



Are you on board?

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January 10, 2020

Via email: susan.you@mass.gov

MassDEP Waterways Regulation Program
Attention: Susan You
One Winter Street, 5th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Fan Pier Marina Redevelopment, 28-52 Northern Avenue, Boston
Chapter 91 License Application, W19-5674

Dear Ms. You,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the license application for the Fan Pier Marina Redevelopment in the South Boston Waterfront Neighborhood. The expansion of this water dependent use, the availability of public touch and go space as well as longer term docking, and the additional activity along the Harborwalk are all in alignment with the kind of public use and activation that is promoted by Chapter 91 and strongly supported by Boston Harbor Now.

Water Transportation

As advocates of increased public ferry service in the Harbor, Boston Harbor Now worked with several state agencies to develop water transportation business plans that were released last spring. The proposed Inner Harbor Connector includes regular ferry service to the dock at Fan Pier. This recommended service along with existing ferry service to Lovejoy Wharf operated by Bay State Cruises, existing ferry service provided by the Winthrop ferry, and existing water shuttle service to East Boston provided by Boston Harbor Cruises on behalf of the Institute for Contemporary Art (ICA) requires safe and consistent access to the ferry dock at Fan Pier.

The configuration of docks and piers proposed by Fan Pier Marina within this protected cove shows the infrastructure remaining clear of the fairway required for ferry boat operations; however, there is no clear restriction on the size of the vessels to be docked on any of the piers. Additional information or explicit limits on vessel size are needed to ensure that the water sheet remains clear to passenger vessel traffic in all navigable weather conditions, particularly when there are high winds. We suggest meeting with vessel operators to ensure that the final dock and pier configuration and the license agreements can promote continued and expanded ferry service in this location in order to provide commuters and visitors with safe and reliable water transit.

Harborwalk

The marina has the potential to enhance the Harborwalk experience where it may otherwise be less well-utilized. During colder months, the floating docks and piers of this marina provide an extension of the Harborwalk that enables people to get even closer to the water. In summer months, access to the marina is restricted to the general public, but the arrival of recreational vessels adds to the activity along Marina Park Drive and Liberty Drive.

However, the section of Harborwalk in front of the ICA is already activated by the welcoming design of the grandstand, which provides seating protected from the weather and clear views of the water, and by the regular public programming provided by the museum, which is carefully planned and then reviewed annually by MassDEP as part of the Chapter 91 management plan. The addition of the new floating E-dock ignores the design of this existing space and its public uses while adding a privatized feel with the installation of a locked gate to this section of Harborwalk. A different strategy that considers both the view of the water from inside the museum's "Mediatheque" and the experience outside along the Harborwalk and on the grandstand seating could mitigate this problem. Regardless, a design developed in collaboration with the museum is more likely to preserve the welcoming character of this valuable public space.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kathy Abbott
President and CEO