



THE BACK BAY SUN

S H E D D I N G N E W L I G H T O N A N O L D N E I G H B O R H O O D

July 13, 2007

New and improved drinking fountains for Esplanade by Tory Glerum

Three of the Esplanade's nine water fountains, one located at the Teddy Ebersol Fields, one near the Hatch Shell, and one at Dartmouth Street, are currently broken, and, according to Wendy Fox, Press Secretary for the Department of Conservation and Recreation, are either undergoing or awaiting repairs.

Meanwhile, the Esplanade Association has been working with architects and engineers on a project to eventually replace several aging and often broken water fountains on the Esplanade and fix the current piping system.

"Some of the fountains might be working, but they are dismal," TEA's Executive Director Patrice Todisco said. "They are old, concrete fixtures set in mud that you would want to think twice about before using."

According to Todisco, a new model has already been chosen that is better looking and more reliable. However, she said the project is complicated due to the necessity of fixing the entire water system, and the timeline depends on construction scheduling and the progress of behind-the-scenes engineering. TEA will also pursue outreach and fundraising to help pay for the project, and hopes to reconvene with DCR, who they met with eight months ago, in order to finalize plans.

"There are a lot of issues involved, but we are committed to doing the work," Todisco said.

The question is, will these new fountains be used? People who attend Hill House's weekend events seem to prefer bottled water, Associate Director Ian Moorhouse said. Hill House not only sells water bottles at these events, but also provides them daily to children participating in their summer camp, which runs recreational activities on the Ebersol Fields.

"We have never had a problem with the faulty fountains because the kids come down to the fields filled up," he said.

Yet, while Todisco recognizes the popularity of bottled water, she said TEA has not taken it into consideration as they pursue their water fountain renewal project.

"Drinking fountains are an essential amenity and traditional component of public parks," she added. "It would be a mistake not to replace them."