



**For Release**  
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## **TOWN RESIDENTS LAUNCH MARBLEHEAD COMMUNITY BOATING INITIATIVE** **New Community Survey to Inform the Future Revitalization of Parker's Boatyard**

MARBLEHEAD, Mass.--Town residents James Ashton and Jocelyn Cook, in partnership with a team of dedicated volunteers, are looking to revitalize Parker's Boatyard through the creation of a nonprofit organization: *Marblehead Community Boating Center*, that would enhance public access to Marblehead Harbor. On January 22, the new initiative announced a community wide survey to capture the needs and wants of residents, as well as visitors, while gauging support for such a proposal.

The ultimate vision for the center is to provide increased access for the general public that is also universal (American Disabilities Act compliant) for small sail, motor and paddle vessels (kayak/SUP). Those enjoying the center could utilize craft storage, vessel launching and an array of rentals from paddle to power and sail. The center also hopes to offer youth and adult educational opportunities related to safe boating, sailing, seamanship and environmental stewardship.

"We believe a community boating center will fill an important role in getting more residents to enjoy the harbor and expand their love of marine recreation of all kinds," Co-creator Jocelyn Cook describes. "And given our community's rich history of yachting, a public boating center can help support the growth of one-design racing and offer increased capacity for visiting sailors associated with regattas."

The Town of Marblehead owns Parker's Boatyard which is located just off Redstone Lane near the Marblehead Light Department and provides direct access to Marblehead's iconic main harbor. The Parker family sold the property to the town in 1987 for the purpose of outdoor municipal recreation. Over the past 30 years, the yard has been used in many ways, including boat storage, commercial fisheries usage and dry-sailing access for one-design racing sailors. The most recent dry-sailing activity ended in 2018 due to safety concerns around the condition of the space and new State requirements needed for boat crane usage.

"With the necessary improvements and planning, Parker's Boatyard represents a unique opportunity to incorporate a larger vision for a space that reflects the needs of this community by serving a variety of marine interests," said Co-creator James Ashton.

Over the past several months, Ashton and Cook have been brainstorming with the Harbormaster's office and the Harbor & Waters Board as they conduct due diligence by engaging yacht clubs, neighbors and other stakeholders for feedback and guidance with the aim of creating as much collaboration as possible.

A critical part of this outreach includes an online community survey to assess the public need. Residents and visitors are encouraged to take the survey before Thursday, February 4:  
<https://mhdboating.questionpro.com>.

To learn more, sign up for updates, and contact the organizers of the Marblehead Community Boating Center initiative visit [www.mhdboating.org](http://www.mhdboating.org).