

FACA Notes Meeting #29 – March 23, 2018

Facilitator: Stacy Smith

Committee Members: Patrick Collum, Karolyn Wray, Kate Stevenson, Tony Mercantante, Dan Saunders, Michael Walsh, Shawn Welch, Mary Eileen Fouratt, Jim Krauss, , Gerry Scharfenberger, Guy Hembling

NPS: NPNH Commissioner Joshua Laird, GATE Superintendent Jennifer T. Nersesian (Designated Federal Official – DFO), GATE Chief Business Services and Partnerships Pam McLay, GATE Business Services Karen Edelman, Michal Wisniewski, and Kelly Griffith, GATE Public Affairs Daphne Yun, Pete McCarthy, Sandy Hook Unit manager

- Pledge of Allegiance
- Park Update and Announcements

Shawn Welch Update and Announcements:

- Lillian Burry could not be here but sent a message that Shawn will read later
- Mike Holenstien will not join due to unexpected requirements
- Guy Hembling will join later today.

Superintendent Update and Announcements:

- The Secretary of Interior (SOI) visited Gateway in September 2018. Part of the reason for the visit is to ensure east coast parks get their due in a very west coast park oriented system. NPS-wide deferred maintenance is a SOI priority. Though this is an agency-wide issue, GATE has the highest level of deferred maintenance in the NPS. We will continue to seek support from SOI on this issue. We will take every opportunity we can get to raise visibility of what is going on here of which FACA is a part.
- Projects with Sandy Hook Foundation:
 - The new Observation Platform was completed. SHF has been working with local garden clubs to revegetate area under platform.
 - Group camping with SHF at Nike Radar Site in development. NPS is putting out group camping tents. SHF is committed to working with NPS to make old barracks fit for use for a group camping program.
- AGFA has been undertaking additional work within Battery Gunnison/New Battery Peck to include exterior lighting installation and functional restoration of historic Chemical Defense system.
- Changes to the Committee, John Ekdahl has departed, Tim Hill has retired and moved to FL, Margot Walsh resigned. We must address the lack of local municipal representation from Highlands, Atlantic Highlands, Rumson, and Sea Bright. Additionally, some members require term renewals this summer.
- Brookdale Community College students are working on design of three additional buildings. They will present at one of our near future meetings.
- Infrastructure Projects:
 - Fort Hancock Roof Stabilization efforts are underway at Officers Row Buildings 6 and 16 and Barracks 24. NPS is hiring additional seasonal employees over summer to help move this effort along.
 - Building 102 Improvements are still in progress.

- Beach Center D final design and planning for demolition. Thereafter, NPS has to undertake planning for further use of the area.
- Group 2 Housing Buildings were completed August 2017.
- History House improvements were completed in spring 2017. Thanks to SHF for painting project at History House.
- Telecommunications project at Fort Hancock is complete. Upgraded service is now in place.
- Recent paving of Hudson Road, the Building 26 parking lot, and the parking lot utilized by MAST is complete.
- Wastewater treatment plant is completed. Contractor is fixing some design issues arising in connection with project. New sewer treatment plant serving the park – much more resilient designed to withstand weather events.
- Lift station improvements were completed in 2017.
- Water plant (different from wastewater treatment plant) contract for roof rehab has been awarded. \$1MM should be completed July of 2018. Historic Bldg which houses critical infrastructure.
- Scaffolding visible around the lighthouse was erected for a rehabilitation project. Foundation work and staining on the side is being treated expected complete May 2018. It is a \$1MM project.
- New Maintenance Facility results in restoration of historic structures in FOHA. This \$13MM project expected to be completed summer 2019.
- Bldgs. 64 and 73 are getting roofs and interior finishes should be completed in the next month or so.
- NPS Contract restored the Battery Gunnison/New Battery Peck ammunition bridges (two) and stairs to the Battery Commander's Station.
- Beach mat replacement is underway.
- Other updates from Superintendent:
 - Tax Bill and impact to Historic Tax Credits – Have not been eliminated nor reduced but now instead of being able to take the 20% credit in one year, it has to be spread over five years.
 - New Staff in Leasing Program and Division of Resource Management
 - Regarding Inspections (code and building), we have received permission to defer to the local jurisdiction. We can move from NFPA to IBC with historic considerations.
- Other Announcements
 - From Lillian Burry: April 12, the freeholders are voting on the \$13MM bond necessary to undertake improvements to buildings 23 and 56.
 - From Lillian Burry: May 19th the County is dedicating Battery Lewis at Hartshorne woods. Invites for the 10 am event will follow. AGFA will attend and then conduct a public six mile hike at Fort Hancock after the dedication. The hike requires on-line pre-registration. Details are in the park spring program.
- Leasing Updates: See corresponding PPT Presentation prepared for this meeting. There has been significant progress on the execution of Letters of Intent (LOIs). It takes a long time to hire the professionals, coordinate drawings, and review submissions required under the terms of the LOIs.
 - NPS will not sign any leases until we have approved drawings.
 - NPS will try to upload plans and specs received to date to the website.

- Regarding Liquor Licenses, NPS will work directly with applicants. There is no oversight from the state except the issuance of the actual license. NJ ABC laws are still in effect even though the State does not directly supervise.
- NPS Action items:
 - Update the map on the website to show which buildings are leased or subject to LOIs
 - Check to see if changes to historic tax credit information page on FACA website requires revision.
- Outreach discussion: Requesting outreach ideas from the Committee. NPS has created tear sheets, brochure boxes, and signs/banners. We can provide those to Committee members for distribution.
- Suggestions from Committee Members include:
 - Posting ads on the Ferry boats *Action Item for Michael Walsh*
 - Reaching out to Mariners who conduct tours of the harbor *Action Item for Lynda Rose*
 - Advertising on Middletown and County Television (free) *Action Item for Tony Mercantante*
 - More video content on the Facebook site. Consider using college students to produce videos for credit.
- Next Presentation Topic/Part of Leasing PPT - Mooring Fields in NYC and NPS and Raritan. See corresponding PPT Presentation prepared for this meeting. NPS is considering a competitive solicitation which would allow an operator to construct and manage a mooring field in the bay. Responsibility for permitting and required approvals will be borne by proposed Lessee. NPS proposes including a land based operation tied into a structure that can be used in connection with a long term lease. There is great deal of park planning and compliance review required for a project of this scope. The most efficient way is to try and see if the market will bear the cost.
 - Comment from Dr. Norbert P. Psuty (*Professor Emeritus in the Departments of Geography, Geological Sciences, and Marine and Coastal Sciences at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey; currently the Director of Sandy Hook Cooperative Research Programs of the Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences. He is a coastal geomorphologist*): Previous proposals to DEP were rejected due to presence of clams and the only place DEP would approve is by existing ferry docks.
- PILOT Program Presentation (moved from 1:30 to the 11 am slot on the agenda). Tony Mercantante, Middletown Township (MT) Administrator discusses use of PILOT/PILT Program instead of traditional property tax approach. Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT/PILT) programs are implemented to allow for improvements to distressed, underutilized, vacant property, spur economic development. If this was private property in NJ, it could be designated an area in need of redevelopment and a PILOT program could be implemented. Municipalities create a boundary of the area in need of redevelopment, get it designated, create a plan by which the plan will be implemented. Like zoning requirements which replace the underlying zoning. But here there is no underlying zoning control by MT so the process is not yet applicable. This change will take some change at the state legislature level as well as some change to federal regulation.
 - Because this is federal land, there are different considerations. How to make it applicable is a complicated issue. One consideration is whether the Federal Government is going to assent to zoning determinations made by local municipality with respect to redevelopment.
 - MT has approached State politicians regarding PILOT/PILT. No one is able to identify the mechanism by which the PILOT program could be enacted (due to requirement to designate an area in need of redevelopment). MT has asked state legislators to facilitate meeting between NJ Attorney General's Office and NPS. *Action Items: MT to send related legal citation. NPS to work with DOI SOL.*

- Concerns identified by committee members include the stability of the PILOT/PILT payment over time and the ability to insulate the payee from radical changes over time. Also noted that PILOT/PILT funds are general fund assets and lack the expenditure limitations of a normal tax levy. Given that NPS provides all of the direct services, and charges the lessee for some of those services, there is a need to avoid the appearance of “double billing”.

- Public Comment at 11:30

Dan Ferrise, potential Lessee with Letters of Intent for Buildings 52, 80, 36, has questions about PILOT. To MT: As I understand you have assessed the property at some level. Seeks clarification on how PILT is assessed. MT explains that PILTs used to be assessed at a very specific percent such as 6.82% but now you can tailor the PILT to the project considerations. There are provisions in the laws which identify the total project costs and other significant terms.

DFO: The goal of the program is to get the level of taxes lower than that associated with the traditional method of taxation.

Dan Ferrise: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) issue is a huge win for this project. My original interest in Building 17 was put on hold due NFPA requirement to sprinkler and make the building compliant. In essence, I’ve lost \$17k due to this issue. The move to local municipal code oversight is a huge win for this project.

The other consideration that should be better managed is the tax credit program. There should be coordination between the tax credit office and the Officers Row buildings. Those buildings are almost identical. There should be pre-approvals and materials lists for all work anticipated with the exterior of the buildings. There needs to be better access to the park’s historic architect so that information can be provided ahead of time with respect to the tax credits. The approval process is cumbersome and time consuming and costs leases money. If NPS is more up front about the level of review required, and the materials approved, there will be less confusion. Hiring another NPS architect is a very big improvement.

Brian Samuelson, Building #21 Lessee. Not enough people know about this opportunity. Mr. Samuelson has a listing on Craig’s List. It provides a link to the FACA site. He also has links to FACA on his own website. He thanks the NPS for moving ahead.

Guy Hembling asks what Mr. Samuelson is paying in taxes right now. Brian: Assessment is \$5300. Guy to MT: Will that change with the PILOT? Middletown does not know.

Guy asked about bricks and discussion with DFO indicates that NPS is open to a bulk brick buy. Research is ongoing regarding the legal and source issues associated with this proposal.

Dan Ferrise asks about the Historical Architect GATE has hired. Is that person at Fort Hancock? Are you having an archeologist on site at Fort Hancock? NPS should have the archeologist on site to identify where to put propane tanks for all buildings. Right now, the LOI requires the Lessee to do it. If you get more information from the park service up front, it makes it easier to assess your needs and costs up front. The park historic architect should be checking in with proposed Lessees every week and find out what information they need to move ahead with next steps. The NPS should invest more time on completion of buildings and provide video tours of completed buildings .

Public Comment Period Closed.

Working Lunch.

- Back to outreach. Additional suggestions:
 - More printed information should be available around the park
 - Reach back out to County and State Tourism Boards
 - Agreed NPS will create talking points about the Leasing Program for front line staff.
 - Gerry S will link to FACA on the County Free holder website. Gerry S will see if he can do a FACA related spot on the County TV program.

- Other Agenda Items:
 - Municipal representation on the Committee.
 - Committee members are instructed to identify such parties by the next meeting and new areas of expertise that should be represented on the Committee.
 - Consider people who can address construction/implementation as we move into that phase of the project.
 - Historic Context Recommendations at Five Years.
 - Provided handout of recommendation as forwarded to NPS in 2013.
 - NPS has made two major changes that reflect the recommendations:
 - Updated the park entrance sign and post entrance sign at Guardian Park to include the full landmark designation (Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark).
 - Updated the “Unigrid” (park quad-fold) to show the landmark designation just below “Sandy Hook”.
 - Updated the digital “Fort Hancock Historic Post” digital tear sheet (hard copies must be exhausted before new printing).
 - Updated the Post area map (to include building numbers) and posted to the NPS map web page.
 - Updated the peninsula map (to include buildings numbers) and posted to the NPS map web page.
 - NPS is updating all operational documents related to Sandy Hook to include the full landmark designation. The following revised documents were shared at the meeting:
 - Special Use Permit
 - Short Term Lease
 - Application for non-standard Special Use Permit
 - After Hours Access Permit Fact Sheet (map still requires updating)
 - Beach Ceremony Fact Sheet (map still requires updating)
 - Commercial Filming and Still Photography permit
 - Bus Schedules
 - Camp Gateway trifold
 - NPS will complete updates of operational documents and post to the NPS website not later than June 2018.

- Closing Comments:
 - Members are pleased Middletown Township is pursuing a PILOT. It will be a big help getting the tax issue resolved.
 - Members are pleased to see how much progress NPS has made despite the hiatus.

- One additional announcement: Gerry Scharfenberger is a Monmouth County Freeholder as of February 2, 2018.

Adjourned.