TO: Willard Beach Advisory Working Group

RE: short term and long term goals

Short term:

1. Dogs. Dog walkers are by far the largest user of Willard Beach. Accommodating them is accommodating your neighbors and visitors. A concerted effort should be made to make it easy for them to clean up after their dogs. To that end ideas are: biodegradable bags to pick up waste supplied by the town and each entrance; multiple sand poop scoopers left stored on the side of the beach shack to encourage other dog owners to pick up after persons who have not picked up after themselves; garbage cans that would make it easy to dump a sand scooper; understanding that perfection is the goal, but reality is that nothing is perfect. People may occasionally be on the beach after hours unknowingly; may not have a bag, may holler to their dogs, may have dogs not under voice control. That is life and it is not in the city's interest to berate dog owners, whose average age is probably north of 50 years old, own homes in the area and spend money at local stores. These folks represent the majority of users when you consider they use the beach year round. This weekend, there were 100 persons on the beach at 10 am and it lasted all day. After turnover, I am guessing 300 plus dog walker persons visited the beach in one day this past weekend. Dog walkers interact with each other, and are typically friendly law abiding townspeople. Compare them to persons sitting on a towel in the summer, would you ever walk up to someone you don't know sun tanning, set your blanket down next to them and say, I really like your bathing suit? Your beach chair? If you did, you would be considered a threat. There is no comparison to the friendliness of the dog walkers with each other.

2. Boaters. Boaters are probably the 3rd largest user group behind dog walkers and sun bathers. This would include kayaks; paddle boards; sail boats and motor boats. Thought should be put into if there is to be specific launching areas for kayaks/paddle boards/windsurfers/small sail boats well marked or detailed out on new park signs. For passenger pick up/drop off the same thing is needed. Currently there is confusion regarding if pick up/drop off is allowed. I have researched town code on this and currently there is no, zero, prohibition on bringing a motor boat to the beach on any part of the beach. Many towns in Maine allow this; the entire state of Florida allows this. To claim that this is not safe doesn't stack up. We should define areas each side of the beach where this is permitted. I suggest the area in line with the dinghy storage on the SMCC side and a similar area along the opposite side near the beach shacks.
3. Signage at the entrances. Single attractive national park grade signs at all entrances stating hours & rules. Maybe a map showing areas/islands in the bay you can see... Put one on the beach shacks also.
4. Notice board on the beach shack to post neighborhood notes & events.
5. Replant native trees along the path to the fishing shacks. Provide a planting plan by a landscape company detailing what will be done.
6. Reopen the ramp. The main issue was the cavity under the ramp. That has been sealed off by the city with wire mesh. The structural integrity of the ramp was initially questioned, but upon inspection it was found to be a major project to tear it down. This implies it is sturdy. I have tested it with 600 pounds on the end and it doesn’t budge. Put a sign up like we did on the adjacent stairs saying pass at your own risk until funds become available for repair.
7. Use the Friends of Willard Beach Facebook page as a primary point of community notice of things happening in addition to the city website.
8. Lose the life guards or change the scope of work. It has been hard to fill the positions. Make it more of a park ranger position.
9. Continue using fencing to build up the dunes. It worked.
10. Lose the lights, or pair them back. The light poles out to the fishing shack detracts from the vista and converts it to a city look from a natural look. Or go with something lower and less intrusive.

Large scale projects:

1. Repurpose the snack shack. It could be an event space/community space. It is underutilized.
2. Rebuilding the dock at the fishing shacks. This would be a major benefit to all the boaters. I could foresee storage of dinghy’s and kayaks on racks for a fee to help maintain the beach. In York they rent dock space to lobsterman and got federal money to rebuild their pier. It is nice. It is hard to pick up passengers or take out guests with dinghy only access. The dock under the bridge could possibly be moved over here as it would serve a lot more people than where it currently exists.
3. New entrance off Deake St. to the beach.