

The Daily Item

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On the waterfront, EDIC developments are all positive

Item Staff Report

LYNN – There has been no shortage of positive developments on the Lynn Waterfront, and the state has taken notice.

Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito announced Tuesday that the Economic Development & Industrial Corporation of Lynn (EDIC/Lynn) has been awarded a \$380,000 Seaport Economic Council grant, which will be used for maintenance and upgrades to the commuter ferry terminal at EDIC's Blossom Street Extension landing.

The grant is part of \$1.8 million in funding the state awarded for projects in Lynn and six other communities

The grants were approved Tuesday at a Seaport Economic Council meeting at North Shore Community College. Polito led the meeting as chair of the council, which conducted a meeting in Lynn for the first time in 15 years.

EDIC conducted a three-phase construction project at the Blossom Street Extension site from 2006-12. In that period, the agency was able to secure a total of \$7.5 million in three separate rounds of federal, state and local funding to repave the parking lot, build a new boat ramp and construct the terminal.

The grant awarded Tuesday will be used for extensive upgrades to the terminal, including removing aluminum structures and towing them by tugboat to a marine contractor's maintenance facility; reconditioning steel bulkheads; engineering services; and electrical and plumbing upgrades.

"Lynn has a waterfront master plan," EDIC/Lynn Executive Director James Cowdell told the council, noting it was developed after 19 public meetings over the course of several years.

Cowdell provided a lengthy list of positive waterfront developments in the last several years, highlighted by the \$115-million investment at the former Beacon Chevrolet site that will result in approximately 330 market-rate apartments and other commercial and recreational uses.

Cowdell also mentioned the sale of the Garelick Farms and Mass Merchandise Mart sites. A.W. Perry and Novaya Real Estate Partners plan to market the 17-acre Garelick site for a combination of industrial uses, housing, retail, and commercial space. Post Road Residential has been permitted for a \$400-million, mixed-use redevelopment at the Mass Merchandise site that will include shops, restaurants and other retail uses, Cowdell said, noting that the investment into the ferry-terminal site started the ball rolling.

"We are building close collaborations across the private sector and with the governor. We are grateful for your support," Mayor Jared Nicholson told Polito. "We hope that we can move forward in improving our region."

Offering commuter ferry service has been a goal of EDIC for almost 10 years. In 2014, former Gov. Deval Patrick launched a two-year pilot program that allowed up to 250 passengers for 35-minute rides to and from Boston. The program ran in 2014, 2015 and 2017, until Baker cut funding in 2018, citing a lack of earmarked funds from the federal government to buy a vessel.

Polito asked Cowdell if Lynn currently has a vessel it could use for ferry service. Cowdell said EDIC has leased the dock to the owner of a large vessel, though his plan for now is to use it for Whale watches and harbor island tours. The vessel can accommodate at least 150 passengers, but without a subsidy it is not feasible to use for ferry service Cowdell said.

“That said, there is a strong argument for the ferry service,” Cowdell said. “People love to commute this way.”

Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll said one option could be to include Lynn in the Salem-to-Boston ferry service. Driscoll is a member of the Seaport Economic Council who is running for lieutenant governor.

Nicholson’s office said the city hopes to find funding to procure a vessel for ferry service, but in the meantime, the best course of action is to focus on improving the site for boats that currently use it as a landing.

Following the meeting, Polito toured the Seaport Landing Marina, located at 154 Lynnway, alongside Community Development Director James Marsh and Members of his team.