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Scott Avedisian - Come explore the Rocky Point shoreline this summer

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After years of planning and hard work - and a great deal of public anticipation - on June 24, I was joined by more than 100 residents and a host of federal, state, and local officials, including governor Lincoln Chafee, U.S. senator Jack Reed, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) policy director Sally Yozell, state Department of Environmental Management Director Janet Coit, and Grover Fugate, executive director of the Coastal Resources Management Council, to officially open the city's 41 acres of shoreline at Rocky Point.

Anita Ferla, widow of Conrad Ferla, the former owner of the amusement park, cut the ribbon.

The park will be open for pedestrian access from dawn to dusk daily. Visitors will be able to park in an 80-car lot adjacent to the former main gate and walk down to the city's property. The remaining land, which includes the old midway, Shore Dinner Hall and other buildings, is still under control of the U.S. Small Business Administration and is fenced off for safety and security reasons. Last November, voters approved a \$10 million bond to help purchase the remaining 83 acres; discussions are ongoing among local and state officials and SBA representatives.

Residents of all ages began arriving at the park in advance of the ceremony - some several hours ahead of time - to enjoy the property, which now includes a paved walkway that winds its way along the shoreline, and newly planted native trees and shrubs, generously donated by Pepsi and Shaw's and planted with the help of their volunteer employees. Our Department of Public Works crews were on hand to celebrate as well - they spent countless hours clearing ramshackle cottages, cleaning up debris that accumulated since the park closed, trimming trees, preparing the land, doing plantings and laying down the asphalt. Representatives from Veri-Waterman & Associates, which provided pro bono landscaping services, and members of our Planning Department were also among the attendees.

Purchase of the land, which was paid for through a combination of NOAA, state and local funds, was finalized in July 2008, and the city began extensive work on the site. RIDEM has awarded a total of \$140,000 in grants through its Historic Parks and Preservation program, which has paid for site improvements, including materials for the path. We will also be installing interpretive signage in an effort to promote the history of the park, which was operational from the mid-1800s until its closure in 1995.

The acquisition of the shoreline and the wonderful improvements that have been made here are the direct result of federal, state and local officials, city employees and volunteers working cooperatively to ensure that this historically and environmentally significant property remains accessible to the public for generations to come.

I encourage you to plan a visit to Warwick and Rocky Point to enjoy views of our bay. For more

information, call our Department of Tourism, Culture and Development at 738-2000, x6202.
Scott Avedisian is the mayor of Warwick.

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