



THE BATTERY PARK CITY BROADSHEET

LOCAL CONSORTIUM WINS CONTROL OF NORTH COVE

With the Help of Yachting Superstar Dennis Conner, New Directors Plan to Attract Events As Well As Boats

NEIGHBORHOOD RECREATIONAL FOCUS TO CONTINUE

A new business consortium formed by BPC resident Michael Fortenbaugh – North Cove Marina Management Group – has been awarded control of North Cove by the Battery Park City Authority. In addition to Mr. Fortenbaugh, owner of the Manhattan Sailing Club, directors of the group include BPC resident Jordan Gruzen, architect and head of the planning and design organization New York New Visions; Larry Graham, representing Brookfield Properties, owner of the World Financial Center; and Dennis Conner, four-time winner of the America's Cup and former BPC resident.

The group won the approval of the BPCA with its vision of a flourishing, prosperous marina. It didn't hurt that they were the high bidder out of three contenders, one of which was the BPC Parks Conservancy. According to a person privy to the proposals sent to the Authority, the Conservancy promised to bring in \$700,000 over a five-year period. The consortium promised \$1.3 million over the same period.



Michael Fortenbaugh

The marketing plan depends in part on Mr. Conner's cachet in the sailing world. While the group hopes to attract more mega-yachts, Mr. Fortenbaugh says small sailboats, such as the J-24s of his own club, will always find a berth. "I want everybody to feel like North Cove is their home," he said, "but to make this work, I've got to bring in some boats."

Among the group's first moves is a web site (www.thenorthcove.com) where readers may sign up to receive e-mail about events or information on vessels docked at the marina. "We'll get the word out and try to attract events, not just boats. Any way we can help further recreation in the harbor," Mr. Fortenbaugh said, ticking off some of his plans. "Next month we'll begin refurbishing the Cove." The group plans to reestablish what it says is a more efficient docking plan known as the Mediterranean Mooring System, where slips are positioned so that boats back into the seawall.

For the past two years the marina has been managed by the BPC Parks Conservancy under the guidance of assistant director Vince McGowan. Mr. Fortenbaugh praised the work of the Conservancy and said he hopes its public programs at the Cove, such as fishing, swimming competitions, and a summer teen marine program, will continue.

other than the sailing club. Last October he organized Kids Day in the Harbor, which gave hundreds of children and their parents free boatrides. He launched a free teen sailing program two years ago through the New York Harbor Sailing Foundation. And three years ago, he led opposition to a plan to turn North Cove into a ferry hub after 9/11, insisting that it remain focused on recreational boating.

"There was no one so dedicated to ensuring that North Cove would reopen after 9/11 and become vital again as Michael," said BPCA president and CEO Timothy Carey on January 11 when the designation was approved.

