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**Brooklyn Community Board 6  
Economic & Waterfront Development Committee  
Public Meeting About Plans For Atlantic Basin.  
Monday 1/5/09, 6:30pm**

**Presenters at the meeting:  
NYC Economic Development Corporation  
New York Water Taxi  
PortSide NewYork**

**Transcript segments:**

- Part 1 of 4: [Intro and EDC presentation](#)
- Part 2 of 4: [New York Water Taxi presentation](#)
- Part 3 of 4: [PortSide NewYork presentation](#)
- Part 4 of 4: [QnA](#)

**Jeff Strabone:** Hello. Thank you for coming. Happy New Year. I'm Jeff Strabone, Co-Chairman of the Economic and Waterfront Development Committee, and we have three presentations tonight about the waterfront. The first... First we will hear from Venetia Lannon, Senior Vice-President for Maritime at the New York City Economic Development Corporation; and then we'll hear from Tom Fox of New York Water Taxi; and then we'll have a presentation by Carolina Salguero of Portside NewYork. And we're going to hold the questions until after all three presentations, so stick around please. And with that, I'm going to turn the mike over to my Co-Chairman, Greg O'Connell... I'm sorry, can I have a motion from someone on the committee to approve the minutes? Lou makes the motion. Is there a second? Seconded by Marilyn, okay. Any discussion on the motion? Hearing none, I'll call the question. All in favor say "aye." Opposed? Abstentions? Thanks.

**Greg O'Connell:** I just want to say thank you for everyone for coming here tonight. I wish you a peaceful and healthy New Year. It's good to see so many people here today... tonight. I see Elizabeth Lind from the South Brooklyn Neighborhood Alliance; Mike Webster, President of the Columbia Street Waterfront Neighborhood Association. I think John McGettrick mentioned he was co-chair of Red Hook Civic, will be here tonight; and Jeff, who is President of the Cobble Hill Association. In the month of November, City Comptroller Bill Thompson appeared before our community board and

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he spoke how important it was, today especially with our economic climate, about small businesses. But he also mentioned about transparency and about how this administration, and him in particular, are concerned about this transparency. I think that's what this is all about tonight. You know, we've heard many rumors about what's happening along the waterfront and what happened to the original RFP. And I think that's what we're looking to clear up tonight.

I want to thank all of those who are presenting tonight. This is -- I think we will hold off all our questions until all of them have made the presentation. And hopefully this is the beginning of a dialogue. It's so important that the community is here tonight to answer as many questions as they can so we fully understand what is happening along this waterfront. And especially, like I say, with this economic climate, our jobs are so important today. So... would you be so kind?

**Venetia Lannon:** Of course. Thank you so much, Greg. And, again, I'm Venetia Lannon, Senior Vice-President at EDC, where I head up the Maritime Group. And, that's a group that was formed recently, about a year ago, to focus our efforts on developing New York City's working waterfront. In addition to port and rail facilities, we also oversee the city's passenger ferry efforts. So everything to sort of move people and goods by water is in our group. And I'm joined by Andrew Genn. I'm joined by Jessica Pavone; by Michael Taylor; and by Janelle Paterson from EDC. Again, thank you so much for having us. And I agree with Greg. I think transparency is critical. This new proposal that we have for Atlantic Basin, we have been briefing the city's elected officials and we briefed the leadership of Community Board 6, but we heard that this meeting was taking place and asked if we could participate, as we would like to get the word out to as many people as possible about our current thinking on this critical piece of city infrastructure. So, I've been asked to be brief, and I will try to do that. I know there's a lot on the agenda, but I know that people are very interested in what's going on. So we're going to talk just a little bit about how we got here, what our current proposal consists of, where we are in the process, and then I understand that we'll have Q&A at the end of the session.

So... The last time EDC spoke to Community Board 6, I was not lucky enough to be part of those conversations, but I do know that it was in a very different context that we were here. We were here when the city was planning to acquire Piers 7 through 12 from the Port Authority, and we planned to...oops... we planned to pursue a mixed-use development, as many of you know, that would have included some residential, commercial... would have included Phoenix Beverage, who we're going to talk about tonight, on Pier 7. It would have included GIPEC on Piers 9A or 9B. And um... it was in that sort of mixed-use context that EDC issued an RFEI... and then an RFP for a full-service marina in the Atlantic Basin that was potentially to be attached to a hotel on the

uplands. And, again, we came and spoke to all of CB6 back in 2007 about that proposal. As I think everybody is aware, what the defining fact that happened in the intervening time was that the Port Authority board approved a 10-year lease extension with American Stevedoring for the use of Piers 7-10. So that's something that sort of sent us back to the drawing board for Atlantic Basin. As we felt that our plans for a marina for yachts and an upland hotel were no longer really in keeping with the plans for a port in Red Hook. But, I do want to stress is that what we heard from the community at that time was the need for a balanced strategy for whatever we do on... in the Atlantic Basin. One that supported the port. We heard that loud and clear. To be able to move cargo into the city by the water. That was key. That people were interested in seeing the cruise terminals supported. Other maritime uses and public access were all very important things that we heard from the Red Hook community back a couple of years ago, and those are things that have continued to inform the presentation that I'm going to show you now, and inform our current plan, current thinking.

Uh huh... these four points. So this is maybe not the best graphic... I can point to... Although you'll be happy to know we're not spending the taxpayers' money on fancy consultant presentations. We did this ourselves, so...

But what we're talking about, and I'll talk about each of these components in more detail. We're talking about Pier 11, accommodating Phoenix Beverage at Pier 11, as well as a portion of Building 185, which we're also seeking to lease from the Port Authority. We currently lease Piers 11 and 12, as you know, from the Port Authority. We are seeking to make a connection to the Brooklyn Greenway here, and I'll talk more about that... providing public access to Atlantic Basin, as well as what we're calling a "cultural use," and I'll get more into that as well, and associated with a cultural vessel. In addition, in the future, this will be the home of the Governors Island Ferry to Brooklyn, as well as activating the basin with vessel tie up for work boats or ferries.

So, again, I think the overall themes here, and I'm going to go through all of the pieces, but the overall themes are supporting... supporting the port and in keeping with the spirit of a working waterfront in Red Hook... Switch implements here... I just want to, I think you all know about the cruise terminal, but I think it's important to stress that there are a lot of uses that we're trying to fit in at the Atlantic Basin and they all need to be layered on top of an active Brooklyn Cruise Terminal, that welcomed over 3,000... 300,000 passengers in 2008, and employs 250 people, many of those people local, on the 60 cruise days that we experience a year in Brooklyn. So that's sort of the base line of what we're planning from.

To talk about public access... again, we just heard over and over and over again how important public access is to the Red Hook community, to Atlantic Basin. We would like to provide public access in a way that is safe and is coordinated with all the other

activities that we're trying to do here... as I said, that links to the Greenway. We understand that there is a... the current planning for the Greenway would run along Conover Street and then connect to Pioneer Street. We have agreed with Brooklyn Greenway to evaluate that alternative with DOT as well as looking at Van Brunt Street, although we understand Conover is the preferred access. We would like to look at both of those options, in terms of understanding the full safety impacts in terms of, again, you'll see, we're trying to fit in a lot of... of uses here. We envision green space to the south of Pier 11. I mean, obviously this is a gateway to Governors Island with some of the largest green space in the city, and I'll talk about that in a moment.

In terms of what we're talking about: What is "cultural space"? What is cultural vessels? We need to put out an RFP for this use, but I think that the... the spirit and the intention and, quite frankly, a lot of the programming that we think is ideal is really embodied in what PortSide is about, and you're going to hear from Carolina Salguero, after me and after Tom Fox, about the kind of things that Portside is thinking about. But in general, what we're looking to do is we want to bring people to the waterfront in a way that connects to the past of the working waterfront. I mean, I think when we had... you know, we had an event last month where we sort of floated a test balloon to see how this would work and had the Mary Whalen, the tugboat Pegasus, both historic vessels, and thought it was a great way to bring people to the waterfront to learn about Red Hook's past.

But not solely focused on Red Hook's past, also on the present. And looking for programs that make connections with the Harbor School on Governors Island, programs that get people connected to potential internships and jobs on the working waterfront. But also would potentially coordinate excursion boats or other ways that people could get down to the water, onto the water, learn about the water. And all of those uses to be supported with a dedicated area in the upland shed at Building 185. So I think that's... that's what we have in mind in terms of public access and in terms of cultural uses at the Atlantic Basin. Vessel tie-up... We'd really like to see the basin activated with as many boats as possible. We have done a maritime support services study, and through that learned that there is a great demand for tie-up space. Basically what we mean is parking for boats, which is something that is very important in the harbor, both for passenger ferries, recreational ferries, tugs... and that is an RFP that we'll be putting out soon as well.

So, to get to Phoenix, I think many of you know Phoenix Beverage, and the Braymans are here this evening and will be available to answer any questions that you have as well during the Q&A, but Phoenix is one of the largest regional beer distributors in New York City. They are an importer of Heineken, and they also, excuse me, distribute for Brooklyn Brewery. And right now Phoenix Beverage is located in Long Island City, where they have a warehouse distribution facility. So when the ships come from Holland

they go to New Jersey, and then all of those containers are trucked into New York City, to Long Island City. By bringing Phoenix to the waterfront, which has been the goal of many people for a long time, we will bring the ships directly from Europe, or on barges from New Jersey, to Red Hook, eliminating over 20,000 truck trips a year.

Phoenix is really an ideal maritime-dependent user of Red Hook's waterfront. Again, Phoenix has been telling us for a long time that if they don't find a home in New York City, and preferably they want it to be on the waterfront, that they were looking to move out of the city. And that is something that has been of great concern to this administration because Phoenix would employ 500 people in Red Hook. Currently, in their Long Island City facility, I think there are maybe around 600 people, and about 80% of those people are New York City residents. These are high-paying, unionized jobs, largely teamsters, and we have a commitment from Phoenix that, in Red Hook, that they would recruit locally for any jobs lost through the attrition of the move, but also this is a long term lease that we're seeking with Phoenix. 20 years in Red Hook. 20 years of a working waterfront in Red Hook, with jobs for Red Hook related to bringing goods in by water, which, again, is one of our key goals in developing a plan for Red Hook.

So, again, really, there are very few commodities, as some of you may know who know about shipping in New York City, there are very few commodities that want to come directly east of the Hudson. Most commodities come into the ports of New Jersey and then go out into distribution warehouses all throughout New Jersey and get trucked into the city. There are not a lot of commodities that want to come directly into New York, and we want to ensure that those commodities... that we attract them and that they stay here. We see this as a way to anchor the Red Hook container terminal and hopefully grow the Red Hook container terminal with American Stevedoring to find other commodities that may piggyback on Phoenix's ships, whether that's wine and other beverages or specialty foods from Europe, construction materials... We're looking to actively work with ASI and the Port Authority to have this really be the foundation of a strong port in Red Hook. We have a port at the South Brooklyn Marine Terminal. That's important, too. We think both of these facilities are critical to serve the between 7 and 8 million people who live on Long Island. Again, well... what did you say?... okay, I think that's...

And, again, we just want to emphasize that this when we say shovel-ready, it means that is project is ready to go. You know, that there aren't permits or, you know, whether the DEC or Army Corpss or the financing is in place. This is a project that I think is very important, as Greg was saying, in terms of being able to provide jobs instantly. There's not a development timeline with this project. It's something we can do right away. I know that what we have heard over and over again from Red Hook is that trucks are of great concern, and Phoenix, as I say, will receive all of their goods by water. They're very few businesses in New York City that can say that. But they will obviously be

distributing by truck. About a hundred trucks a day will serve the local distribution. We have a commitment from Phoenix in our term sheet that Phoenix will pursue compressed natural gas. They will convert their entire fleet. Here's a picture of a Brooklyn Brewery... that's been flagged with a Brooklyn Brewery logo... that is in the process of being converted, retrofitted to compressed natural gas.

I'll just read, for those of you that can't read, the benefits: 23% less greenhouse gas emissions, this is over conventional diesel; significantly reduced carbon monoxide; 90% reduction in particulate matter; 25-45% reduction in nitrogen oxide emissions; and 25% reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. I think that the Braymans could probably say more articulately than I can their ambitions to be one of the greenest businesses on the Brooklyn waterfront, in terms of cooling their facility, in terms of making it a green building, in terms of making it something that Red Hook could be proud of. But again, we're also going to be holding their feet by the fire, by requiring this of their truck fleet.

Again, another concern that we know has been floating around the community is that these trucks are going to be "wandering through residential streets." That is the farthest thing from the truth. One of the benefits of the container terminal is its ready access to the city's highways – in particular, the BQE. I have here... I'm going to change implements... Here is Pier 11. Trucks will exit directly off of Bowne Street, head down Bowne and get right onto the BQE here, at Hamilton Avenue. So that is the truck route that Phoenix will be required to follow. Again, you know, we know that enforcement is something that it always a concern. We work with DOT in many parts of the city to enforce truck routes, but I want to be very clear that these trucks are not wandering anywhere through Red Hook residential streets. But I don't want to disguise the fact that there are going to be trucks that are going to be distributing beer from this facility... although it will be received by water. Again, the majority of the truck moves occur in the early morning, before the rush hour, which is something that we also think is important.

So this is where we are, we have a signed term sheet with Phoenix which lays out everything that we'd like to see in this deal, and that they have agreed to, but we still need to negotiate a full lease, which we're anticipating doing by March of 2009. We will be releasing an RFP for... be releasing an RFP for the vessel tie-up in February of 2009 as long as... as well as an RFP for the cultural vessel and cultural uses that I discussed. That is the end of my presentation, but I look forward to answering your questions at the end. Thanks.

**Jeff Strabone:** Now we're ready for Tom Fox from New York Water Taxi.