



## **Row New York Gathering**

March 10, 2026 - 6:00 pm

### **Q&A Portion**

Brigid Ahern: I would love to know if folks have questions, or ideas?

**Q1: How long will it take to finish building the boathouse?**

BA: Two years. And the delay on it is really expensive, so one of the things we want to do is get started so we can go through because every month we delay, it adds to the cost. Yeah. I like these kinds of questions that I know the answer to keep it coming.

**Q2: What's the timeline for the borough president?**

BA: Right now it looks like May or June, but most likely June. Most of these have been pretty delayed this year, so a couple more months before we're gonna know.

**Q3: Can you tell us about the borough president and his rowing history?**

BA: No, I promise never to share. No, I'm just kidding, David, you met with them. Do you remember what he said?

Person: He rowed at Oxford. He's a Rhodes Scholar from West Virginia.

BA: You know, once it's in the blood.

Person: Does he get his own boat named.

BA: He can have a rack, not a name.

**Q4: Can you speak a little about the fallback options and what price points they are and what delays we're looking at?**

BA: Yeah, how much time do you have? No, I'm just kidding. Yes, so the first option for a fallback would be to be involved in any kind of development project, many of which happen up

in Inwood. So we were actually finalists down to two for a development project that would have been, I would say, a complimentary space. So if we build this then 10 years from now, that would come online, it would be about half the size. But we lost in the final round for a number of different reasons that didn't have to do with Row New York. I've also spoken with Columbia to see if we could use their space, knock down their boat house, and build our boat house instead of where that is. That is an option, but we would not have real decision rights over the boat house at all, and that seemed dangerous in that case, and there are other options to build a different building in that space. The reason why I did not originally think that was a great idea, and it might actually be our plan B option, and we're speaking to people who can connect us, who have done that, is that it's cost us nearly \$12 million dollars to run utilities to the site and to landscape the park. So that is a cost, no matter if you put up a chain link fence there. The second is that we would have to do all permitting licensing again, which would be essentially a three or four year process. But then the last one is that we have donors who have given to this boathouse, so the idea that we, you know, I'm sure that we could talk to them about it, but my ideal would be, let's see if we can raise the money for this boathouse, this incredible boathouse, and if, for some reason, we can't do that, some of the plan B options are we're trying to tee up right now, but they're at very different levels. So some of them are conversations that I just got an introduction yesterday to somebody who has an idea for us, but at the end of the day, my opinion is that building in New York City costs money

Person: This boathouse is gonna get built. It is going to get built. \*Clapping\*

3:40

BA: But I'm also unapologetic about like, if not us, who? You know what I mean, like, let's do this.

**Q5: It sounds like other ones are not so actionable?**

BA: Well, and I'm still going to pursue them. I mean, part of my challenge is, how much of my time do I spend pursuing them when I could be spending time raising the money and applying to get more public money. But I'm confident in the plans here. We need to see if we can get the rest of the money. But yeah, I always have a plan B in my pocket. Plan B is just not always what I want.

**Q6: You mentioned that the new boathouse is designed for scale in mind. Do you have an aspirational goal for how much you want to scale your community and programs over a period of time?**

BA: Oh, my God, I love that question. Nina, and coming from somebody who has been so deeply involved, Yeah. I mean, I think we can double in size to 1300 people. What's amazing is we right now have one of the largest adaptive programs in the country, and there's tons of demand for that, and we can't do that program in Manhattan unless we have a universally

designed or at least ADA compliance space. So that demand is just sitting waiting for us. And it's cool, because they row during the day, like not at the same time that everybody else rows which is really incredible. There's also an opportunity to have Masters rowing. One of the things we talked about in one of our applications was like, how cool would it be if we had seniors erging and stuff like that. If we had different, that's part of the glory of a boat house, is to have many, many people from different walks of life that are in the same space. So there's the expansion of our current program, which would be about double, and then there are additional programming and right now, the place where we're leaning in the hardest is that there's a lot of opportunity with adaptive to do competitive adaptive, to grow the people that we serve there, and to even expand some of our veterans programs and things like that. So we're leaning into doing a planning process for that right now to understand what's feasible, but it's also just a very high ROI program, because it doesn't cost a lot for us to run it.

**Q7: Other than just the funding gap, you talked about approvals. Is there anything you need to get the boathouse done?**

BA: I need people talking about it and are psyched about it. I mean, one of the things I can't do is I can't call the Manhattan Borough President and all these city councils because I'm just not allowed to lobby. So anybody else please call.

But what I have been so amazed by at my time at Row New York is how easy it is to get people excited about it. But I don't know those people, so the more that you're out there talking and saying, like, hold on a second. I know 10 people who would be interested. I ran into somebody the other day that was like I cannot believe I didn't know that this existed. Alex this just happened at yours, it's amazing. So the number one thing is, let's build our community. And I feel like one of the reasons we wanted to have this is because there are so many people in this room who have given so much already to Row New York, where we haven't actually acknowledged some of that. And so this is a moment where from now on, we are, right? We're building a community that really believes that this can happen. And so the best thing to do is financially support, connect us with anybody. You know, some of the easy ways are also like, I know all of you work at companies, we have this corporate matching thing, and I've been amazed where I just asked people, and they're like, oh, wait, I could call them and get my donation matched. And it's just like, we've just doubled money, right? It's amazingly easy in some ways, but we've just never really asked for it or leveraged it. So now is the time I think, and then to come and see it and participate, just the way that Jordan, that you've been offering to do so.

**Q8: Can you operate off grid?**

BA: What do you mean?

Person: Make your own power, fuel cell and solar

BA: Okay, I just met with a person. I was pretty mad about the solar panels but it was just a coincidence that I was meeting with someone who worked for power night. I asked him that question and I was like I don't want to vertically integrate necessarily into all these things but is there any way I can cut costs so besides my phone calling of con ed at midnight everyday I don't know I would love to explore options like that because what the hell.

Person: You mentioned 12 billion dollars to connect to the grid, forget that. You can have something fairly reasonable that would fix that. Nobody is living there right?

BA: Okay, time to talk. I love it. Thank you for saving me 6 million dollars.

I think that's partially it too that we also want to think about what will it take to maintain this boathouse over time the core of this work is our program and we want to make sure we are putting our resources to that and part of program is having a boathouse and a safe and supportive space where people can be. So, what do we do to make that come about? I'm open to any options. Any other questions? Ideas?

Q9: Thank you so much for having this intimate gathering. It's so nice to see some old and familiar faces but can you just recap the numbers that we need. Where are we, where do we need to get to and what's the end goal?

Thank you Jenni, always. Laser. First let me start with operating. We have a 3.8 million dollar budget that we've reduced by about 600,000 through some cost cutting measures this year and we still are likely to end this year if we don't get our act together at about a 300,000 dollar gap. So we are actively seeking operating funding at any level to fill that gap. And that's partially because of timing. We have a lot of irons on the fire. We don't actually know how to predict when all of these irons will hit. The second thing is our growth capital which we actually don't have a number against yet because what we're trying to understand is what do we have to invest in each year so we can actually get to that amount. We're starting with a planning grant to understand the growth of adaptive and how much that's going to cost and then to assess the need and then to build that so I don't actually have a number for that yet and I'm not even making an ask for that because I'm trying to fill operating first. And then on the boathouse we are looking to raise 15 million in private money to add to what we were looking for the Manhattan borough president and if we're able to do that and get the money that we expect from Manhattan borough president and there's a lot of ifs. We're going to call everyone back who gave to the project originally and say are you still in? We have a lot of work to do there but once that's done then we would be able to break ground. As soon as we have all those written commitments we would be ready to go.

Q10: Is the Manhattan borough president verdict a binary outcome or could it be something shy of the ask if it's not the full grant?

BA: It could be something shy of what we've asked for. It's not binary. So it could be smaller. I think the point is that's why I say 10-15 million because if we go out and raise that then we're comfortable because we would whatever the result of that is we would be ready to go but the truth is it's my job to try to figure out how to shore the base and make sure we can move forward. That said, we're going to do this in the most prudent way possible so if for some reason it's not going to happen we're going to say okay it's not happening, what do we do? But right now the plan is to build it. That's one of the inputs. I'll say it that way.

Alright well, I'm here. I'm always available and we have some staff members in the room too but thank you so much for being here. It meant a lot that you showed up tonight. Thank you.