

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING AND SUPPLEMENTING THE GENERAL ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BAYONNE, CHAPTER 37, HISTORIC PRESERVATION.**

**BE IT ORDAINED, by the Municipal Council of the City of Bayonne, as follows:**

That the Revised General Ordinances of the City of Bayonne, Chapter 37, Historic Preservation, be and is hereby amended and supplemented by adding the following section (37-40. Elco Crane) in its entirety:

**§ 37-40. ELCO CRANE**

**§ 37-40.1. Findings.**

The Municipal Council of the City of Bayonne finds and determines the following:

- a. The Electric Launch and Navigation Company, later known as the Electric Launch Company (“Elco”), was founded in Morris Heights, Bronx, N.Y. The company debuted at the World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago. The centerpiece of this exposition was a large water pool representing Columbus’s voyages to the Americas. Featured in the Great Basin were 55 Elco launches, each 35 feet 10 inches long and energized by battery-powered electric motors. The boats carried over a million passengers, 30 at a time, on the waterways of the Exposition from April 15th through October 31st, 1893. Electric launches were novel, and that method of naval propulsion had never been tested on so large a scale. During the fair, each electric launch charged overnight and ran on average 13 three and one-half mile trips each day with each trip taking approximately 45 minutes, delighting visitors.
- b. In 1900, Elco moved across the Hudson River and established a boat-building facility on 8th Street and Avenue A in Bayonne. The company continued to manufacture civilian pleasure boats including motorized launches, yachts, and other vessels but in 1915 this changed. Elco military boats manufactured at the Elco Naval Division facility in Bayonne, New Jersey were used in both world wars. In World War I, the company was contracted by the British Government to build motor launch (ML) vessels to combat German submarines. It was a naval architect named Irwin Chase who designed the 550 World War I sub-chasers for the British in 1915. In 1922 Chase became General Manager of Elco and his assistant in World War I was a designer, Glenville Sinclair Tremaine, who became the chief naval designer in 1923. The latter was joined by Alfred “Bill” Flemming. This team worked together at Elco during World War II most famously building patrol torpedo (PT) boats for the United States Navy.
- c. In 1938 the US Navy sponsored a design competition to small boat builders with a challenge to create a highly mobile attack boat. Not long after the U.S. entry into the war, there were roughly a dozen separate manufacturers of PT boats from the United States, Canada and Great Britain supplying the US Navy. Eventually, Elco

and Higgins Industries in New Orleans, Louisiana were the dominant two builders with Elco producing the larger number. In the later years of the war the U.S. Navy standardized the design and construction of the PT boat. Two basic and distinctly different types of PT Boats were built for combat with the predominant PT, the 80-foot long "Elco" boat, and the slightly smaller 78-foot long "Higgins" boat. By the end of World War II, 399 Elco PTs had been built and Higgins built approximately 200 PTs. Among the PT boats constructed in Bayonne was PT-109, commanded by naval lieutenant and future U.S. President John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

- d. After the war, Elco went back to building pleasure boats, but by 1948 it was just a small branch of Electric Boat, a conglomerate handled by John Jay Hopkins. Hopkins felt that Elco was not a profitable enterprise, and in December of 1949 the work force was let go, and the equipment, supplies and plant in Bayonne were sold. After Elco left Bayonne, the structure was used by Englander Mattress and Efka Plastics. On September 3, 2001, a fire caused severe damage at the former Elco Naval Division factory. The industrial structure was vacant at the time of the fire, and had not been active for several years. Fire fighters battled the blaze that night and remained on site to apply water to remaining hot spots for two days after they contained the fire. The engineer's report concluded that the main industrial building should be condemned and demolished. This recommendation applied only to the main structure. The Elco Marina clubhouse, the dockside crane, and other free-standing structures nearby were not harmed in the fire and were excluded from the recommended demolition.
- e. The crane, recovered from the Elco Naval Division in Bayonne, lifted the PT boats from land and lowered them into Newark Bay. It serves as a reminder of the important role that Bayonne played in World War II, recalling the men and women employed by the Electric Launch Company (Elco), the servicemen who commanded and worked aboard the Patrol Torpedo (PT) boats that were built in Bayonne, and the innovation of the Electric Launch Company.
- f. The Elco Crane is in Richard A. Rutkowski Park at the Hackensack River Walk in Bayonne, on Newark Bay, west of 52<sup>nd</sup>-54<sup>th</sup> Streets (Block 12, Lot 3). In 2003, the crane was removed from its original location on Newark Bay, to make way for the Boat Works housing development, which is located approximately two miles to the south of this park. The crane was dismantled and stored while this park was completed. The crane was reassembled at its current location in this park in 2006.

### **§ 37-40.2. Key Features.**

The Municipal Council further finds that the features key to the crane's architectural significance include, but are not limited, to the following:

- a. Features key to the design and construction significance of the crane include:
  1. The Elco crane is the only remaining crane of its type from the Elco facility and its design and construction are unique and reflective of an era of historical military significance.

### **§ 37-40.3. Criteria for Historic Designation.**

The Municipal Council further finds and determines that the Elco Crane meets the criteria for

historic designation for the following set forth in Section 37-40.1 above. Additionally, the crane meets Criterion A in that it evidences the "...Character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the Municipality, State, or nation" and Criterion C in that the crane is associated with a site of "an historic event which had significant effect on the development of the municipality, state, or nation."

**§ 37-40.4. Designation as Historic Landmark.**

The Elco Crane, currently located in Richard A. Rutkowski Park at the Hackensack River Walk in Bayonne, on Newark Bay, west of 52<sup>nd</sup>-54<sup>th</sup> Streets (Block 12, Lot 3) is hereby designated a Historic Landmark in accordance with Municipal Land Use Law, N.J.S. 40:55D-1 et seq., and Chapter 37, Historic Preservation, of the Revised General Ordinances of the City of Bayonne.

**§ 37-40.5. Designation on Zoning Map.**

This designation shall be noted on the zoning map of the City of Bayonne and filed with the City Tax Assessor.