



William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth

Contact: Brian McNiff
Telephone: 617-727-9180

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SEASIDE PARK, MARBLEHEAD, APPROVED FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Secretary of the Commonwealth William Francis Galvin is pleased to announce that the Massachusetts Historical Commission approved Seaside Park in Marblehead for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at its March 9, 2011, meeting. The nomination will be submitted to the National Register of Historic Places at the National Park Service in Washington, DC, for final consideration and designation.

“The Massachusetts Historical Commission is dedicated to preserving the Commonwealth’s rich architectural, cultural, archaeological, and historic resources,” Secretary Galvin said. “Inclusion of Seaside Park in the National Register will help to protect this important recreational resource.”

Seaside Park, located on Atlantic Avenue, is the largest of Marblehead’s four public parks. Overlooking Marblehead Harbor, the park contains active recreation fields and facilities, and, from its easternmost edge, views of the islands and waters of the Atlantic. The park’s central feature, the recently restored Elliott Roundy Grandstand, has served as a home to local and semi-pro baseball teams for nearly a century. Other built structures include a field hockey surface and football field, three sets of double tennis courts, equipment for children’s play, a basketball court, a picnic area, and a .9-mile, 18-station fitness trail. The park was built in response to Marblehead’s summer tourism industry—which grew with the 1871 arrival of a railroad line connecting the town to Swampscott and larger commercial centers—as well as the late 19th-century Playground Movement, an effort on the part of civic leaders to offer active recreation to city-dwellers. Marblehead acquired the land for Seaside Park in 1895, and the park was laid out in 1905. The grandstand was built in 1916, and in 1917 the Marblehead Athletic Association made Seaside Park its home, attracting barnstorming professional baseball teams who played for thousands of spectators. The grandstand was threatened with demolition in 1987, but was saved by a group of citizens who raised money to restore the structure. The town is concerned with the long-term health of the park and grandstand, and expects the National Register nomination to bring greater public awareness about this local public asset.

Seaside Park is one of 7 historic resources around the Commonwealth approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places by the Massachusetts Historical Commission at this meeting.

Secretary Galvin serves as Chairman of the 17-member board, which meets regularly and considers historic resources eligible for the National Register four times a year.

The National Register is the nation’s official listing of significant historic resources. In Massachusetts, there are over 70,000 properties listed in the National Register. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has been administering the National Register of Historic Places program in Massachusetts since 1966.

The Massachusetts Historical Commission is the office of the State Historic Preservation Officer and the State Archaeologist. It was established in 1963 to identify, evaluate, and protect important historical and archaeological assets of the Commonwealth. Visit our website to learn more about the Commission’s programs (www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc).

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State House, Room 337, Boston, Massachusetts 02133