

Friends of the Waterfront's NEWPORT WATERFRONT WATCHER

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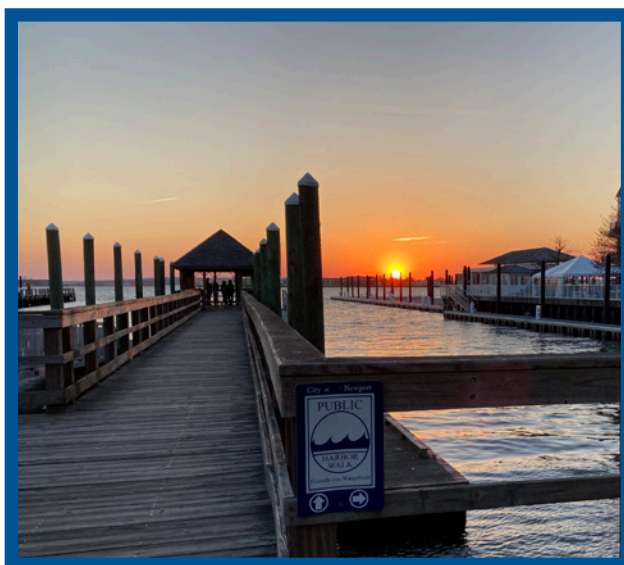
Letter from the President

This is FOW's 40th anniversary! Our mission remains the same - protect waterfront public access and fight for a connected Harbor Walk. As the newly elected President, I want to thank all who have supported FOW over the decades with their time and contributions! Secondly, if you have contributed to FOW this year, thank you and your membership is good through July 2024. If you have not contributed, we kindly ask you to do so now. We are also seeking volunteers and additional Board members or Committee chairs. If you are interested in helping, please contact us at www.newportwaterfront.org. Wishing you all a great summer as we head to the waterfront and enjoy this beautiful harbor.

Lynda Stevenson

Harbor Walk Tours

We will be offering a guided Harbor Walk from Mary Ferrazzoli Park to King Park on August 9, 2023 at 10:00. This is a 1 1/2 mile walk (currently not ADA compliant) with refreshments provided at the end of the walk. Check our Facebook page for additional tour dates.



FOW Efforts Secure a Continuous Path from Smokehouse Cafe through Perry Mill! (page 2)

Shoreline Access Bill Championed by FOW Signed Into Law

On Monday, June 26, 2023, Governor McKee signed into law a landmark bill that, after more than forty years of uncertainty, clearly defines the boundary for the public to enjoy the shoreline.

The legislation, sponsored by Representative Terri Cortvriend of Portsmouth and Senator Mark McKenney of Warwick, establishes the boundary for public use of the shoreline at 10 feet landward of the recognizable high tide line. The right of Rhode Islanders to enjoy the shore is enshrined in the Rhode Island Constitution. A 1982 Rhode Island Supreme Court decision created forty years of confusion and controversy at the shore when it adopted a line that, as a practical matter, virtually nullified this right. The new legislation ensures that the rights guaranteed in the state constitution can be enjoyed on our constantly-changing shoreline.

FOW Attorney Mike Rubin served on a House Special Commission in 2021-22 with Representative Cortvriend and Senator McKenney that reached the consensus that has now become law. Friends of the Waterfront has worked closely in a coalition led by Save the Bay and the Rhode Island Chapter of the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers to see his legislation become law. While the law is immediately effective, necessary implementation steps are still ahead. FOW will continue to work with our partners to see that the law is implemented and defended against any legal challenges.

Wharf News:



Lee's Wharf

What has been referred to as the Manchester Hotel (but will soon unveil a new name) is under construction and expected to open later this summer or early fall.

While characterized as a “boutique hotel” with just 21 rooms, it is also slated to have a restaurant and event space. There were no zoning variances required and very little opposition to this development. FOW, in partnership with the RI Attorney General and the Save the Bay organization, successfully fought to have the developer agree to 1) completely renovate the ROW, including removal of an ugly utility panel, and 2) provide further water-front public access. Pictured above, there are new sidewalks (funded by the hotel) which will extend down to the water and a path across the waterside of the hotel (going north-south) will be provided to the public in addition to the existing ROW.

Howard Wharf

The City of Newport has recognized our claim that an 18.24' wide path to the water is a designated public right-of-way. In May, the Reef restaurant applied for permission to set up tables and chairs in that right-of-way. FOW, having previously won the City Council's commitment to prohibit encroachments on the ROW, objected. As a result, the application was withdrawn prior to the City Council meeting. FOW stood ready to ensure the public access was maintained.

Waite's Wharf

Despite the hotel plan receiving a negative recommendation from the Planning Board, Waites Wharf is moving forward with their plans to seek permits for two hotel buildings, an event space and a restaurant. The first Zoning Board meeting will be September 18, 2023. FOW will do everything possible to ensure the current public waterfront access remains and, hopefully, is enhanced and legally recognized.

Perry Mill

The photograph depicts the start of the Harbor Walk connection between Hammetts Hotel and Perry Mill. A temporary path on Perry Mill Wharf is expected to be walkable by the Summer which will allow the public to walk across the Perry Mill property from north to south. This will result in a

continuous path from the Smokehouse Cafe up to the 41 North property (a big step in our

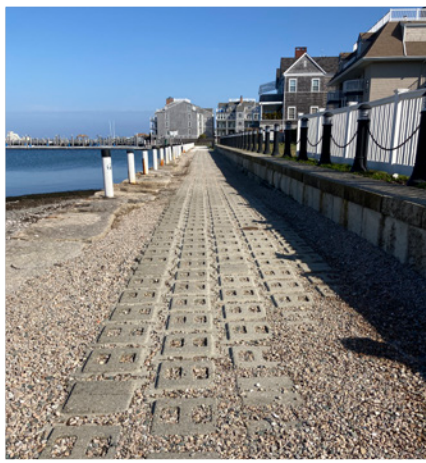


goal of a continuous path to King Park). A new building, to host private events & regattas on the wharf will begin construction in October. In the meantime, we hope the public will enjoy this new addition of waterfront access.

King Park

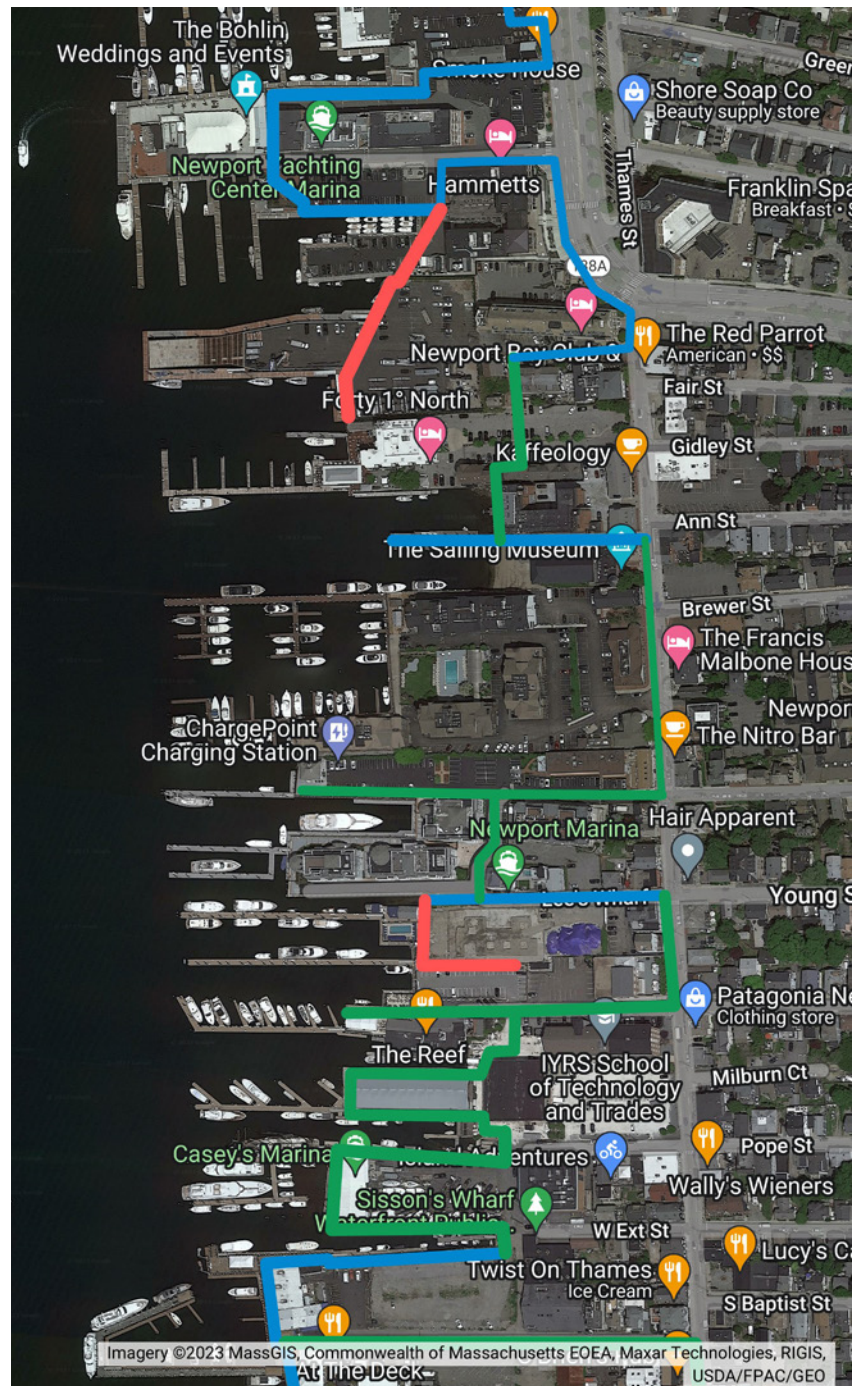
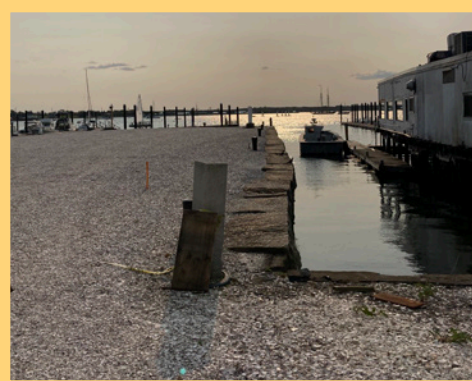


The sea wall at King Park is in serious need of repair. It's important for the City to safeguard this valuable asset.



Wellington Resort

The Wellington Resort has been granted a zoning variance to change from a time share property with 50 apartments to 150 single hotel rooms. During the process, it was noted that the Harbor Walk they are tasked with maintaining, has fallen in to disrepair. A stipulation was made in granting their application, that the Wellington Resort would repair the walk and also make it ADA compliant. FOW requested that the City involve FOW in this process.



An aerial view depicting a section of the current Harbor Walk. Please note NEW areas of public access highlighted in red. We're making progress!

Color Code: **Blue = ADA Harbor Walk**
Green= Non-ADA Compliant
Red=New Public Access

Spring Wharf/IYRS

The yacht Coronet has been moved to Mystic and the wharf is now open. IYRS is discussing how to best use the property going forward. Public access around the perimeter of the wharf has been allowed for years and FOW will continue to monitor the situation.



Earth Day at King Park

Friends of the Waterfront and Friends of King Park partnered with volunteers to clean the park. Thanks to all-Your work made a big impact!

Please support us!

Friends of the Waterfront is made up entirely of volunteers. Our biggest expense, by far, are our legal fees. When public access is threatened or infringed upon, it is often only FOW that steps up to fight. A title search alone can cost upwards of \$5,000. An "expert" witness could run \$5-10,000. Often, developers have multiple days of meetings before Planning and Zoning Boards requiring our attorney to also spend days before these boards in addition to all the research that is required. Your donations for this effort are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Friends of the Waterfront

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Friends of the Waterfront 2023/2024 Annual Membership Dues

_____ Friend \$10 _____ Family \$20 _____ Patron \$50 _____ Other

Membership includes the *Waterfront Watcher* newsletter

NAME _____ (please print)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

E-MAIL _____

Yes, I am interested in volunteering _____ You can also join at www.newportwaterfront.org

How did you hear about us?

Newsletter ☐ Concert ☐ Facebook ☐ Website ☐ Friend ☐ Other _____

SEND TO: FRIENDS OF THE WATERFRONT, PO BOX 932, NEWPORT, RI 02840

YOUR MEMBERSHIP/DONATION IS IMPORTANT TO US - **THANK YOU!**

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