



January 12, 2010

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Hon. Adrian Benepe, Commissioner
NYC Department of Parks and Recreation
The Arsenal
New York, NY 10021

Dear Commissioner Benepe:

I am writing on behalf of the Brooklyn Heights Association (BHA) to thank you for presenting the City's proposal for Brooklyn Bridge Park to the Brooklyn community on December 7. We endorse your plan and urge the City and State to move ahead quickly. Having a local City-controlled entity operate, maintain and manage the Park is in the best interests of the Park, the Brooklyn community and the City. The State has been a dedicated partner, and we applaud its vision and commitment to date. Now, with the Park about to open, it is time for a clear, locally controlled governance structure, with the park parcels clearly and unambiguously protected from development.

As you well know, the BHA has advocated for the Park's creation for over 20 years, and the neighborhood eagerly awaits the opening of Pier 1 in the next few weeks. We continue to endorse the General Project Plan. It is beautifully designed, it envisions the appropriate balance between year round active and passive recreation, it offers access to the water that is unparalleled in the City, and it incorporates sustainable features which make the project truly green. This will be a world-class park.

We also continue to endorse the Park's self-sustainability in order to keep the Park clean, attractive, lively and safe. During your December 7 presentation, we were heartened to hear you commit to limiting the acreage dedicated to revenue-producing activities to no more than the currently-planned 10 percent of the project. Further, the City's willingness and ability to commit the capital funds to complete the Park, with a significant investment of \$55 million immediately, will assure that the Park's construction will not languish.

The BHA has repeatedly asked government to create a transparent process by which the public can be satisfied that only the minimum amount of development needed to cover the Park's costs will be built, and we hope that that you will take the opportunity of the proposed moratorium on issuing Requests for Proposals for the development parcels to do so. If your deliberations during the moratorium indicate that not all the planned development is necessary, we urge you to scale back throughout the project, including at the Fulton Ferry Landing site, not just at the Atlantic Avenue and John Street sites.

That being said, we urge you to consider only those alternative funding sources which provide as secure, direct and consistent revenues as those in the current plan; otherwise, the notion of self-sustainability will be useless. We agreed to a

self-sustaining Park to protect it from the inevitable diminution of park maintenance funds during difficult economic times and will not accept alternatives that fail to achieve that objective. *Most importantly, we do not want the Park's construction delayed unnecessarily by conversations about revenue sources that have already been studied and ruled out.*

We welcome the additional funds that the City proposes for the Park's construction and agree that the new Park features you mentioned – a floating pool, a seasonal bubble on Pier 5, and a seasonal skating rink – are desirable features that the community has long requested.

With the Park about to open, successful programming and stewardship is critical. We urge you to name the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy the Park's official partner for fundraising, volunteerism and communications and its primary programming partner. Not only does the Conservancy have deep roots in the community, it has demonstrated an unparalleled track record for bringing life to the Park.

Finally, as all the governance issues are discussed, your stated commitment to a voice for the community is critical.

Once again, thank you for your steadfast support for Brooklyn Bridge Park. I look forward to seeing you at the long-imagined and eagerly awaited ribbon-cutting for Pier 1.

Sincerely,

Tom van den Bout
President

Cc: Mayor Michael Bloomberg,
Borough President Marty Markowitz
State Senator Daniel Squadron
Assemblywoman Joan Millman
City Councilman Stephen Levin
Robert Lieber, Deputy Mayor
Regina Myer, President, BBPDC
Peter Ashkenasy, BBPDC Board
Carol Ash, BBPDC Board
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John Dew, Chairman, Community Board 2
Nancy Webster, Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy