



**MEETING NOTES  
CENTRAL WATERFRONT COMMITTEE  
LONG TERM STEWARDSHIP SUBCOMMITTEE**

**MEETING #6 November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011  
3:30 — 5:00 PM Room #1600, Seattle Municipal Tower**

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**Meeting Attendees**

*Subcommittee Members & Advisors*

- Carol Binder, Co-Chair
- Bob Davidson, Co-Chair
- Rollin Fatland
- Derek Mason
- Thatcher Bailey

*City Staff & Consultants*

- Nathan Torgelson
- Steve Pearce
- Bob Chandler
- David Graves
- Norm Schwab
- Jennifer Wieland
- Ken Johnsen

*Other Central Waterfront Committee Members*

- Maggie Walker

*Additional Attendees*

- Connie Fishman—*via phone*
  - Felicia Nitu
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**Conference Call with Connie Fishman, Former Executive Director of Hudson River Park Trust**

- **City Staff:**
  - Connie Fishman, former Executive Director of the Hudson River Park Trust, is joining us today to share more information about the Hudson River Park, which has many similarities to the Waterfront.
- **Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee Guest (C. Fishman, Former Executive Director, Hudson River Park Trust):**
  - In terms of background on the project:

- The Hudson River Park is the offspring of the failed transportation project called Westway;
- It used to be an elevated highway separated from the waterfront;
- The highway began to collapse and was to be replaced with highway under the river;
- However, after 20 years of disputes, that was determined to be detrimental to marine resources;
- And so an open space was created as a follow-up.
- An at-grade boulevard style road was designed to replace the elevated highway;
- It was decided that, from the road to the end of the piers, would belong to the park;
- It took three years for the bill to pass;
- It was then agreed 13 piers would be rebuilt with varying degrees of green and open space activities;
- All water between piers also belonged to the park and was designated as marine sanctuary.
- In terms of the Friends of Hudson River Park group:
  - The Friends of Hudson River Park” is an offshoot of an environmental group;
  - It started as an advocacy group comprised of about 40 environmental groups;
  - The advocacy group transformed over the past ten years and is now focused on fundraising;
  - The Hudson River Park Trust board is politically appointed; some Friends representatives will be on it.
  - It took about three years to make that transition.
- In terms of usage:
  - The park is a lot more active than most City parks;
  - Being on the water makes the property more attractive to many uses;
  - There is a bikeway, jogging path, organized sports, recreational fields and courts of all kinds.
  - There is always a lot of push and pull in terms of active and passive activities.
  - In terms of usage, I estimate at least three-quarters are coming from nearby neighborhoods;
  - It also captures a huge number of neighbors from the center of Manhattan to the west.
  - One of the most successful features is the bikeway, which connects around Manhattan and Brooklyn.
  - The Trust’s initial view of the park was it should be a beautiful place to read a book or watch fish;
  - The rest of the New York wanted things to do, and it turned into about half of each;
  - We also had to figure out needs of the groups underrepresented in the planning process;
  - This included things for kids, pets and users from all over Manhattan, not just the West side;
  - Our local legislative rep also pushed on what open space could be covered by concession buildings.
- In terms of operation and maintenance:
  - The Hudson River Park Trust was created in partnership with the City and State;
  - The legislation then diverted leases formerly paid to the City or State directly to the Trust;
  - It also said all money generated in the park had to stay in the park, such as parking and concessions.
  - The operating budget is approximately \$16 million per year;
  - Approximately 40 percent of revenues comes from the parking pier;
  - The next highest rent paid is then from Chelsea Piers, and there are many smaller users;
  - Our most successful events for revenue have been fashion/art shows, concerts and food festivals;
  - During the summer we have outdoor movies, concerts, dances and sporting events that are free;
  - The park is roughly 75 percent built and some uses occupying properties still have to be removed.
  - There is no ongoing dedicated public revenue stream;
  - At whatever point in the future it is 100 percent complete, there will be an operations shortfall;
  - This will be in the range of \$4-5 million per year.
  - We discovered that it’s difficult to get funding for operations and capital maintenance;
  - The Trust and its new Friends group is going to start fundraising to make up the gap.
  - One thing they’re considering is trying to develop a Parking Improvement District;
  - That would levy a nominal amount of tax assessments on property taxes 2-3 blocks adjacent to the park.
  - However, the City has to approve, including the Mayor and City Council.
  - The park physically changed the West side of Manhattan, but we haven’t captured any economic increase;

- Developers who benefited from the development were uninvolved;
  - This is partly because the project was discussed for decades and we were unsure if it would happen.
- In comparison to the other parks in New York:
  - The Highline started from a Committee advocating for it;
  - We have a different history and politics, with years fighting for a park to come into existence.
  - The Brooklyn Bridge Park will be slightly better off for operations and maintenance;
  - They have opportunities to capture revenues generated by residential development, which we don't.
- In terms of expertise around maintenance and operations:
  - The person who headed our design and construction department was experienced in parks maintenance;
  - He was relentless in his pursuit in getting designers to design things that could be taken care of;
  - There was a lot of push to incorporate certain elements or leave out things seen as too fragile;
  - The park was broken into mile-long sections and we tried to standardize elements for each designer;
  - We also spent a lot of time trying to plant things that wouldn't require intensive annual maintenance.
- **Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
  - Other than a potential roller-skating rink, are we generating any revenue in public spaces? The kiosks at each of the streets could be retail-focused, although it seems revenue will be minimal.
- **City Staff:**
  - The areas under the folds, off of the Aquarium Plaza and the spaces at Pier 48 could perhaps be revenue generating, however, there is a lot of debate about appropriate uses for parks.
  - The Hudson River Park is located in an extremely dense neighborhood without a lot of other options for recreation, which creates a somewhat different situation.
  - In visiting the park, I was struck by how many uses there were, including some active with beaches, volleyball and playgrounds balanced by passive, quite and peaceful parks.
- **Consultant:**
  - It's interesting that not just the city stepped in but also that it was viewed as a state investment; we don't currently have parking, but perhaps there is a way to do so.
- **Additional Committee Members:**
  - A Metropolitan Parks District allows us to capture a broad basis of funding for maintenance and operations, and that is something the Waterfront project might fall into.
  - Philosophically, there is no history in Seattle of having revenue-producing activities on parkland; we need to think about whether to call this a park, a center or a district.

### **Work Plan Discussion & Interface with Design, Other Subcommittees**

\*Committee reviewed and referenced documents including: *DRAFT Work Plan Central Waterfront Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee*.

- **City Staff:**
  - The Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee will need to begin considering how to work together on certain elements with the Design Oversight Subcommittee and Finance & Partnerships Subcommittee.
  - One thing that will be helpful is to have a joint meeting in January and again when C. Damon comes to Seattle; JCFO will be in town in January, as well, and we may have joint meetings then.

## Update on Strategic Plan & Funding Plan

- **City Staff:**
  - This Subcommittee will also need to begin thinking about the strategic plan; we'll be talking to consultant firms, including C. Damon from HR&A Associates, to help begin drafting our contribution.
- **Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
  - There is a whole series of threads that need to be brought into tighter focus and crystalized so that we can create a series of recommendations from the purview of our Subcommittee.
  - We need to talk concretely about what type of information we provide, perhaps something like a toolbox of potential financing possibilities, as well as bookend estimates based on phasing?
- **City Staff:**
  - We may also want to think about consistent cost per square foot or acre, as opposed to a number.
- **Consultants:**
  - C. Damon will likely be coming to Seattle in March and, while we don't yet know how everything will develop and what the partners will do, she will bring examples of organizational structures.
  - We'll also want to consider how we talk about both capital and operations and maintenance on a phased basis.

## Recap of October 27<sup>th</sup> Event & Other Programming Opportunities

- **City Staff:**
  - Does the Subcommittee have any feedback on JCFO's latest presentation or thoughts to share with the Design Oversight Subcommittee?
- **Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
  - If we include a pool, perhaps it could be in partnership with an organization so they would be responsible for the operations and maintenance? Alternatively, we could have different departments, and then we'd be a broker with other entities.

## Additional Items

- **Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee Co-Chairs, Members & Advisors:**
  - Derek Mason, who is here with us today, is joining the Long Term Stewardship Subcommittee as an advisor.