



DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

April 4, 2002

Mr. John Carroll
Wiley Avenue
Peaks Island, ME 04107

RE: Cruise Ship Use of the Maine State Pier

Dear John:

Thank you for your email of 3-21-02 regarding cruise ship use of the Maine State Pier. This is an issue that the Planning staff and I have considered in the past, and I am happy to take you through the issues as we have considered them. Below, I will answer your questions roughly in the order in which you ask them in your email.

Will cruise ships use the Maine State Pier this summer?

Yes, Portland will host cruise ships in numbers comparable to the previous several seasons.

Will the facility go through Site Plan Review?

The current use of the Maine State Pier will not receive site plan review for the following reasons.

- (1) Cruise ship berthing, like all berthing, is a water-dependent use as defined under City Code 14-47. Maine State Pier has traditionally been used for a variety of transient deep-water berthing uses. Transient military, military repair, military housing, tug boats, sea going barges, VIP vessels and cruise ships are all among the vessels that have used the east side of Maine State Pier before, during and after the BIW occupation of the site. The extent to which the current use of the pier differs from previous use of the pier represents a shift from one mix of berthing vessels to another (primarily military vessels during BIW's time to more cruise ships currently). The primary water-dependent use (deep-water berthing) has not changed.

(2) The current cruise ship uses of the east side of Maine State Pier require no site alterations to the existing approved site plan. If the City Waterfront Division proposes any alterations to the approved site plan, they would most likely be reviewed at the administrative level unless the proposed site changes crossed the threshold criteria for major development under City Code 14-522. As you know, the Planning Board automatically reviews all major development.

How can the public weigh in on an administrative decision?

Under City Code 14-527, any aggrieved member of the public can appeal an administrative decision to the Planning Board. Traditionally, the Planning Office has not automatically referred minor applications to the Planning Board at the request of a member of the public. If public concerns are raised during the course of an administrative review, the interested parties can be notified of decisions so that they have the option to file an appeal to the Planning Board.

I hope that I have been able to answer your questions. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please call at any time. Thank you for your continued concern and interest in waterfront planning issues.

Sincerely:

Alex (WBN)

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