

HOUSE No. 79.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, BOSTON, JAN. 13, 1902.

Hon. JAMES J. MYERS, *Speaker, House of Representatives.*

SIR:—I have the honor to submit herewith a special report of the Metropolitan Park Commission, required by Chapter 107 of the Resolves of 1901, upon the matter of a bath house and sanitary station at Nahant beach.

Very respectfully,

WM. M. OLIN,
Secretary.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled.

The Metropolitan Park Commission presents herewith the special report required by chapter 107 of the Resolves of 1901, upon the matter of a bath house and sanitary station at Nahant Beach. The resolve is as follows:—

Resolved, That the Metropolitan Park Commission is hereby authorized and requested to investigate the desirability and feasibility of constructing and maintaining a public bath house and sanitary station upon that part of the Metropolitan Reservation known as Nahant Beach, and to report the result of the investigation to the next General Court not later than the second Monday in January.

The commission has investigated the subject matter of this resolve by personal inspection of Nahant Beach and of its public use during the past summer, by public hearings to official representatives and citizens of Nahant and Lynn, and by the reports and estimates of the engineer, architect and landscape architect.

Nahant Beach is on the ocean side of the Nahant shore where it curves into the Lynn shore at Oceanside Park, a local park of the city of Lynn. It forms part of the Metropolitan Park holdings, which include in this neighborhood nearly all the shore on both the ocean and harbor side of the only highway between Nahant and the main land of Lynn. These holdings were acquired with the concurrence of the selectmen of Nahant, who acted under a vote of the town. With the exception of a few parcels of land, they were entirely the property of the town of Nahant and were, in effect,

a gift made by the town in order that buildings that were unsightly and distasteful to the townspeople might be removed and the shore cared for in such a way as to restore and preserve its natural beauty. This desire was not included in any formal agreement, but it is so well understood that the commission considers it as in effect a trust to be administered with reasonable regard for both the wishes of the townspeople and the necessities of the public in their use of the reservation.

As soon as possible after acquiring the shore as above described, the commission caused all buildings to be removed except a few private bath houses at the end nearest the main portion of Nahant which had been used by prominent citizens of the town for many years under a license from the selectmen. The buildings removed were hotels, amusement stands of all kinds, and a large number of bath houses on the ocean side, and houses, sheds and other minor buildings on the harbor side. The beauty of the beach was immediately restored and made apparent, but the public resorting to the beach were left without the usual and necessary accommodations. A private establishment on the harbor side within the city of Lynn furnished the only accommodations and out of consideration to the public needs, the general rules of the reservation were modified so as to allow bathers to cross the highway from this establishment in bathing costume to reach the beach within the reservation. Although a very considerable use continued to be made of the beach, there were many protests and requests for improved accommodations.

The above facts together with the observations of the commission and its officers, and the testimony given at the hearings in regard to the matter, make it seem clear that there will continue to be a very large use of this beach and shore and that the public will always require reasonable accommodations of the sort usually provided in the neighborhood of a bathing beach. Such accommodations ought to include sanitariums, a room for the emergencies of sudden illnesses and accidents, detention rooms for those arrested for the violation of the law, bath houses, and shelters against the sun and sudden showers.

The commission also finds that it is reasonable to expect that these accommodations will be provided at the expense of the Metropolitan Parks District. Nahant Beach has always been used more largely by people of the adjoining city of Lynn and of other cities and towns within, and even beyond the Metropolitan District, than by the people of Nahant. The adjoining shore within the city of Lynn, while equally beautiful and already developed by the expenditure of considerable money, is not a good bathing beach. In years past, Nahant has had no inducement to provide public accommodations on this beach and Lynn and the people beyond could not provide them. It cannot be reasonably expected that either municipality will in the future wish to pay for the cost of public accommodations on the beach. Nahant has given its property to the District, while Lynn has already provided at its own expense such important local parks that they will be considered valuable additions to the Metropolitan Parks. Both municipalities are somewhat removed from the rest of the District and its park system and yet are obliged to join in the cost of maintaining the system.

In considering the matter of providing accommodations recommended, the commission has found that the wishes of the townspeople of Nahant, which it believes ought to be respected, happily coincide with what will provide reasonably for the public necessities and with what will clearly be the best development of the beach as a public park.

Plans embodying these ideas have been prepared in preliminary form which provide for the necessary buildings of attractive appearance upon land of the reservation on the harbor side with an approach to the bathing beach on the ocean side by a subway under the highway, — a plan very similar to, but upon a smaller scale than, that adopted and now so successfully in use at Revere Beach. The buildings on the harbor side include 500 bath rooms and a head-house with public sanitariums, emergency and detention rooms. The highway is to be elevated to the grade of the crest of the beach, which will allow for the subways and will conform to the grade to the proposed extension of the esplanade of Lynn Oceanside Park overlooking the bathing beach. By this plan, the only available land for buildings of the necessary

size is utilized, the attractiveness of the highway is increased, and the wonderful beauty of the uninterrupted sweep of ocean view is preserved.

For economy of first cost and of cost of maintenance, it is planned that the reservation and the bath house, if built, shall remain under the same general supervision as Revere Beach and that the laundry, and clerical work shall be done at the bath house on that beach. The buildings on the harbor side will cover an area of about 16,000 square feet and will cost approximately \$40,000; the equipment with necessary furniture, apparatus for heating water, and other machinery, and the equipment of bath suits and towels will cost \$8,000; the changes in the road and about buildings to conform to the crest of the beach will cost \$18,000, making a total for necessary buildings, work and equipment of \$66,000. This amount does not include the cost of the esplanade on the ocean side.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM B. DE LAS CASAS,
EDWIN U. CURTIS,
DAVID N. SKILLINGS,
ELLERTON P. WHITNEY,

Metropolitan Park Commissioners.

Mr. Haskell of the commission is absent from the State and, therefore, does not sign this report.

