



January 20, 2020

RE: Welcome in the New Year with Continued Support of Friends Of The Waterfront!

Dear Friend of the Waterfront:

Now that we can all see what rampant development looks like thanks to two new downtown hotels, it's urgent that you support **Friends of the Waterfront**, (**FOW**) the **all-volunteer 501(c3)** watchdog of the waterfront. For more than three decades, **FOW** has worked to preserve public access to Newport's waterfront, but the challenges continue. The past year has been eventful for **FOW**.

FOW's legacy of preserving Newport's waterfront includes attracting people to parks, festivals, and educating residents and visitors alike about our special waterfront. For its June, 2020 Annual Meeting, **FOW** will host expert Peter Shelley of the Boston Conservation Law Foundation, to tour our waterfront and opine on conservation versus development. The debate is urgent because Newport is constantly under a threat of overdevelopment. **FOW** is the advocate for public access when developers plan.

A few of the Year in Review highlights:

- With the Hammett's Hotel taking reservations for July at \$600 per night, **FOW** led in negotiating two public access easements in perpetuity there, which are registered with the city and cannot be denied.
- At the **FOW** annual meeting, Board Member and retired Assistant Attorney General Mike Rubin presented "A Tale of Two Wharves, Howard and Lee's." At Lee's, Rubin discovered conflicting signs about public versus private property. While there he also noted overgrown beautification efforts hiding unauthorized structures along the public right of way. The issue was brought to the attention of the RI Attorney General. At Howard Wharf, a new restaurant was potentially infringing on the public right of way. With **FOW** prodding, the city asked the restaurant to provide a survey delineating rights of way in order to renew its liquor license. Unfortunately, the one produced was an unsigned and unstamped survey that Rubin described as, "a piece of paper good for wrapping fish." As requested by **FOW** the City Council gave an extension and it is now being settled with **FOW's** help through the city solicitor.
- With funding from the Isham Family, **FOW** hosted a second summer series of concerts at King Park that included an Irish festival that attracted over a hundred people. The King Park rain garden continues to act as a filter for water coming from the public restrooms' roof tops. Working with URI Master Gardeners, **FOW** hosted Earth Day and a series of events with free seed and plants at the park.
- In 2019 **FOW** added a sixth dinghy planter to the Newport Harbor Walk. The Monarch butterfly habitat was created in association with Sail To Prevail and is located on the Bay Walk at Fort Adams.
- **FOW** volunteers and URI Master Gardeners continue to maintain the five existing (recycled dinghy) container gardens and pollinator habitats along the Newport Harbor Walk as well as the Mary Ferrazzoli pocket park garden on Long Wharf.
- **FOW** again offered Spring and Fall free walking tours. Many walkers got up close to the new hotels for the first time and realized how dramatically they alter historic downtown Newport. Our annual Inspection Cruise was again sold out.
- In October **FOW's** kiosk at Thames and Broadway was first up at the Annual Broadway Street Fair. **FOW** volunteers manned the tent selling raffle tickets for the hand-painted pollinator rain barrel, passing out free seeds while discussing proposed plans for yet another hotel, a 150 room and banquet hall at Waite's Wharf.

As a nonprofit organization, **FOW** relies on support of members. By renewing your 2020 membership **now**, at only \$5 per year, you support a 37-year mission to preserve public access to the waterfront.

[Donate or renew online at http://www.newportwaterfront.org/support-us/.](http://www.newportwaterfront.org/support-us/)

FOW's sincere gratitude goes out to the Newport community for sustaining our ongoing work.

Sincerely,

Johanna Vietry, President
Friends of the Waterfront