

# Lynn receives \$259G for commuter ferry

By Chris Stevens / The Daily Item | Posted: Wednesday, October 19, 2011 12:00 am

LYNN - The Seaport Advisory Council agreed Tuesday to approve \$259,300 that will be used to close a shortfall for the second part of a project to launch a commuter ferry from Lynn to Boston.

Economic Development and Industrial Corp. Executive Director James Cowdell said he was confident the council would approve the money.

“They have funded this 100 percent since the beginning,” he said. “Once we explained why we were short ... they understood.”

Cowdell drove to New Bedford to meet with the council to explain the shortfall, which he said occurred when bids to rebuild the seawall and the foundation for the dock at the end of the Blossom Street Extension came in higher than expected.

Seaport awarded \$1.3 million to the EDIC in October 2010 for the project, but Meninno Construction of Lynn came in with the lowest bid at \$1.55 million.

Cowdell attributed the higher bid to the fact that “the price of steel went incredibly high.”

However, he said he was sure the council would back them in large part because Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray serves as its chairman.

The Seaport Council is made up of 15 city and state officials from the state’s seaport communities. It also includes regional and waterway user representatives. Its mission is to develop the commercial maritime resources of the state and it is funded through the Energy and Environmental Bond Bill.

In 2007, Murray and the council funded Phase 1 of the project \, awarding \$700,000 to demolish a new boat ramp and complete paving of the site.

Murray visited Lynn last week to join a host of other city and state officials to break ground on the project.

State Sen. Thomas McGee D-Lynn, who has championed the project from the start, called the vote to award the money “another step in the right direction.”

McGee said he couldn’t attend the meeting with the Advisory Council, but he sent a letter of support and has been in constant contact with Murray’s office.

“This is really going to happen and I’m starting to feel it from constituents, people on the street,” he said. “I think people are really getting excited.”

McGee said he believes part of the excitement is that residents are starting to see good things happen

on the waterfront.

“And this is an exciting piece,” he added. “The Lt. Governor has been really supportive, Seaport has been great, they understand the vision we have.”

Cowdell plans to meet with Meninno Construction next week to discuss the work schedule for the project. He said he expects the work to take six months to complete.

“Then in the spring 2012 we’ll go back to Seaport for the final funding,” he said.

Phase III of the project will cost an estimated \$2.5 million and will include dredging and constructing the actual dock, Cowdell said. The true final phase, he added, will be buying a boat.

Cowdell said it wasn’t that long ago that people were skeptical about a commuter ferry coming to Lynn, “now they’re asking me when it’s coming.” He said he believes the Lynn-to-Boston commuter ferry could be running in under three years.

In a release from Murray, state Rep. Stephen Walsh, D-Lynn, said, “I applaud the Seaport Advisory Council and the Patrick/Murray Administration for supporting our endeavors and understanding the potential of the Lynn Ferry Project. “

Murray in a prepared statement said, “With over 2,800 miles of coastline, we need to continue to do our part to not only maintain this infrastructure but also make necessary improvements to support the local and regional economies along the coast. Today’s approved funding will support investments in Lynn, and we look forward to future economic development opportunities in this area.”