



CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4

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J. LEE COMPTON
Chair

ANTHONY M. BORELLI
District Manager

September 8, 2005

Richard L. Tomer
Chief, Regulatory Branch
US Army Corps of Engineers
New York District
Jacob K. Javits Federal Building
New York, NY 10278-0090

Re: Public Notice Number 2005-00569-Y3
Ramp for proposed “duck” tours by Port Imperial Duck Charterers, LLC.

Dear Mr. Tomer

The above referenced application came to the attention of Manhattan Community Board No 4 on August 25. We organized a special meeting of the Waterfront & Parks Committee and Transportation Planning Committee for September 7, immediately prior to our regular full Board meeting, and this letter was subsequently approved by a unanimous vote of the full Board. It is being faxed to you on September 8, 2005, with a mailed version to follow ASAP.

The proposal raises several important environmental concerns for the surrounding community, air and water quality, and the Hudson River Park that require additional explanation and a full public hearing to be adequately discussed. These issues include::

- The ducks will be traveling on dirty NYC streets and then going directly into the water, taking street pollution with them into what is, by NYS Legislation (the Hudson River Park Act), a sanctuary. This practice seems, on its face, to be environmentally unsound unless measures are taken to ensure that the underbodies of the ducks are cleaned before each water departure.
- The area of water proposed is already very busy with the current (and now potentially expanded) ferry operations which will soon move to the new terminal at Pier 79, and with Circle Line, World Yacht, other charter boats and the Passenger Ship Terminal all within blocks to the north. Adding another water use, while seemingly as of right, will exacerbate current problems of turbidity and wake wash. As the ACOE is aware, wake wash from the ferry operation is currently causing damage to adjacent piers, and any proposal that has the capability of adding to this problem must be closely examined before any approvals are granted. For instance, what is the wake signature of these craft?
- There has been no determination yet whether this action requires review by the Hudson River Park Trust and whether the action may violate the Hudson River Park Act. Given the increased bus traffic this will cause at the Hudson River crossing and the related increased crossing of its pedestrian/bicycle path (the operator estimated 10-12 buses an hour to the Community Board

committees) the ACOE should not make a determination until they have this information.

- Have studies been done to determine that the proposed ramp does not become a convenient landing (or “haul out”) location for harbor seals? We note that proposals to place “get-downs” in the park have been modified for the same reason;
- The proposed landing facility is an integral part of an entire “tourist experience,” and the environmental impacts of the entire experience must be assessed. The applicant and its duck operating partner, NY Waterways, stated at the above mentioned Community Board Committee meeting that the additional buses enabled by this proposed construction (of which there may be 8 or more, running continuously as tourist traffic demands) would increase its tour traffic by 8-10%, a significant volume that requires community and ACOE assessment of its impact on traffic congestion, local travel time, noise, and air quality. This is particularly concerning given their proposed route, which includes the already severely congested West 42nd Street corridor from Times Square to the Hudson River Park, portions of the West Side Highway (Route 9A) , the primarily residential West 50th Street, and travel through the Lincoln Tunnel for daily storage of the buses in New Jersey.

For the above reasons we urge the ACOE to conduct a public hearing before issuing a permit for this application. Without such a hearing, we must object to the issuance of the permit as currently stated.

Thank you.



J. Lee Compton
Chair
Manhattan Community Board No. 4



Jay Marcus
Chair
Transportation Planning Committee



John Doswell
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

Kristin Dionne
Co-Chair
Waterfront & Parks Committee

cc: Elected Officials
Port Imperial Duck Charterers LLC
Hudson River Park Trust
Friends of Hudson River Park
Dept of City Planning
Dept. of Transportation
NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation
Dept. of Consumer Affairs