



# WALSH BOAT LANDING

## NOTES - FOCUS GROUP WITH COMMERCIAL USERS

Held Wednesday, December 10, 2014 | 3:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

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

### 1. Introduction, Review of Agenda, and Overview of Topic

- Comment made to indicate commercial users not present at meeting:
  - [Kontiki](#) Fun Boat
  - [Sunshine Machine](#) Boat Tours
  - [Miss High Life](#)
- Goals of the Pending Grant
  - Improve (not expand) boat landing
  - ADA accessible parking and sidewalks
  - Improvements will likely begin early 2017 and last 6 to 9 months, during which maintaining some access to the landing will be a priority
  - There will be community engagement during the design process

### 2. Definition of Issues from the Commercial User Point of View – Public Dialogue

- Parking Issues:
  - LACK of parking - not enough on the street and in the current small lot.
  - The parking farthest away is for boat trailers, but the longer boats are on the water, the longer they block access.
- Overcrowding situation at dock:
  - Too few access points on the lake
  - Getting boats on and off in a timely matter, more timely for inexperienced boaters
  - Especially crowded on weekends at 11am, 3pm-4pm, and around sundown
  - Currently, commercial businesses mitigate boat traffic by communicating w/ each other and “nosing” up their boats rather than docking parallel to the landing in order to take up less space.
- Other dock issues:
  - Replace the missing cleats at the dock.

### 3. Discussion of Businesses’ Current Dock Use and Business Sizing

- [Austin Duck Adventures](#)
  - 39 ft x 9 ft boat
  - operate 7 days a week
  - uses Walsh for about 20 minutes for pick ups/drop offs, don’t dock there
- [Lake Austin Riverboats](#)
  - 84 ft - 93 ft boats
  - Mostly pick up at LCRA
  - Use Walsh for wastewater pump (so do other commercial and private boats)
  - Average event size: 100 people

- [Austin Party Cruises](#)
  - 3 boats
    - Two are 62 ft long x 14 feet wide, other is 62 long x 20 ft wide
  - Group sizes and trip lengths vary
  - Can host up to 75 people
  - Run year round - will host 10 to 15 per week in peak season
  - All pick ups at Walsh
- [Lake Austin Parties](#)
  - 16-17 ft and 35 ft boats
  - By reservation only
- [Sun and Fun](#)
  - Has 8 boats, operates every day. By reservation/hourly rental only.
  - 2 pontoons, 3 ski boats and 3 jet skis
- [Keep Austin Wet](#)
  - 5 boats
  - 7 days a week
  - An average Saturday = two 50-people trips
- [Fly Lake Austin](#)
  - Typically weekends
  - Often has to park in the neighborhood
  - Anchors boats, pickups every 1-2 hours
  - Hasn't had to wait more than 15 minutes to use the doc. Usually wait less than 5 minutes.
- Liquid Affliction
  - Small business, just starting up, will have 2 boats and do water ski trainings
- [Float On Austin](#)
  - 5 personal, 6-15 people boats, 8-24 feet long
  - Less than three times a day on the weekend
  - Takes 5-15 minutes at Walsh to load
- All businesses
  - Night rentals usually drop off at Walsh around 9 - 10pm, sometimes as late as midnight
  - 'Bring your own alcohol' policies

#### 4. Discussion to Brainstorm Solutions

- Separating commercial and private use by space or time
  - Space (in or out of Walsh)
    - Only one dock for commercial use
    - Businesses rent spaces at exclusively commercial dock (ex: Oyster Landing) and leave Walsh for exclusively private use
  - Time (hours of use)
    - Section dock on the weekends
    - Set four times vs unpredictable rental hours
      - Unrealistic, will harm businesses that do reservations, rentals
    - Keep in mind that busiest times are Friday – Sunday

- Parking suggestions:
  - Talk to LCRA about using the parking lot used by their employees – supposedly available to public during non-working hours
  - Add better signage to existing LCRA lot (to communicate clearly when it's free after business hours and on weekends) because it's currently underused
  - Build another parking lot (in addition to current LCRA one)
  - Improve bus stop frequency, especially on the weekend; improve cab service to area would help eliminate the need for so many parking spaces
  - Make both parking lots 'trailer only' during the weekends, would get boats out of the water faster and help congestion. Sometimes cars parked in lot block trailers from leaving.
  
- Other Suggestions:
  - Allow more docking at the LCRA dock?
    - Not likely - LCRA has allowed one business to dock there for decades, but is asking even them to find a different space
  - A finger-tip dock with 20 slips would go a long way towards eliminating crowding
  - A dumpster on site would alleviate trash problem

## 5. Public Comments from Neighbors Attending Meeting

- Don't understand *commercial* use of a small, *public* park without some form of licensing agreement. Couldn't go out in Zilker Park and just start selling hot dogs.
- Businesses need to be better stewards of the parkland
- Leftover trash, overflowing cans is a big issue - City staff have been picking up the businesses' excess trash
- Issue of fueling boats at the dock
- Issue of leaving boats up b/t rental times
- Lack of boat ramp etiquette (blocking everyone's access)
- Commercial users' responses
  - Distinction of reservation-based businesses, they are not taking walk-up traffic, and they are out on the water, which is not parkland
  - Hope for brainstorming solutions on Jan 13th
  - Commercial (more experienced) boaters often help inexperienced boaters with their problems at the dock, helps move traffic in and out faster
  - Several commercial users stated that they haul out their own trash
  - City (parks and law departments) *is* contemplating a licensing, permitting, or contract process

## 6. Next Steps

- Next meeting date: Tuesday, January 13th, from 6:30pm – 8:30pm. Location: TBD
  - Will be with ALL stakeholders
  - Needs to be civil, open-minded, understanding, and collaborative
  - Please circulate to anyone who may be interested!
  - Parks Department will bring their suggestions for solutions
- Information and notes from focus group meetings posted on Parks and Recreation Department website.