

June 19, 2025

To: City of Hudson Planning Board

Re: Colarusso Dock Conditional Use Permit Application - Response to Attorney Letter

Dear Chair Joyner and Planning Board Members,

First, a big thank you for reopening the Colarusso Dock Conditional Use Permit (C.U.P.) Application public hearing to allow the public to provide new information to the Board.

It will be highly productive to receive additional public comments following the May 6th public hearing, which brought in over 100 letters and a wide range of ideas that have deepened and advanced the public discussion. Nearly 500 individuals, the majority from Hudson, have signed a petition to keep the hearing open, and we're sure they're all deeply appreciative of your decision to keep the process open and participatory.

In response to **Attorney T.J. Ruane's June 12, 2025, letter** to the Board regarding the Dock C.U.P., please see our June 16th IMBY article attached herein.

Additionally, regarding **Gabrielle Hoffmann's letter of concern** written to the Board weeks before she was asked to serve on the Board, it sounds like Mr. Colarusso and Ms. Hoffmann share similar concerns about public safety and trucks.

Ms. Hoffmann's letter stated:

"I hope with all my heart that as you contemplate the usage of our precious waterfront you keep in mind all the young and old citizens of Hudson who want their waterfront access to be safe, both physically and environmentally, and also as pleasant and user friendly as can be. Big dangerous trucks, gravel dust and loud noises butting up against the only public waterfront access is hardly ideal... we are hoping that steps can be taken to secure as much protection to this important resource as possible."

In the past, Mr. Colarusso has echoed and even gone beyond Hoffmann's concerns, with the following statements:

"Our company committed to the expense of the improved haul road in order to increase public safety and enhance the community character by removing our trucks from the truck route through Hudson, Paul Colarusso said in a statement Tuesday" [regarding the haul-road plan]. [NNY 360 January 7, 2019]

"If we can get our trucks out of the city, we have less potential of something terrible happening. ... That was the motivation for this whole thing at the very, very beginning: to get our trucks out of the city so we're not exposed to any kind of liabilities that could happen. God forbid, a little kid chases a ball in front of a truck." [Times Union August 18, 2021 regarding haul road]

As stated in our attached article, Ms. Hoffmann's concerns are not only reasonable—they are exactly the kinds of issues the Planning Board is charged with considering under the zoning code: *public health, safety, environmental impacts, and compatibility with community use*. In fact, concern about truck traffic was the very reason the Planning Board approved the private road agreement with Colarusso—to get the trucks off Columbia Street. These concerns reflect the shared values and priorities of the entire city—and are publicly stated by the Chair of the Planning Board, Theresa Joyner, time and again.

Mr. Colarusso's fears are noteworthy, although we have concerns with the possible inference that the haul road determination may solve the problems of public safety and trucks, as it does not. The Broad St and Front St crossings (see below) are located in the heart of the Core-Riverfront District, leading directly to the Henry Hudson Riverfront Park, and are part of our city too. The possibility of a little kid chasing a ball in front of a truck near the Riverfront Park is likewise worrisome. Thus public safety concerns remain.



We urge you to read and consider the attached. As mentioned in the article, the Hudson Planning Board not only can—but is obligated—to ensure that the applicant responds to public concerns before the hearing is closed. Just as important, the public must have the opportunity to **respond to the applicant's answers**. The sole purpose of a public hearing: to allow for an open exchange before a decision is made. To close the hearing without allowing that final exchange would short-circuit the process and undermine the principles of transparency and public engagement that this Board is meant to uphold.

We strongly urge the Board to require the applicant to respond to the public's and the Board's concerns while the hearing is open, and allow public input throughout the review process.

Thank you in advance for considering this information, and for your volunteer service on the Board.

Respectfully,

Donna Streitz
Our Hudson Waterfront

Attachment
IMBY Article - June 16, 2025

Waterfront Update: Public hearing reopened; Colarusso pushes back hard
By Donna Streitz, Our Hudson Waterfront



Two Colarusso gravel trucks and an Amtrak train approach the Broad Street crossing at exactly the same time. Hudson NY

On June 11th the City of Hudson Planning Board voted to reopen the Colarusso dock Conditional Use Permit application public hearing by a vote of 5 to 2.

On June 12th, Colarusso's attorney wrote a letter to the Planning Board indicating that they declined to participate in the Mayor-proposed "key stakeholders" meeting to discuss permit conditions. Further, they requested recusal of Gabrielle Hoffman from the Planning Board due to bias, and annulment of the public hearing on the basis that the Board's decision to reopen was to delay the Board's review of the application to facilitate Mayor Johnson's proposed "working group" meeting to negotiate conditions. Click [here](#) for letter.

A few reminders about the recent Planning Board meeting:

- **The public hearing will take place on Tuesday July 15th @ 6:30pm** at a location TBD. The Board advised that it would post an official notice soon.
- **The public was allowed to provide input at the meeting, and expressed the desire to reopen the hearing to provide additional information to the Board, and to be able to provide input and ask questions throughout the Board's review and deliberation process**, including following receipt of the applicant's response to concerns and the Board's future requests of them.
- **The Board stated that they have received all public comments through May 30th, and will discuss the comments at its regular July 8th monthly meeting in open forum.**
- The Board stated that they had been invited to attend a **Mayor initiated "working group" meeting** to draft "conditions," that would take place Friday June 13th. **They approved a letter to the Mayor advising of their agreement to send three Board members to the work group meetings**, and that any recommendations made by the group would NOT be binding on the planning board's review and decisions. *[Note: In view of Colarusso's refusal to participate, the working group meeting was canceled.]*

REQUEST FOR RECUSAL HAS NO LEGAL BASIS

The request for recusal of Gabrielle Hoffman from the Planning Board on the basis of bias is preposterous and has no legal basis. Her letter to the Board—written weeks before she was even asked to serve—expressed a clear, responsible concern for public safety and the protection of a vital community resource. In it, she writes:

“I hope with all my heart that as you contemplate the usage of our precious waterfront you keep in mind all the young and old citizens of Hudson who want their waterfront access to be safe, both physically and environmentally, and also as pleasant and user friendly as can be. Big dangerous trucks, gravel dust and loud noises butting up against the only public waterfront access is hardly ideal... we are hoping that steps can be taken to secure as much protection to this important resource as possible.”

These concerns are not only reasonable—they are exactly the kinds of issues the Planning Board is charged with considering under the zoning code: *public health, safety, environmental impacts, and compatibility with community use*. In fact, concern about truck traffic was the very reason the Planning Board approved the private road agreement with Colarusso—to get the trucks off Columbia Street. These concerns reflect the shared values and priorities of the entire city—and are publicly stated by the Chair of the Planning Board, Theresa Joyner, time and again.

Colarusso’s attorneys have twisted Gabrielle Hoffman’s words into an imagined conflict of interest. Any official who raises legitimate concerns about this operation is met with legal threats, and attempts to silence them. It’s a bad faith tactic, bullying, pure and simple—meant to intimidate both private citizens and the public officials who represent them.

Gabrielle Hoffman should not recuse herself from the Board. She is doing exactly what a conscientious planning board member is supposed to do.

CLAIMS OF DELAY TACTICS UNFOUNDED

Colarusso’s attorney claims that *“the decision to reopen the public hearing was made to delay the board’s deliberation on Colarusso’s application to facilitate Johnson’s working group, and to prevent public backlash on the working group’s meeting being held.”*

In our opinion, this claim is incorrect. **The Board repeatedly emphasized that the Mayor’s work group is a separate and independent process, unrelated to the Planning Board’s duties under the zoning code.** The Board’s attorney also made clear that neither the Mayor nor the Planning Board has the authority to interfere with the application review process.

As stated, the Board made clear that its review would not be delayed or influenced by the Mayor’s initiative. In our opinion, it is therefore both inaccurate and disingenuous for Colarusso’s attorneys to claim that the public hearing is being held solely because of a stakeholders meeting—and the record clearly shows otherwise.

The Board Chair said more than once that the Board is diligently reviewing the public comments submitted during the public hearing and will proceed with its review. The board’s attorney stated that its review would also include an open forum discussion on the “conditions.”

The prior public hearing was prematurely closed by a vote of four of six Hudson Planning Board members—despite multiple requests to keep it open, and before:

- Conducting a proper review under the City Zoning Code.
- Clarifying the full scope of review (which must include all dock operations).
- Receiving any response from the applicant regarding concerns raised.

NEXT STEPS

Thank the Planning Board for doing the right thing by re-opening the public hearing. Require the applicant to reply to public concerns expressed thus far before the public hearing is closed.

The Hudson Planning Board not only can—but is obligated—to ensure that the applicant responds to public concerns before the hearing is closed. Just as important, the public must have the opportunity to respond to the applicant's answers. **The sole purpose of a public hearing: to allow for an open exchange before a decision is made.** Closing the hearing without this exchange would undermine transparency and violate the spirit of the law. We strongly urge the Board to uphold this process.

PETITION

We are keeping our petition open as many of our requests remain. If you haven't already, please [sign and share](#).

Send comments and/or questions to the Planning Board via email to board secretary Linda Fenoff: lfenoff@cityofhudson.org