

## **Mayor Checks In On Inner Harbor Troubles - City Strategizing For Ways To Protect Visitors, *WBAL-TV.com*, June 3, 2009**

Baltimore city officials are contemplating new strategies to keep visitors to the Inner Harbor safe after several assaults by teens over the last few weeks.

WBAL TV 11 News found Mayor Sheila Dixon doing her own unscheduled check of the harbor on Wednesday.

"I just want to get a sense for myself of what's happening. I ran into some kids that came down after their graduation practice," she said.

"We don't want to deter people from not coming down. We have a lot of great things on weekends. We want people to not feel fearful." - Mayor Sheila Dixon

Around the same time, police questioned a teenager and told him he couldn't be at the harbor as long as school was in session.

Over the past six weeks, a string of random assaults by groups of teens has caused police to more than triple their presence in the area. A police spokesman said the extra officers are being pulled from other units.

They're working on new strategies to cover weekdays since the school year is coming to an end.

"What I said to some of those kids is, 'Look, a small group is giving all of you a bad name. So, you've got to conduct yourself in a way that's responsible.' I said, 'If you think you can say something to a group who might not be doing the right thing, maybe they'll listen to you,'" Dixon told 11 News I-Team lead investigative reporter Jayne Miller.

"We don't want to deter people from not coming down. We have a lot of great things on weekends. We want people to not feel fearful," Dixon said.

City Council is exploring the use of more cameras at the harbor and some have debated a stricter curfew. The mayor said all options are on the table.

"I asked my staff to give me some examples of what's happening in other cities," she said. City Councilman Bill Cole, who represents the area, said he hopes the end of school might actually help.

"The mayor has a lot of kids going to work for summer jobs, so maybe that will help. But schools are letting out earlier this year. A lot of kids have nothing to do in the afternoon. We see kids wandering through the harbor and at bus stops," he said.

Police are planning a larger presence of undercover officers at the harbor to try to find the assailants responsible for the assaults.

