

Boston Harbor Neighborhood Newsletter

Archived Edition—March 2009—Eric Hurlburt, Editor



Boston Harbor, ca. 1940, provided by Jerry Hall

To Boston Harbor Neighbors:

As we eagerly await the advent of spring I wanted to let everyone know what is happening with the Boston Harbor Association. Thanks to everyone who attended our annual meeting on February 4. We almost filled the fire station with about 50 residents attending to elect the board, share their issues and discuss some of these with representatives from Thurston County. If you feel that you missed out on paying your annual dues of \$10 (or 10 shares of Citibank) you can always drop them off at the Marina or mail them to the Boston Harbor Association at 312-73rd Ave. N.E. Olympia, WA 98506. For the record, we currently have \$3449.68 in our account.

Thurston County Commissioner Cathy Wolfe was unable to attend our meeting, so she sent three of her department heads: Michael Welter (Parks & Recreation and Development Services), Lester Olson (Roads & Transportation) and Mark Petrie (Water & Waste Management). We had a lively discussion about closure of the public toilets at the boat ramp next to the marina, permitting and land-use procedures, and plowing of local roads during our 'blizzard' among other things. I appreciated these folks for putting themselves in the line of fire. The County is going through some painful budget cuts and services that we are accustomed to will be reduced or terminated. They heard from us that there is strong involvement by the community in what happens in the neighborhood and that we have expectations about how the County does their business. At the same time, I think we have demonstrated that we are prepared to also contribute to maintaining the neighborhood.

The primary, official business was to elect new board members. Of the incumbents, Glen Hunter chose not to serve again (something about retirement and travel) and his contribution will be missed. We do expect him to be around during the fireworks to collect donations, a role that he has excelled at. The remaining incumbents were re-elected and Amy Chance was elected to fill the vacancy. At our board meeting on March 3 we elected officers, so the 2009 Boston Harbor Association board is:

Boston Harbor Association Board - 2009

Adrienne Smith - Sec.	Eric Hurlburt - Pres.	Lynda Eich - Treas.
Amy Chance	Frank Swinkey	Pam McHugh
Chris Hamilton	John Aultman - Vice Pres.	Stu Simpson

Boston Harbor Neighborhood Newsletter

Archived Edition—March 2009

Eric Hurlburt, Editor

Some outstanding issues that we are working on:

Toilets: The public toilets at the boat ramp were closed in November. These are used by marina patrons, but also by a wide variety of boaters, kayakers, bicyclists and families visiting the harbor. At the annual meeting the County said the restrooms were closed because of budget concerns and will be reopened April 1. These were built with state funds and the Department of Fish and Wildlife has a contract with the County for their operation and was not aware of the closure. WDFW is now talking with the County about reopening the toilets and we have expressed our concerns to both of them. In the meantime, the Boston Harbor Marina has provided a Sani-Can and offered to maintain the toilets. The County proposed a contract that would make the marina responsible for all costs and liability. This isn't reasonable, so we continue the discussions.

Burfoot Park: The County also has closed Burfoot Park for the winter, but there is concern about it being reopened. The Parks & Recreation Department is looking at ways for all the county parks to generate at least part of their operations cost, but latest announcements are that all parks may be closed. We were fortunate that our trail was built before this budget crunch hit, but keeping Burfoot open is a concern for us as well as people from around the county that enjoy it. There may be some options for 'adopting' the park where volunteers could help with maintenance if that would keep the park open.

As far as the trail off Boston Harbor Extension, if you haven't used it, give it a try. It is a very pleasant entrance into the park leading you directly to the lower park and beach. The trail still needs some re-vegetation and Amy Chance is going to work with out garden clubs to arrange this. This may be a great opportunity for a neighborhood work party.

Land Use: This will be one of our areas of focus over the next year. There are recurring questions raised by our neighbors about how decisions are made about land use, zoning, sewer hook-ups, etc. It appears that the County has been inconsistent in issuing permits and variances, and there is a real issue with notification. Neighbors and the community don't learn about these decisions until they have already been made. Even if the decisions are completely correct, it creates an environment of suspicion. We are talking to the County about how we can be better informed in a timely manner about pending land use, construction and other permit decisions.

One of the biggest land use rules affecting our neighborhood is the Shorelines Management Act. This regulates activities within 200 feet of the shore and affects many activities further inland. Thurston County is starting the first major update of their Shorelines Master Program in many years. An announcement of public meetings was distributed with this month's sewer/water bill. I hope that some of you were able to attend. This will be a long process and Board will be following this and will keep you informed of its progress.

Boston Harbor Neighborhood Newsletter

Archived Edition—March 2009

Eric Hurlburt, Editor

Boston Harbor Website

(www.bostonharborassoc.org): We have had our own website for several years, but it is in need of major updating. We would like to use it to more effectively keep you informed about activities in the neighborhood, issues that affect you locally, and educate people about the history and environment of the Boston Harbor area. In doing this we need help:

- 1) Emails and mailers will be the primary tool for getting notices out to the community and the website will be more like a library with resource information, documents, meeting minutes, calendars, etc. What would you like to see on the website? Let us know.
- 2) Is there someone who would be willing to volunteer to update the website and do a little redesign? This isn't a major project requiring sophisticated expertise, but any expertise is greater than what we have available on the board. This might even be something that could be done as a class project.

Rockin' Auction 2009 - Saturday, March 28: One of the hubs of our community is the Boston Harbor School. The school is holding their annual auction/dinner/rock'n roll party to raise funds for the PTA. These will go to pay for field trips, spring plays, and materials and supplies for use by our teachers. The PTA is also planning to update and revitalize the non-fiction library. My understanding is that some of the books about current events are now considered historical texts.

Tickets (\$25) need to be bought in advance. A form was included in the last sewer bill, but if you can't find it, call the school. If you can't attend, please consider making a donation anyway.

July 3 Fireworks: We are planning the 2009 fireworks display and negotiating with the pyrotechnics company. Last year we tried to choreograph the display with music broadcasted over a short-range FM radio transmitter. The music worked, the DJ was great, the choreography - well let's say it didn't come off as planned. So, we will keep it simple and just have fireworks and music this year.

Other Thurston County Budget Issues: We are all going to be affected by the decisions being made by the state, county and other public entities. One concern is how the County reductions will affect the sheriff's department. Dave Jamison forwarded the attached press release from Sheriff Kimball about the effect of these cuts. We haven't discussed this as a Board, so we haven't taken a position, but please take a look at it.

Eric Hurlburt, President

Boston Harbor Assn.

360-754-8897 (H)

360-951-1096 (C)

EHurlburt@comcast.net