



THE CITY OF NEW YORK

MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 7

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Steven Brown, Board Chair

Michelle P. Booker, District Manager

November 29, 2021

By e-mail and regular mail:

Julia Melzer, Vice President Capital Program
NYC Economic Development Commission
One Liberty Street
New York, NY 10006

Re: Proposed EDC/DPR Project At 79th Street Boat Basin at Hudson River/Manhattan

Dear Ms. Melzer,

Since you presented your plans for the renovation/expansion of the 79th Street Boat Basin on the Hudson River back in June, a few things have changed on our committee, and we sincerely apologize for the very long delay in getting this letter to you.

1. The Dock House: At our committee meeting on June 21st, 2021, a number of concerns were expressed by our members and the community. We were hopeful that at our subsequent presentation by the EDC, made on November 15th, 2021 and concerning specifically the Dock House, many of these would have been addressed, but it appears that only very minimal changes have been made. Some concerns were originally expressed regarding the size, bulk and design of the new Dock House, in relation to the rest of the landmarked Riverside Park. Members and community members expressed thoughts that the design was too large, bulky, clumsy, and opaque, and also inconsistent with the surrounding architectural and other features of Riverside Park. There are concerns about blocking sight lines, supporting columns that are too thick, three opaque sides to the building, with only one side, that one seen only from the water, being made of glass. Although we are grateful that the Dock House is now set back marginally from the esplanade to give it a bit of breathing room, the slope to the roof has also been added, and the cladding has also been modified to simplify the material palette, these changes are too small to make a difference in bulk. It still remains a building that is opaque on three sides and mostly glass only on the water side, where very few will see it.
2. Regarding those who live aboard their boats, including many who have lived aboard for years, we are glad that the planned infrastructure improvements will certainly help this community in numerous ways. However, although we heard the EDC state that the community of 'live-aboards' will be found alternative docking locations during the

time the Boat Basin is closed, and they voiced that they will be offered the opportunity to return after completion of the work with the understanding that they will pay the same rent, etc., we would like some written assurance that this will be the case. Additionally, since no work has thus begun and does not to be starting for another year at least, it seems needless and unsympathetic that this community was required to vacate the boat basin so early.

3. Our community in general has always been enthusiastic about the free kayaking program that was in operation around 72nd street until Hurricane Sandy. It is possible that some version of this program may be revived in the future. We believe that the most ideal location for it would be the renovated 79th Street Boat Basin, given that a new, better gangway with wave-protection and ADA-accessibility is already part of the proposed construction here. Hence, we are requesting that a safe structure to store equipment for the potentially revived kayaking program be included in the plans as well.
4. Widening the Esplanade around the Boat Basin: This area of the park, that north/south pathway adjacent to the Boat Basin is already often overcrowded. The new expansion of the basin will make this even more congested. Although it was stated that an expansion of the Esplanade could not be done without being environmentally destructive, we would ask that you revisit and take another look to see if something might be done.
5. Lastly, we request, if at all possible, that a viable route be kept open along the north/south bicycle route for the duration of the construction period for both recreational and commuting cyclists, as well as along the Esplanade for recreational users in Riverside Park. Three plus years is a long time to close and shut off primary routes along the park.

Respectfully yours



Steven Brown, Chair, Community
Board 7/Manhattan



Barbara Adler & Natasha Kazmi
Co-chairs, CB7 Parks & Environment
Committee

cc's, by e-mail:

Ms. Signe Nielsen, President, Public Design Commission of the City of New York
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President
Hon. Helen Rosenthal, NYC Council Member, 6th District
Hon. Gabrielle Fialkoff, NYC DPR Commissioner
William T. Castro, NYC DPR Manhattan Borough Commissioner

Steve Simon, DPR Chief of Staff, Manhattan
Rachel Loeb, President and CEO, NYC EDC
Vincent Sapienza, NYC DEP Commissioner
John Herrold, Administrator, Riverside Park
Margaret Bracken, Landscape Architect, Riverside Park
Dan Garodnick, President and CEO, Riverside Park Conservancy