



16 March 2012  
The New York City Council  
Committee on Waterfronts

Re: 3/16/12 Oversight hearing: Transforming NYC's Waterfront – A One-Year Update on the Waterfront Action Agenda

Dear Chairman Nelson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding this hearing to follow up on the EDC's important Waterfront Action Agenda. My testimony will speak to some general issues as they are the context for a crisis relating to the waterfront themed non-profit PortSide NewYork which I founded and direct.

I urgently ask for your help getting a publicly-accessible berth for PortSide NewYork and our historic ship MARY A. WHALEN. We need a home confirmed by April 30 or we close and the ship will be scrapped.

NYC has already invested in PortSide NewYork. Let's work together to have that investment pay off.

We completed our 2005 business plan a \$50,000 grant from SBS. The plan was for a home on private property which the developer did not make available.

In 2006, PortSide responded to an EDC RFEI for Atlantic Basin in Red Hook, Brooklyn. In 2007, we responded to their RFP for the Basin.

In late 2008, the EDC said PortSide would have a home in Atlantic Basin. We worked closely with the EDC during 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 to create programs in Atlantic Basin and to do a building code review for the interior spaces in the shed that were promised to us. At the end of all that, the EDC said they would have to re-RFP the space.

PortSide now needs an immediate resolution to our real estate situation. The tanker MARY WHALEN is docked in the Red Hook Container Terminal where public programs and revenue-generating uses of the ship are prevented due to Homeland Security regulations limiting access to the port by visitors.

**PortSide NewYork, aboard the tanker MARY A. WHALEN**  
**P.O. Box 195, Red Hook Station, Brooklyn, NY 11231**  
**917-414-0565, [portsidenewyork@gmail.com](mailto:portsidenewyork@gmail.com), [www.portsidenewyork.org](http://www.portsidenewyork.org)**

PortSide knows how to program, knows how and where to raise and earn money and just needs a place to do that. We are confident that we will rebound quickly if we get such a place.

I would like it understood that PortSide's dilemma is part of a larger problem we want you to address: NYC piers are not readily available to historic ships. Please push for early resolution of a 2012 goal of the Mayor's office to create a uniform docking protocol for historic ships on city-owned property in NYC.

PortSide celebrates the accomplishment of Vision 2020, but for its ethos to be executed, we need profound change on the waterfront in both pier design and pier management.

We can provide detailed suggestions; for now, I outline the issues more broadly:

NYC has a trend of not designing piers for boats and ships. The first wave of waterfront revitalization built piers for pedestrians. The city lost many options for ship-based programming and waterborne transportation with that trend. More recently, new piers have been intended for ships but not built with ship-appropriate designs. Some of these can be adapted with easy fixes. Move to promptly adapt those piers.

Shift pier management to more ship-friendly ethos and procedures. This would allow the retrofits I just mentioned.

Move to deploy inactive viable piers immediately. Given the recession, all assets should be deployed ASAP to create activity.

Prioritize water-dependant uses of piers instead of volley ball, mini golf, pilates, trapeze schools.

Promote the harbor and ships better. Currently, the Harbor District website home page has "what's new" as of September 2010 and has not listed non-profit historic vessels, not even the Intrepid or South Street Seaport, on their web pages for "sites" or "access."

Streamline permit procedures. PortSide has spent as long as seven months negotiating a permit for summer programming with the EDC. Seven months of biweekly meetings lasting an hour and a half each. Getting to yes should be faster for all parties.

Convene a working group of pier managers with boat operators to rapidly hammer out new guidelines for pier operations.

In return, the city would get the following benefits: Historic ships offer educational and cultural programming for all ages, they are great staycation material; they can be major tourist attractions and are always anchors and magnets to destinations. They are moveable assets that want to move, so investing in one ship can satisfy many communities and boroughs. No land-based museum can offer that.

Better piers can be used by non-profit AND for-profit ships, so many benefits will flow from more ship-oriented piers.

The Bloomberg administration has done remarkable work making the city friendlier for cyclists. Streets have been reconfigured, maps have been generated, cycling promoted. Let's have that kind of focus on ships.

Please act quickly to help PortSide find a home for the MARY WHALEN. Yesterday, we received an unsolicited email from the Curator of America's Pearl Harbor Memorial, the Battleship Missouri Memorial who wrote "Good luck! You have a beautiful and historic vessel there." NYC should hold the MARY WHALEN in the same regard.

PortSide has identified several piers where we could serve the public and rapidly rebound and would like to discuss those with you and have your support as we negotiate with them.

Thanks for your consideration, and again, thanks for your dedication to New York City's waterfront.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carolina Salguero", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Carolina Salguero  
PortSide NewYork  
Founder & Director