

URBAN WATERFRONT ACTION GROUP

September 18, 2002

MINUTES

Attendees

Duckboat Tours

Joe Brooks	Penn's Landing	JB@pennslandingcorp.com
Chris Dailey	Pennoni Assoc.	cdailey@pennoni.com
Chris Squazzo	Pennoni Assoc.	csquazzo@pennoni.com
Michael Gaier	Ride the Ducks	sjosel@aol.com
John E. Walker	Ride the Ducks	jwalker@ridetheducks.com
Bob McDowell	Ride the Ducks	mac@ridetheducks.com
Michael Kovach	Ride the Ducks	kovach@discoverychannelducks.com
Kenneth R. Anderson	PADEP SERO	kanderson@state.pa.us
Domenic Rocco	PADEP SERO	drocco@state.pa.us
Zahra Nucci	PADEP SERO	znucci@state.pa.us
Bill Jenkins	Corps of Engineers	william.h.jenkins@nap02.usace.army.mil
Larry Toth	PADEP – CZM	latoth@state.pa.us
Chris Linn	DVRPC	clinn@dvrpc.org

1. The meeting began at 10:10 a.m.

Pier 28

2. Chris Linn of DVRPC chaired the meeting. Members of the UWAG committee and the applicants introduced themselves.
3. Mr. McDowell of Ride the Ducks (RTD) described the overall operations of RTD. RTD operates in Seattle, Boston and Branson. They have had a quarter of a million successful launches in Branson alone. Mr. McDowell stated that Duckboat tours would be conducive to promoting Penn's Landing.

Mr. McDowell described the ingress and egress ramps that would be required to facilitate the tours. He said that the egress ramp can be steeper than the ingress ramp.

4. Mr. Brooks emphasized Penn's Landing's desire to have an attraction like Duckboat tours on the waterfront. He stated that RTD is the best operator and that Pennoni Associates was a top notch firm.
5. Mr. McDowell stated that they would prefer a fixed ramp system that has no moving parts. He remarked that one option for the ramps was to put in aggregate fill and cap it with concrete. He described the location of the ramps: one ramp at the foot of the Moshulu and one at Pier 11 under the Ben Franklin Bridge.
6. Mr. Toth asked why two ramps were needed.

Mr. McDowell responded that the boats were slow and that they preferred to travel with the current. In addition, 2 ramps prevent boat operators from shortcutting the tour, they would maximize RTD's ability to showcase Penn's Landing and they would enable the tours to continue even if one of the ramps required maintenance.

7. Mr. Toth asked if the ramps were to be constructed on solid fill or pilings

Mr. McDowell replied that they both fill and pilings were viable options. RTD used fill in Baltimore.

8. Mr. Jenkins asked RTD if they could use an open deck structure, such as corrugated steel. Mr. McDowell stated that they would rather not use corrugated steel because their vehicles weigh 25,000 lbs.
9. Mr. Jenkins inquired as to the water depth at the location of the ramps.

Mr. McDowell said that the water level at the Moshulu is about 15 feet.

Mr. Jenkins said that the important depth to consider was 10 feet, because aquatic vegetation doesn't grow below 10 feet in the Delaware River.

10. Mr. Anderson asked if RTD used aggregate fill when constructing ramps in other tidal situations. Mr. McDowell said that all of RTD's ramps are aggregate fill.

Mr. Anderson remarked that tide and current change all the time in the Delaware River and that the current would therefore not be such an important issue when it came to the need for two ramps.

Mr. McDowell stated that a loop route (i.e., one ramp) damages the perception of the tour. The customer does not feel like they are going anywhere and that they are wasting their time. Having two ramps is absolutely critical to the success of the operation.

Mr. Anderson asked if RTD had considered current and sheltering when selecting ramp locations. Mr. McDowell responded affirmatively. Mr. Anderson then asked if they had considered cutting into the bulkhead. Mr. McDowell said that they had considered it and concluded that it was an option for the Moshulu ramp but not for the B.F. Bridge ramp because of the proximity of a pedestrian path.

11. Mr. Anderson stated that DEP considers construction costs, logistics and technical issues when examining different project alternatives, and that this is taken into consideration when permits are issued.

12. Mr. McDowell remarked that RTD was optimistic that the use of pilings would be a viable alternative for ramp construction.

In the case of fill, Mr. Rocco asked if RTD would put aggregate right on the river bottom. Mr. McDowell said that they would and that it was not easy because aggregate fill displaces a lot of silt.

13. Mr. Anderson suggested RTD perform a PNDI search, because pile driving might have an impact on endangered species. In particular, Mr. Anderson expressed concern over the potential presence of Bog(?) Turtles in the general vicinity.
14. Mr. Toth asked if the ramps would be anchored into the bulkhead. Mr. McDowell indicated that that is what they had hoped and that they would use the existing bulkhead. Mr. Toth inquired whether or not 14 feet was sufficient width for the ramps. Mr. McDowell responded that it was sufficient for the ingress ramp, but 16 feet may be required for the egress ramp.
15. Mr. Jenkins remarked that justifying the need for two ramps will be a big issue in the application.

16. Mr. Toth inquired if they had considered having a ramp in NJ. Mr. McDowell stated they had, but that the NJ shoreline was too far and that they preferred to stay close to the shore and out of the shipping lanes, exiting the river near the Moshulu.
17. Mr. Anderson asked if RTD could lease the area under the B.F. Bridge. Mr. Brooks thought so and said that their lawyer, Dilworth, was working on it and would acquire the necessary documentation.
18. Mr. Gaier asked if the tide overrides the current. Mr. Anderson said that it does and that the shifting nature of the tide could be a logistical constraint that justifies the need for two ramps.
19. Mr. Toth asked if RTD had talked to the city about using the Ducks on city streets. Mr. McDowell responded affirmatively and said that the eight foot wide Ducks should not pose any problems.
20. Mr. Anderson told RTD to meet with the Philadelphia Water Department to investigate the location of sewer outfalls.
21. Mr. Rocco commented that permitting at Penn's Landing was often administratively complex because of the large number of past permits on file. He suggested that Penn's Landing obtain one big permit for all of their activities that shows everything on site, because, currently, there are too many separate permits. Mr. Anderson added that DEP needs one authorization for all of Penn's Landing so they know which permit to amend. Currently, DEP does not know which permit to amend.

Mr. Anderson remarked that no matter what kind of permit application was submitted, DEP has a permit review period of 120 days.
22. Mr. McDowell inquired as to the timing of the shad run. Mr. Anderson replied that it starts around March 15 and should be past Penn's Landing by the end of April.
23. Mr. Toth said he would locate the documentation that gave Philadelphia control over the Penn's Landing site.
24. Mr. Anderson stated that application should be submitted to the state in triplicate and to Larry Toth. DEP will make a completeness review in 120 days and will inform the applicant if anything is missing. Mr. Anderson added that they also have a 60 day technical review period and that they must issue their permit before the Corps can issue a permit, which may take a couple of weeks.
25. Mr. Toth asked if anyone had talked to the Coast Guard. Mr. Squazzo said that they had not, but they planned to talk to the Virginia office.
26. The meeting adjourned at 11:45.

