



# WALSH BOAT LANDING

## NOTES - FOCUS GROUP WITH INDIVIDUAL USERS (NON-COMMERCIAL USERS)

Held Thursday, November 20, 2014 | 6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Lions Municipal Golf Course (2901 Enfield Road, Austin, TX 78703-3603)

### 1. Definition of Issues from the Public/Individual Dock User Point of View

- Intrusion of commercial boats
- Maintenance issues
- Traffic management
  - on and off shore
  - finger docks – anchor offshore
- Paying for parking
  - enforcement of regulations / inconsistencies
- Why are commercial boats allowed? What are the current regulations? Are they being enforced?
  - Phone No. for Operations Gamekeeper = 800-792-GAME
  - Fuel spills from commercial boats in park
- Request for reps from APD, Law, Texas Parks, LCRA at next meeting
- Lack of boating etiquette / ramp etiquette
- Parking in the neighborhood
  - Should Walsh be closed when no parking?
  - Parking permits for residents / Residential parking permit process
- Dogs w/out leashes / signage
- Design of the landing itself
  - ramp's ability to handle capacity
  - approach
- Access at night
- 20 – 30 foot designated fishing space for families
  - Request for kid's fishing programs
- Ramp closing down without announcement, impediment to access due to special events
- Decking frequently in disrepair
- Deck at far right continues to be used despite fence
- Safety issues with Duck Tours (running into ramp, splashing)
- Rent-by-the-hour businesses hogging parking stalls / jet skis
- Need ADA/disabled-designated space (next to restrooms?) plus visitor space
- Camera surveillance for no-park zones
- Ski school parents blocking ramps
- Need designated officers / ranger at peak times to manage parking and use of facility
- Trash from commercial boats
  - Half can likely be recycled
- Crosswalk/sidewalk improvements
  - major pedestrian safety and accessibility issues
    - no safe way to get across Scenic

## 2. Small Group Reports – Table Discussions for Brainstorming Solutions

- **Group 1 (Austin Dispute Resolution Center Mediator: Robert Kamm)**
  - Exclude commercial use entirely
  - Commercial Separation -- profit vs personal, find location for commercial dock landing through LCRA, Travis County, etc.
  - Interim solution = change commercial uses (permit and *limit* commercial users)
  - Find legal/law against commercial from using Walsh - there should be existing law that could regulate the commercial users
  - End the drought (so businesses go back to Lake Travis)
  - If one business can stay, let it be “Commodore” who has a history at the site
  - Want more city regulation for safety reasons and to evaluate environmental impact
  
- **Group 2 (Austin Dispute Resolution Center Mediator: Kathy Lenox)**
  - Values: fairness, enforceability, price, timing, maintenance/safety
  - Return dock to character of non-commercial park
  - Time limits on docks/ramp for commercial
  - Separate commercial dock
  - Commercial users need to take trash with them
  - Need coordination and help from LCRA
  - Assigned commercial parking
  - Signage for parking area
  - Limited time for tour bus stopping/viewing
  - Add staff to enforce, Officers on site for purpose of enforcement
  - Add finger docks
  - During peak of May – August, provide:
    - painted/clear crosswalk
    - short-time parking in area by island
    - traffic direction on busy weekends by officers
  
- **Group 3 (Austin Dispute Resolution Center Mediator: Shana Ellison)**
  - Funding mechanism for maintenance of dock - use revenue from use direct for maintenance; create a line item in the Parks Dept. budget for maintenance
  - Separate commercial from residential use - move commercial to LCRA dock or City Park
  - Separation preserves ramp and reduces maintenance issues caused by commercial use
  - Commercial includes both the big boats and the rent-by-the-hour
  - Duck Tours need the ramp but they violate the no wake zone when they enter the water -- this should be enforced
  - Congestion - there should be a time limit for boat parking/standing. People need to stay moving and/or they need to do their staging in the water
  - Change dock design to add more space for standing boats - add floating finger docks. Takes up less space and the boats won't get damaged when other boats come in/out causing wake. Just need space for long enough to go get the car. Won't use up ramp space that way.
  - Fishing near the boat launch is dangerous. Add fishing dock on the north end (replace existing dock) that goes out over lake in the area too shallow for the boats. Creates a larger space for pedestrians and fishing area.

- Create larger no wake zone. Start at gas station and go all of the way to the dam, shore-to-shore.
- Add more boat officers to enforce the ordinances -- APD or wardens. Ask if can move some down from Lake Travis area.
- They want long-term resolution of issues and to give enforcement more teeth.
- Hire a traffic cop for high usage times -- on land at boat landing. Needs to be a city official, not a kid. Need it to prevent conflict and high tensions between boat owners & operators and keep traffic moving.
- Get donations/fees from the major boat dealers in ATX.
- Have the commercial users pay usage fees to retrofit the LCRA dock so that their smaller boats can use it.
- Parking lots - there was a change that made the trailers have to go to the smaller lot down river. Request a change so the trailers park in the bigger, upriver lot.
- The grant for building the infrastructure comes from money collected as excise taxes paid on gas by the boaters. Those people paying should get a say on the infrastructure.
- Design needs to be vetted by users and experts. Don't want a bad design/unusable (cited an example at another area lake).

#### 4. Addition comments submitted:

- **Suggestions submitted on paper by Ron Torrey, skstanley@austin.rr.com (Region VII Director, Texas Association of Bass Clubs, Member of A-Fishanados Bass Club, Austin, TX) Titled "Walsh Boat Landing Improvements"**
- Parking Lot
  - Used crush concrete as a surface
    - economical
    - TXDOT approved for highway road base
    - installs quickly
- Ramp Area
  - Signage denoting prelaunch and post launch areas
    - Designate North Ramp for personal craft (Paddle Craft and Jet Skis)
  - Mark designated areas with paint striping
- No Wake Zone
  - Start No Wake Zone 200 yds before ramp across the whole lake
    - Safety factor at docks
    - easier to launch and load boats
    - help control erosion at docks and dock repair
- Party Barges
  - Dredge area between ramps for access by party barges (cost?)
    - Opens up dock area for loading and unloading smaller craft
- Fees
  - Party barges add a \$1.00 per person "Dock Fee"
    - Do they pay anything now? If so, how much?
  - Is it economically feasible to collect fees?
  - How much? \$5.00 may be appropriate for a Ski or Bass Boat or Jet Ski. What about Paddle Craft?
- No Swimming Signs
- Trash: replace cans with dumpsters