



Opinion

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## LET IMPERATORE'S EXAMPLE ENDURE

**PHOTO BY BOB ROCHE**

*NY Waterway Executive Vice President Arthur Imperatore Jr., state Sen. Thomas M. McGee and U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton.*

The meeting lasted only 20 minutes and drew fewer than a dozen people, but Arthur Imperatore's visit to the Blossom Street extension ferry dock last Friday signaled a positive change in the way city leaders are viewing Lynn's development prospects.

At the invitation of U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton's economic development director, Jason Denoncourt, Imperatore — who helps run a New York City ferry service shuttling commuters on a daily basis over waterways surrounding New York — got a first-hand look at Lynn's ferry operation.

There wasn't much to see on a wintry day. The boat that shuttles passengers between Lynn and Boston in the summer suspended operations for the season three months ago and the passengers waiting to take a water-borne trip to Boston with their bikes, briefcases and books were negotiating traffic or sitting on a commuter train during Imperatore's visit.

But the self-made businessman, who helped launch NY Waterway with one ferry running to New York and New Jersey, did not need to see passengers boarding a boat to know Lynn is on the right track with its decision to make the city a water transportation destination.

Imperatore said the Lynn ferry offers "tremendous potential" and he tempered that praise with specific advice to city officials: Find a way to run a ferry year-round and apply "patience and perseverance" to ongoing efforts to expand operations.

As much as Imperatore's advice is probably worth its weight in gold, the willingness on the part of city officials to listen to that advice is priceless. In fact, it may be the key Lynn finally needs to unlock development riches on the city's waterfront.

Public officials armed with new policies and developers carrying promises have given birth to a succession of grandiose development plans for the stretch of land bordering Lynn Harbor and the Lynnway. In almost every instance, those visions have evaporated and the drawings and plans sit gathering dust on some City Hall shelf.

The success or failure of the newest waterfront visions may well depend on city officials' success in bringing other Arthur Imperatores to Lynn. Before the city signs or endorses a plan to build high-rise residential developments on the waterfront, it should get some Imperatore-like advice from a successful high-rise developer. Before they embrace plans for a hotel along the Lynnway, they should talk to the Chelsea city officials and developers who brought hotels to that city.

Arthur Imperatore didn't say a lot last Friday on the Lynn ferry dock, but he made every word count for Lynn's future.