelopment project in its history. Our goals of cleaning up the site, stabilizing and expanding our tax base, and enhancing our thriving tourism with development of a new wharf and public access will surely also benefit our neighbors across the harbor.

It has been a pleasure to work with Representative Ehrlich on many energy and utility issues as she brings much expertise to the discussion. As more details for this project become public and available, I look forward to working with Representative Ehrlich and Senator McGee and our entire local delegation to make sure this project works for Salem and the North Shore. Whether redevelopment of Salem's waterfront or Lynn's waterfront, we understand we must work together to accomplish our goals. As our state and our country attempt to evolve to a cleaner and greener energy in the 21st century, this project could become a successful model for the rest of the country as many coal plants come to the end of their life cycles. It can only happen by an open process and cooperation amongst our local delegation.

John Keenan, D-Salem, is state representative for Massachusetts' 7th Essex District and chairman of the legislature's Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy.

LETTERS

Strauss has served Swampscott well

To The *Item* Editor:

I am writing in support of Matthew Strauss for another term on the Swampscott Board of Selectmen.

Matt was instrumental as the chairman of the Board in the recent hiring of Mr. Younger as the next Town Administrator. I believe it will be a benefit to the town to maintain an experienced board familiar with the current issues facing the town to provide consistency and direction for Mr. Younger as he takes over the ongoing business of the town.

In addition, I believe the town is better served by having representation of board members from different precincts. Currently four of the five current

board members reside in precinct 5; the only member of the current board that resides in a different precinct is Matt Strauss in Precinct 2. Since the challenger, Mr. Kessler, also resides in Precinct 5 there would be no representation from other precincts in town.

I believe there is a benefit to having representation on the Board of Selectmen of residents from different neighborhoods within the community. There is no question in my mind that there is the "other side of the tracks," literally, that separates the quality of living for many of the working class citizens and elderly with limited finances residing in less affluent sections of town. While I do not mean to insinuate that this board or previous boards do not have the best interests of the town at heart, I do believe it's important to have

more representation from across the community to raise concerns that impact some residents that others may not be aware of.

I believe Matt understands the issues that confront different neighborhoods and he has demonstrated his willingness to bring forward these issues in a fair and democratic way.

His dedication and commitment to the job is admirable. As everyone knows, the time commitment of being a member of an elected board or volunteer board is substantial and many are thankful for those willing to step up to make our town a better place for all.

It is for these reasons I urge residents to consider Matthew Strauss for another term on the Swampscott Board of Selectmen.

Kevin Donaher
Swampscott