

REPORT ON FIRST OUTER HARBOR PUBLIC MEETING

Buffalo Riverworks 9/28/2016

Prepared by Concerned Citizens for the Outer Harbor

On Wednesday, September 28, 2016, over 200 people gathered to have a public conversation about the Outer Harbor. The meeting was held at Buffalo Riverworks on the Buffalo River and was a combination of presentations, open mike, and wall board for comments. The crowd was enthusiastic and eager to share ideas for a vision of a shared and public waterfront and also state complaints at being shut out of the process of determining the future of the Lake Erie Shoreline.

The coalition, OUR OUTER HARBOR campaign, hosted the meeting with support from the Western New York Environmental Alliance and Riverworks, and the volunteer efforts of many organizations.

We met in a large open space at Riverworks with exhibitions of proposals prepared by various organizations. The program was introduced by Jay Burney, President of the Times Beach Nature Preserve who showed a beautiful short video of the rich natural resources of the proposed Bell Slip Preserve. There were also presentations by Tim Tielman from the Campaign for Buffalo, Joanne Kahn from the 21st Century Park on the Outer Harbor; Jim Carr on the Terminal buildings, and Lynda Schneekloth from the WNY Environmental Alliance.

The Campaign had developed a list of questions to be asked of any proposed project or intervention for review by the group, and this list has been modified based on the comments of the meeting.

DRAFT

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ANY VISION OR PROJECT BEING PROPOSED

Revised 10/1/16

1. *Is it truly public or does it exclude some publics?*
2. *Is it water based and/or dependent? Would it be better in a different location?*
3. *Does it protect and expand natural environments, and provide habitat for other species?*
4. *Does it divert urban development and financial resources from the city proper? Avoid sprawl? Avoid creating a second city on the Outer Harbor?*
5. *Does it meet the policies as outlined in the City's LWRP?*
6. *Does it promote a healthy city? Does it encourage physical activity, provide access to natural world, protect from exposure to environmental hazards such as severe weather and contamination?*
7. *Was the decision to proceed based on a transparent and democratic process that includes public input?*
8. *Is this in keeping with the people's vision of the Outer Harbor public lands?*
9. *Is this the "new Buffalo" type of sustainable development? Does this increased community wealth and protect our natural and preserve our shared cultural assets?*

We left with a call to action to all who care about the future of Our Outer Harbor: sign the online petition at www.ourouterarbor.org, write to your local officials or send a letter to the editor. Here is the message:

1. Public lands on the Outer Harbor need to remain in public ownership. Protect this land for future generations.
2. All planning processes need to be transparent and give ample opportunity for the general public to participate.
3. Ask your elected official for their position.

(NOTE: All comments from members of the public were recorded and transcribed and a summary of comments is below. Anyone interested in seeing the pages of transcription are invited to do so on the website.)

Stay Tuned For Information On Next Public Meeting

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SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

OUTER HARBOR PUBLIC MEETING

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General:

- Over 200 people attended.
 - Had public input via open mic, comment cards and writing on the wall
 - Comments summarized below in 5 categories, beginning with the most recommendations
1. **Keep and improve the Outer Harbor as a natural, green space open to the public: (107)**
 - We have something unique: Fantastic sunsets. Opportunities for city kids to learn about conservation/restoration. Waterfront wilderness. Marine preserve. Climate change buffer.
 - Keep it green, keep it wild. Buffalo has plenty of pavement and building space.
 - Soften shoreline. Let people enjoy the water. Seats. Picnic tables. Restaurants. Bike rentals.
 - No mountain bikes.
 - Open space for everyone.
 - No stadium.
 - Keep it simple. It's our waterfront.
 - Limit development to 10%: to private lands (Terminals A and B, Freezer Queen), and to venues that support public needs: coffee shop, farmers market, bakery, bar. Restrooms.
 - Look at Chicago/Navy Pier for ideas. Make Buffalo's waterfront the best.
 - In times of climate change, use Outer Harbor as a buffer for the city.

2. Proposed activities: (51)

- Promote industrial heritage. (Terminals A, B, FQ, grain elevators)
- Solar/wind carousel
- Indoor beach. Splash park. Ground fountains kids can run through.
- Multi use trails—all seasons.
- Need wind surfing access—no wind shadow
- Affordable boating for regular people
- Snow Castle / igloos to rent similar to Lapland/Finland.
- Weather museum. Community center.
- Tielman's plan is a great start.

3. Transportation: (23)

- Connect public transit – accessibility a problem especially for the 1/3 of our city who do not have access to a car
- Find carbon neutral forms of transportation such as the gondola and electric buses to the waterfront.
- Ferry wait too long.
- Embrace/improve Skyway (7) Take Skyway down (2)
- Improve access to north end: Rebuild Michigan Ave Bridge.

4. Housing Development: (23)

- No condos or other housing: not enough services. Winters too tough. (22)
- Buckheit complex is good for the Outer Harbor: More taxes; cleans up ugly FQ site (1)

5. Process (10)

- Need a Comprehensive Plan for entire waterfront. Need more public meetings for input.
- Need local electeds and ECHDC to participate in this campaign.
- Reform the ECHDC along lines of (public aspects) of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corp.
- No public tax breaks or subsidies for private development.
- Need full EIS for major proposed changes.
- The Outer Harbor lands are not the private playground of any entity whether ECHDC or any non-profit. They are a shared public space and required a shared public conversation to determine visions and actions.
- The Outer harbor should aspire to keeping costs down. Region and city should share public costs.