



CITY OF NEW YORK

**MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD No. 4**

330 West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, 26<sup>th</sup> floor New York, NY 10036  
tel: 212-736-4536 fax: 212-947-9512  
www.ManhattanCB4.org

**J. LEE COMPTON**  
Chair

**ROBERT J. BENFATTO, JR., ESQ.**  
District Manager

October 6, 2006

Louis Oliva, Acting Regional Director, NYC  
New York State Department of Environmental Conservation  
Region 2 Headquarters  
47-40 22<sup>nd</sup> Street  
Long Island City, NY 11101

**Re: Pier 63 Maritime (Lackawanna Railroad Barge) at Pier 66A: Kayaking**  
**Application ID: 2-6205-01687/00001**

Dear Mr. Oliva,

As you are aware, Pier 63 Maritime, a former railroad car-float transformed into a waterfront access site, is a very popular center for historic ships, park visitors, neighborhood residents, commercial and recreational boaters, maritime enthusiasts, and, as was amply demonstrated to Manhattan Community Board No 4 (CB4) at a recent meeting of its Waterfront & Parks Committee, a very large and active community of kayakers.

Approximately three years ago, Pier 63 Maritime (P63M) came before CB4 to seek its endorsement of a plan to move the barge to Pier 66A, a partially restored railroad float bridge, when its lease from its landlord at the time, Basketball City, was terminated as stipulated by the Hudson River Park Act. The plan was approved by CB4 concept.

Subsequently the owners of Pier 63 Maritime began discussions with both the Hudson River Park Trust (HRPT, its new landlord to be) and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with regard to this move, slated to occur in the coming months. It is our understanding that these discussions have resulted in a pending permit from DEC and a draft lease, still in negotiation, from HRPT.

At the last meeting of the Waterfront & Parks Committee, several issues related to this move were discussed in detail, in particular (and the subject of this letter) the status of kayaking at the barge after it moves to its new location.

According to Manhattan Kayak, a subtenant of Pier 634 Maritime, as well as numerous independent kayakers, approximately 150 to 170 kayaks and canoes are currently stored in and/or launch from Pier 63 Maritime. The majority are stored below the deck of the barge with the remainder on adjacent floats – none are stored above deck. These boats are divided between Manhattan Kayak's own training and tour boats, a kayak water polo club, New York Outrigger and independent privately owned kayaks, the latter being the largest contingent by number (over 100).

It is our understanding that the DEC permit as currently proposed, does not allow either the storage of or the launching of kayaks or other human powered boats from P63M once it moves to its new location at Pier 66A. We also understand the reasons for this prohibition may come from one or more of the following reasoning's:

1. That there will be a boathouse and hand-powered boat launch immediately north of Pier 66A (at Pier 66) that will be sufficient to handle the current and/or anticipated activity of this nature,
2. That P63M will be host to motorized vessels as permitted (historic vessels, commercial excursion boats and water taxis) and will, thus be unsafe for kayaks, and/or
3. That P63M at Pier 66A will lie within a "motorboat zone" as defined by the Trust's Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan, and therefore human powered boats are not permitted at this location under the plan.

The kayaking community has demonstrated to us that the first reasoning (capacity of the planned boathouse at Pier 66) is not valid based on the numbers presented – up to 170 in the current situation compared to a capacity of about 55 (according to the kayakers) in the new boathouse – leaving over 100 without a place to launch or store kayaks. It further appears that other kayak facilities in Hudson River Park are not capable of absorbing this overflow. It is also evident that this activity seems to be growing in Hudson River Park as well as other locations.

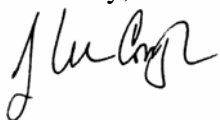
As for the second reasoning, the kayaking community has stated that combined kayaking and motorized boating has taken place at Pier 63 Maritime safely and without incident for many years, as well as at other locations such as Pier 40 (also within Hudson River Park), the 79<sup>th</sup> Street Boat Basin and many other locations in the city, state and the US.

As to whether the interpretation of the Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan prohibits kayaking within motorized boating areas, we have no opinion. However, the owner of the P63M has agreed to keep motorized vessels away from the north side of the barge, paving the way for the Trust to re-designate that area for human-powered vessels if necessary. If such a change is needed and if all parties can agree to such a solution, CB4 sees no reason to object.

In summary, it appears that a definite need exists to accommodate both kayak storage and launching at P63M as well as the adjacent boathouse at Pier 66, and that there is no particular danger in allowing this to occur. Assuming that such activities are in accord with either the current or potentially revised Estuarine Sanctuary Management Plan to the satisfaction of DEC, the Trust, the kayakers and the owner of P63M, and based on our knowledge of the situation, CB4 urges DEC to allow the kayaking and human powered boating activities (storage and launching) to continue at the new location as they have for many years at its current location.

This letter was passed unanimously at the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of Manhattan Community Board No 4.

Sincerely,



J. Lee Compton  
Chair  
Community Board 4



John Doswell  
Co-Chair  
Waterfronts and Parks

Kristin Dionne  
Co-Chair  
Waterfronts and Parks

cc: Steve Kahn, Regional 2, NYC  
Connie & Noreen - HRPT,  
John Krevey - P63M  
Pier 63 North River, NYC NY 10011  
Manhattan Kayak  
Michael Cook - Concerned Sea Kayakers in Hudson River Park  
2373 Broadway, NYC NY 10024  
Carter Craft - MWA  
Electeds