

# Protecting Newport's Shoreline Over 25 Years

Mary Ferrazzoli founded Friends of the Waterfront in 1982, when concerned citizens protested the development of the Inn on the Harbor, which impacted public access to Ann Street Pier; followed by Inn on Long Wharf, a building whose lack of character and size is still a sore issue.

During her years, Mary and FoW were prominent in the Hearings for Rights of Way by the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC). Our RoW team included Newport Historian Genevieve Mathison, and that team was responsible for the establishment and marking of the 23 State-designated RoW in Newport.

Major "Hot Spots" then were Radcliffe Romaine's Steamship Landing development at Washington St. and Long Wharf, which failed because of the scandal associated with the Inn on Long Wharf, and Paul Sullivan's huge development planned across three wharves (Waites, Spring, and Howard) which failed because of zoning concerns.

FoW hired Arlene Violet to appeal a questionable decision on Brown and Howard (after 18 years, the lawsuit was terminated, resulting in 18-year old permits being used for development of the huge condos.)

An attempt to have flexible zoning in "Planned Unit Developments" met stiff FoW opposition, and was stopped because of concerns about rampant overdevelopment along the waterfront. The PUD would have allowed developers to bypass Planning and Zoning Board review and deal directly with the City Council only.

During the mid-1980s, plans for a Harbor Walk were introduced, and Dennis Nixon and William Warner helped generate FoW support for this forward-thinking project. In late 1980s, a FoW newsletter suggested "a moratorium on sewer tie-ins until the Newport waterfront is no longer polluted every time it rains." This serious problem remains unsolved to this date, 20 years later.

In 1988, Mary was awarded the Antiquarian Award from the Preservation Society. In the early 1990s, Mary initiated a citizens' petition, gathering 1346 signatures to have RoW declared for all city streets running to the shoreline.

Mayors and Councilors were



Mary Ferrazzoli

resistant to change and because of their political ties to many of the developers, "looked" the other way on many questionable waterfront activities.

For eleven years, the illegal operations of Mr. Bolender's houseboat at the corner of Long Wharf and America's Cup Avenue were a major issue before the CRMC.

Mary served as founder and president from 1982 until her sudden and untimely death in August 1994.

Fortunately for FoW, VP Vic Farmer was able to take the helm and kept the organization going through some difficult years, providing strong leadership and introducing the Guardian Cadre to monitor "Hot Spots" and assisted Mike Rubin, Assistant to the Attorney General, in research for the Scott's and North Commercial Wharf issue.

Vic had a Bike Tour of the Waterfront, Walking Tours of the Waterfront, and developed the FoW web program including sites for Cliff Walk, Harbor Walk, and Ocean Drive.

Vic lobbied the City Council with engineering studies of the deteriorating conditions at Ann Street Pier and Van Zandt Pier. In 1995, the City Council approved a bench to honor Mary on Long Wharf with mention of "creation of a park at Long Wharf and Washington Street honoring Ferrazzoli" in a Daily News article.

John Dalessio was hired as Executive Director in 1996 to help with day-to-day operations; followed by Christine Sherren who served in 2000.

In 2001, Darryl Paquette joined FoW and brought his expertise as a young lawyer dedicated to shoreline issues. During his tenure as President, Darryl provided invaluable networking

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## Waterfront HOT SPOTS

By Liz Mathinos

### MARY FERRAZZOLI PARK

Progress is moving forward with Mary Ferrazzoli Park, the designated pocket park at the corner of Washington Street and Long Wharf. In mid-June, the City awarded a \$200,000 contract to Reagan Construction with \$50,000 estimated for remediation work for potentially contaminated soil on the site from fuel lines from prior uses.

Mr. Reagan "warned the city" that it could be a higher amount for remediation because there is no way of knowing until the work is underway how close the \$50,000 estimate is.

Reagan plans to drive steel sheeting to contain the soil and then put in granite blocks like those already there. Once paperwork is done for the contract, permit applications have to go before Coastal Resources Management Council and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Construction could begin in September.

At the dedication of the Louis Jagschitz Fishing Pier, a DEM rep. promised that the historic bollards from the Fall River Line would be returned, to be used in the pocket park. Friends of the Waterfront plan a bench and bronze plaque and will contribute towards the City's effort.

A future project would be an historic marker showing the significance of Gravelly Point, Washington's Landing, and the Fall River Line, at this harbor point.

### WASHINGTON ST. EXTENSION

The Attorney General's office decided not to assist the City in its legal efforts to counter the lawsuit to claim the land of this former road. Joe DeAngelis is representing the abutters. Mr. Reagan firmly believes that he has a right to this land and stated that he would go "to the Supreme Court" if necessary.

### WAITES WHARF

Rumors abound about future development at this site, and there's a wait-and-see attitude from the immediate abutters on Cod-dington Wharf.