



January 18, 2022

RE: In the New Year ~ Please Continue to Support Friends Of The Waterfront!

Friends of the Waterfront (FOW) wish all its members and families a safe and healthy New Year in 2022.

Even though 2021 ended much as it began, with RI having the highest Covid cases *per capita* in the US; the FOW all-volunteer board persevered. In fact, the long-term pandemic home confinement gave the board a renewed sense of purpose taken from FOW's basic mission to protect and to expand public access all along Newport's spectacular waterfront. The year 2021 ending was a year of 3 BIG victories for the **PUBLIC**.

1. In 2020 FOW cited Lee's Wharf as a problem right-of-way (ROW) by filing a complaint with the City of Newport. The City-owned pumping station was placed in the public ROW along with a massive electrical panel and other city equipment that blocked the view of the water. FOW's grievance at Lee's Wharf with the City went unanswered. FOW then filed an obstruction complaint with the RI Coastal Resources Management Council. CRMC and the RI Attorney General's (AG) office followed-through on the complaint and the City was hit with a notice of violation after the obstructions were assessed to be the City's responsibilities.

The RIAG announced an agreement that would restore public access in downtown Newport at the end of 2022. Concessions were made at Lee's Wharf; the electrical panel and overgrown vegetation will be removed by the City. The pump station structures won't be removed because of the prohibitive costs, but will be aptly screened. Howard Wharf LLC, the property developers of the proposed 21 room Manchester Hotel on the adjoining property has agreed to provide improvements that will include lighting, benches and new on-site landscaping. On Lee's Wharf which runs East to West, on the ROW's southerly side, an additional five-foot-wide walkway (sidewalk) will actually widen the public access to the shore.

Once these ensured improvements take place, this long-neglected and much-abused ROW will be accessible to the public. Residents and visitors will again be able to walk all the way from Thames Street to the stone wall at the water's edge unimpeded; this has not been possible for well over a decade.

2. Due to FOW's advocacy in a separate negotiation; the proposed Manchester Hotel developer Howard Cushing made an additional agreement on its own land. There will also be a North-South public assent easement running parallel to the water that will become part of the contiguous Newport Harbor Walk.

3. At year's end, FOW brought another ROW dispute that goes back to 2019 to the attention of the City Council at the Reef restaurant on Howard Wharf. FOW Attorney Michael Rubin at the Reef's liquor license hearing stated that Howard Wharf was a public ROW and it needed to be marked and free of all obstructions to the water's edge in perpetuity. The Reef lawyers citing their own flawed survey claimed public access did not go to the water's edge. FOW maintained that after the CRMC 1987 ROW designation sometime in the late 20th or early 21st century someone embanked upon the land. This created a new shoreline extending the land by wharfing. Attorney Rubin mapped out the pathway width of 18.24 feet and City Solicitor Behan agreed.

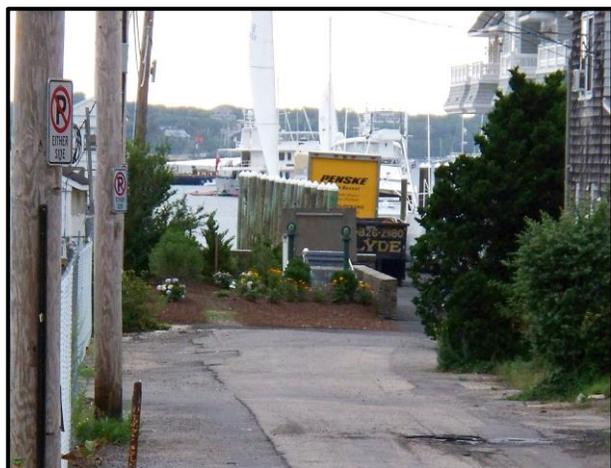
The real problem is the tables and chairs that block access to the water and has been an ongoing issue from the previous owners. CRMC stated that tables and chairs are not allowed in the ROW. The Council granted approval for the liquor license so long that the restaurant **does not** encroach upon the established ROW.

As a nonprofit, FOW relies on our community's support. In 2022, other disputed ROWs need more investigative legal research; by renewing your membership now, still only \$5 annually, you will help preserve access to the Newport shoreline. If 2 years of living through a pandemic has brought you a new appreciation of our historic waterfront, then let's join together to always keep it **PROTECTED** and **OPEN** to the **PUBLIC**.

Please Support Our Work in 2022,
Friends of the Waterfront Board of Directors

Help Friends of the Waterfront Protect All of Newport's PUBLIC Rights of Way

2008 Waterfront View at Lees Wharf



2020 Waterfront View at Lees Wharf



Renew Your 2022 Membership Now

Help Fund Our 2022 Investigative Legal Research

Renewal Form Below, or Renew Online
www.newportwaterfront.org/support-us/

Friends of the Waterfront 2022 Annual Membership Dues

Renew online www.newportwaterfront.org/support-us/

Single \$5.00 ~ Family \$10.00 ~ Patron \$25.00 ~ Business \$50.00 ~ Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Telephone # _____ Email* _____

Send to Friends of the Waterfront

PO Box 932

Newport, RI 02840

Thank You!

Friends of the Waterfront is a tax exempt, nonprofit 501c 3 Corporation *Your check is your receipt*

I would like to volunteer for future FOW projects YES NO

I Want to Donate to the Newport Waterfront Native Plant Project \$ _____
INCLUDE ME ON FOW UPDATE EMAILS * (Circle)