

PortSide NewYork testimony to City Council Waterfronts Committee

December 14, 2017

Re “Investing in the City’s Maritime Industry Workforce.”

Via email

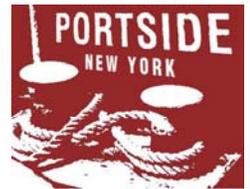
To: Sartori, Kristoffer <KSartori@council.nyc.gov>

Cc: Mulvihill, Patrick <PMulvihill@council.nyc.gov>

PortSide NewYork thanks you for this hearing on an important topic that is very central to our mission and program plans.

At present there is much to be improved. Below are our suggestions for how to better invest in the City’s Maritime Industry Workforce.

- 1. Increase the number of maritime facilities of all types.** If there is more maritime, there are more jobs. NYC was once fluent in the language of maritime, but City leaders have lost that fluency. This is no longer a boat friendly city, and all sectors of maritime activity have strained to grow for many years. This includes cruise ships, tugs and barges, dinner and excursion vessels, historic ships, and recreational boats.
- 2. Make maritime activity more accessible.** If people can see it, they learn there is a job there. Other USA cities and towns find ways to make the working waterfront accessible, even a tourist attraction. NYC has overly segregated its waterfront into “public access” and “working waterfront.” For example, we have been told by senior Parks staff that “a tugboat cannot be in a park” and that “boats block the view” so they cannot be on a number of the new North Brooklyn Parks Department piers. We find both statements ridiculous.
- 3. Change the City’s Department of Education system.** We strongly favor the proposed Harbor School Middle School in Red Hook, Brooklyn; but that is not enough. Even though the Harbor School is fabulous, it only reaches a tiny fraction of the NYC student body, some 400 students a year in a city of over eight million residents. NYC needs more flexibility at all DOE schools so that place-based learning, field trips, etc., become more possible. In our experience, EVERY education program for students of any age from anywhere (including overseas) that has participated in a PortSide NewYork education program is VERY excited about the experience. Those are all schools and programs that have sought us out. However, when we pursue NYC DOE schools to entice them to come to us, even if the teacher(s) are highly interested, it is hard for them to



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fit in a visit to PortSide. There should to be many organizations, distributed all over the city, that offer maritime educational experiences.

Some examples of positive models elsewhere and some solutions:

Examples of accessible maritime activity where public access and working waterfront are combined:

Look at the ship fans and listen to a PA system give info about a huge ship at this link: https://articles.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2017/12/why_the_great_lakes_largest_fr.am

Check out Seattle's Ballard Locks, run by the US Army Corps, one of the city's most popular attractions where ships, boats, and fish pass and interpretation is provided. Real, working infrastructure is positioned as an attraction and educational opportunity. <http://www.myballard.com/ballard-locks-seattle/>

Check out Seattle's "Fishman's Terminal" <http://www.portseattle.org/Commercial-Marine/Fishermens-Terminal/Pages/On-Site-Businesses.aspx> that has workboats (commercial fishing boats) and a recreational marina, a greenmarket, bar, café, restaurant, a boat-share club.

This mixing is a standard MO in New England. There are many examples in Vineyard Haven harbor on Martha's Vineyard where the owner of the famous Black Dog Restaurant also sails tall ships and launches them from a marine railroad that is about 15' from the restaurant.

Read about Portland, Maine and how we compare it favorably to NYC in our blogpost <http://portsidewyork.org/portsidetanke/2014/2/20/red-hook-ferry-enhancement-activating-atlantic-basin-brooklyn-cruise-terminal-ny-rising-crp-discussion>

A way to address 1) and 2) Increase the number of maritime facilities and make maritime facilities more accessible:

A) A powerful solution would be to finally provide a proper home to PortSide New York. PortSide would be the first facility in the city to combine all at one site working waterfront, public access, maritime education for youth and professional mariner training.

PortSide has been trying to get space to create such a facility since our 2005 business plan funded by the Department of Small Business Services.

However, one of the largest impediments to our growth has been the very same NYC EDC cited as a motive for this hearing. We responded to an EDC RFEI and RFP. The EDC then promised PortSide a home from 2008 to 2011 and made many public promises that PortSide was getting that home. In 2011, they reversed themselves without explanation.

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It took significant advocacy by the then-new councilman Carlos Menchaca and other elected officials to get a space for our ship MARY A. WHALEN at the very same location where the EDC promised a home for years. We got this space in May 2015, four years after the EDC reversed themselves. The space provided is a fraction of the originally promised space. We then sought the formerly-promised (and unleased) building space at the same location from August 2015 to no avail until November 2017. We warmly thank the EDC President James Patchett for taking action this November and offering PortSide a framework for getting that building space; but we mention this saga as an example of impediments to solutions.

We add two more specific suggestions for activating the waterfront in a way that allows for multiple uses:

B) Ensure that the EDC's next [DockNYC](#) contract guarantees that the operator has to provide community programming and what PortSide calls "public-access" maritime. Many boats offering public programs have found DockNYC piers challenging to use.

The following language was in the RFP that generated the DockNYC contract, but the operator BillyBey has said that their contract has no obligation to fulfill this:

Apple will view favorably proposals that demonstrate an awareness of the role of the Berthing Sites as an integral part of the surrounding community. As such, Apple will view favorably proposals that include opportunities for community programming, such as: youth outreach programs, special events, educational programming, discounted/free concession services, historic, cultural and educational boats and programs/accommodations for senior citizens and persons with disabilities.

We applaud the language, and would like to see something like in the upcoming RFP, and more importantly, in the final contract.

C) Pressure NYC's waterfront parks to use their piers for maritime uses that support education. There is notable growth in floating oyster bars and restaurants, but very little in the way of new space for larger educational vessels (not human-powered) to operate. In the USA, historic ships are a typical gateway to a maritime career; however, the City's educational historic ship fleet is concentrated in lower Manhattan and Red Hook, Brooklyn with no vessels serving Queens, Staten Island, the Bronx and the rest of Manhattan and Brooklyn. Governor's Island has no public maritime programming. Brooklyn Bridge Park promised historic ships years ago, but only has one historic ship, and it is an upscale, commercial, oyster bar.

One administrative request, please provide attachments or links when you cite a program such as “NY Economic Development Corporation's Maritime Career Propeller initiative.” We do not find this on their website nor any mention of it via Google. We have no idea what this is.

Thanks for your consideration.

Don't hesitate to call or write with follow up questions or comments.

Sincerely,

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

Carolina Salguero
Founder & President
PortSide NewYork