

Co-Chairs:
George Goodwill
Michel J. Palma

Committee Members:
John Dooley-on leave
Maritta Dunn
Carolyn Hammond
Sylvia Robinson
Walter South

Community Members:

Gloria Allen
3150 Broadway

Tom Demott
West Harlem Coalition

Joan S. Levine
Morningside Heights/West Harlem
Sanitation Coalition Morningside Gardens
Community Relations

Sara Martin
Grant Resident Association

Martha Levy
3150 Broadway

Diane Turner
3150 Broadway

**Minutes of the
The Harlem Piers and Waterfront Committee
6:30 PM, Wednesday, January 7, 2003**

Attendance:

Committee Members: John Dooley – on leave
Maritta Dunn - Present
Carolyn Hammond - Present
Sylvia Robinson - Present
Walter South – Present

AGENDA: Motion: To adopt Agenda. Seconded and passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Motion: To approve Minutes from our last Meeting, with all the necessary corrections and emendations as briefly noted and discussed (a revised copy will be handed out at the next scheduled meeting) Seconded and passed unanimously.

CO-CHAIRS OPENING COMMENTS:

For the sake of moving the agenda to our working session with EDC and the W architect firm, there are no comments from either chairs.

OLD BUSINESS:

Working session with EDC and W Architects on planned development of the Harlem Piers and waterfront area at Manhattanville.

Before Barbara Wilks made her presentation, Jeannette Rausch wanted to announce that as the Master Plan for the Harlem Piers and waterfront is proceeding on two parallel tracks, that is, waterfront design and rezoning, the city agency referred to as City Planning, (and in particular Amanda Burden) wants to come to CB 9 on January 21 to talk about rezoning and its general parameters.

With regard to what the project cost, Jeanette Rausch of EDC clarified for Board and community members the misconception that the project "lost" 3 million dollars in funding. Jeanette stated that without any adoption of plans or allocation of funds, the initial design plan came to cost 13 million dollars. Subsequent to the initial design plan, the City and State allocated funds in the amount of \$10 million. That the initial design plan costs and the subsequent allocation of funds differed by 3 million does not represent a "loss" of funding because the project was never funded at that level to begin with. Planning proceeded without any strict notion of any funding; however, once funding was allocated and known, the plan had to be adjusted accordingly, hence the current working session.

Barbara Wilks proceeded with her presentation. W Architects presented new drawings, plans and a model of the redesigned Harlem Piers and waterfront area taking into consideration many of the ideas and suggestions from our last committee meeting.

These ideas were essentially incorporated in the new design plan drawings and model, such as,

- a buffer along the narrow marginal street,
- a great view out from 125th Street,
- the park should be a major focal point and gathering place, a different “funky” kind of place,
- a unique place along the waterfront where there is the ability to walk down to the water,
- to move the building from the north end of the waterfront, more south and closer to 125th Street where the ferry would land,
- keeping the ferry excursion pier and (re)moving others.

The model demonstrated a bigger focus on the center, close to 125th Street, with a casual and gradual step-down to the waterfront. This would be a multi-purpose space and sitting area from which to support such activities as simple viewing of the river to supporting small concert gatherings/performance, especially with a barge coming in to serve as a performance platform. With the building included in this area, there will be access to the roof which will also be used as a viewing platform or lookout. The will also be used as a “gateway” to the ferry pier.

The piers themselves have been re-aligned to get more experiences out of what is being built, and connects to a walkway and boardwalk.

There are steps, hillsides, greenery, trees, walkways, seating areas, access to the water, a bike trail.

Little boats will have the ability to moor at one of the piers as a respite area (not a marina). The Kiak launch is moved to the north, close to a more stable waterfront area.

Ecology learning spaces can happen down toward the piers. There is room and consideration for public art in the design positioning of the piers, giving many viewable access space for such works to be installed. Artist may be able to incorporate the water and waterfront area as well.

Piers are designed for little excursion boats and front-loading (people) ferryboats.

Cecil Corbin-Marks mentioned that in terms of the ecological activities, how did the architects design for such activities if they don't yet know what they are? Barbara responded by saying that once everything is finalized as to their positioning in the park/plaza more definite activities can be identified in what would be the next level of detail. Next level of detail take advantage of the opportunities incorporated into the plan and can include such detail as artistic work, historical content, ecological educational activity, and other public and concentrated activity. Corbin-Marks asked the architects to include what they could gather from other interpretative learning sites from across the country in making the entire “living” part of the design contribute to the learning process. The piers themselves should be included in the learning process and opportunities should exist there as well. In earlier community work sessions, a whole pier was dedicated to a learning function, and Mr. Corbin-Marks asked that a more correct balance be struck between prior educational opportunities discussed and those currently accommodated for in the plan.

Tom Demott expressed his concern about confining different activities to only occur in certain area, and was hoping that the design could lend itself to any waterfront activity anywhere in the design, as long as safety is adhered to. For example, fishing should happen almost anywhere in the plan design and not confined to one corner of the piers. In general, the plan is an improvement over the prior design, however Tom wanted to register his view that the plan still looks very much like a plaza, and not enough like a park.

Maritta Dunn asked how high the building is. Barbara said the building serves as a gateway and overhead to pedestrians and ferry travelers. Maritta was concerned about the exact positioning of the building in relation to the view corridor from 125th Street, and that it be moved a bit more South to not interfere with the view as you approach the waterfront from the East. The view is not that affected, the architects all chimed in, since the highway and the building are close together, and there would be no appreciable blocked view than there already exists with the highway.

Savanah McClain reminded the architects about the current educational drawing on Cherry Walk, and that this motif could continue into the design plans. Ms. McClain mention the New York Botanical Garden having audio learning places throughout the garden and that is was a good idea to incorporate at the next level of detail.

Kyesha Edwards, a young teenager, wanted to remind the committee that there should be activities for all generations and not specifically for one (learning) age group.

Maritta asked if the ferry would affect the fishing. Jeanette Rausch said the two could not happen at the same pier location, however Maritta was more generally concerned with one activity adversely affecting the other, anywhere on the piers. Cecil Corbin-Mark explained that there are regulations governing use categories, i.e. boat-ferrying, fishing, and that the current design will be looked at by the appropriate agencies to ensure that the use of the waterfront does not interfere with the marine habitat. He mentioned piers in and of themselves create another form of marine habitat, and this is generally helpful for fishing.

Dr. Vickie Golson reiterated the importance of incorporating ecological learning activities at the piers, i.e. audio learning stations and the like. The 1% for artists to place art in the park/plaza, should be revisited. Len Greco, from EDC, reiterated that 1% of the budget is approximately \$100,000 and that is barely sufficient for one artist, let alone two or more.

George Goodwill asked for the meeting not to concentrate too much on detail because there was a lot to be accomplished in a little time and that we should move the meeting along before the whole project becomes a moot point with the re-allocation or loss of funds.

Michael Palma asked for a 8.5x11 versions of the design plan for general consumption by the Community Board to show a work in progress with community input, and moving in the right direction.

Carolyn Hammond reiterated what Corbin-Mark and Vicki Golson have previously mentioned. Educational opportunities for area children were a paramount concern and design concept for the Harlem Piers since the very initial discussions many years ago for any Master Plan Development. Conversions with Columbia University and City College have been in progress, as well as curriculum development, to use the waterfront area as a way to educate area children. Corbin-Mark asked the architects to look at other examples such as with aquariums to see how they incorporate ecological learning activities in such a setting.

Corbin-Mark wants to be clear how we get community ideas and concerns to a more categorized state. He's not sure of the process. What is the process for the community saying what happens in which phase of plan development.

How does the community participate with such city agencies such as DOT, and understanding their issues as well as having them understand our issues, especially with the community-desired closing of Marginal Street?

George asked if Jeannette knew if any DOT plans for closing Marginal Street. Jeannette believes the closing of Marginal Street is an issue that must continue at the community level and EDC should not be the conduit for those efforts and conversations with DOT. The reduction in width of Marginal Street is a first step in what may eventually be its ultimate closing, but that as a goal, EDC cannot contemplate it in the current design plans.

Corbin-Mark wants to know what DOT issues are with closing Marginal Street, but Jeannette Rausch believes that DOT does not have the "data" to even know what their "issues" are. However Jeannette does suggest a meeting with DOT as part of this process to bring out the concerns that will lead toward a working dialogue between the community and DOT.

George Goodwill wanted to know if the future of an inter-modal center at the Piers would influence DOT in any way. MTA, Amtrak are aware of each other and of their plans and the lines of communication are open.

Walter South commended various aspect of plan but mostly suggested that there are things that could be done in design to "chip-away" at the use of Marginal Street, i.e. redirecting the flow of traffic at St. Clair and 133rd Street. Marginal should be made to a one-lane road, which is what it currently is explained Walter South. Also suggested that the building should be less obtrusive and made smaller; awning instead of an underpass, a kiosk instead of a building, Walter suggests.

Jeannette Rausch reminded everyone how deliberate DOT is in making these types of decision, i.e. closing streets, redirecting traffic, etc.

Jeannette Rausch reminded everyone that the building has more uses than just informational and will be looked upon to provide maintenance services to the park/plaza. The need for the building is two fold: 1) the need for program activity and informational center, and 2) that somehow it keys into the maintenance of the park.

Carolyn Kent objects to having a building and wanted to express that the park is an extraordinary "outdoor" site and should be kept that way.

Dr. Golson shared some old UDC design plans with the community as a point of reference of past ideas and concepts to embolden the architects as they rethink their design plans.

NEW BUSINESS:

No new business.

AJOURNMENT: 8:30 PM

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD NO. 9
HARLEM PIERS & WATERFRONT COMMITTEE
ATTENDANCE SHEET

DATE: January 8, 03

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

George Goodwill, Co-Chair

George Goodwill

Michael Palma, Co-Chair

Michael Palma

Carolyn Hammond

Carolyn P. Hammond

Sylvia Robinson

Sylvia Robinson

Walter South

Walter South

Maritta Dunn

Maritta Dunn

John Dooley

BOARD MEMBERS:

Carolyn Kent

Shapiro

PUBLIC MEMBERS:

Gloria Allen

Tom De Mott

Tom DeMott

Joan Levine

Joan Morford - substitute

Martha Levy

Diane Turner
