



CITY OF NEW YORK  
**Community Board No. 2**

350 JAY STREET - 8TH FL.

BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11201

(718) 596-5410 FAX (718) 852-1461  
cb2k@nyc.rr.com

MARTY MARKOWITZ  
*Borough President*

JOHN DEW  
*Chairperson*  
ROBERT PERRIS  
*District Manager*

April 15, 2011

Ron Golem, Principal  
Bay Area Economics  
121 West 27th Street, Suite 705  
New York, New York 10001

*by e-mail: bbptestimony@bae1.com*

Dear Mr. Golem:

I am writing to submit the formal comments of Community Board 2 on the draft report, "Study of Alternatives to Housing for the Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations." The community board voted 22 in favor, one opposed, five abstentions (22-1-5) on April 13, 2011 to submit this letter as its testimony, which I request be entered into the record.

Community Board 2 disagrees with the determination of the Committee on Alternatives to Housing that the use of Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements to capture tax revenues from future tax-paying owners of certain currently tax-exempt Watchtower Society properties does not satisfy the study threshold parameters because the agreements would displace monies the City would normally receive.

The community board believes the monies displaced under this scenario are conceptually comparable to the PILOTs currently proposed to be received from development on the perimeter of the park. The Watchtower property scheme is scalable as necessary to ensure financial comparability and Community Board 2 requests the Committee on Alternatives to Housing authorize Bay Area Economics to study this alternative further.

Mr. John Dew, chairperson of Community Board 2, also serves as the co-chair of the park's community advisory committee. To avoid any appearance of conflict of interest, Mr. Dew recused himself from voting on this matter at both the executive committee and on April 13. He also asked that I sign this letter. As requested, the letter has been transmitted via e-mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Lene Singletary  
Second Vice Chairperson

cc: (see following page)

Ron Golem, Principal  
Bay Area Economics  
April 15, 2011  
Page 2

cc: Hon. Marty Markowitz  
Brooklyn Borough President  
Hon. Daniel Squadron  
New York State Senate  
Hon. Joan Millman  
New York State Assembly  
Hon. Stephen Levin  
New York City Council  
Robert K. Steel, Chair  
Regina Myer, President  
Brooklyn Bridge Park Corp.

JD:RP



# THE CITY OF NEW YORK COMMUNITY BOARD SIX

**Marty Markowitz**  
Borough President

**Daniel M. Kummer**  
Chairperson

**Craig Hammerman**  
District Manager

April 14, 2011

Ron Golem, Principal  
Bay Area Economics  
121 West 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 705  
New York, New York 10001

Dear Mr. Golem:

I am writing to advise you that at its April 13, 2011 general meeting Brooklyn Community Board 6 resolved by a vote of 31 in favor, 2 against, with no abstentions, to support the submission of the following statement as our testimony in response to Bay Area Economics' (BAE) draft report prepared for the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation's Committee for Alternatives to Housing (CAH) entitled, "Study of Alternatives to Housing for the Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations."

Brooklyn Community Board 6 (CB6) truly appreciated the presentation to our Executive Committee on April 11, 2011 by representatives of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, as it gave us, and those in attendance, a much deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to the revenue potential for the park.

Brooklyn CB6 commends the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the Committee on Alternatives to Housing and BAE for finding many ways to pay for the park without the need for more housing, in keeping with our long-standing position against housing inside this park.

The BAE draft report has already identified millions of dollars in potential revenue that has the potential, at a minimum, to drastically reduce the need for housing revenue to sustain the ongoing operations of the park.

Brooklyn CB6 believes that the CAH could go further than it has in identifying revenue. Specifically, as originally proposed, BAE should analyze the potential revenue opportunities involving the currently tax-exempt Watchtower Society properties. We call on the CAH to reconsider its finding that this revenue source does not meet the study threshold parameters and to consider a fuller range of other revenue opportunities relating to these properties.

**250 Baltic Street • Brooklyn, New York 11201-6401 • [www.BrooklynCB6.org](http://www.BrooklynCB6.org)  
t: (718) 643-3027 • f: (718) 624-8410 • e: [info@BrooklynCB6.org](mailto:info@BrooklynCB6.org)**

Brooklyn CB6 believes that the CAH should also reconsider and study further the fundraising and sponsorship opportunities for alternative funding, since they have both been proven, effective strategies for other major urban park-centered organizations like the Prospect Park Alliance and the Central Park Conservancy.

Brooklyn CB6 also believes that the CAH should investigate design and/or engineering changes, working within the parameters of the approved General Project Plan, which could substantially reduce operating expenses. As with the Watchtower properties, we call on the CAH to reconsider its finding that exploring those opportunities for expense reduction does not meet the study threshold parameters.

Lastly, Brooklyn CB6 believes that until such time as the alternative sources of revenue (without housing), including those additional unstudied sources noted above, are sufficient to fund the operating costs of the park, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation and the City should fund the shortfall. Such a subsidy would be particularly justified by the fact that this unique location's characteristics have already contributed to a vibrant synergy between the park, its surrounding neighborhoods, the waterfront and New York Harbor. Brooklyn CB6 strongly believes that this park will eventually become one of the City's premier destinations, and therefore merits such support.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Daniel M. Kummer  
Chairperson

cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg  
Hon. Marty Markowitz  
Hon. Daniel Squadron  
Hon. Joan Millman  
Hon. Steven Levin  
Hon. Brad Lander  
Robert K. Steel, Chairperson, BBPC  
Regina Myer, President, BBPC  
John Dew, Chairperson, Brooklyn CB2

250 Baltic Street • Brooklyn, New York 11201-6401 • [www.BrooklynCB6.org](http://www.BrooklynCB6.org)  
t: (718) 643-3027 • f: (718) 624-8410 • e: [info@BrooklynCB6.org](mailto:info@BrooklynCB6.org)

POST OFFICE BOX 020583 BROOKLYN, N.Y. 11202-0583



April 25, 2011

Ron Golem, Principal  
Bay Area Economics  
121 West 27th Street, Suite 705  
New York, New York 10001

The BHA board welcomes and applauds the progress at Piers 1 and 6. Brooklyn Bridge Park is already on its way to becoming the world-class destination we envisioned. We are excited about the future construction of the long awaited park and want the process to continue.

However, the BHA is concerned that the potential annual revenues outlined in the BAE report are not sufficient to adequately support the annual operating budget needs which are further complicated by our desire to diminish or eliminate housing in the park. Therefore we would like to see further study in several areas.

First and foremost, we ask for an analysis of the inclusion of the Watchtower properties to fund annual Park maintenance. These buildings create opportunities that the consultant was not asked to consider, however they should not be ignored. We ask the CAH to reconsider the study of these properties as part of a broader plan that envisions and encompasses these buildings into the waterfront of Brooklyn. This opportunity should not be overlooked.

Although the PID tax zone may be a very dubious concept in this economy, the boundaries were defined in a way that severely limited the zone's feasibility. A larger study area would reduce the tax burden and spread the cost's to more residents of eventual users. We suggest another look at this zone through the use of a phone survey in a broader area than outlined in the current BAE report.

We also suggest further study of sponsorship revenue by looking at Chicago's Millennium Park or other similar parks to see if significant annual funding can be

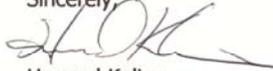
SERVING THE HISTORIC BROOKLYN NEIGHBORHOOD BOUNDED BY  
COURT STREET AND FOURTH AVENUE, FROM WARREN TO SCHERMERHORN STREETS

identified. There may be ways to secure sponsorships that integrate rather than distract from the park plan.

Since the Tobacco Warehouse has been designated for use by St. Ann's Warehouse, we ask if there is another site that can accommodate private event use on a regular basis. This is one change we would consider if the demand yielded significant and consistent revenue.

Lastly, the BHA asks that user fees be set at rates comparable to other city parks so that the park is accessible to all. This should be a very important part of the park plan in perpetuity.

Sincerely,



Howard Kolins  
President

To the B.A.E. Team,

Please concentrate on the opportunity that Brooklyn Bridge Park has to offer New York...the world...and all those who have visited, and who will continue to come from far away places.

What will they expect to see when they arrive?

The great harbor? YES.

The Statue of Liberty? YES.

The wonderfully unique view that this park has to offer of Manhattan and the near rebirth of our downtown skyline? YES.

A glassy high rise in the park? NO.

Large, tall, glassy new structures should not be permitted in this park...even if they might help fund the park itself.

There is an existing condo structure, of which I am a resident, that is unique as it has provenance...it was here before there was a park.

It's very structure is relative to the industrial history in commerce that once took place on the piers.

I think you can see by the (I'd guess Guinness World Book) long lines for pizza at Grimaldi's; or, the droves of people that arrive here for ice cream; and the bus drop-offs for touristic photos of the bridge and city skyline, that this is one of the most unique places on in New York...in the world.

I can't even imagine how many more people will come here once Jane's Carousel opens!

For people to come all this way and see a 20 or 30 story building...well, they may as well be in Manhattan, or downtown Brooklyn!

There is of course, money to consider.

We see today that the High Line Park has had a tumultuous affect to the traffic and commerce of Chelsea and the West Side of Manhattan...once the Hudson Rail Yards are developed, the High Line will become a separate 'downtown'.

Imagine when Brooklyn Bridge Park comes to fruition, how this park will fuel even greater commerce prospects.

Why not a grand hall, open to the harbor, for entertainment, charity events, and Hollywood premieres that would rival the anything Manhattan had to offer?

Why not a rock climbing facility that makes you feel like you're scaling Manhattan over it's water's edge?

We have seen how the summer movies, how the water events, how the pure spectacle have drawn people here...let it be about the experience and not more development.

We know that there are large blocks of property that the Jehovah's Witnesses will be selling off...how perfect that those tax revenues will once after decades, stream back into the city revenue stream...could they all be PILOT programs as well, like ONEBP?

I read the alternative revenue draft that your group put forward, and it seemed to understate potential revenue sources. Of course, it's better to be conservative than far-reaching in today's economy...I just felt that not enough in depth measure went into the alternative measures.

This is an amazing park...with sustainable features that any large corporate donor would love to associate itself with in a sponsorship contract...'DELL Brooklyn Bridge Park'?

In the end, what was outlined, seemed to be low-ball comparatives for things like concessions and restaurants and what they bring in for other established parks.

Your report seemed disproportionately underwhelming to the overwhelming scale and opportunities this park offers us!

Regards,  
Dominick Leuci,

360 Furman Street  
603  
Brooklyn, New York  
11201

I am a resident of 360 Furman Street and I just came back from this evenings meeting at St.Francis College.

I wrote in already, but have some more to add:

3/31/2011

1. MORE HOUSING – While the idea of additional housing will probably better meet the financial requirements of maintaining the park, what developer will come forth and do so? 360 Furman is still half empty...that's almost 500,000 square feet! With these stats, what developer/bank will go high risk and build here...especially a costly new build...this building was a renovation.

a. With these uncertain times, and mortgage lending changing before our very eyes, more condo development will be even riskier. So, if your conclusion is to fund the park with housing ( a plan built pre-Lehman), what relevance does that possible scenario play out in today's climate?

b. What is the environmental impact to the park by adding more residences? How much more road space will be used by private residences? How much less will be given to people, children, families and groups?

c. How can a world class park have a finger sticking up from it? It's been a terrible problem in Brooklyn through out many developing neighborhoods...just recently, a developer was told to remove his 'tumor' addition in Cobble Hill...How can BBPark sustain such a blight for generations? If building is necessary on the two Pier sites, they should not be allowed to rise more than half 360 Furman's height...they would at least 'hill up' to the existing building and BQE ramp.

d. If the PID (a prospect I would favor over more housing...and should be brought to a wide net vote) were to become a reality, are we socializing democracy and spreading the burden? Why are wealthy people being singled out for a 'public' park? Personally, I'm not offended by the notion as it would further maintain the park's presence as a park , and not a development site, therefore increasing surrounding property values.

2. THE POLITICS – I understand this is not your purpose or function, but why can't the budget be reviewed, and redefined for a post recession world? It was conceived before the Lehman crash.

a. The WatchTower – that and the other Jehovah's properties, are of complete relevance to the discussion table. These properties have been absent over the decades in tax revenues for the city...if we've made it this far without them, why not consider a good parcel of PILOT's to go to the park? These properties exist...more enticing to a developer. Walentas would eat these up in a heartbeat. If Eminent Domain can be used as an argument for the construction of a stadium in downtown Brooklyn, certainly, it can be used for the completion, success and maintenance of Brooklyn's most important addition of green (and blue) space. (As of recent, the Tobacco Warehouses have come up as point of contention...land/property transfers should be considered to

complete the park development...it is upsetting, but possibly necessary. (FOOTNOTE: Brooklyn has the least amount of green space per capita than any other borough.))

b. Why was your funding assessment so understated in so many parts...like the rates for films and commercials? What kind of political influence shot those numbers down? It questions your accountability and full responsibility in being committed to a fair and valued outcome for generations to come.

Based on other testimonials I heard, I don't want our great park space to become a Vancouver redo! We deserve more than that in Brooklyn, America's first and oldest suburb.

3. CONCLUSION: If housing is an absolute need, then it must be minimized. In consideration, at Pier 6, they should not be higher than half the height of 360 Furman. The developers could choose to make floor sized/townhouse apartments...since the higher end of real estate is now moving...they would be more appealing than 1/2 bedrooms. At John St, they should not be higher than zoning permits. Corporate support should be considered...the issue of what's more 'privatizing' ...sponsorship or housing is irrelevant...they are one in the same...both things that don't belong in the park but are bound to be inside this one because of circumstances.

Thank You Again,

Dominick Leuci

360 Furman Street  
#603  
Brooklyn, NY  
11201

I have another comment to provide for the BAE team surveying BBP alternative funding options.

Please commit yourselves to following your triple bottom line philosophy of sustainable economics, environment, and equity.

**Sustainable Economics :** The BBPark was designed and created in a pre-Lehman era. The park may need a modification or two here and there to help reduce it's completion and operating budget. That's a fair consideration. (Some possible missing opportunities from the revenue stream....music barges, marina boating, marina tours/classes.)

**Environment :** People visiting this park want an escape and the view of the harbor, bridge and skyline...they don't want to do this under the shadows of skyscrapers. That's the wrong message...and as was explained by example from the gentlemen advising us of the Vancouver problem/study...that people DIDN'T FEEL IT WAS THEIR PARK with large luxury towers hovering over them. It further disenfranchised lower income people as they felt out of place.

**Equity :** Who is financially wrapped up in the commitment, longevity and future success of the park? ALL OF US. Those that live near the park. Those that live farther. Those that live within it/on it's edge.

Please do your utmost to consider what the park MEANS to people as much what it's WORTH.

From my inner courtyard (don't have the clear big views that others do in my building), but I get some air, sun and light. A building right in front of it would block me (and many other residents) into a metal and cement box. I know, buyer beware, I read the offering plan, saw the lot lines....however, it doesn't mean we should end up building a tall building just because it can.

Please consider the full impact of more (tall) housing. Please understand how much OPEN space means to everyone that enjoys outdoor space and why so many people left the canyons of Manhattan to live in the open, spacious borough of Brooklyn. Please commit to deciding on what's fair for all.

Thank You  
Dominick Leuci

360 Furman Street  
603  
Brooklyn, NY  
11201

April 4, 2011

To: The Committee on Alternatives to Housing

Fm: The Park Community Council  
28 Old Fulton St., Apt. 8B  
Brooklyn NY 11201  
718 802 1324/917 282 6244

The Park Community Council (“PCC”), representing neighboring community associations and activity advocacy groups since 2006 to share information and engage in constructive dialogue in respect to planning, design, construction and usage of the Park within the parameters of the General Project Plan, have carefully reviewed the BAE draft report on the Alternatives to Housing, and respectfully submit the following comments.

There was a general consensus that the options as defined and analyzed are insufficient for a viable alternative long-term financing plan for the Brooklyn Bridge Park. The potential annual revenues from alternative sources considered in the report range from an estimated minimum of \$2.42 million to a maximum \$6.95 million. A realistic appraisal of the options examined suggests that the likely revenues would be closer to the minimum than the maximum projections. The ‘alternatives’ studied are alternatives to the planned apartment buildings at Pier 6 and John Street, which are projected to contribute \$8.3 million annually to the Park from 2019 onwards and which presume 100% occupancy by 2019. Regrettably, plans for and projected revenue from the planned Pier I hotel-condo complex were not included in the mandate for this ‘alternatives to housing’ study, though we believe they should have been.

The bulk of the possible non-housing income to the park identified in the BAE report would come from a new Park Improvement District (PID), a special taxation zone within a quarter-mile (approximately) of the park’s boundaries that the consultants estimate could generate from \$1 million to \$4 million yearly. However, the proposed PID boundaries appear arbitrarily, irregularly and too narrowly defined. A broader catchment area beyond the small and almost wholly residential tax district proposed in the report, with a resulting lowering of the additional required levies on each property in the contributing zone, could be examined as a further alternative. This would require a realistic appraisal of its political feasibility, based on a survey of potentially affected taxpayers and on hurdles to be overcome during the municipal review process. PCC believes it unlikely, however, that most area homeowners would approve voluntary additional taxation, and one of our elected officials has already gone on record against the PID.

The remaining sources of potential revenue combined would at maximum contribute less than \$3 million annually, but even these earnings projections appear inflated, given likely public opposition to, for example, high commercial market rates for the use of public sporting facilities in a public park. (The modest fees charged for analogous ball-court facilities in Prospect Park, for example, would be a more widely acceptable point of pricing reference).

Subtracting the PID, this leaves a shortfall of at least \$5 million, by BAE’s own estimates. The

report's unstated conclusion, then, is that there are no viable alternatives to housing as a major source of revenue for park maintenance and operations. Yet this conclusion is based on an unnecessarily strict interpretation of the CAH requirement that no alternative income sources may be considered to which the city would in theory otherwise be entitled as ordinary tax revenue. This is a reasonable principle, as tax income that would have been received by the city for schools, police and firefighters and other public services throughout the city, including all city parks, should not be and have never been redirected to the maintenance of any one public park. But this should not preclude exploration of mechanisms by which the city and the park could share in proceeds generated by new businesses and rising property values that would be directly attributable to the construction of an adjacent park at public expense.

For example, rezoning and related legal procedures authorizing the potential conversion of the Watchtower complex at Furman Street and Columbia Heights into a hotel and/or luxury housing would create significant new value for the property. That property's value is in turn a function of its privileged location on the boundary of the new publicly funded Brooklyn Bridge Park.

The potential value of the Watchtower complex would be further enhanced if the Park Corporation were to choose to not exercise its right to build a large revenue-generating hotel/condo directly in front of that property, blocking its river and skyline views. Rather than build its own new hotel/condo, the Corporation could receive compensatory income from the conversion of the existing structure into a luxury hotel and/or apartment building. A related option may be to amend the Park General Project Plan (GPP) to redraw the Park's boundaries to include the Watchtower property, with possible bond financing for its direct purchase by the Corporation. Other GPP options and incentives, including the bypassing of city ULURP rezoning rules for the site, should also be more thoroughly and transparently examined.

These options would not violate the principle that the city should not forego current or expected tax income. The city now receives no taxes at all from the Jehovah's Witnesses properties, and may not receive any income from these properties over the next decade or more. The PCC recommends that their potential for integration into the Brooklyn Bridge Park project be aggressively and creatively explored with the owners, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the relevant elected public officials, the Bloomberg administration, and city tax authorities. These synergies could create new value and new income for the benefit of the city and the park alike.

In conclusion, the PCC believes that the Watchtower properties – in particular the Furman St. and its adjacent Columbia Heights site – should be studied further, as the PID does not seem a viable alternative. Any study, however, must be completed under a deadline so as not to slow the maintenance and build-out of the park.

For the Council,  
Joan Zimmerman

CC:  
Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez  
Senator Daniel Squadron

Assemblywoman Joan Millman  
Councilman Stephen Levin  
Borough President Marty Moskowitz

It is understood that the numerous revenue sources, which the Brooklyn Bridge Park (BBP) Corporation has pursued and will continue to pursue, provide insufficient support for the maintenance and operation (M&O) of the completed park, and that residential with some commercial (hotel) development may be the most lucrative and stable source. It has also been postulated that these developments will require the least amount of ground space to generate the necessary funding for the park's M&O.

However, I would like to point out that (1) the two highrise buildings planned for the upland portion of Pier 6 may well lower the value of One Brooklyn Bridge Park's luxury apartments facing south and thus diminish park income; and (2) I fail to understand why housing on the John Street lot, subjected to incessant emanating from the Manhattan Bridge above - even with desirable East River and Manhattan views from west- and north-facing units - is considered an attractive proposition.

Yet, completion of the park and certainty of M&O funding are of great urgency, and the BBP Corporation may already have developers and lenders waiting in the wings to begin construction as soon as possible as your report forecasts an income flow to begin as early as 2017.

Even with the foregone conclusion that housing will be built, it is regrettable that the Watchtower Society-owned properties at the foot of Columbia Heights were excluded from your otherwise exhaustive research. True, nobody knows when the Watchtower Society may dispose of these buildings. Nevertheless, I urge you to recommend in your final report to the Committee on Alternatives to Housing that the BBP Corporation and the city administration, in the coming years, explore mechanisms by which these properties could ultimately benefit the park.

I understand that Tom Fox, one of the founders of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition, is looking for a site to accommodate his "London Eye" project, for which he has funding and which requires one acre of space; he has already entered into discussions with potentially interested parties. I suggest that the project be examined for its income potential as a major attraction and a year-round funding source, possibly as an alternative to housing on the upland portion of Pier 6 where the solid bulk of the two highrise buildings could be replaced by the Wheel's "transparent" structure.

Ursula Hahn  
175 Adams Street #14-B  
Brooklyn, NY 11201-1859  
718-834-0477  
[ujhbrooklyn@aol.com](mailto:ujhbrooklyn@aol.com)

Has anyone considered combining the Brooklyn Bridge Park and BQE Rehabilitation project into one cohesive idea?

If integrated into one design solution, it's possible we'll end up with an even better park, and a greatly improved expressway that no longer bisects people from the park.

I have been attending both the BQE and BBP public meetings for well over a year. While I've listened to many points of view, there doesn't seem to be a prevailing movement on how to complete the park, let alone tackle the BQE!

Compromises will need to be made in order to get the park completed/funded. Efficient planning of the BQE rehabilitation has to be found so it won't negatively impact people for years to come.

The BQE cantilever needs to disappear, or remain a blight on the park and Brooklyn Heights forever. The tunnel options are very expensive and time consuming propositions, although the most tantalizing.

Why not cover it? Transform the shell into landscaped canopy with multiple access ways from the top of the promenade to the park below. Brooklyn's own hanging gardens of Boboli!

This could be the right proposal for the Bloomberg administration which has been about the greening of New York...since this is a state/city issue, the BQE could possibly better find the funding it needs.

Making an extended garden/public space over the BQE from the top of the promenade down to the park would mean no extra bridges, and no berms which so many find a waste of space.

We could create an incredible connection point between the park and Brooklyn.

Thank You for Your Consideration.

Dominick Leuci,  
Brooklyn Heights Resident

## **TESTIMONY REGARDING THE BAE DRAFT REPORT ON ALTERNATIVES TO HOUSING TO FUND BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK OPERATIONS**

### **SUBMITTED VIA EMAIL**

April 18, 2011

I thank you for the opportunity to have given a brief testimony on March 31<sup>st</sup>. As I indicated at the hearing, I am submitting my full testimony in writing. My testimony is solely my own viewpoint. I am not testifying for any of the organizations with which I am affiliated.

After extensive study and public input, the General Project Plan (GPP) for Brooklyn Bridge Park included a limited amount of residential and commercial development to fully finance the maintenance and operations of the Park. Continued public input throughout the park design process resulted in halving the development footprint in the park and set the residential footprints on the Park periphery.

The revenue alternatives outlined in the BAE report are not sufficient to replace the Pier 6 and John Street residential sites in their entirety. The City of New York has conditioned its provision of the capital dollars to build the rest of Brooklyn Bridge Park only if the park has a viable plan to fund its maintenance and operations. \$45 million in funds in the short term plus an additional \$85 million that has been promised, but not allocated, is at stake. To have the rest of the park, we need certainty now about the funding to maintain the park and where that funding will come from.

The current park plan which achieves self-sustainability using only 8% of its footprint for revenue-generation (less than half of what was originally authorized) is a good plan. The development parcels under review comprise 3 plots with footprints of less than 10,000 square feet each -- in total less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre. Experience has demonstrated that housing has not privatized the park. One Brooklyn Bridge Park has been occupied since before the opening of Pier 6. There is no indication that it has compromised the enjoyment of the park as evidenced by the thousands of children playing in the water lab and visitors flocking to the park from over 175 zip codes, all across the city, and the world. Limited residential development actually privatizes the park far less than some of the alternatives outlined in the BAE report.

My specific comments on the nine alternative sources studied are as follows:

1. **PARK IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT:** A Park Improvement District appears unlikely to gain the required consent from a majority of mostly residential property owners. Also, some 1/3 of the commercial property owners already pay assessments for other BIDS.

2. **FEE-BASED RECREATION:** Charging market rate fees for use of the park's recreation amenities is far more privatizing than residential buildings on the park's periphery. Using public funds to build a park that would offer its facilities only to those who can afford to pay premium rates is totally unacceptable.

3. EVENTS: Too heavy a reliance on private events and rentals within the existing facilities of Brooklyn Bridge Park would privatize the park by cutting off those who cannot pay from too many park areas too often. There must be a balance between public and private use. It would be far more equitable to use private event funds to supplement free public programming within the park.

4. CONCESSIONS: It is unlikely that the park could support additional concessions beyond those currently outlined in the park plan.

5. COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT: It is unlikely that the park could support additional retail development beyond that already contemplated in the existing General Project Plan. The park site does not seem to be attractive for office use, which would be subject to ICAP tax exemptions. Retail development needs more foot traffic which the proposed residential developments would have provided.

6. SPONSORSHIPS: Sponsorship dollars are typically used for one-time naming rights on a capital construction or for funding activities rather than operations.

7. FUNDRAISING: The experience of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy demonstrated a willingness on the part of donors to contribute funds to support free, public programming. More study is needed regarding fundraising options for capital and maintenance. Also, philanthropic dollars are not as certain from year to year as PILOTS would be.

8. LEVERAGING EXPECTED DISPOSITION OF WATCHTOWER PROPERTIES: The proposal to change the footprint, height and massing of the Pier 1 development violates agreements reached during the design process with community groups. The design was modified to preserve a view corridor of the Brooklyn Bridge from the Promenade. The leveraging proposal addresses only the scenic view plane contained in the City's zoning resolution but not the community input that the designer considered. Additionally, the proposal estimates a potential one-time payment of some \$5 million – less than one-third of one year's maintenance budget – in return for compromising a property which the park controls. This is a poor bargain and should not be pursued.

9. INCREASED PARKING REVENUES: Metering existing parking places is reasonable but no additional parking lots should be placed in the park. They are unsightly and do not contribute to public recreation space. The proposed John Street and Pier 6 developments could contain indoor parking facilities without degrading the parkland.

#### REGARDING STUDY OF POTENTIAL REVENUES FROM WATCHTOWER PROPERTIES:

It is a fact that the park has no control over the timing of when the Watchtower properties will come on the market or over their disposition. They are privately owned properties outside the General Project area. The current owner has the right to choose the time and method of their

disposition. Furthermore, a private purchaser of the properties could choose to take advantage of various tax relief provisions depending on the type of development planned.

The suggestion by some that eminent domain be considered raises the specter of redoing the General Project Plan to increase the boundaries, potential Supplemental EIS for the modification of the boundaries all followed by potential protracted court proceedings over the attempt to seize only the properties of a religious organization and not those of other owners in the newly modified boundaries.

I believe the study of potential revenue from the eventual disposition of the Watchtower properties is a wasteful exercise not worthy of having additional time or resources devoted to it. No reliable conclusion is possible without knowing when the properties will come on the market and what kind of tax provisions will be applicable to what some as yet unknown developer may do.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene E. Janner  
101 Clark Street  
Brooklyn, NY 11201

Hello,

I am writing to submit the Brooklyn Bridge Park's written testimony (attached) in response to the CAH draft report.

The Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy ([www.brooklynbridgepark.org](http://www.brooklynbridgepark.org)) is a non-profit organization born over 25 years ago to advocate for a park along the downtown Brooklyn waterfront. The Conservancy works to ensure the creation, adequate funding, proper maintenance, public support, and citizen enjoyment of Brooklyn Bridge Park through partnership with the public sector, development of programming, and active promotion of the needs of the park and its constituents.

Over the past ten years, the Conservancy has brought imaginative and popular programming to the future park site. Working in partnership with the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation, the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, and numerous community groups, the Conservancy has facilitated free public programming enjoyed by more than half a million visitors. The Conservancy has raised over \$11 million, which has supported free public programming in the park as well as advocacy, park stewardship and maintenance.

Currently the Conservancy is working with Brooklyn Bridge Park to provide a wide range of free, public programming on Piers 1 and 6, which opened last year. Offerings include the annual outdoor film series "Movies with a View," boating with local kayaking and rowing groups, a fitness series, playground enrichment activities, family festivals, and an extensive series of education courses focusing on the natural ecology and built environment of the park.

Thank you for your consideration,



Nancy Webster

--

Nancy Webster  
Executive Director  
**Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy**

## **BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK CONSERVANCY RESPONSE TO BAE STUDY ON ALTERNATIVES TO HOUSING TO FUND BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK OPERATIONS**

MARCH 31, 2011

Since 2004, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy has supported the General Project Plan (GPP) for Brooklyn Bridge Park, which calls for a limited amount of residential and commercial development to fully finance the maintenance and operations of self-sustaining Brooklyn Bridge Park.

While supporting the plan, we have also consistently advocated for the least amount of development possible to adequately sustain the park. In that spirit, we welcome the work of Brooklyn Bridge Park's Committee on Alternatives to Housing and the most recent study on revenue alternatives.

Of the alternatives studied, the Conservancy believes that the careful and judicious use of private events, the exploration of sponsorship opportunities and private philanthropy in support of capital projects, and the metering of existing street level parking spaces hold some potential as revenue sources.

But let's be clear that these and other revenue alternatives outlined in the report will not be sufficient to replace the Pier 6 and John St residential sites, which are expected to contribute approximately \$8.25 million in revenues per year, nor the Pier 1 residences. However, as we have advocated, these new funds could help to reduce the scale of residential development in the park. We call on Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation to examine that potential quickly and thoroughly.

Here's why this discussion is so important right now.

Brooklyn Bridge Park isn't fully funded yet – the park still needs approximately \$130 million to complete its construction. The City of New York has said that it will provide the capital dollars to build the rest of Brooklyn Bridge Park, but those dollars will flow only if the park has a viable plan to fund its maintenance and operations.

That means that \$44 million in funds in the short term along with an additional \$85 million that has been promised, but not allocated, is hanging in the balance. We cannot afford to walk away from that, and lose the promise of Brooklyn Bridge Park.

If we want the rest of the park – Piers 2 and 3, the outer section of Pier 6, the section in Dumbo, and Brooklyn Bridge Plaza – to be built, we need certainty about when we will have the funding to maintain them and where that funding will come from. And we need that certainty now.

The current park plan – which proposes an achievable strategy for self sustainability with only 9% of its footprint devoted to revenue-generation (less than half of what was originally authorized) – is still a good plan. And the development parcels that are under review comprise 3 plots with footprints of approximately 10,000 square feet each -- in total less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre.

Some have expressed concern that the housing contemplated in the current plan will privatize the park.

We've had a year to test this concern. One Brooklyn Bridge Park has been occupied since before the opening of Pier 6, and we have no indication whatsoever that it has compromised the enjoyment of the thousands of children playing in the water lab, visitors catching the free ferry to Governor's Island, or bikers taking the interim greenway to Pier 1. And it certainly has not discouraged those from outside the neighborhood coming to the park – surveys showed that visitors flocked to the park from over 175 zip codes, all across the city, and the world.

Limited residential development actually privatizes the park far less than some of the alternatives outlined in the BAE report, such as taking up more open space by spreading additional retail stores across the park's boundaries, or building a parking garage on what could be open space, or charging fees for basketball courts that are free at every other park in the city.

We think the park's designers are right when they note that in the case of Brooklyn Bridge Park, which is cut off from surrounding neighborhoods by the Brooklyn Queens Expressway, having people live on the park's edges will help activate and energize the open spaces and provide critical "eyes on the park" for what can be an isolated area. And additional residents will support the retail activities already envisioned in the park's plan.

In closing, Piers 1 and 6 of Brooklyn Bridge Park opened last winter and captured our hearts. But let's reiterate -- much of the rest of the park may never be finished if we cannot implement a revenue plan. The basketball and handball courts of Pier 2 may never be built, the John St. section of the park may remain as a garbage-strewn and fenced-off field, Pier 3 may degrade and fall into the East River, and the back half of Pier 6 may never open.

It's time to decide whether we want Brooklyn Bridge Park, or not. Whether we want a fully built park, or whether we want to stop with only 2/3 of our park built and walk away from the rest because we cannot reach agreement on its funding.

The Conservancy wants a fully built park, and we want it as quickly as possible – with no delays and no more uncertainty over its future.

To that end, we call on the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the Mayor, and our local elected officials to reach an agreement and move forward now with a revenue plan that fully funds a safe, beautiful, and vibrant Brooklyn Bridge Park and to fully commit the remaining \$130 million in capital funds to complete the world-class, waterfront park this community has worked for over the past twenty-five years.

Brooklyn Bridge Park – fully funded, fully built – NOW.

Following are the Conservancy's comments on the nine alternative sources studied:

1. **PARK IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT:** A Park Improvement District, which calls for a 3% tax increase on residents within ¼ miles of the park’s boundary, appears unrealistic given that it would require a majority consent of affected property owners. We note that 1/3 of those property owners already pay assessments for other BIDS.

2. **FEE-BASED RECREATION:** The report clearly shows that the construction of an indoor facility for fee-based recreation is not feasible. Further, the Conservancy does not support raising fees for outdoor recreation to a level inconsistent with and higher than that of existing New York City Parks.

3. **EVENTS:** We support the use of private events and rentals within the existing facilities of Brooklyn Bridge Park, as long as a balance is maintained between public and private use. We encourage the use of private event funds to help supplement free public programming within the park.

4. **CONCESSIONS:** It is unlikely that the park could support additional concessions beyond those currently outlined in the park plan.

5. **COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT:** It is unlikely that the park could support additional retail development beyond that already contemplated in the Empire Stores, the ground floor of One Brooklyn Bridge Park, and the ground floor of the hotel complex on Pier 1. Additionally, the park site does not seem to be attractive for office use, which as well may be subject to ICAP tax exemptions.

6. **SPONSORSHIPS:** The Conservancy has successfully pursued sponsorship for free, public programs in the park. We note that sponsorship dollars are typically used for funding activities and not operations. We support a feasibility study for sponsorship opportunities for capital projects.

7. **FUNDRAISING:** The Conservancy has raised over \$11 million in support of free, public programming in Brooklyn Bridge Park – programs that have drawn over half a million visitors to the beginnings of the park. We will continue to help fund Brooklyn Bridge Park’s programming, which is not currently accounted for in the park’s budget. We look forward to working in partnership with Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation to study fundraising options for capital projects within the park and to identify additional opportunities for philanthropic support.

8. **WATCHTOWER PROPERTIES:** It is a fact, though disappointing, that we have no control over the timing of when the Watchtower properties will come on the market. Further, we are concerned that short of eminent domain, the Watchtower properties cannot be compelled to enter into the park’s GPP.

9. **PARKING:** The Conservancy supports the metering of existing street level spaces within the park, but does not support the construction of an indoor parking garage on the park’s footprint. We note that an indoor garage may also be subject to the ICAP 25-year tax exemption.

Testimony for the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation  
And the Committee on Alternatives to Housing.  
March 31, 2011

My name is Irene Van Slyke a member of the ExCom of the NYC Sierra Club.

For the record both the NYC and NY State Sierra Club chapters have long standing resolutions opposing “any plan for a future Brooklyn Bridge Park that incorporates residential buildings because it is incompatible with a public park.” The Sierra Club is a member of a 10 group coalition opposing residential development.

The Sierra Club believes that a real public park has dedicated park-land and is managed by the City or State Department of Parks. A public park is a park in the democratic tradition of inviting and serving all people of the rainbow from young to old, rich and poor, able bodied or challenged. If there are problems you can complain to elected officials or the Department of Parks and hold bureaucrats accountable.

Not so for this Park, it is not really a park even though everyone continues to call it that and hopes to salvage as much as possible of the promised park by coming out to hearings and meetings as this one.

Having said that, we commend our elected officials for forcing the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation to at least go through an exercise to justify why building residential and commercial real estate are the only way to finance the park.

The CAH was hampered by many caveats: it could not consider any direct funds from the City budget, no tax increment financing or any other scheme that would reduce revenue to the City coffers. They could not consider Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTS) to capture tax revenues as Watchtower properties (that are tax exempt) are sold to new tax paying owners. The CAH looked at it then decided that PILOTS would displace income the City was entitled to and so abandoned that possibility.

The result: The CAH could not come up with enough monies to satisfy the sustainability requirement: It did include \$4 million in extra taxes for people who live in proximity of the park, it calls for more parking to raise income, higher fees for recreational facilities and concessions and additional income from commercial real estate.

Unexplored were the possible repurposing of the 360 Furman Street building with commercial entities since apartments remain empty even with extensive marketing. There is no mention of a community plan for Pier 6 that would create a destination for visitors and community alike connecting cultural and recreational activities with businesses in the retail corridor of Atlantic Avenue. A plan that would add jobs and income that will be welcome during the present economic downturn.

The Sierra Club in general does not favor corporate events and naming opportunities instead we favor legislation to declare the land of Brooklyn Bridge Park as Park Land with strong state protection of its open space.

Thank you.

To whom it may concern:

I wholly support the General Project Plan (GPP) to fully fund the park using a limited amount of residential and commercial development. It seems like a no brainer since it is approved and ready to go. Additionally, the study didn't find any alternatives, so we should move forward with this logical, low impact way to fund the park.

We should take advantage of the momentum that we've got with the Bloomberg administration to get this park funded since we don't know what the next administration will bring.

To delay and look into other opportunities seems to be a large tactical and strategic error.

As a Brooklyn resident, I can't begin to tell you how excited I am about the park being built. It is an incredible addition to the neighborhood and borough.

Sincerely,  
Katherine Fichthorn

My name is Stephen Dietz and I am a member of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy. I submit this testimony as a resident of Brooklyn Heights for over 30 years and one who has been deeply interested in seeing Brooklyn Bridge Park built.

The study of funding alternatives for the Brooklyn Bridge Park (the “Park”) is now complete and it is clear that there are no alternatives that can adequately fund the estimated maintenance costs of the Park. This is the same conclusion reached by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation when they decided that building limited housing in a small area in the Park was the only alternative that provided adequate funding. Use of the Watchtower properties to fund some of these costs is subject to such a high degree of uncertainty and timing issues that this option is not a feasible source of revenue in the near term.

Funding for the Park will not be forthcoming unless the costs of maintenance are covered. I support limited development of housing in the Park (with reduced building size) as a means to fund the maintenance costs and permit the City to move forward to fund the remaining costs of building the Park. I also support use of some of the alternatives outlined in the study to reduce building size. This limited housing, at a reduced scale, on a tiny portion of the Park is only a small tradeoff to get a completed world class Park.

To: Brooklyn Bridge Park Committee on Alternatives to Housing (CAH)  
From: Robert Pirani, Vice President for Environmental Programs  
Date: April 19, 2011  
RE: Draft Study of Alternatives to Housing for the Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts on the Draft Study.

The Memorandum of Understanding signed by the Governor and Mayor in 2002 set out an essential condition for the project plan: that this park be self-sustaining by setting aside land for revenue producing uses. While this is not necessarily the best policy option for financing essential public services like parks, we must ensure that Brooklyn Bridge Park has the funds needed to ensure it is well tended and that there are exciting and interesting programs that attract people from throughout Brooklyn and the Region. We also want to ensure that the construction of the Park continue to move forward and not lose momentum.

Given this reality, we support the plan's use of residential and limited hotel uses as the primary source of revenue. This choice poses some advantages in that it is the most reliable source of upfront revenue possible, adds some eyes to the park in all seasons and conditions, and creates a base population that helps sustain services that all park users will enjoy. These uses are land-efficient; and we note that this is far less than that authorized by the 2002 MOU. Such residential uses are far preferable to big box retail development.

We believe that concerns over privatization of the park can be addressed by both design and by programs. The plan does a good job of separating the proposed development with streets and other public spaces. We also support the use of restaurants, cafes and other local retail on the first floor of these buildings to insure the public quality of the streets. We would also suggest that operations funds be used to create substantial public programs intended to attract people from all over Brooklyn and the region.

But we remain concerned over the scale of some of the proposed towers. The gateways to the park at Atlantic Avenue and Fulton Ferry Landing – as well as at John Street – must be beautiful, iconic arrival points. The park should not be dominated by tall towers.

As a matter of principal, the Park should adopt the smallest development program that can prudently support the park in the long run. The process of development will be sequenced and monitored to ensure that no more development takes place than what is required. The plan should unfold in a manner that allows for flexible financing.

We believe three of the alternatives studied for the Committee could reduce the Park's reliance on only a few small parcels to generate income sufficient to meet its needs.

The first is metering of existing street level spaces within the park. This alternative would generate some limited revenue, and perhaps just as importantly would price and manage this public service appropriately.

The second is a creation of a Park Improvement District. Our work for Friends of Hudson River Park found that, in a two block area of Greenwich Village, twenty percent of the value of the real estate was attributable to the Park Because of the high quality and excellent maintenance of the park, this relationship resulted in two hundred million dollars accruing to local property owners<sup>i</sup>. Adjoining owners in Brooklyn can anticipate a similar benefit and it is in their own interest to support the park's maintenance through a structured program.

The third is the use of the revenues associated from the Watchtower site, whether as a condition of final approval for Watchtower-related rezoning or other new entitlements, or by redesigning the Pier 1 Hotel to protect views from the Watchtower Building, thus increasing its value.

The report correctly notes that the PID will be challenging to implement and that potential revenue from Watchtower approvals is speculative and not under the control of the City. Moreover, neither option would cover all the costs from Pier 6, the Pier 1 Hotel, and John Street development and cannot be considered a substitute.

However all of these options – especially the PID - do offer the potential of generating enough income to reduce the height and bulk of buildings from the Pier 6, Pier 1 Hotel, and John St sites. We would suggest that these options be incorporated as desired options in the Park Financing Plan. A final determination as to their feasibility can be made at the time that the leases for the Pier 6 and John Street development are negotiated. We believe that the RFP's for the John Street and Pier 6 sites can and should go forward as scheduled (July 2011 and July 2013 respectively) with a final determination on building heights to be made during the negotiations.

<sup>i</sup> See [rpa.org/pdf/20080719\\_FOHRP\\_Report\\_Impact\\_on\\_Property\\_Values.pdf](http://rpa.org/pdf/20080719_FOHRP_Report_Impact_on_Property_Values.pdf)

Subject: The 1997 Praedium Study

As you may learn, the Community Advisory Council has adopted a resolution asking BAE (among other things) to study the 1997 Praedium Study for possible alternative sources of revenue.

The Praedium Study included Ernst & Young projections of costs, operating revenues, and likely concessional revenues to the Park if a hotel/conference center were built on Pier 1, an indoor Ice Skating Facility were built on Pier 2, and all of Piers 3 and 5 were dedicated to the accoutrements normally associated with a yachtsmen's marina -- outfitting and retail for the yachts themselves, bars and restaurants for the yachtsmen (and the public), etc. It projected that some \$157,378/yr might be generated for the Park by the Ice Rink on Pier 2; and, from Piers 3 and 5 -- just \$28,380/yr from the yacht moorings but \$551,479/yr from the restaurants & food pavilions; \$1,272,923/yr from catering private affairs; and \$729,346/yr from the boat repair & showroom & sales & clubhouse & storage & retail.

I urge the CAH to reject this outlandish idea to install a rich-man's two-pier yacht basin in between and all along Piers 3 and 5, which would mean abandoning the 5 acres of field-sports (and possibly its winter-time "bubble") on Pier 5, and the landscaped, passive-use park on the 5 acres of Pier 3. [BAE has already dismissed the likelihood of a developer's interest in an indoor athletic facility, much less the possibility of its generating net revenues for the Park: consequently I assume the CAH will not be interested in attempting to instal an ice-skating facility on Pier 2.]

Even if we can assume a yacht marina and its fancy commercial accoutrements could generate \$2-2 1/2 million in annual net revenues (and the ice-skating facility another \$157,000/yr) , *what park will be left to support, with these revenues? Losing 10 acres of active and recreational space at the very center of the Park would be as tragic as it would be irreversible!*

-----  
The Praedium Study also studied building a 1,500 car underground garage along Furman Street which was projected to generate a very considerable \$2,582,129/yr of revenue to the Park: possibly all the goings and comings to the yacht basin and its night spots and catering facilities could sustain so large a garage. As we know, BAE only studied a 200-car *above-ground* garage, generating only \$233,000/yr. We have no idea what additional parking demand the Park *as presently designed* could sustain, much less a number as large as 1,500. Nor any familiarity with when and how the federal highway people could or would work with the City as to utilizing air or ground rights along the Park's Furman St. border, as Tony Manheim has proposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Flemming  
51 Joralemon St  
Brooklyn NY 11201  
718 852 2418

The Fulton Ferry Landing Association commends Bay Area Economics on expeditiously completing a complex task. As we understand the conclusion of the preliminary report, it appears that there are not long-term alternatives to housing sufficient to replace it as the major source of financing for the park; indeed, it seems likely that under strict adherence to the thresholds, the likely revenues from other sources, such as sports facilities, would be closer to the minimum than the maximum appraisals.

We believe, however, that the draft report was negatively impacted by the constraints under which the study took place. The most obvious of these is the first threshold parameter; namely, that no alternative revenue source can displace revenue to which the City is otherwise entitled. A better process would have enabled the numbers to be fully explored without such a caveat, and thereby allowed for a more thorough analysis and greater creativity in generating ideas.

Also, it appeared that BAE lacked the expertise to fully analyze certain alternatives such as revenues from sponsorships and naming rights. No numeric contribution was assigned to such sources. A third constraint was the failure to include the study of housing on Pier One by either the CAH or BAE.

Nevertheless, we believe that several of the alternatives raised in the draft report merit further investigation, so long as such study does not unduly affect the Park's ongoing construction and operating schedules. These include: the Park Improvement District, (PID), sponsorship/naming rights, and the Watchtower Buildings, particularly those in direct proximity to the park.

The PID: In spite of the fact that BAE identified the PID as the largest potential contributor to non-housing income, the proposed PID boundaries are arbitrary, unrelated to the actual demographics of the neighborhoods, and unduly constricted. The PID catchment area should ensure that businesses and residents alike are included, as with Bryant Park's BID. For the community to accept the burden of contribution, the price of the PID would need to be substantially reduced, and therefore the borders would need to be extended to a minimum of a mile. In another model, the PID might expand as far as 2.5 miles, depending on studies of usage, with contributions highest within the closest 1 mile zone, decreasing with increased distance from the park. We believe that a PID could well be successful if annual costs per contributor dropped to approximately \$100 per household/business.

Sponsorship/naming rights: Millennium Park is frequently referred to as the model for such activities. In a way, Brooklyn Bridge Park already has accepted such a sponsorship, albeit by another name and from a private donor, in the form of "Jane's Carousel." The donor dictated the place that his gift would be constructed, the design around it, and in return, the Park was given \$3.5 million to resurface Empire Fulton Ferry Park, along with the carousel, the building to house it, and 10 years maintenance, just as corporate and individual donors in Millennium Park had "the right to influence the design of the park's amenities." Unfortunately, the siting of the carousel circumvented all public process, but we firmly believe that such a process could be established, and that BAE's suggestion regarding naming rights to pay for new park facilities should be explored. One that was of interest was the "Naming Payment" which could be put into the Maritime Maintenance Reserve Fund, partly reducing the annual contribution to the Park's \$4million "M&O"

budget. As an example, if a corporate cruise line would pay for the maintenance of the most vulnerable pier in return for a plaque indicating this donation, that could be a viable trade-off. It would, however, be essential to establish a public process for input and approval in any such transaction.

The Watchtower Buildings: FFLA supports further investigation of the idea of converting the Columbia/Furman Street Watchtower properties into a hotel/luxury housing complex, as a means of generating revenue and reducing the need for new residential and commercial construction within Park boundaries. However, the mitigating effects of any such conversion MUST be distributed to all sites currently slated for development, including the hotel/condo on Pier One. Construction of BOTH the hotel/condo AND the development of the Watchtower properties as a component of the park would inflict a double burden on this community by concentrating nearly all of the residential and hotel construction contemplated for the park in one tiny area. The increase in density, noise, and commercial and residential congestion would have a disproportionately negative impact on this small community.

While some might argue that, strictly speaking, the Park is not entitled to any of the revenues to be generated from future taxation of the Watchtower properties, that strikes us as an unduly narrow interpretation of what is in reality a more nuanced situation. Without intervention, the Watchtower properties closest to the Park are likely to remain off the tax rolls, benefitting neither Park nor City, for a considerable period of time to come. On the other hand, if they were converted and/or integrated into the Park, their value would be enhanced by proximity to the Park, and new revenues would be generated for both Park and City to share. Their value would be further amplified if the Park decided to forego building in front of them, blocking views and competing for occupants. In that case, the Park might receive compensatory income, as well as the added bonus to the public of permanently opening valuable green space once designated for the large hotel/condo complex.

The inclusion of One Brooklyn Bridge Park within the park boundaries and the use of PILOT revenues from that structure to partially fund park operations creates a precedent for further exploration of this strategy with respect to the Watchtower properties. Another option may be to amend the GPP to include the Watchtower properties, particularly those adjacent to the park, supported by bond or other financing for direct acquisition of those structures by the Corporation.

Accordingly, we believe that, as with the first PILOT established for 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park, the City, the Park, and the owners should assertively and vigorously explore innovative means by which to incorporate into the park those structures with greatest proximity to the park at the very least. We believe that contrary to displacing revenue to the City, such actions have the potential to substantially enhance income and value for the both city and the Park.

Sincerely,

Joan Zimmerman,  
President

We have lived in Brooklyn with our family for almost forty years. For the last 20 of those at least, the dream of a waterfront park on the piers next to the bridge has been under discussion. In that time, it seems that every iteration of a park has been proposed and debated by the community and a broader public. We now have an award winning, critically acclaimed design that has been through countless community reviews and many revisions. Somehow the plan managed to avoid becoming a camel. Instead, we have a park that encapsulates an inspiring vision of the best our city can be. Its beginnings on Piers One and Six are 'green' from the recycled stone, dirt fill and yellow pine benches to the lawns and the saltwater marsh.

Income from the proposed residential housing is necessary to make the park self sustaining. Given the uncertain future of so many of our publicly funded initiatives, this is a critical insurance policy for the park's future. The current study of alternatives to housing in Brooklyn Bridge Park was helpful in that it has investigated every option exhaustively even if for a second time, and the results have reached an even wider audience. No one wants to sacrifice even an inch of public ground, water or air space unnecessarily. Everyone wants to be at peace with the final decision.

But no significant viable alternatives have been found. Further delay puts the city funding to finish the park in jeopardy. Loosing the funding to finish the park at this stage would senselessly deprive ourselves, our children, the borough, the city and the world of a unique urban treasure. It's time to get back to the work of building our park.

Connie and Ted Roosevelt

## **Brooklyn Heights Association's Response to BAE's Draft Report Study of Alternatives to Housing for the Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations**

April 22, 2011  
via email

The Brooklyn Heights Association (BRA) commends the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation's Committee on Alternatives to Housing (CAH) and BAE Urban Economics (BAE) for their fine effort investigating revenue-generating alternatives for funding the operations of Brooklyn Bridge Park (Park).

After careful review of the Draft Report Study of Alternatives to Housing for the Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations, we remain convinced that the most reliable model for financing the Park's maintenance and operations remains the funding model outlined in the Park's 2005 General Project Plan (GPP). Its call for limited residential and commercial development on less than 8% of the Park's footprint is fiscally sound and more achievable than other options studied. The John Street and Pier 6 parcels will encroach on less than % of an acre of parkland, but will contribute nearly \$8.25 million in reliable revenues. One Brooklyn Bridge Park proves that this fiscal model works.

Of the nine alternatives studied by BAE, several offer funding options which might, if enacted, provide opportunities for supplemental revenues. We do not believe, however, that any of these alternatives presents a viable revenue-generating plan which could supplant the GPP model.

We agree with BAE's conclusion that a proposed Park Improvement District presents a tremendous risk for delay due to the seemingly insurmountable burden of obtaining the support of a majority of the affected property owners.

We object to market-rate fee-based recreational facilities as a funding source and urge the BBPC to adopt the NYC Parks Department's recreational facilities fee structure, which is nominal. We agree with BAE that a new indoor recreational facility is not feasible at this time.

We also agree with BAE that a new indoor events facility is not feasible at this time.

While increasing the number of concessions facilities in the Park creates opportunities for supplemental revenues, this falls far short of the revenue-generation projected in the GPP. We would vehemently oppose increasing the amount of square footage devoted to commercial activity above what is now in the GPP. People are flocking to Piers 1 and 6 for the park-like experiences to be enjoyed there. We do like the idea of a bike rental concession, charging nominal fees as a park amenity, a la Governors Island.

We agree with the BAE that the Commercial Real Estate Development alternative is implausible and is, in our view, undesirable. .

Sponsorships and fundraising events, if carefully managed, present possible opportunities for supplemental revenue-generation only.

We oppose the building of an additional onsite parking garage, and worry that additional metered parking along Furman Street might discourage Park visitors from using mass transportation.

We struggle with the Leveraging Opportunities Related to the Expected Disposition of Watchtower Properties alternative.

First, the BHA vehemently opposes any relocation and redesign of the current Pier 1 Hotel development project which would encroach upon the view of the Brooklyn Bridge from the Brooklyn Heights Promenade. The siting, mass and height of the hotel project were carefully studied and negotiated with the Park's design team to insure that the project would not intrude upon the view of the Brooklyn Bridge, its roadbed, its majestic necklace and the Brooklyn Tower. The leveraging alternative only addresses the Scenic View Plane contained in the City Zoning Resolution and neglects the agreement made between the BBPDC and the community regarding the Hotel during the design of the Park, and that is unacceptable.

Second, while the BHA recognizes the significant revenue-generating potential of the Watchtower Properties, we are deeply concerned that to rely on them would delay funding of the Park. At this time, they may not present a suitable or feasible funding alternative.

If, however, their risk assessment and revenue-generation studies can be completed by BAE within thirty (30) days of April 25, 2011, the close of the public comment period, the BHA would support their inclusion in BAE's final report. **We repeat: Any study of the Watchtower's properties should not be used by opponents of housing as an excuse to delay the conclusion of BAE's final report nor as a rationale for delaying the Park's completion.**

We do not agree with claims that new residential buildings will privatize the park. The John Street site and two Pier 6 sites will amount to 3/4 of an acre when taken together. As shown in the GPP, these three buildings are proposed to be outside the dedicated park boundaries on the periphery of the park. We already have the example of One Brooklyn Bridge, whose residents have joined us in a deep and abiding commitment to the Park. Their daily presence among the Park's hundreds of other visitors only serves to enrich and enliven the Park experience. We believe that the added presence of the future residents of the other development parcels would only strengthen the Park's vitality.

We are in the midst of an extraordinary moment in our borough's history. Visitors to this magical Park are commanding us, our mayor, our local elected officials and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, as its committed friends and guardians, to come together right now to finish building the Park. The time for delay and uncertainty is long past.

cc: Honorable Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Borough Prersident  
Honorable Daniel Squadron, New York State Senator  
Honorable Joan Millman, New York State Assemblymember

Honorable Stephen T. Levin, New York City Councilmember  
Robert K. Steel, Chairman, Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation  
Regina Myer, Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation President  
John Dew, Chairperson, Community Board 2

**J. Peter Flemming**  
**51 Joralemon Street**  
**Brooklyn NY 11201**

April 24, 2011

Bay Area Economics  
C/o Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation  
334 Furman St  
Brooklyn NY 11201

Ladies & Gentlemen:

I take the liberty of forwarding text of Responses (to your Draft Report studying 9 categories of Alternatives to Housing) originally drafted by me, as Chair of the “Concessions and Development Sites” committee of the Citizens Advisory Council to the Park Corporation (the “CAC”), on the basis of discussion among our committee, and as modified in parts based on suggestions from members of our committee. Obviously – as you have learned -- these Responses were set aside by the CAC in lieu of generalized “support” of two community boards’ own responses (together with several other specific demands). As the CAC simply set aside discussion of the Responses herebelow, it is obvious that – aside from myself and a majority of our committee – these Responses do not represent the views of the majority of the CAC; but it is equally true that, one by one, it is unknown to what extent a majority of the CAC, *if it had taken the trouble to consider them*, might actually have agreed with some or all of these Responses. In any event, kindly accept these Responses as expressing my personal views.

-----  
1. **The PID:** The CAC accepts BAE’s conclusion that it is dubious that property owners in nearby neighborhoods (a “Park Improvement District”, or “PID”) would vote to accept an increase in their property tax so as to enable the Park to dispense with one or more of the condominiums at Pier 6 and John Street. However, the CAC is *agreeable to investing in a credible sampling or survey* to better evaluate the likelihood of property owners’ acceptance of a PID (either within BAE’s ¼-mile band, or a larger band); the time-frame to approve a PID; and such PID’s most likely revenue, *so long as such additional study will in no way affect the Park’s ongoing construction and operating schedules*.

2. **Market-rate Fee-based Recreation:** In order to ensure that the Park is accessible to a wide variety of communities, the CAC does not support raising fees for usage of the Park’s athletic fields and courts to a level inconsistent with, and higher than that of existing New York City parks, and accepts BAE’s conclusion that developers would not find it economically feasible to construct an indoor athletic facility.

3. **Events Facility:** The CAC accepts BAE’s conclusion that developers would not find it economically feasible to construct an indoor Events Facility.

4. **Additional Concessions:** The CAC accepts BAE’s conclusion that, given the variety of Concessions already planned for the public areas and within the Hotel, Empire Stores, One

Brooklyn Bridge Park, and proposed Pier 6 condos, and the existing and future competing sites in the immediate neighborhoods, there could be at most only one additional casual restaurant, snack bar/outdoor café, and/or kiosk; notes that a bicycle rental concession is already part of the Park's projected \$551-566,000 annual concessional revenues; *and expresses its preference for no or only minimal additional concessions at all.*

5. **Commercial Real Estate:** The CAC accepts BAE's conclusion that developers would not find it economically feasible to construct an office development; notes that up to 65,000 sq ft of 2-story retail space might be of interest to a developer – 40,000 sq ft of which could fit into the two Pier 6 condo sites, if freed up, and 25,000 sq ft of which would have to be taken from some other space in the Park – which could generate \$256,803/yr in revenues; and accepts such retail construction *only if proven viable in competition with the existing retail space at One Brooklyn Bridge Park and Atlantic Avenue and if not otherwise intruding upon existing public space in the Park.*

6. **Sponsorships:** The CAC accepts the solicitation of Sponsorships, *as long as they do not result in unacceptable changes in or imposition upon the design for the Park's public spaces.*

7. **Fundraising/Grants:** The CAC supports additional investigation into the feasibility of private fundraising, while noting that fundraising to date has concentrated on free programming activities to enliven the Park that will still need funding going forward.

8. **The Watchtower Properties:** As to the idea to move the Hotel complex planned at Pier 1 some 330 ft. south along Furman St. so as to enhance the market value of the Watchtower's building on Furman St. by opening up its view and thus generate a one-time payment by the Watchtower of \$4 to 5 million, the CAC has mixed feelings as to then doubling the height of the Hotel: on this point the *CAC might support the total elimination of the proposed Pier 1 Hotel complex should the Corporation find a way to capture sufficient revenue streams from the two adjoining Watchtower buildings at 51 Furman St. and 29 Columbia Heights.* As to the idea of inducing Watchtower's or future developers' payments for certain "GPP" privileges, *or as to the idea not only to give certain "GPP" privileges but to capture the buildings' property taxes under a "PILOT",* the CAC is not opposed, *so long as neither further study of such proposals nor the actual implementation of such proposals affects in any way the Park's ongoing construction and operating schedules, nor result in any shortfall between the projected M&O expenses and projected dedicated revenues.*

9. **Parking:** The CAC accepts metering of the 80 parking spaces on Furman St., generating \$438,000/yr (\$5475/space), rejects the idea of an above-ground garage which would not only take up existing Park space but would only generate \$233,000/yr. (\$1165/space), but is open to studying the feasibility of developing an underground garage.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Flemming

As a long term resident of Cobble Hill and someone who gets involved in communities around the world working on public spaces, we naturally come across many examples of financing parks and waterfront destinations. In fact, for the more than 70 projects a year we are asked to work on, we develop, along with a program, vision and plan, management and financing suggestions, for most of them.

My recommendations creating a more diverse and financially sustainable park are focused on three potential destinations. They are:

- **Empire Stores over to Fulton landing.** This area could easily become the best waterfront destination in the New York Harbor. The two benchmarks attached above are two major attractions in Vancouver and Seattle. Both are the most visited sites in their respective cities and Granville Island is the 2nd most visited destination in Canada. Niagara Falls is the most visited.

**Pike Place Market** is part of a larger district with significant tax and business revenues beyond the Market itself. The market generated 87 million dollars in revenues in 2002 with Tax revenue of 3.9 million. There are 5500 jobs that are related to the market with salaries around 70 Million annually. There are 10 million visitors annually.

**Granville Island** has annual economic activity of 215 million with 3000 jobs on the Island. Tax receipts over a 25 year period have amounted to just under 400 million or 16 million annually. The annual operating budget is around 8 million and includes all cost including infrastructure costs. It is approximately 36 acres and was a "brown field" site. They have 12 million visitors annually. Both the Pike place market and Granville Island are publicly controlled and are considered to be local, community destinations. There are no chains in either, and the rents in Granville Island range from 125 per square foot for market stalls down to 6 dollars a square foot for artists and artisans. Tourists come, but the vast numbers are repeat users that are local. The only chain is Starbucks because the original store is there at Pike Place.

- **The area under the BQE Expressway.** I strongly believe that you could place low-rise building along the BQE instead of the berms. There is obviously no revenue from the berms, but cities with extended waterfronts that have small buildings along them are more active, safe and draw a more diverse audience. With building of 3-5 stories, the residential tenets are younger, and more a part of the community. High rise building attract older people who have less interest in activity and want peace and quiet. Vancouver has destroyed their waterfront with high rise buildings that have no uses in the ground floor and parks that are visual and virtually unusable. The planning staff thinks of their waterfront as having been privatized. David Wolentas told me the other day that he had offered to build buildings like that and that it would significantly help with supporting the costs of operating the waterfront. He might be able to elucidate his views if you would interview him. Also Eldon Scott and his Urban Space Management company is doing the DeKalb Market which is scheduled to open in two months. His Company is also working on Pier 57 on the west side of Manhattan. They use containers to create destinations within months creating small selling spaces for artists and artisans to sell their own products. His

partner Eric Reynolds has developed a half a dozen sites in London that collectively draw 15 million visitors per year. Our recent article on Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper describes this approach that could be applied to BBP. It would bring in diverse audiences, add jobs and income for the park. You will notice that we use a picture of Brooklyn Bridge Park to start the article.

<http://www.pps.org/articles/lighter-quicker-cheaper-a-low-cost-high-impact-approach/>

- **Pier 6 at Atlantic Avenue.** As you know there was no community process. This is clearly the worst designed part of the park. Clustering playgrounds, an isolated dog run, and a raised/perched/faux wetland as an anchor for Atlantic Avenue makes no sense. Some people call it stupid and an enormous waste of money. If you follow Ecological Urbanism or Landscape Urbanism, you will see how controversial these types of designs are. If you read into the discussions, or watch presentations by their proponents, which Van Valkenburg is a major player, you will see how little thought or attention is given to social/use issues. As you know, our core values are around place, and making places that are used by diverse cultures/ages is our objective. This park, and particularly pier 6, does not meet any of our criteria as a place. Our assessment of what a good place is has four qualities - Comfort and Image, Access and Linkage, Activities and Uses, and, Sociability.

<http://www.pps.org/placemaking/articles/placemaking-tools/>

Landscape Urbanism is a very disturbing "High Design" theory. Brooklyn Bridge Park is being called the first major park applying their principles. There is a lot to read about this aberration that will give you second thoughts about its value to the broader Brooklyn community. The two articles in Planetizen give a very good overview.

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/46990>

<http://www.planetizen.com/node/47909>

--

Fred Kent, President  
Project for Public Spaces  
700 Broadway, 4th Fl,  
New York, NY 10003  
212-620-5660 ext 310  
[twitter.com/Fred\\_Kent](https://twitter.com/Fred_Kent)  
[www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

## **A RESPONSE BY ROY W. SLOANE TO THE BBP COMMITTEE ON ALTERNATIVES TO HOUSING IN BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK DRAFT REPORT**

**APRIL 25, 2011**

### **CONCLUSIONS – BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE**

Thank you for the opportunity to present the conclusions that I have drawn from the BAE draft report and from the process that led to it's conclusions:

The good news is that the BAE draft report conclusively demonstrated that there are a number of ways other than housing to generate the revenue required by the Mayor. However, in all cases, significant revenue sources were systematically under-estimated. This includes revenue that could be obtained from film shoots and special events. Not studied at all were the Jehovah Witness properties and the yachting marina. This all leads to the disturbing conclusion that the draft report is little more than a carefully crafted propaganda document designed to support the Mayor's desire for luxury high rise housing on John Street and the upland of Pier 6.

I have no doubt that BAE is qualified and capable of finding the means to equitably and securely fund Brooklyn Bridge Park but the artificially imposed "threshold parameters" had the effect of a finger on the scale that both distorted the outcome and guaranteed that the Mayor's preference for housing would be the only possible conclusion. Further, I am of the strong opinion that the staff of the Development Corporation – Regina Meyer, David Lowen and Ellen Ryan – willfully and intentionally poisoned the public process in their personal efforts to sustain the Mayor's objective. It appears to me that they were, in fact, active supporters of housing who engaged in vigorous efforts to round up and coach speakers in favor of housing– many of whom they have business or professional relationships, providing or not providing information to BAE that would support their position or harmful to their opponents as well as mis-construing details of the draft report in their public presentations to CB6 and to the CAC . I contend that the staff's intervention was calculated in every instance to provide support for the pre-determined conclusion that luxury housing is the only means of supporting the park. If true, these are hardly the actions of disinterested, objective public officials seeking to fairly determine the most equitable way to fund Brooklyn Bridge Park.

I strongly support the resolutions of CB2, CB6 and the BBP CAC that call for the BAE to aggressively study potential revenue generating ideas and expense reduction options, including fundraising/sponsorship opportunities and options involving the Watchtower properties. In addition to the revenue sources mentioned in the CB2 and CB6 resolutions, the CAC urges BAE to consider other potential revenue sources including, but not limited to: a real estate transfer fee; enhanced revenues from parking (including the police garage); alternative approaches to the PID; and potential revenues from the yacht marina. I call on the CAH to support the conclusions of CB6 and the BBP CAC and request that BAE thoroughly explore these options and reject any more housing inside this park. Any further efforts at obfuscation, staging or rigging a pre-determined "luxury housing" outcome will be met with by a resounding, immediate public call on our elected officials to exercise their vetoes on housing.

From Anthony Manheim:

**“ALTERNATIVES TO HOUSING” WITHIN BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK**

\*\*\*\*\*

**JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES’ PROPERITES:**

To help finance completion of Brooklyn Bridge Park, the General Project Plan created over five years ago by the State and adopted last year by New York City, calls for the construction of 740 additional new market-rate apartments *inside* the Park (in addition to the 450 units at 360 Furman Street/One Brooklyn Bridge Park - currently half unsold) and 175 hotel rooms. These new residential units are proposed to be located at the two geographic ends of the Park (John Street and Pier #6) and at the middle of the Park at Pier #1.

**All new residential units needed to finance Brooklyn Bridge Park can alternatively be built on Jehovah’s Witnesses/Watchtower Society properties** across the street from the Park, pursuant to a joint venture agreement to be negotiated between the City and Watchtower, in the context of

- the City’s **“right of eminent domain”** to take private property for a public purpose, and **incorporating PILOT-paying property** into Brooklyn Bridge Park; and
- **Watchtower Society’s** announced intention, after more than a century here, to re-locate its world-wide headquarters and **dispose of its 4.4 million square feet of property in downtown Brooklyn**, on which it has never paid any NYC real estate taxes.

The joint venture would match revenues, timing and risks of the present plan, while granting the Watchtower Society an economic return commensurate with what it can now reasonably expect. Net tax revenues to the City will be unaffected. The **City has already decided to forgo real estate taxes on the 740 condos and 175 hotel rooms** to come “on stream” over the next several years, and be newly added to the universe of market-rate/luxury residential units which constitute the City’s real estate tax base. There is no financial difference to the City that depends upon which side of Furman Street those PILOT-paying units are located; they come out of the market-driven and market-determined increment within any given marketing period, of newly purchased and occupied luxury condos capable of paying NYC real estate taxes (or PILOTs). **That universe is determined by the market** – not by builders (or municipal bureaucrats). Otherwise, there would not be several hundred unsold condos at One Brooklyn Bridge Park!

The GPP calls for a total of approximately 1.1 million maximum gross square feet of new residential construction to accommodate 740 luxury condos and 175 hotel rooms “on site” (precisely 1,109,940 Max GSF, including parking – see separate note on Parking). The four Jehovah’s Witnesses properties directly across Furman Street in Fulton Ferry and overlooking Brooklyn Bridge Park from the west side of Columbia Heights can provide the same 1.1 million GSF (859,628 GSF in 51 Furman St. and 25, 122 & 128 Columbia Heights) plus an additional 272,182 as-of-right buildable GSF at 51 Furman St., which raises the total to 1,132,260 GSF.

[Should still more bulk be required, the two properties across Columbia Heights with Park views at 97 & 107 contain almost 200,000 additional GSF – without touching the small Ulrich Franzen residential building at 119 Columbia Heights or the major Towers and Bossert hotel properties -

whose aggregate bulk totals over a half-million more GSF. On the other hand, if a reduced number of residential units proves sufficient as a result of incorporation of other “Alternatives to Housing” revenue streams – either from updated evaluation of sources indicated in the 1997 Economic Viability Study (*e.g.* parking, *inter alia*), or otherwise (real estate transfer fee, PID, events, fundraising, etc.) – then even less than the one quarter of Watchtower’s current property holdings in downtown Brooklyn than herein proposed, would need to be constrained.]

The Watchtower Society, currently owns a total of 4.4 million built and buildable GSF in Downtown Brooklyn: 2,889,841 currently built (some of which exceeds current zoning but are “grandfathered”) + 1,506,644 buildable GSF under current zoning (of which 880,000 has already been approved at 85 Jay Street) = 4,396,485 – all of which it has stated it intends to dispose of over the next several years as it moves its world headquarters to property it owns upstate.

**Joint Venture: Alternative to “eminent domain” taking.** The joint venture agreement to be negotiated for the City (at the level of Deputy Mayor or Mayor’s Office) would give the City control over timing so as to match the marketing and revenue streams of the current plan’s on-site program. Fortunately, the gross market-driven parameters of the City’s timing would seem consonant with the Jehovah’s Witnesses stated objectives to complete their upstate facility before vacating Brooklyn.

But in reality, under the alternative prospect of the City’s right to take property for a public purpose under eminent domain, the City’s needs control: it simply is not credible to aver that building and financing a world class public park is somehow *less* a “public purpose” (the criterion for an “eminent domain” taking of private property – recently confirmed by the Court of Appeals, the highest court in NY State, and by the U.S Supreme Court) than the creation of a commercial basketball stadium at Atlantic Yards, a mile away.

What the Watchtower would be entitled to receive in an “eminent domain” taking is the current value of their real estate holdings, under *current market conditions*, and present zoning, with an as-of-right plan to build view-blocking towers in front of their major property. Fortunately for them, however, the City does not need, and should not want, to maximize its return – only to match timing and revenues of the current plan to finance Brooklyn Bridge Park. Therefore the **City does not need to acquire Watchtower property** – only to recover upfront that portion of payments pursuant to RFPs for redevelopment rights and ground leases that may be attributable to the further *build-out of the Park* which will have occurred in the meantime, the *elimination of direct competition* for the same buyers of condos within the Park, and the *cancelation of view-blocking towers* which would have been built. It is quite possible that essentially all – or almost all – the increase in value attributable to the recovery in the NYC luxury/market-rate condo market can be allocated to the Jehovah’s Witnesses. They would lose all such market improvement if they reject the joint venture and force the City to use eminent domain.

As in the case of condos/hotel rooms within the Park, the timing of those RFPs will have to await the recovery of the real estate market. (A recent *New York Times* article states “Sales of new single-family homes in February were down more than 80 percent from the 2005 peak... New single-family sales are now lower than at any point since the data was first collected in 1963, when the

nation had 120 million fewer residents.” <http://nyti.ms/g56mod> for full article.) Developers work with borrowed funds and institutional lenders cannot be expected to underwrite new residential real estate in or near Brooklyn Bridge Park while several hundred units at One Brooklyn Bridge Park remain unsold, and government regulators are scrutinizing speculative lending practices. [AIG, who financed One Brooklyn Bridge Park, is arguably the “poster child” of such activity; its implosion brought down Bear Stearns and indirectly led to the demise of Lehman Brothers. No, Brooklyn Bridge Park is not responsible for the world-wide financial debacle of the past 3 years and the worst recession in ¾ of a century, which the US is just now climbing out of, but the timing of recovery of the high-end NYC residential market is still some time off.) We should be taking every advantage of this market-driven delay, to review, revise and perfect to ensure that that we have the best possible plans – financial and in all other respects – for the best possible Brooklyn Bridge Park. We will not be given another “second chance”!

\*\*\*\*\*

**JEHOVAH WITNESSES/WATCHTOWER SOCIETY PROPERTY IN DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN**

ADDRESS	LOT AREA (SF)	LANDMARK	ZONING	FAR	MIN FAR PERMITTED BUILDING SIZE (SF)	MAX FAR PERMITTED BUILDING SIZE (SF)	CURRENT GSF	MAX BUILT/ BUILDABLE GSF
51 Furman St.	67,494	YES-DUMBO	M2-1	1.0 - 10.0	67,494	674,940	402,308	674,940
25 Columbia Hts	32,000	NO	M2-1	1.0 - 10.0	32,000	320,000	304,650	320,000
128 Columbia Hts	12,607	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	9,833	30,635	115,920	115,920
122 Columbia Hts	7,554	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	5,892	18,356	36,750	36,750
119 Columbia Hts	8,530	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	6,653	20,728	34,452	34,452
97 Columbia Hts	7,575	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	5,909	18,407	90,426	90,426
107 Columbia Hts	20,427	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	15,933	49,638	104,239	104,239
79 Willow St.	20,267	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	15,808	49,249	356,000	356,000
98 Montague St.	15,600	YES-BH	R-6	0.78 - 2.43	12,168	37,908	187,200	187,200
107 Adams St.	20,704	NO	M1-6	1.0 - 10.0	20,704	207,040	206,000	207,040
81 Prospect St.	8,253	NO	M1-6	1.0 - 10.0	8,253	82,530	81,000	82,530
64 Prospect St.	20,600	NO	M1-6	1.0 - 10.0	20,600	206,000	162,000	206,000
137 Pearl St.	14,800	NO	M1-6	1.0 - 10.0	14,800	148,000	191,800	191,800
175 Pearl St.	21,218	NO	M1-6	1.0 - 10.0	21,218	212,180	191,688	212,180
90 Sands St.	21,175	NO	M1-6	1.0 - 10.0	21,175	211,750	363,100	363,100
85 Jay St.	134,988	-	M1-2/R8	0.94 - 6.02	126,889	812,628	-	880,000
173 Front St.	3,200	NO	M1-4/R8A	5.4 - 7.2	17,280	23,040	-	23,040
177 Front St.	5,200	NO	M1-4/R7A	4.0	20,800	20,800	5,000	20,800
200 Water St.	21,500	YES-DUMBO	M1-4/R7A	4.0	86,000	86,000	4,200	86,000
61 Adams St.	17,564	NO	M1-5/R9-1	.99 - 7.52	17,388	132,081	41,150	132,081
68 Adams St.	11,958	NO	M1-2/R8A	6.02	71,987	71,987	11,958	71,987
					<b>618,785</b>	<b>3,433,897</b>	<b>2,889,841</b>	<b>4,396,485</b>

Revised on 25-Apr-11

**Parking as revenue source**

In 1970, NYC’s Department of Transportation made a study of on-street parking in Brooklyn Heights, and found it to be at 140% of capacity. It has not gotten better since then, with the closing of the municipal lot at the foot Pierrepont Street for the Morgan Stanley tower and the Love Lane Garage for condo construction (currently suspended). Brownstones constructed as single-family homes now contain 3 or four households, some with multiple car-owning drivers. [The author

moved into the neighborhood in 1960 when indoor parking was \$30/month; he became a street-parker some years ago, as monthly fees approached \$500.] The \$250,000 Economic Viability Study of the Piers Sector (Piers #1-6) of Brooklyn Bridge Park (7-page Executive Summary or full 90-page Study available from <mailto:bbp@aamanheim.net>) projected annual lease revenues from Parking at \$1,210,000 for a normal “stabilized” year after full build-out of the Park - and this was just the Piers Sector! It is unclear how BAE Urban Economics could find only a *maximum of* \$438,000 – 1/3 of what Ernst & Young, who crunched the numbers for the 1997 Praedium Group Study, found 14 years earlier – and that for only a portion of the entire Brooklyn Bridge Park site.

Part of the explanation may lie in the fact that the earlier Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition plan and program (sometimes referred to as the Schnadelbach plan after the landscape architect from whom it was commissioned) had a *half*-berm in front of the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, hollowed out on the Furman Street side to accommodate major linear parking (*inter alia*) while increasing usable parkland within Brooklyn Bridge Park itself. [*N.B.* Such a structure might be partially paid for by DOT in connection with the BQE cantilever renovation.]

I wanted to share briefly my perspective on the wonderful, evolving Brooklyn Bridge Park. With the opening of small sections of the park, it is no longer a dream but an evolving reality, and it is critical that progress be maintained on a timely basis to complete this park and to establish a permanent, sustainable funding mechanism. It is critical that our elected and appointed officials move forward now on a viable plan to get this done, and it is clear after much thought, study, review, and re-study and re-review that there is a workable plan on the table. Simply put, residential development, at the very edges of the park (it really is just the Pier 6 and John Street sites that are being debated—3 plots with a footprint under  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an acre) may not be perfect but it is a path towards sufficiency and sustainability for a world class amenity for NYC, for Brooklyn, and for the many visitors to our borough and city each year. The completed Pier 1 is an absolute gem—congratulations to the design, construction, and management teams that got it done!

There are tradeoffs in every endeavor. In a difficult economic environment and at a time of continuous deficits and challenging city and state budgets there is no evidence that the park can or will be built and maintained out of the general ledgers and current or future tax base of the city and state. While that is unfortunate, it is understandable. And while it is clear that more park and less development (if it were paid for and maintained in perpetuity by the city or state) would be a wonderful answer, after several decades of debate and deferral we've not achieved that outcome, nor is there any reason to believe that outcome is forthcoming. Instead, we have a workable plan and compromise at hand: accessing permanent funding through limited and thoughtful development within the park footprint itself.

We must not stop or delay, and should move now to complete the rest of the park without waiting and hoping for another two decades for money that has never come. Waiting for an unrealistic or unattainable choice is voting against our park!

Many thanks for your hard work and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tim Ingrassia

April 25, 2011  
THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Dear Committee on Alternatives to Housing:

We write -- as the New York City Councilmembers representing Brooklyn Bridge Park and surrounding neighborhoods -- to urge further consideration of potential revenue from the manufacturing-zoned properties owned by the Watchtower Society as an alternative to the new construction of housing on the Pier 6, Pier 1, and John Street sites. We believe that the original decision by the Committee to consider these potential revenues was correct, that their exclusion from the first draft of the report was a mistake, and that they could serve as a sufficient and appropriate revenue stream to fund the maintenance and operations of the Park without the development of additional housing. In this letter we describe a general framework, with two options, that we strongly believe the Committee should consider.

To be clear, we do not necessarily accept the framework that Brooklyn Bridge Park must be entirely "self-sustaining." Neither of us was in office when this framework was adopted, so we have the benefit of subsequent information. While there are clearly substantial costs, both capital and operating, to the Park, we believe that there are also substantial benefits to the city as a whole, in addition to nearby neighborhoods. The Park is already functioning to increase nearby property values, to attract tourists and new park users not only to the Brooklyn waterfront but Governor's Island as well, to provide the open space to serve growing neighborhoods, and to serve as a regional amenity. This value will be realized by the communities near the park, and by the city as a whole. It will also be realized by the Watchtower Society on all of their properties, and by any future developer who may seek to convert these properties to residential use. We believe it is therefore appropriate for tax revenue -- including new revenues that would come from the Watchtower properties -- to sustain this park, just as it does other parks in New York City.

Notwithstanding these objections to the general framework, we believe that the model we propose here meets the criteria laid out by the Committee: it does not displace revenue to which the City is otherwise entitled, and the overall timing and risk is consistent with the City's proposal for residential development at John Street, Pier 6, and Pier 1.

We propose that the General Project Plan (GPP) and boundary areas of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation be modified to include the eight (8) manufacturing-zoned properties belonging to the Watchtower Society. The plan modification would not reduce the properties' current value in any way. It does not displace revenue to which the City is otherwise entitled, since those properties are not currently zoned for residential use, and would therefore be taxed at

a much lower rate if they were to stay manufacturing-zoned, even if they were transferred to a for-profit owner.

Indeed, this proposal is based on the precedent set by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation when it expanded the GPP and boundary areas of the Park to include 360 Furman Street, now known as One Brooklyn Bridge Park. The PILOTs and ground rent produced by One Brooklyn Bridge Park are now projected to be \$2,982,000 per year, or 18% of the total revenue needed to fund the maintenance of the Park, according to the Brooklyn Bridge Park Financial Plan of January 2009.

Two options for converting the properties to residential use should be explored:

1. Through the GPP modification, the properties could be rezoned to allow residential development, but tax revenues above the current levels would be directed as PILOTs to Brooklyn Bridge Park. This would not displace any revenues which the City is receiving now, or to which it is entitled. And it would not harm the Watchtower Society, since they would not only still have the full current value of their property, but would achieve a rezoning to residential without paying any more in taxes than if those buildings became zoned residentially immediately.

2. Additional revenue, beyond that which would be generated by Option #1, could be achieved if the GPP required the developer (the Watchtower, or one of their partners) to share with the public some of the increase in value from the rezoning. This could be structured either as a one-time fee, or as an ongoing additional PILOT. This would still not constitute a taking, since the Watchtower would not lose any value. In fact, they would gain value through the rezoning; however, some of this incremental value would be shared with the BBPDC. This would generate additional revenue for the Park, since it would provide both the residential PILOT, and the conversion fee.

In the presentation by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation to Community Board 6 on Monday, April 11th, David Lowin and Regina Myer of Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation argued two reasons that they believe this suggestion violated the parameters of the report: (1) because the Watchtower Society might prefer to go through the ULURP process to achieve a rezoning, and (2) because the City would receive the additional tax revenue if the property were rezoned. We reject both these reasons.

As the City Council members representing the Park, the Watchtower properties, and surrounding area, we can assure you that a rezoning through ULURP is not at all "as-of-right." We would raise many questions about the impacts of a proposed residential rezoning on our neighborhood, including the impact on public open space and the loss of potential light manufacturing jobs that could operate in those properties as of right. It is not at the discretion of the property owner which process would be better for considering a rezoning. If an ESDC-led process would produce a superior public outcome to ULURP, while still allowing the Watchtower Society to achieve their goals, then that is what we should do.

For similar reasons, our proposal would not displace revenue to which the City is entitled. Even putting aside the question of the properties that are already zoned residential, there is no question that for the properties that are currently zoned manufacturing, the City is not “entitled” to the level of revenue that would result from a rezoning to residential any more than the owner is “entitled” to the rezoning. Under the GPP process that we propose, with goals of developing a regional park that serves surrounding communities and beyond, it would be entirely appropriate to use the additional revenue to support park operations.

Finally, on the question of timing and risk: while it is of course true that the BBPDC has more control over the sale of the John Street and Pier 6 properties, what is required here is a long-term analysis. Because there is more overall square footage in the Watchtower properties, because these buildings are already built, and because the issue of views from the Watchtower property would not be obstructed, we believe that the overall risk and timing is commensurate.

Again, we strongly urge you to study these options and present them to the full Committee on Alternatives to Housing in your final report.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Councilmember Stephen Levin  
District #33, Brooklyn

Councilmember Brad Lander  
District, #39, Brooklyn

BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK DEFENSE FUND, INC.

To: Ron Golem, Bay Area Economics Group

Date: April 25, 2011

The following provides testimony from the BBP DF to the Study of Alternatives to Housing for the Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations, Draft Report, February 22, 2011.

**Summary Position on the Consultant's Report:**

We are pleased that the BBP entity, through their direction of the Bay Area Economics Group, has found many ways to pay for park maintenance without the need for more housing inside this public park's borders. We were especially pleased that they looked for multiple funding sources versus relying on one source - private housing inside the park - for park financing.

But this report reflects significant shortcomings and factual errors that we hope will be changed in the final draft. This report has not:

Explored the Jehovah Witnesses properties, a Real Estate Transaction fee or BQE rebuild funds, as recommended in community testimony. Each of these three funding sources meet and in some cases exceed the original conditions as well as the new committee-driven stipulations added after the community's first testimony.

Looked at all the parking spaces for revenue that were planned inside the park (only 80 spaces versus the 1120 spaces planned) or parking off-site, as recommended in the 2001 Plan and in other community testimony.

Properly accounted for revenue from events, concessions, philanthropy and movie shoots particularly in light of the fact that the BBP entity today receives fees from these sources that exceed the numbers reflected in the BAE draft report.

Factored into their funding algorithm increased park utility and job creation from design changes that would also bring significant revenue for park operations.

Reflected fundamental events in its history and has factual errors in the description of the park.

Presented fair and balanced array of experts, articles or websites in its analysis. Almost all sources considered are organizations (or a lone local newspaper) that have promoted housing from the start. This lack of objectivity makes the report highly suspect.

**Detailed Requests for Changes to the Draft Report**

**1. Jehovah Witness Properties:** While the specifics of this idea are contained in several other community letters and testimony, we would like to again add our request to study this opportunity. We would like the report to also reflect that the full BBP Board voted on Dec. 20th to study these adjacent properties - we were surprised they were not fully explored in the Draft Report.

There are many ways to package this deal. The question raised in the report and in other testimony is that the Society is inscrutable. But this is challenged by their very public announcements over the past several years that they will in fact be vacating Brooklyn. It has been extensively reported in many newspapers beginning in 2006, with quotes from the Society's directors of their intent to sell Brooklyn properties. We also request that BAE make clear in their final report exactly who met with the Society regarding the properties. Ms. Regina Myer told the CB6 Executive Committee on 4/11/11 that she did not meet with the Witnesses which is in direct conflict with Mr. David Lowen's statement 3/31/11 to the CAC that he and Ms. Myer *did* meet with them. Who at the Society was in attendance? When and where did this occur? What was the exact offer proffered? Is it in writing and if so, will it be included in this final report?

**2. Real Estate Transaction Trust:** This was another high revenue opportunity for park financing that was outlined in the original testimony that went unstudied in the BAE draft report. This would be a one-time fee and as such, would meet the original stipulations for the study. East Hampton employs it, as do other towns in NY and across the nation. Buyers pay a one time 2% fee on the purchase of residential or commercial properties. This fee would apply to homes and businesses in the 2 to 3 block radius of the park - the borders suggested for the PID in the draft report. Towns use these funds to secure and maintain open space. The land is placed in an irrevocable trust. Assuming 300 properties each year in this catchment area with the average sale price of \$600,000, the park could obtain \$3.6 million each year for the Trust.

*Again, while not the sole means for park support as we agree that the park should not rely heavily on one source (one of the problems with the condo plan today), this fee is a very worthy way to recognize the value of the park to surrounding property owners at the same time not invade the NYC tax base (the way the current PILOTs do).*

We urge BAE to study this alternative to its fullest extent.

**3. BQE Rebuild:** The State DOT is responsible for rebuilding the federal highway known as the BQE which runs parallel to Brooklyn Bridge Park. A stipulation for this rebuild project, as with all federal highway projects, is that communities be compensated for land used or disturbed during highway repair and reconstruction. The specifics of this are found in the Federal Highway Administration's code which should be mined specifically for BBP. While this may be a one time payment, it could be considerable given the significant work that needs to be done on the triple cantilevered roadway overhanging the park. It could partially off-set on-going maintenance costs at the same time provide needed funds the city has currently not set aside to finish the park (estimated in excess of \$139 million of which the Mayor has only promised \$55 million if maintenance funds are found).

**4. Parking:** If 1120 parking spaces are planned for the park, why are only 80 spaces paying into the park? If 80 spaces could generate \$438,000, what would 1120 spaces yield? If the same formula were used, wouldn't \$6 million from just this one source, parking, go a long way toward preventing more housing inside the park? Why weren't off site parking properties, like those at York Street (Jehovah Witness property rezoned for parking), the LICH lots on Warren and

Congress Streets, the lot at Willow Place and State Street, and on Water Street (police/muni-parking lot) considered for revenue production? *Parking was considered a primary funding mechanism in the two earlier park funding analyses.* We strongly recommend a fresh look at this option, even if it means building a lot along Furman Street (under or as a replacement for the expensive berm or even a new structure at Pier 6 disguised as a mountain climbing wall). Parking is needed in the area and many park goers, especially for evening events at the park, rely on autos.

Having on and off site parking performs three critical functions: 1. relieves the surrounding communities of heavy traffic and the polluting-search for on-street, local spots; 2. provides park goers with an easy in/out particularly for large family outing and sports meets (especially for volunteer coaches toting lots of bulky and heavy equipment); 3. is the most reliable, reasonable and park-friendly means of funding, as used by many parks for revenue generation throughout the nation.

It is a glaring oversight to limit parking revenue to a handful of spots, knowing that the majority of parking spaces in 1 BBP are today used by park goers. Parking in this building should be going to the park, too. This was engineered out of the plan at early stages of the park-housing plan. That was a mistake we hope will not be repeated in the hotel building or other buildings on and off the site going forward.

**5. Events:** The draft report suggests buildings must be built in order to have events at the park, thus undercutting revenue. This is not so. Using comparables to other NYC parks - Bryant Park and Asser Levy Park on Coney Island are two examples - demonstrates that significant events held in these other parks do not require building a permanent facility. The Bryant Park's annual ice rink - free skating we should note, not the for-pay model the report suggests - and the Fashion Week events are some very visible examples of vendors who bring in a temporary facility that not only generates revenue for their business but pays the park considerable funds, in excess of the assumptions made for BBP. We would like to see the final report reflect a much broader array of non-permanent, non-built structures that vendors bring in at their own expense and that the true revenues from such operations (like the free ice-skating at Bryant Park and Fashion Week with funds collected on other rentals and concessions) be reflected in this BBP analysis.

We would also like the report to reflect what the designer paid in 2007 for the use of BBP Pier 3. This fashion company erected their own facility for just one night. How much did they pay to rent this pier? It should be noted in the report that this event occurred long before the park was opened/beautified and thus the amount paid likely did not reflect a premium price the visual beauty of a finished park could generate. But it would be a start to understand the opportunities for high-paying events.

We also suggest that BAE report reflect other amusement venues that come to other waterside parks across the country and in Canada, for temporary events, again bringing their own temporary facility and high volume, highpaying visitors.

**6. Recreation:** We would also like the report to revisit the argument that temporary events as well as recreational features may conflict with the design intent of BBP. The original design intent of BBP, per the 13 Guiding Principles (attached) were clear - the communities wanted both active and passive recreation, and buildings (not housing) on a scale relative to the surrounding communities (i.e., 3 and 4 story historic brownstones). These are the enduring principles for the park that should again be reiterated in this report, and they should still be operative as the 13 Guiding Principles represented years of united community advocacy and agreement.

Landscaping and passive park activities *are* appropriate and should be evident in the park, particularly for the “green heart” close to existing residences on the Promenade. That said, when Landscaping replaced *all* yearround active recreation for which the communities long advocated, it became an issue of social as well as economic injustice. The very community that advocated for “a park that pays for itself” then proceeded to push revenue generation to the areas of the park used by their neighbors, arguably those most in need of a true park with lots of year round recreation. If this park is required to pay for itself then there can be no sacred cows. If public funds are used to build the park in the first place then the public should have access to features they have long-advocated, including year round recreation, in the locations that best addresses their community’s needs. This is not accomplished in the current park design. And to use as an excuse that placing recreation at Pier 6 or at John Street, as originally planned, is in conflict with the current design or that it will cost more to build a building, shows a complete lack of understanding about how this “park” has evolved to serve the self interests of one group above the needs of the greater whole. We suggest all would well be served to correct a narrative that tries to mask the social and economic inequities inherent in the pro-housing design.

Importantly, high volume recreational use should not be dismissed as inappropriate for BBP (see BAE comment on pg. 34 of Draft). Recreation, along with events, has the added benefit of making the park a destination - putting it in the mind of area residents and tour operators on a more frequent basis and thus, solving another issue BAE raised - the so-called remote location of the park. Frequent and high volume use should be judged excellent for a park. Isn’t it appropriate that there be lots of things to do inside the park, year round, in order for there to be the greatest number of people coming throughout the year, keeping it used (and safe), and generating the highest return on investment for concessions and activities and events? *It is a perverse view of this park to make it entirely passive (suggesting deference to luxury condo owners who would live inside a public park) and then suggest any activity that brings many visitors is in conflict with the park’s underlying design intent.*

We strongly recommend the consultants readjust their thinking on this issue - particularly as this park has the added responsibility of paying for its ongoing maintenance and future capital costs! The mere suggestion that events and recreational activities will bring more people should not be viewed apprehensively - it should be celebrated.

A park with many things to do in it, year round, will also encourage job creation - one of the key principles for the design of this park throughout its 30 year period of development. If these jobs had PILOT’s attached to them, this could be yet another way to fund the park. We recommend the Consultants consider job creation from ideas such as Atlantic Ferry Landing, recreational facilities

and more events in the park, calculating the impact on NYC taxes. Were it not for a busy park, the city would not be entitled to any increases in taxable incomes. This impact should also be noted in the report's written analysis.

**7. Atlantic Ferry Landing:** Testimony for a cultural, hospitality, recreational and ferry transit hub with centerpiece 3D info-tainment museum at Pier 6 was almost entirely ignored in the draft report. Community testimony presented a museum using holographic images of the area and its characters - a time machine of the site from pre-Columbian to Washington to building the Bridge to the more recent events of 9/11 and today's park. Visitors literally fly over the site as if they are there, with astounding realism. It becomes a destination that an operator builds and City shares in fees (like Boston's Freedom Trail Exhibit in 1976, updated with the realism of Universal Studio/ Pixar animation in a very small footprint). This idea makes use of a unique transportation location, builds traffic along Atlantic Avenue and helps create permanent jobs all while capturing the area's unrivaled history.

It is of grave concern that the report does not consider the destination potential for Pier 6, even for recreation, claiming it lacks transit access. The same is true for Pier 1 yet businesses along the Fulton corridor are thriving - one need only look at Grimaldi pizza every day and night of the week, even in sub-zero degree weather, with a line down one city block to get in, to demonstrate the vitality of a destination. This could also be true for Pier 6 but the ideas offered in testimony were not fully explored. The final report should list whom the consultants met with on these destination ideas, and the context for those meetings with potential operators at Atlantic Ferry.

Finally, adaptive re-use of existing structures like 350 Furman Street, the maintenance building, and Pier 2 sheds are additional ways to make the park active with year-round structures that are already in the park. These could be repurposed for both free recreation (bringing people to the park who would in turn use concessions) as well as events and even the museum (without building anything new at Pier 6).

**8. Movie shoots:** The report assumed only 5 shoots at the city's permit rate of \$300 per shoot. It is disingenuous to suggest that only a mere \$1500 could be generated from feature film shoots. In early April of this year local news media reported that an operator paid tens of thousands to the BBP entity for just one shoot. The study needs to reflect the real rates being paid to the BBP entity *today* for movie shoots, and market rates for other public space that is charged, not an intentionally low-balled permit fee. We also ask that the report chronicle the number of shoots that have already taken place in the park with the dollars paid. Fudging these real numbers becomes another glaring example of where the report significantly undervalues actual funds coming to the park, calling into question the entire report's veracity and intent. It is not worthy of BAE or any remaining possibility that this study might be objective.

**9. Concessions:** Adding only one restaurant, one kiosk, one cart and suggesting that there were already many retailers nearby that would compete with in-park concessions would deny the obvious: Madison Sq. Park's Shake Shack contributes \$3 Million per year to that park yet is surrounded by hundreds of food venues. The same is true for Union Sq. park's new restaurant venue. The Prospect Park boathouse is one comparable that should be reviewed as both a

concession and as an event venue for BBP - how much revenue does this venue provide the city? If BBP is treated as envisioned and described in the entity's literature, i.e., *a destination park*, with things to do there year round, then in-park concessions will thrive and other destination parks (like Prospect Park) should be used as a comparables. Limiting the thinking and vision for this park has led to a very limited view of its true revenue potential.

### **Report's Factual Errors, Missing or Biased Data:**

**1. Descriptions of the park:** In many places throughout the report, condo housing is referred to as at the "periphery" of the park. This is at best misleading and disingenuous. The housing is *inside the park's borders, in the footprint of the park*, and all housing buildings are *located at critical entrances* to the park. Of the four primary park entrances - Atlantic Avenue, Joralemon Street, Pier 1 and John Street, where more than 90% of all park visitors arrive - there are housing buildings planned. *Entrances to a public park could hardly be considered "periphery"*. We recommend that the report change the wording to simply state that the housing is inside the park at each of four entrances and simply *drop the fiction that park entrances are peripheral*. They are not and to suggest otherwise strains the report's credibility. It, too, is unworthy of BAE's place in objective analysis.

For the record, there are more than 14 acres of this park dedicated to housing and hotel if the roadways that support the housing are included. It is false to also claim the park is 85 acres - even the recent BBP reports say it is 72 acres of land of which about 4 acres have existing buildings on them. We hope this factual error will be corrected in the final report.

On page 17, please change the "70 percent of the model is tied to housing" as it is more than 90%. Per your own notations, the remaining percentages are: stores (4%), concessions (3.4%) and events (.5%).

**2. Historical references:** The historical summary completely ignores the non-housing 2003 GPP and its positive and united community testimony and support. It is wrong to ignore this important GPP in the historical summary. It should be noted that almost every word of the 2003 GPP was changed in 2006 under the guise of a "revised GPP". The only words that remained constant were the historical description of the site. Please add this to the timeline.

**3. Missing data/suspect analysis:** BBP did not provide consultants with the 2001 Plan or the 1997 revenue report where multiple funding streams were analyzed and recommended, including a for-pay marina. Interestingly, sufficient funds were found to pay for park operations without need of private housing in both of those earlier analyses. This should be reflected in both this report's narrative and in the historical timeline. To simply ignore this earlier work is a gross oversight or worse, calls into question the credibility of this study.

Additionally, we strongly request articles written by the major local newspapers that have the largest circulation (CNG Group) as well as Metro NY, NY Daily News and NY Post be cited in the final report (vs. the limited, privately owned pro-housing Eagle publication). We were surprised at

the selection of pro-housing articles from the NY Times and the absence of the most in-depth article on this subject from the Times (notably the March 24, 2009 two page article). Additionally, to cite only the BHA, Conservancy, Eagle and BH blog as the only websites reviewed, denying the many other sites from the 13 organizations listed on our letterhead, the Post and Daily News blogs, The Carroll Gardens Patch, Pardon Me for Asking and the Cobble Hill blog would be equally relevant sites to our organization's for information about the community's desires and ideas for a park.

**4. Use of appropriate comparables:** BBP is written about, conceived of and planned as a one of the great destination parks in NYC. As such, not to have used other destination parks including Prospect Park (for concessions), Bryant Park ( for movie shoots/events), Central Park(for outdoor events and concessions), Flushing Meadow (for recreational venues) as comparables for BBP is a gross oversight. Other parks outside of NYC that are appropriate as they have self sustaining components and are waterside that should be used in this study are: the Presidio, Granville Island, Vancouver and the Santa Monica Pier. We hope this oversight will be corrected in the final report.

**5. Stipulations:** The consultants and the CAH should consider adding some stipulations to their analysis, including if the current plan/design for each section of the park actually promotes *park dwell time* - a critical evaluative parameter for a public park. Concessions, a museum and Atlantic Ferry would rate favorably while one season-only, passive landscaping or private housing (a different sort of "dwell" than real park advocates would ever consider) would not. We also suggest that time-to-build be considered a stipulation. It is faster to repurpose a building than start from scratch - additional support for Jehovah Witness buildings over new housing in the speed to market quest.

In conclusion, we are pleased that the report has identified many ways to pay for the park without the need for more housing. But, we are concerned that history is being re-written and that the draft demonstrates a disturbing lack of appreciation for attracting many people to the park. Return on Investment should be considered in the analysis but is not in the current draft - something we also hope the report addresses in its final version. Suggesting, as this report also does, that high park usage is in conflict with the park's design goals, is disturbing. We need our parks for both passive ("heart of green") as well as active recreation. Unless BBP becomes both, its ability to pay for itself will be severely limited. Passive-only was never the design intent or the community's goal for BBP, and the consultant's analysis should not prey to the social and economic inequity that is implied by having a viewing-only park with precious landscaping and private luxury housing parked at critical entrances to this public park.

Sincerely,

Judith Francis, President, BBPDF  
Dorothy Siegel, VP, BBPDF  
Bob Stone, Treasurer  
Mary Goodman, Board Member, at large  
Kenn Lowy, President, Friends of Brooklyn Bridge Park

Doreen Gallo, President, DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance  
Maria Pagano, President, Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association  
Glenn Kelly, President, Friends of Carroll Park  
Roy Sloane, President, Cobble Hill Association  
Adam Meshberg, President, Vinegar Hill Association  
Anthony Manheim, Founder, BBP Coalition  
Lucy Koteen, Member, Ft. Greene Assn.  
Linda DeRosa, Secretary, BBP DF

**DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN WATERFRONT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION  
BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK 13 GUIDING PRINCIPALS**

**THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE BROOKLYN WATERFRONT SHALL BE GUIDED BY  
THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES**

JULY 18, 1992 (This is the date the principles were signed by H. Golden, S. Solarz, E. Dugan, M. Connor, K. Fisher and T. Manheim and the sent to UDC)

**1. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

- a. The Plan shall celebrate the unparalleled vistas and historic nature of the site with a worldclass design affording a spectacular entry into Brooklyn.
- b. The Plan shall be conducted by a public entity which holds title to the site which includes Port Authority and other public and private parcels.
- c. The Plan shall encompass the waterfront area between the Manhattan Bridge and Atlantic Avenue including Empire-Fulton Ferry State Park, the Brooklyn Bridge area and the upland of Pier
- d. The overall Plan shall be agreed to before permanent use or construction is authorized.

**2. FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND FULL PUBLIC REVIEW THROUGHOUT THE  
PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT PROCESSES**

- a. Including representatives of the Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition, Citywide and Brooklyn groups who have devoted years to public involvement and professional planning for the site.
- b. Including Citywide and Brooklyn area business, labor, civic and educational leaders.

**3. RETAIN AND ENHANCE SCENIC VIEWS**

- a. Preserve existing street-end view corridors, including Atlantic Avenue and Old Fulton Street.
- b. Protect and enhance the view of the Brooklyn Bridge and its towers, the Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor from the adjacent communities and the Promenade.

#### 4. PUBLIC OWNERSHIP TO PLAN, DEVELOP, OPERATE AND MANAGE THE SITE

a. In accordance with the overall Plan, issue carefully phased sequential requests for proposals for construction and operation through ground leases for commercial developments.

#### 5. MAXIMIZE DEDICATED PARK LAND AND OPEN SPACE FOR YEAR ROUND PUBLIC RECREATION, BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE

a. The goal for the redevelopment is public access and use in a mixed-use development consisting predominantly of, and including the maximum level of, dedicated parkland and open space, for both active and passive recreation.

#### 6. FOSTER PUBLIC ACCESS AND USES FROM BROOKLYN AND THROUGHOUT THE REGION WHILE RESPECTING AND PROTECTING THE CHARACTER OF, AND IMPACTS ON, ADJACENT COMMUNITIES

#### 7. DEVELOP AND PROVIDE FOR ENFORCEMENT OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION GUIDELINES EMPHASIZING DESIGN QUALITY AND PROVIDING ENFORCEABLE LIMITS ON THE HEIGHTS, BULK, MASSING AND FOOTPRINT

#### 8. DEVELOP A FISCALLY PRUDENT PLAN

a. Specialized commercial uses (e.g., executive conference center/destination resort, restaurants, maritime center) shall be encouraged and residential and office uses shall be discouraged.

b. The site shall have only so much commercial development in a park-like setting as is necessary to enliven the area, to provide security and to finance ongoing operations.

c. The revenues from such commercial uses shall be committed to the operation and maintenance of dedicated park and open space areas and contribute to capital development costs.

d. The development of commercial uses, open space and park areas specified in the overall Plan shall be implemented in an incremental and coordinated manner.

#### 9. FOSTER JOB DEVELOPMENT

a. Favor development that generates permanent skilled jobs, especially based on marine repair, hotel-conference and restaurant services and maritime activities.

#### 10. FOSTER WATER-RELATED DEVELOPMENT

a. Encourage uses that are enhanced by a waterfront location and/or that will enhance the waterfront.

11. REQUIRE A SCALE AND BUILT FORM THAT RELATES CLOSELY TO THE SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS

12. FOSTER THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SITE AND DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN, INCLUDING INCREASED TRANSPORTATION OPPORTUNITIES

- a. Trolleys, buses and other public transportation to connect the site to rail and subway services.
- b. Encourages the provision of pedestrian and bicycle access to, and usage within, the site.

13. MINIMIZE NOISE AND AIR POLLUTION

- a. Minimize vehicular traffic congestion and pollution impact on neighborhoods to the north, east and south.

Ron Golem, Principal  
Bay Area Economics  
121 West 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 705  
New York, New York 10001

April 25, 2011

Dear Mr. Golem,

The DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance (DNA), supports the Motion passed on April 20, 2011 -CAC meeting at LICH: Maker: Dorothy Siegel, BBPDF Seconder: Richard Bashner, CB6

The CAC endorses the positions taken by CB6 and CB2 that encourage the BAE to aggressively study the potential revenue generating ideas and expense reduction options, including fundraising/sponsorship opportunities and options involving the Watchtower properties. In addition to the revenue sources mentioned in the CB2 and CB6 resolutions, the CAC urges BAE to consider other potential revenue sources including, but not limited to: a real estate transfer fee: enhanced revenues from parking (specifically, the police garage): alternative approaches to the PID; and potential revenues from the yacht marina. The CAC further urges BAE to provide a point-by-point analysis of the revenue generators in the 1997 Praedium Group Study.

In addition DNA supports recommendations made by the Campaign for Brooklyn Bridge Park and the Brooklyn Bridge Park Defense Fund.

The DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance commends the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the Committee on Alternatives to Housing, and Bay Area Economics for finding numerous ways to pay for the park without additional housing, in keeping with DNA's long standing position against housing inside the park.

Since the General Project Plan was completed in 2005, the housing bubble has burst.

Alternative to all new proposed residential units needed to finance Brooklyn Bridge Park, can be adaptively reuse Jehovah Witnesses/Watchtower Society properties across the street from the Park negotiated between the City and the Watchtower. The Campaign for Brooklyn Bridge Park explains this in great detail.

In addition, in 2007, DNA worked with the Municipal Art Society in their application to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Brooklyn Heritage Industrial Waterfront was placed on the national Trust's "11 Most Endangered Sites in America". The Brooklyn Bridge Park Development Corporation ignored their advocacy, and the Purchase Building was demolished as well as the Cold Storage Building. What is startling about your draft report was the complete omission of the economic value of our historic resources. From Brooklyn Heights, through Fulton Ferry, DUMBO to Vinegar Hill are continuous NYC historic districts- (Brooklyn Heights being the first and DUMBO being the 90<sup>th</sup>-designated in 2007).

The DUMBO Neighborhood Alliance requests that you consider the designation reports for the four historic districts, consults with the Historic District Council as well as the National Trust for the treatment and recommendations of our historic resources currently compromised by design. DNA will facilitate comments by historian David McCullough, filmmaker Ken Burns, historians Frances Marone and Andrew Dolkart, as well as the Historic Districts Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation upon request. There needs to be a PRESERVATION INTERVENTION-a-NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

Neglected opportunities exist at all entrances to the Park- Pier 6, Fulton Ferry and the North entrance- Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass. I will speak about the DUMBO entrance. The amazing view corridors and public spaces occupied by the Department of Transportation neglect and obstruct public access that pre-exists. In 2010, DNA hired urban planner, Paul Graziano to create a zoning proposal for the 3 historic waterfront neighborhoods. While Brooklyn City Planning suggested our proposed suggestions “too visionary” for the Con Edison properties, be considered as parkland in the future - ConEdison announced that their Vinegar Hill Plant would close a year later. When the John Street lot was on the auction block in 1997, it was DNA that met with the Trust for Public Land to have this waterfront property be open space as part of the park. The John Street lot has the BEST scenic views of both the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges. The Park Plan needs a preservation awakening.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to reach out for supplemental documentation or historic materials.

Sincerely,

Doreen Gallo, Executive Director

917-596-3901

Hello,

At a meeting on April 20, 2011, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Community Advisory Council passed the below motion commenting on the BAE draft report on alternatives to housing in Brooklyn Bridge Park. We have also attached letters from Community Boards 2 and 6 to which our comments refer.

*The CAC endorses the positions taken by CB6 and CB2 that encourage the BAE to aggressively study potential revenue generating ideas and expense reduction options, including fundraising/sponsorship opportunities and options involving the Watchtower properties. In addition to the revenue sources mentioned in the CB2 and CB6 resolutions, the CAC urges BAE to consider other potential revenue sources including, but not limited to: a real estate transfer fee; enhanced revenues from parking (specifically, the police garage); alternative approaches to the PID; and potential revenues from the yacht marina. The CAC further urges BAE to provide a point by point analysis of the revenue generators covered in the 1997 Praedium Group study.*

Thank you for your consideration,

Nancy Webster and John Dew  
Co-chairs  
Brooklyn Bridge Park Community Advisory Committee

## **ATLANTIC AVENUE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**

April 25, 2011

TO: BBPDC Committee on Alternatives to Housing  
FROM: Atlantic Avenue Local Development Corporation

The mission of the Atlantic Avenue Development Corporation (AALDC) is to further economic development, historic preservation, and cultural enrichment in the greater Atlantic Avenue area. We generally support responsible development in the Atlantic Avenue area. Brooklyn Bridge Park (BBP) has already been and will continue to be an amazing addition to the area.

The AALDC supports the goal of a financially self-sustaining BBP that includes housing. This is not an ideal situation. However, it is what we have been dealt, and in light of the current fiscal situation it seems prudent to not fully rely on government funds for a park that will require significant maintenance.

We do not want to significantly delay the progress in the park. However:

- We support the idea that has been put forth of further pursuing the possibilities of integrating into BBP the Watchtower properties adjacent to Pier One.
- We do not see why some of the alternatives investigated cannot be integrated into the park plan along with the housing plans. If \$3-4mm is added to the revenue, then the size of the housing developments can be reduced to contribute less than \$16mm
- In order to better reflect the historical aesthetic of the area, we would like the height of the Pier 6 development to be no more than the highest residential units on One Brooklyn Bridge Park.
- We would like to better understand why the \$2/sq ft revenue from Empire Stores is so significantly lower than \$14/sq ft revenue from the John Street and Pier 6 residential developments. Either full commercial development is the wrong direction for the Empire Stores, or John Street/Pier 6 seem overstated.
- We would also like to see the RFPs require that significant public space (more than just bathrooms) be included in the new developments. This would better integrate them into the park community, provide venues for small public events, as well as temporary shelter from the elements.

As stated before, we think the park is great for Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, New York, and dare we say the World! This is especially true in these economically difficult times. However, just because something is good, doesn't mean that it can't be better.

Thank you for your time,

Christian Haag  
President  
AALDC

25 April 2011

Mr. Ron Golem, Bay Area Economics Group

After review of the Study of Alternatives to Housing for Funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations we have the following comments and recommendations:

**Source of Funding:** We find it disturbing that 96% of funding for operations is expected to derive from ground leases from speculative development. The report includes case studies that highlight just how unusual BBP's dependence on private development is: no other case study park depends so heavily on developer fees. The report itself indicates that the average is 35%. It seems to us that this over-reliance on what is essentially a single source of funding is highly risky and compromises the independence of the Park's management. We suspect that any entity that is obligated to making large ground-lease payments will expect some degree of influence over the beneficiaries of these payments, thus effectively 'privatizing' the management of the Park. We believe that a public park should not be unduly influenced by private interests. We request that the report more fully address the risks of such a non-diverse funding structure.

**Overlooked Opportunities:** We believe there are a number of important potential funding sources that were not considered. We request that the report include these overlooked opportunities and investigate them in sufficient detail to present a credible assessment of their viability.

- o Jehovah Witness Properties: as testified by others, there are numerous possibilities of benefiting from the eventual disposition of these properties. We believe the City of New York is in a strong position to negotiate for acquisition of these properties, thus permitting the Park development sites to be allocated to public uses.

- o Parking: we believe the report overlooks off-site parking possibilities such as the police lot on Water Street or the development of a parking structure to replace

- o Real Estate Transaction Fee: as a new, one-time fee per transaction this would appear to meet the threshold parameters and could generate substantial income for the Park.

**Incompletely Analyzed Alternatives:** We feel that some of the alternatives were not thoroughly analyzed or were dismissed prematurely. We request that these be revisited before the final report is released.

- o Park Improvement District: a survey should be conducted to assess the degree of public support for this measure. We would prefer that a PID have the widest possible boundaries.

- o Events: we believe that the report does not adequately address the opportunities available from events that do not require buildings. The report acknowledges that such events carry little risk and states that other parks generate substantial income from them. The report should provide much more detail on the types of events possible, the typical fees paid for them (with comparables from other cities as well as NYC parks).

The report should also acknowledge the potential increase in business to concessions from events in the park. We also believe that the report grossly underestimates the potential for income from movie shoots and photography. Because BBP is obligated to support itself, it seems unreasonable to assume that it must charge the same rates as parks operated by the Parks Department.

o Concessions: We believe that the concession payments are underestimated, especially when compared to the figures given as comparables. In addition, these methods of raising money are supposed to be *alternatives* to housing, therefore a concession at Pier 6 would not compete with planned retail in the residential buildings.

o Sponsorships: The report does not adequately address this alternative. It sidesteps it by stating that a feasibility study is needed; we feel that at least some sort of feasibility study should be performed in order to justify the conclusions.

o Fundraising/Grants: We feel the report does not adequately address this alternative. A feasibility study should be performed in order to justify the conclusions and determine the likely level of support that could be generated.

**General:** While we appreciate the effort that Bay Area Economics put into the report and are encouraged that there are a substantial number of alternatives identified, we feel that the study is unreasonably encumbered by the ‘threshold parameters’ and some of the ‘evaluative parameters’. Setting aside our opinion that a public park is a legitimate beneficiary of tax payments, and thus income from such sources should not be excluded, we believe the parameter regarding timing is arbitrary; why should not the project timing be altered to reflect the changing realities (and risks) of the real estate market or to accommodate new ideas about funding sources? Further, we see no reason why the design of the park should not be altered if such alterations are would result in serving the desires of the community or result in lower operating costs or increased revenues. This park is ultimately a public amenity within which the community desires both active and passive recreation features, and it should be the highest priority that it be implemented in the community’s interests. We believe building private housing within the park is poor urban design and the near exclusive reliance on income from such development is poor public policy.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the report.

Sincerely,  
Norman Cox, President  
Columbia Waterfront Neighborhood Association

Build the apartments as contemplated in the existing park plan.

The committee on alternatives has had its say. If some incremental funds can be found to reduce building heights, then so be it. But the borough needs this park now, and rather than turn the park into a political football (over an issue only a very small percentage of users care about), we need to move ahead.

Along the same lines, I would ask our political representatives to abandon their obstructionist stance and begin to loudly advocate for the dollars needed to complete the park in its entirety.

Housing in the park is a "rat in a can" issue. Loud, but in the end a distraction from our main goal - a funded and finished park.

Luke Fichthorn