

Earl Newhouse, by Tom Theodore (Board of Selectmen)

I grew up in Canton, and the Canton Reservoir Pond has been so commonplace in our town that for as long as I can remember, it's just been "the Rez." The Rez has a place in some of my fondest memories. As a kid, in the winter I would put on my skates, climb the wall on Pleasant Street, and hit the ice. In the summer, I would go fishing. When I started playing golf at the Wampatuck Country Club, the Rez became the water I had to fish my ball out of whenever I reached the fifth hole. Overall, with the reservoir being such a part of my daily life, I never stopped to think about the true value of this property. That is, until just recently.

In 1997, Canton purchased the Eugene Williams Estate, a property along the Reservoir, and dedicated a portion of the estate to the late Canton Police Officer Earl Newhouse. Newhouse had frequented the Reservoir, spending hours fishing and enjoying this integral piece of Canton history. Thirteen years after purchasing the estate – and a small portion of the Reservoir's waterfront – the town finally acquired the Reservoir in its entirety. This new acquisition of the Reservoir granted all Canton residents access to a part of Canton I have always held so dear.

Unfortunately, years of neglect have caused the the Earl Newhouse Waterfront to deteriorate. This past summer, I stopped by the Waterfront and was frankly surprised by its condition. I reached out for volunteers, and we cleaned up the debris that had gathered around the property. We purchased new picnic tables, and I could see the property slowly being restored. In the weeks that followed, I found myself continuously drawn to the waterfront. I took my lunch out on the property, and I began to imagine the unlimited possibilities for this site.

The possibilities for this site are multifaceted as well as largely beneficial. I can envision the community using the Earl Newhouse Waterfront for multi-seasonal recreational activities - kayaking, boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, ice skating. I can envision this waterfront being a resource for Canton citizens well into the future. This resource, this essential piece of Canton, is so unique to our town and, I believe, deserves to be enhanced. Enhancing the Earl Newhouse Waterfront would in turn enhance and enrich the value of our community.

The Town of Canton has prepared a Master Plan for the property that will conserve and protect the integrity of our wetland resources as well as provide new opportunities for recreational activities. To gain insight into the full scope of this project, the Town will first survey the property and then present to the community a transparent, comprehensive analysis to serve as the basis for a future development plan.

Many years have passed since I last skated on the Reservoir, and I think the time has come for this to change. As a Selectman, I now see the Rez as a unique, viable resource for our community – one that is far more significant than its casual nickname implies. It would be a shame for us to let this beautiful property, with stunning, million-dollar views and peaceful sunsets, remain underutilized. I encourage you to stop by the Earl Newhouse Waterfront and check it out for yourself as well as visit the town webpage for extended details on the master plan: <https://www.town.canton.ma.us/696/Earl-Newhouse-Waterfront-Master-Plan>

I would also encourage you to get involved in the Town's Master Plan update process. For more information, and to sign up for updates, please go to www.cantonmasterplan.com.