

## Summary of Comments

# Hampton Beach Design Workshop

March 5, 2008

*This is a record of comments made during the wrap up of the March 5, 2008 public workshop regarding improvements to Hampton Beach State Park. The collected comments are a summary and have NOT been evaluated in any way nor reflect the spirited discussion that occurred in the work groups. All thoughts will be considered in the design process; however, some ideas may be out of the scope of this project and/or may or may not be feasible for this project.*

## South Beach Area Comments

### Visitor Center and Maintenance Building:

- Park administration should remain at the Seashell (not be moved to the South Beach area) because the park managers need to be present at the center of activity.
- This Visitor's Center should be smaller than the Seashell center. Need coffee, bathrooms, directions/reservation services.
- The existing maintenance building is ugly. It should be screened, hidden from view. Ideas: landscaping, berm or lobster floats, traps, nets, etc. hung on side of building to hide it.

### Entry and Gateway:

- Beautification Committee has done planting at the entry specifically daffodils, and a Maple tree. The climate is challenging and the lack of water for irrigation is a problem for getting plantings established.
- There is a nice spot for a scenic overlook at the SW corner of the site near the river. There should be a handicapped accessible walk to and seating at this spot.
- The Hampton Beautification Committee is currently working on a banner program for the Beach Village District.
- There is walking, biking, and even wheelchair traffic over the bridge and along the sidewalk at the South Beach area that should connect to the park and boardwalk as a system.

### Parking Area:

- The parking area should be landscaped with trees! It is desolate now.
- The parking area has flooding/drainage problems.
- There should be some spaces that can be leased in the South Beach area.

### RV's:

- There should be no RV's parked next to the neighborhood (this is a problem during peak times i.e., July 4<sup>th</sup>).
- There is an inequity between the rates RV's pay versus lodging rates in town. There is a perception that the RV campers don't contribute as much to the Town's economy, they do not pay for lodging or meals out. The RV camping rates should be brought up to market rates for overnight lodging.

#### **Beach Access:**

- There should be a boardwalk through the Dover Street dunes (visitors cut their feet of broken glass).

### **Beach Promenade General Comments**

- Playground needs an employee to monitor out-of-control kids.
- There is a question about whether parks/playgrounds at other areas along the boardwalk (and their associated management issue) is a good idea. Perhaps it would be better to develop these areas as focal points for people with public art, sculpture or other focal elements.
- Hampton Beach has been described as a concrete jungle, so more greenery is needed! Trees are a problem re: blocking views. Shade structures i.e., pergolas with vines would be nice. Beautification Committee is working on plan for flower baskets on light poles.
- With high pedestrian use along the promenade, accentuate the walkways with interesting paving, and consider bulb-outs in some locations for safer crosswalks.
- Shade and seating areas are needed.
- Outdoor rinse-off showers are a good idea, high demand, lower maintenance, etc. Indoor showers are different. Maybe OK in one location, but not at each bathhouse. Would you pay for a shower?

### **Haverhill Street Bathhouse**

- Because this area is a transition from the commercial beach to the residential neighborhoods, there are different sensitivities here.
- The need for the placement of bathhouses is supported, but neighbors preferred the siting of them in line with the end of the streets to avoid blocking views.
- Keep activity at the Haverhill Street bathhouse more 'low key' and make it look nice since it is in the 'front yard' of neighbors.

- Provide a better transition between the sidewalk and the street right at the Haverhill/Ocean Street intersection to improve handicapped accessibility and make it more attractive.

## **Seashell Area**

### **Bathroom Facilities:**

- Seashell should have good-sized men's and women's facilities and there should be more women's toilets than men's.

### **Special Needs Accessibility:**

- Special needs accessibility should be throughout the facility and have access to the beach.
- Elderly users need shade, so here should be plenty of shaded areas at the Seashell for the elderly users to sit.
- It is currently difficult for elderly to get onto the sand.

### **Visitor Center:**

- The Visitor's Center at the Seashell will probably get more use than at the south end.
- The Visitor's Center at the Seashell could perhaps expand into the adjacent parking area.

### **Seashell Stage Area:**

- The Seashell should have more than 500 seats. It should be a minimum of 750 seats.
- Dunkin' Donuts had a show that they brought to the Seashell that featured a ski jump and stage. The presentation faced toward the beach. A stage facing the beach would be good. The wind often comes from the north east in the spring and can be quite strong.
- An area for dancing as part of the entertainment and stage facilities would be a good feature.
- During a concert, the Seashell areas jam up with the elderly sitting in the aisles blocking circulation.
- Using portable staging, in addition to a fixed stage, would give the opportunity to expand the stage. This staging could be stored at the South Beach area.

### **Seashell Parking:**

- Some people would prefer not to have staff parking next to the Seashell area, though Brian feels that this parking area is important for staff, police and emergency vehicles and wants to keep it for them.
- There doesn't need to be as much area designated for bus parking. Right now only Charter buses come there. There is no regularly scheduled bus service.
- There are 18 parking spaces designated for the handicapped and are all in front of the Seashell. Perhaps these can be eliminated and the sidewalk can be expanded into the parking area. The handicapped spaces could be located in other nearby locations.
- A handicapped drop-off in the general area of the Seashell would be good, as well as a 5 to 10 min limit for drop-off parking in general. This would give people the opportunity to use the bathroom, pick up a brochure and get directions.

#### **Extra Seashell Features:**

- Shade is important throughout.
- A layout should be such that they can handle large crowds. Saturday is the most problematic day.
- It is currently difficult for elderly to get onto the sand. It would be good to correct this.
- A craft shop at the Seashell would be good.
- There used to be a tunnel that went through the Seashell area. It is now used for maintenance vehicles. This is a way to get around the large crowds. Currently there is no way.
- Lifeguard station is perfect as is at the Seashell area.
- Security of the building equipment must be kept in mind.
- It is very important that there be outside showers and rinse-off stations located throughout the park as people are hesitant to send children into bath house buildings.
- The United States flag, the NH state flag, a POW flag and Canadian flag should be on flagpoles.

#### **Crosswalks & Sidewalks:**

- It was suggested that there could be crosswalks in the air over Ocean Boulevard.
- Fences to control people crossing Ocean Boulevard would also help.

- Businesses are bumping out to the green line further reducing the sidewalk space on the town side of Ocean Boulevard.

## **Marine Memorial Area**

- Pedestrian crossings are important across Ocean Boulevard and along the beach promenade. At the Ashworth Hotel nearby intersection is dangerous.
- Ashworth Hotel is very concerned with views.
- Park connection between the Memorial, the bathhouse and Boars head should be improved to be safer and more attractive.
- More greenery is needed in the memorial area as well as neighboring parklands. The Beautification Committee has made efforts to improve the area with garden areas.
- Align small park areas/ pocket parks with pedestrian crossings.
- Might be good to shift pedestrian activity further away from the central congested area, i.e., move the bathhouse further up the walkway.
- There are sacred views in this area: photo spots, statue, Boars Head.
- Memorial service: extend park area to new bathhouse.
- A shift up the beach could 'expand' the beach area for greater use.
- People are using curbs in 'bumpouts' in desperation for congregating, eating—need more spaces for sitting.

## **General Comments**

- Durability of materials is a consideration as the environmental conditions are harsh.
- It was suggested to video tape public hearings for the public access video.