

A Guide to the Waterfront Watch Collection, 1971-1974

**Archives & Special Collections
College of Staten Island Library, CUNY
2800 Victory Blvd., 1L-216
Staten Island, NY 10314**

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Finding Aid by Jacquelyn Ferry

Overview of the Collection

Collection No. : SIM-5

Title: Waterfront Watch Collection

Creator: Donald E. Peters

Dates: 1971-1974

Extent: .75 Linear Feet

Abstract: Waterfront Watch was an organization of environmentalists from the South Shore of Staten Island. Their purpose was to fight the passage of the South Richmond Development Corporation Bill. Ultimately, the bill failed to pass the New York State Assembly and was never reintroduced. Collection materials cover the years 1971 to 1974, with the bulk of materials from February 1973 to May 1973. The collection contains

correspondence, publications, lobbying packets, financial records, photographs, maps, and news clippings. The publications file includes position papers, fact sheets, lobbying packets, and a report written by the Waterfront Watch. In addition, the collection has an extensive news clippings file on the South Richmond Bill.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

Waterfront Watch Collection, Archives & Special Collections,
Department of the Library, College of Staten Island, CUNY, Staten
Island, New York.

Acquisition

The collection was donated by Donald E. Peters on behalf of
Waterfront Watch of Staten Island in 2001.

Processing Information

Collection processed by Jacquelyn Ferry.

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Restrictions

Access

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

Copyright Notice

The researcher assumes full responsibility for compliance with laws
of copyright. Requests for permission to publish material from this

collection should be discussed with the Coordinator of Archives & Special Collections.

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Administrative History

Waterfront Watch was an organization of environmentalists from the South Shore of Staten Island. The organization formed after the annual meeting of the Richmond County Yacht Club in December 1972. The president of Waterfront Watch, Allen A. Peters, was a member of the Richmond County Yacht Club, as were several other officers and members of Waterfront Watch. The purpose of the organization was to fight the passage of the South Richmond Development Corporation Bill.

The South Richmond Development Corporation Bill, also known as the South Richmond Plan, provided for a semi-public development corporation for southwest Richmond County. The proposed South Richmond Development Area included Great Kills Park and adjacent waterfront and underwater land. This land had also been designated for inclusion in the Gateway National Urban Recreation Area. Senator John Marchi, the prime sponsor of the South Richmond Bill, introduced the bill into the New York State Legislature during the 1972 and 1973 sessions. The bill passed twice in the Senate but failed to pass the Assembly. Senator Marchi decided not to reintroduce the bill after it died in an Assembly committee at the end of the 1973 legislative session.

Waterfront Watch opposed the South Richmond Development Corporation because they feared its environmental impact on the South Shore. The inclusion of Great Kills Park was of great concern to the Waterfront Watch, as was the possibility of an offshore landfill. Ultimately, the land was transferred to the federal government when the Gateway Bill was signed into law on June 19, 1977.

Many local organizations joined the Waterfront Watch in opposition to the South Richmond Bill, including the Civic Congress of Staten Island and Gateway Citizens Committee. In addition, Borough President Robert Connor and Assemblymen Lucio T. Russo and Edward J. Amann opposed the bill. Amann was a particularly vocal opponent of the bill and he played a crucial role in the bill's defeat in the Assembly in both 1972 and 1973.

The Waterfront Watch dissolved in May 1973 after the defeat the South Richmond Bill.

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Scope & Content Note

The Waterfront Watch of Staten Island Collection consists of approximately 3/4 linear feet of material covering the years 1971 to 1974, with the bulk of material from February 1973 to May 1973. The collection contains correspondence, publications, lobbying packets, financial records, photographs, maps, and news clippings.

Although Waterfront Watch was only active for a few months, the collection offers a wide variety of material on Waterfront Watch, the South Richmond Bill, and the South Shore of Staten Island. Administrative records, however, are notably lacking. There are no minutes or records of administrative functions apart from a brief "statement of policy and position" paper and a few financial records. It is probable that, due to the brief and informal nature of the organization, no such records were kept. The collection does, however, contain a rich variety of material documenting the defeat of the South Richmond Bill and the policy positions and concerns of Waterfront Watch. Another issue, which pertains to the entire collection, is that much of the material in the collection is undated. However, due to the organization's brief period of activity, the material can still be evaluated within a fairly specific time frame.

The organizational records contain two folders of undated material related to the organizational functions of Waterfront Watch. This series is not comprehensive and, aside from a list of officers and a brief page of notes, offers little information about the formation or administration of the organization. However, the correspondence file fills some of the gaps left by the absence of administrative records. The correspondence file consists of one folder of correspondence from January to September 1973.

The publications series offers a detailed view of two of Waterfront Watch's most important activities - community education and lobbying. The publications file is useful in determining the positions and policies of the Waterfront Watch and also provides background information about the South Richmond Bill and the environment of the South Shore. The report

written by Waterfront Watch in January 1973 is a particularly valuable source of information.

The public relations file and the financial records are incomplete, but both provide some information regarding two crucial functions of the organization. The material in the public relations series is undated. The financial records contain comprehensive records of donations received and scattered banking material, receipts, and financial registers covering the years 1972 to 1974.

The Waterfront Watch collection contains a series containing reference material from 1971 to 1973. The series is comprised mostly of legislative material and background material on local politicians, presumably used in the group's lobbying efforts. The photographs series contains undated but mostly labeled photographs of the South Shore shoreline and wildlife. The photographs would be of particular interest to those studying the development of the South Shore of Staten Island.

The news clippings file contains the most comprehensive information about the history of the South Richmond Bill and the Waterfront Watch organization. The news clippings file runs from January to September 1973, with particularly good coverage of the opposition to the South Richmond Bill. The news clippings file also includes advertisements placed in local newspapers by Waterfront Watch.

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Arrangement

The Waterfront Watch Collection is divided into eight series:

ORGANIZATIONAL RECORDS
CORRESPONDENCE
PUBLICATIONS
PUBLIC RELATIONS
FINANCIAL RECORDS
REFERENCE MATERIAL
PHOTOGRAPHS
NEWS CLIPPINGS

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Index Terms

This collection is indexed under the following terms. Manuscript collections are not included in the College of Staten Island's library catalog at this time.

Subject Topics

Environmentalism -- New York (State) -- Richmond County
Richmond County (N.Y.) -- City Planning

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Series Descriptions & Container Listing

[The following box/folder inventory is in the form of a table. If you are visually impaired and using a pdf reader you may need assistance and should contact the Archives at 718-982-4128.]

Series 1: Organizational Records, n.d. 2 Folders.

The series consists of two folders. One folder contains a "statement of policy and position" and the other contains information on membership and organizational activities. The series is arranged alphabetically.

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	1	Statement of Policy and Position, n.d.
1	2	Membership & Summary of Activities, n.d.

Series 2: Series 2: Correspondence, January - September 1973, n.d. 1 Folder.

The correspondence file consists of correspondence to and from the Waterfront Watch and is arranged chronologically. The correspondence file includes letters to and from local politicians and letters of support from politicians, environmental groups, and local organizations. Several of these letters were reproduced in Waterfront Watch's lobbying packets.

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	3	Correspondence, January-September 1973, n.d.

Series 3: Publications, January - March 1973, n.d. 13 Folders.

The publications series consists of lobbying packets, reports, fact sheets, and position statements created and distributed by the Waterfront Watch. Publications are arranged chronologically. Undated publications have been arranged alphabetically at the end of the series. There are several lobbying packets, which include cover letters, fact sheets, policy statements, news clippings, and maps. These packets were distributed to state senators and assemblymen in Albany.

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	4	Report on Staten Island's South Shore Tidal Waters and the Threat Posed by the Landfill Provisions of the "New South Richmond Development Corp." Bill, January 18, 1973
1	5	Lobbying Packet #1, February 1973
1	6	Lobbying Packet #2, February 20, 1973
1	7	Lobbying Packet #3, February 26, 1973
1	8	Lobbying Packet #4, February 27, 1973
1	9	Lobbying Packet #5, March 5, 1973
1	10	Lobbying Packet #6, March 12, 1973

1	11	Lobbying Packet #7, March 28, 1973
1	12	Fact Sheets, n.d.
1	13	Hand-out, n.d.
1	14	Lobbying Packets, n.d.
1	15	Proposed Amendments, n.d.
1	16	Statement of Policy, n.d.

Series 4: Public Relations, n.d. 2 Folders.

This series contains materials related to press coverage and community outreach. The series is arranged alphabetically. Public Relations material includes a list of press contacts and draft statements.

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	17	Draft Statements, n.d.
1	18	Press Contacts, n.d.

Series 5: Financial Records, 1972 - 1974, n.d. 4 Folders.

The financial records contain banking material, donation records, financial registers, and receipts. The series is arranged alphabetically by material type.

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	19	Banking Material, February 1973-March 1974

1	20	Donation Records, 1973, n.d.
1	21	Financial Registers, 1972, n.d.
1	22	Receipts, February-May 1973

Series 6: Reference Material, 1971 - 1973, n.d. 15 Folders.

This series is arranged alphabetically and includes bills, maps, statements, press releases and material related to Adirondack Park, the Civic Congress of Staten Island, and the Gateway Citizens Committee. Much of the reference material is legislative in nature and may have been used in Waterfront Watch's lobbying efforts and in the drafting of reports and lobbying packets.

Box#	Folder#	Title
1	23	Adirondack Park, 1973
1	24	Assemblyman De Salvio's Statements, May 26, 1973
1	25	Bills, January-May 1973, n.d.
1	26	Calendar of Bills, May 25, 1973
1	27	Civic Congress of Staten Island, Inc., March 1972
1	28	Environmental Conservation Law, n.d.>
1	29	Gateway Citizens Committee, September 1973, n.d.
1	30	Know Your Legislators, 1973
1	31	Legislative Hearings - Gateway Area Proposals, 1971
2	1	Lists of Legislators, 1973, n.d.

2	2	Maps, n.d.
2	3	New Land Resources Summary, n.d.
2	4	New York State Senate - Voting Record on Bill S.2183-A, 1973
2	5	Press Release from the Office of the Mayor, John V. Lindsay, June 26, 1973
2	6	Statement of Borough President Robert T. Connor on Senator Marchi's Bill to Create a New South Richmond Development Corporation, February 20, 1973

Series 7: Photographs, n.d. 1 Folder.

This series is comprised of photographs of the South Shore of Staten Island. There are aerial photographs of the shoreline of the South Shore as well as photographs of wildlife and Great Kills Park

Box#	Folder#	Title
2	7	Photographs, n.d.

Series 8: News Clippings, January - September 1973, n.d. 7 Folders.

The news clippings file contains comprehensive coverage of the South Richmond Bill and the Waterfront Watch organization, including advertisements placed in local newspapers by Waterfront Watch. The news clippings file is arranged chronologically.

Box#	Folder#	Title
2	8	News Clippings, January 1973
2	9	News Clippings, February 1973

2	10	News Clippings, March 1973
2	11	News Clippings, April 1973
2	12	News Clippings, May 1973
2	13	News Clippings, June 1973
2	14	News Clippings, July-September 1973, n.d.