

**FORT HANCOCK 21st CENTURY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING #39  
April 13, 2022**

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● General Agreement Schedule and Process</li> <li>● Working Group Updates</li> <li>● Leasing Updates</li> <li>● Discussion of Ombudsman/subcommittee/communication link</li> </ul>
Action Items for Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recommendation to include more presentations from Gateway’s Chief of Resource Management</li> <li>● Recommendation to try to resolve the land ownership issue with Sandlass house and report to group.</li> <li>● Recommendation for an update on Gateway’s Great American Outdoors Act projects for 23, 24, 25.</li> </ul>

Attendees:

NPS: Jennifer T. Nersesian, Gateway National Recreation Area Superintendent and Designated Federal Officer (DFO); Karen Edelman, Gateway Business Services; Daphne Yun, Gateway Public Affairs; Pete McCarthy, Sandy Hook Unit Manager; Patti Rafferty, Chief of Resource Management, Nadya Nenadich Historic Preservation Architect, , Amy Sebring Chief of Planning, Project & Asset Management, Joy Beasley, NPS associate director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science, Mike Caldwell, NPS associate director of Park Planning, Facilities, and Land, Ray Sauvajot, NPS associate director of Natural Resource Stewardship and Science, Jennifer Wyse, Chief of Staff for Natural Resource Stewardship, and David Hallac, Superintendent of Cape Hatteras National Seashore

Facilitator: Bennett Brooks

FACA Committee Co-Chairs: Shawn Welch, Gerard Glaser

FACA Committee members: Gary Casazza, Linda Cohen, Chris Doxey, Mary Eileen Fouratt, Michael Holenstein, Jim Krauss, Tony Mercantante, Dr. Howard Parish, Gerry Scharfenberger, Kevin Settinbrino, Kate Stevenson, Michael Walsh, Karolyn Wray

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## **Welcome, Meeting Overview and Committee Context Jen Nersesian, Bennett Brooks**

Meeting called to order by Gateway Superintendent Jen Nersesian.

Pledge of allegiance

Overview of meeting agenda and ground rules

### **Park Updates – Jen Nersesian**

#### **Great American Outdoors Act Projects**

2021 project - Officers Row Seawall and Revetement.

This is a \$30,000,000 investment. Due to the rapid rate of erosion a temporary stabilization project was undertaken behind the chapel while the bigger project goes through the contract and design and final construction processes.

The temporary stabilization project has finished and there is now stabilization infrastructure in place.

2022 project – Rehabilitation of the water and wastewater lines at Sandy Hook.

The sewer plant was repaired after Hurricane Sandy, this project is for the lines themselves that run through Sandy Hook. This is a \$13 million project that will rehabilitate the whole distribution system. There is also a \$6-7 million project to rehabilitate the well and build a redundant well for the system.

#### **Sandy Recovery Program Project**

The last walk-through of our Sandy Recovery Program project was completed in March. There were over 50 projects at Gateway, many of them at Sandy Hook. The total cost of all these projects was over \$100 million.

The hurricane taught us many valuable lessons, and we want to mark every milestone completed.

#### **Officers Row Roof Project**

This is a \$3,000,000 project to stabilize the roofs that in the worst condition on 8-10 of the buildings. It is currently in contract negotiations and should be awarded soon.

There is also a hazardous tree removal and pruning project moving forward as well as the group camping project the park is working on with the Sandy Hook foundation.

#### **Other Updates**

Fishing access passes went on sale on March 1 through recreation.gov for overnight fishing access (at Sandy Hook). We've been modernizing the way we do these kinds of passes and there

are no more onsite sales. Camping reservations are also open for Sandy Hook for the summer through [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov).

The Lighthouse Keeper's Quarters (visitor center) is open on the weekends from 10 am to 4 pm and the ferry should begin operations on Memorial Day weekend.

Ocean Fun Day is scheduled for May 22. McFly's on the Hook is open on weekends. McFly's is one of our leasing successes, everyone should check it out.

Jen wrapped up the park updates by saying park staff have been exploring different paths for bringing on an ombudsman, or someone who helps connect lessees and the park. Nothing has worked out yet. The park is trying to hire more project managers as well.

### **Leasing Update – Karen Edelman**

Seven buildings are currently leased.

- Buildings 23 and 56 a former barrack and mess hall and are subject to an agreement with the Marine Academy of Science and Technology.
- Building 53 is the former Post Exchange and is the current location of McFly's on the Hook. <https://mcflysonthehook.com/>
- Building 21 is a duplex that is available for vacation rentals. Brian Samuelson has his own website: <http://sandyhookrentals.com/>.
- Building 104- used as an office and residence.
- Building 52 – Former Sergeants' quarters now being used as a vacation rental. <https://sandyhookvacation.com/>
- Building 36 – Former Mule Barn expected to be a bar/restaurant/event location which should open toward the end of 2023.

Four buildings are subject to a letter of intent.

- Building 40- former YMCA- proposed for dining and event space
- Buildings 24 & 25, former barracks – residential use
- Building 114 former Officers Club – event space

The 21 remaining buildings are currently subject to a general agreement with a developer and are proposed for mixed sorts of residential use of varying sizes and degrees. This general agreement has two steps. The first step requires the developer to develop prototypes for two officers row buildings. A feasibility study analysis will be created based on the outcome of those prototypes followed by a comprehensive concept plan. This is necessary to see whether the number of units proposed is viable, and whether this project can move ahead when considering things like retaining character defining features and the historic fabric. Engineers are expected onsite on April 13-14 to evaluate Officers Row buildings 7 and 12. Those are the two building that will be used as prototypes for this effort.

Bennett Brooks asked if anyone had any questions on the park or leasing update.

Bennett Brooks shared a question from the chat about the \$3,000,000 being used to stabilize the building roofs. Is this from Gateway's base budget?

Jen Nersesian answered that this money is from Gateway's leasing program. She continued that in certain cases, when leasing these buildings, most of what goes toward historic preservation winds up offsetting any payments during the lease term. By law we must charge fair market value rates, but this can be offset with investments in historic preservation. Most of the buildings in Gateway's leasing programs are so deteriorated that this offset would be carried out through the better part of a 60-year terms, so rent payment would not be collected. In other situations, rent is collected once that historic preservation offset has been met, and the park receives regular rent payments. The lease revenue is earmarked to go to deferred maintenance and big projects, and particularly for projects that in turn help support the leasing program.

Christina Doxey asked if the restaurant in the old mule barn will be serving alcohol. And then asked who would hold the license?

Karen Edelman answered that yes, they plan to serve alcohol. Lessees can hold licenses. These licenses don't go through any municipality, but through the State in the form of the permit. There was a previous FACA presentation on this.

Bennett shared a question from Allan Porto. He submitted a response to the RFP for officers' row. He wants to know if the buildings are being held up or being considered for others.

Jen Nersesian let everyone know that the NPS takes proposals on a first come first serve basis. The Stillman proposal was for all remaining buildings on the RFP. A feasibility study will be the first step. The Stillman group is taking two buildings and working through the designs on them to understand what can be done within the stored constraints within other considerations, in terms of what density they can accommodate, and see if this a viable project from an investment standpoint. If the group is successful, then the project will take on the rest of the buildings. They have first dibs based on submission of their proposal in 2020. Backup applications are taken, and there have been cases when the first proposal did not move forward, so the second proposal was evaluated. Jen continued that she did not know whether Allan's proposal will be formally evaluated until that point, but if it's the next proposal in line that's been submitted than it is the next in queue to be evaluated.

**Sandy Hook as a National Model: Discussion of climate change with National Park Service Associate Directors - Joy Beasley, NPS associate director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science; Mike Caldwell, NPS associate director of Park Planning, Facilities, and Land; and Ray Sauvajot, NPS associate director of Natural Resources, Stewardship, and Science and David Hallac, Superintendent of Cape Hatteras National Seashore**

Bennett Brooks explained that the next hour or so will be used to think about climate change in a couple of different ways. National Park Service leaders will talk about Sandy Hook as a national

model to discuss climate change, then Gateway's Chief of Resource Management Patti Rafferty will share her presentation on potential climate change, impacts, and mitigation.

Jen Nersesian introduced three of the associate directors for the entire National Park Service. Mike Caldwell is the Associate Director of Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands; Joy Beasley is the Associate Director of Cultural Resources, Partnerships, and Science; and Roy Sauvajot is the Associate Director of Natural Resources, Stewardship, and Science. She also introduced David Hallac, the superintendent of Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Jen continued that the Washington team has long been tracking, interested in and supporting the efforts at Sandy Hook, both in terms of stewardship, and of course, in the leasing program. Over the past couple of meetings there have been an increasing number of questions about climate change. The working group had a very productive discussion on climate change considerations, which has built the foundation for furthering that discussion and to look at potential impacts and how they are addressed. This has been discussed by the park in the past, between the general management plan, which, brought to climate change into consideration when it was finalized in 2014, and also throughout the Hurricane Sandy recovery process. Hurricane Sandy changed how impacts of climate change were understood and discussed and brought to the forefront the importance of building back in a more resilient way.

The National Park Service as an agency is taking the next step in looking to develop a coastal park initiative, with a decision-making framework to help bring consistency and to try to move it by those decisions. Jen is one of the leads on this process along with Dave Hallac from Cape Hatteras. That park faces many of the same kinds of issues that are part of our day-to-day reality. The group kicked off a few weeks ago a climate change vulnerability assessment of Hurricane Sandy work to update the data and projections so that future issues can be understood. This will help form the foundation for prioritizing investments.

Jen then introduced Mike Caldwell, associate director of Planning, Facilities, and Land.

Mike Caldwell thanked Jen. He had been to an advisory meeting in the past and worked with Jen and a number of folks in the park, especially in post-Sandy rebuilding and the development of the General Management Plan. He continued that what is being done at Sandy Hook and Fort Hancock is of great interest not only to the northeast region, but also to the National Park Service. Having the three associate directors here demonstrates that intersection of climate change with historic preservation as well as natural resources. One of the messages all three of the associate directors have is Sandy Hook is a laboratory where all these things meet. How are these resources going to be preserved? How will climate change be dealt with? How can a place be adaptively reused in different ways for a future. Sandy Hook as a pilot for this coastal initiative framework is very important. He noted that Joy, Ray, and Mike sit on the national investment review board that looks at the investments in facilities across the National Park system to decide whether the agency should make that investment.

One of the reasons the coastal initiative needs to be developed is to help set a framework for some of these critical decisions that that must happen; not just daily operationally, but when a great amount of funding is invested, whether it's public funding or private funding, into these

assets, climate change and other issues must be considered to see if this investment is a wise choice. Current information is used to decide if everything from a road to a seawall to an officer's quarters building is the best investment for the National Park Service to make.

Climate change is a key filter for the projects in the Investment Review Board. The coastal park initiative will be giving the Investment Review Board a tool that can help them make decisions as well as helping superintendents by giving them a framework for the agency instead of having to work through the issue park by park. Mike said he looks forward to sharing the results of this. He finished by saying that his directorate (Parks Planning, Facilities, and Land) has a role in convening the Investment Review Board and serves as the coordinator of the Great American Outdoors Act along with the comptroller's office. He then introduced Joy Beasley and thanked Jen for having the opportunity to speak.

Joy Beasley, associate director of Cultural Resources and Partnerships, thanked Jen for allowing this group to be here today and chat with the committee. She continued that Mike Caldwell did a great job of setting up why the associate directors are at the meeting and the goals of the coastal initiative. Joy added that one reason that Sandy Hook is a great option for a pilot project is certainly because of its natural features, and its geography, but also because of the importance of its cultural resources. The Sandy Hook Lighthouse is an individually listed national historic landmark that sits within a national historic landmark district, and so that that brings a special responsibility to our consideration of the impacts on those resources, and how we're managing those resources. It's a great opportunity to really decide how we're going to approach these decisions going forward and to approach that in a truly collaborative and interdisciplinary fashion. For over 200 years, Sandy Hook has been a critical component of the defenses of the New York harbor. As a national historic landmark, it has much to tell us about an exceptional illustration of American history. She ended by thanking Jen for her leadership and said that superintendents are going to help the Washington team understand how to walk through this process and how to set up a framework that can work on the ground at the park level.

Ray Sauvajot thanked Jen for the invitation to speak. He shared his background, as well as the role he plays within the National Park Service. Ray is the associate director for the Natural Resource, Stewardship and science directorate of the National Park Service, and his Directorate provides broad oversight across the National Park system applying science and law and policy around the stewardship and the understanding and the restoration of biological resources to physical resources, like geologic features, and so forth. Within that directorate is the climate change response program, which is a cross-disciplinary program that provides guidance, training, and broader oversight around climate change issues across the national park system. Although a phenomenon that is understood from a natural science perspective, the implications of climate change and the consequences of it, and the way to respond to climate change are intricately linked with other programs across the National Park system. Ray's directorate works very closely with the facilities management and facilities planning group that Mike Caldwell represents. Many of the features and the research, structures and other things are cultural resources as well, and so Roy's group also coordinates closely with Joy Beasley. They also strive to understand the consequences and the implications of a changing climate to the investments that the National Park Service makes with respect to infrastructure, how we communicate with

and interpret resources to visitors and how we respond in general to ensure that the values of the National Park system are understood, interpreted, and protected for future generations.

Given the challenges of a changing climate, coastal areas like Sandy Hook, are vulnerable to the effects of the changing climate, and particularly things like rising sea level and the frequency of severe storms. This was demonstrated with Hurricane Sandy. Through all of this, as the committee has heard from Mike and Joy, the National Park Service is embarked on a very important effort to put in place a framework that allows it to think about how to approach the resource protection and the resource investments that need to occur within the National Park Service. This needs to occur looking through the lens of climate change and the risks and challenges that climate change provides. Sandy Hook is right in the middle of that conversation, and it exemplifies the importance of taking a hard look on where and how we invest, and in facilities and visitors' services, and also how those interact with the natural environment and the consequences of a changing environment and asking: What kinds of mitigation measures can we implement and what kinds of investments are going to be appropriate given these challenges? At Gateway the National Park Service and the park itself have been working very closely to look at vulnerability analyses, and we see that as a critical component of understanding the appropriateness of these kinds of investments. This is now coupled with this pilot project and this framework (that you've heard a bit about already) where we see the work that's going on at Sandy Hook and specifically the work that's going on here at Fort Hancock, as a really important pilot to understand how those investments can be done using the best information and thinking about it again through that lens of climate change and the consequences of climate change. The interdependence of our work across facilities, cultural resources, natural resources, and climate change are fully ingrained in this effort, and our goal is to use the best available science and analysis of that science to make appropriate decisions that are consistent with the mission of the National Park Service. We also want to look at things through a very informed perspective about the consequences of those actions, given the challenges that we're facing for climate change, and we are looking forward to the effort.

Ray continued by saying this is a is going to be a really important model for the National Park Service, much broader than just Gateway National Recreation Area. He added that on top of all the issues related to changing climate and sea level rise and storm frequencies, his team works to understand other natural resource issues that affect any kind of development that occurs in parks. Sandy Hook has very important and notable natural resource values including the rare maritime holly forest and the piping plover and is also an important migratory bird stopover. Those factors get incorporated into decisions about development. Any work and next steps would look at the context of investments with respect to the challenges posed by climate change, sea level rise and storms, and also go through NPS processes through the National Environmental Policy Acts (NEPA) and other environmental obligations, and responsibilities we have as the National Park Service. ~~So that is a sort of broad overview of kind of how the natural resource programs fit into this and our commitment and interest in looking at Sandy Hook as important to applying the scientific information, looking at vulnerabilities, responding to those vulnerabilities, and then moving forward with appropriate actions.~~

Jen Nersesian thanked the three associate directors, and then asked Dave Hallac if he'd like to contribute.

David Hallac thanked everyone for the opportunity to participate in today's meeting. He is enjoying working as part of the team leading this new decision framework with Superintendent Nersesian. Cape Hatteras National seashore is 75 miles long, and they are basically managing about 4,000,000\* people on a sandbar. The park includes around 30 historic structures, many of which are similar to structures at Fort Hancock. In some cases, they're national historic landmarks and some significant decisions and efforts have been made in the past to protect those structures from erosion and sea level rise. The most famous – moving the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse – was made approximately 23 years ago. At that time this was considered radical by some, maybe crazy by others, and progressive, and that was based on the best of science, and it was certainly something that we look back at as a success. One of the hardest parts of this was actually getting community buy-in. Science surrounding sea level rise and climate change is always changing, but more and more, there's some certainty to the amount of sea level rise we're going to see and to the intensity and frequency of future storms and severe weather, so to some degree, the science side of this is the easy part. The hard part is understanding the value of these historic structures and districts, to our stakeholders, to our communities, and to those who cherish them because of the culture that they provide within the community, and the history they preserve for our nation. Superintendent Hallac continued that for that reason it's a real pleasure to see this committee here today, and to learn more about how they advise the superintendent and the park. He thanked everyone for the opportunity to be here.

Bennett Brooks thanked David and asked if anyone had any questions or comments.

Gerry Glaser thanked everyone for joining the meeting. He continued that the committee has been at it for some 10 years, and he feels that what was described today is the culmination of efforts that the committee has been hopeful about, since the work was begun, and that it is thrilling to have the associate directors involved in this broader effort within the National Park Service. He welcomes the opportunity to hear of agenda items that the associate directors think would be helpful for the committee to pursue more broadly with the community that they represent.

Mike Caldwell said that as the coastal initiative goes forward, they look forward to the opportunity to share what the framework means for Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook. He underscored the importance of a transparent effort. This group offers an opportunity to deal with the big issues that affect places like Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook. These places mean something to everyone, and they certainly mean something extra special to this group. Mike continued that as far as agenda items, this group looks forward to sharing the outcomes and process. There will be a constant evaluation of what's being done– where investments are made, what materials are used, etc. This group has done a great job, and it's really looking at how we take these historic structures and give them some sort of sustainability.

Shawn Welch asked what was the timeline for developing the framework? He wanted to know how it fits with the conversation happening right now at Sandy Hook.

Mike answered that he, Dave, and Jen, have a key check-in point in July at the Investment Review Board (IRB). The IRB will rely on Jen and her knowledge of this project's progress. The

three directorates have provided the support they need to help run the meetings, take notes, and get other folks lined up. July is a critical moment and then the project will head into fall based on evaluations, etc. Mike continued that no one's put a hard stop on any of the wonderful investments that are going on now at Sandy Hook, and we all can learn from those investments. Mike complimented Jen and her team for their remarkable job in recovering from Hurricane Sandy as well as presenting the needs of the entire park as part of the Great American Outdoors Act.

Jen Nersesian thanked Mike and added that in terms of Sandy Hook, the climate change vulnerabilities and assessment process just began. The process should create information and baseline data, and that should line up really nicely with the draft framework that will also be in place.

Shawn Welch asked when the draft framework will come into focus for climate change evaluation and when would the two come together?

Ray said it will take time, and there isn't a specific date or timeline at this point. But a lot of time has been focused on keeping this going. There should be a draft framework this fall.

Shawn said he thinks that this sounds like the fruits of this framework will be seen in 2024 or 2025.

Mike Caldwell agreed with that timeline. He continued that they are in the early stages of formulating the 2024 budget cycle, and there are some operational needs at Gateway which fit into this. Now would be the time to get input on a larger programmatic level dealing with climate change across the board. There are a number of other efforts underway within the Biden-Harris administration that could impact the park. Specifically, the FY '23 budget was just sent out about two weeks ago. There are many things that even if they are part of Jen or Dave's (Cape Hatteras) budgets, there could be support for some of these same things on a national level. Ray continued that he thought most of the audience knew that many of the investments that are going on and certainly some that have been proposed as part of the Great American Outdoors Act aren't tied to the budget process, but that funding is coming from the leasing revenue from public land. Proposed projects for FY 24 and FY 25 are being reviewed now. So, he agrees with Shawn's earlier assessment about the project being slated for FY 24. Ray said the beauty of what is going on right now is the entire concept of public private partnership.

Gerry Glaser said that he has heard Mike and Ray and Joy make comments about the pilot, the program, and the uniqueness of what's happening at Sandy Hook. While it may not be in a documented format, Sandy Hook is seen as a laboratory and as a pilot for the future, and to hear you say there's been no hard stops on any of the investments that're being made is important because those trajectories are important as we move forward, and if we lose any of those building blocks that could become very problematic.

Ray said that what has been driving this overall process service-wide has been the experiences of the Investment Review Board over the last several months and years. When major investment proposals come forward, these climate change questions are some of the big struggles. This has

been the motivation for the creation of a clear framework. It's been recognized that this is an urgent need; not something that can be drawn out. The process is independent of the vagaries of the budget ups and downs. The consequences, implications, and long-term results may be influenced by future budgets in the sense it could help accelerate or it could be applied to more projects.

Bennett Brooks thanked everyone who spoke and asked if any other committee members had questions or comments.

Mike Caldwell wanted to add to Shawn Welch's point and what has already been stated. We are in the axis of dedicated appropriations, you know, specifically targeted at this particular initiative and are working with the resources that we have, with the capacity that we have to keep things moving and on the cultural resources side one of our challenges is clear. We have less baseline data about the impacts or potential impacts on climate change to cultural resources and we're working really closely with Ray's folks in the climate change response program on vulnerability assessments. Mike recently hired two dedicated positions that are embedded with the climate change response program and historic architect and an archaeologist. We're working directly with those folks. We've recently issued guidelines relating to adaptation of the sort of resources for flooding risk. They are also working on developing some training on how to implement those kinds of standards (Secretary of Interior) within national park units, and as part of the development of those flooding guidelines.

We had a kind of long-standing interagency agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers to do materials testing and are testing out different material types to find out how they perform under specific conditions. This will help us address how we can rehabilitate and adapt historic resources, using materials that will be more resilient to impacts such as water inundation and other effects of climate change. There is also a long-standing research project that deals with the impacts of fire retardants on historic buildings. This is all part of a broad-brush approach to make sure that Jen and Dave have the resources and the subject matter expertise they need as this project is moved forward. No one is sitting on their hands waiting for a big bag of money from Congress, although that would certainly help.

Joy Beasley said that she reminds Mike and Roy and other colleagues at the IRB level that the National Park Service is not the only ones dealing with this issue. There are many examples in the private sector, state level, and the municipal level. There are many communities trying to preserve their historic resources. Part of this is trying to learn from how other folks are approaching these issues and seeing if it can be applied to the work in the National Park Service.

Shawn Welch said that it's his sense that by being a pilot, Sandy Hook is getting to sort of plug into a giant free consulting network that is helping with challenges and opportunities. He asked if there was a formal documentation of the status of Sandy Hook with regard to the concept of a pilot is it formalized, or is it a working agreement that you're working on working agreement?

Mike Caldwell answered that it's fit within existing work plans. To Ray and Joy's point, resources are mobilized quickly because the Fort Hancock leasing project fits into the fiscal year work plans shared with the director.

Gerry Glaser asked if there will be specific recommendations on infrastructure improvements and things within that, and that analysis that can be done out at Sandy Hook to mitigate some of the real results regarding climate change and sea level rise.

Mike Caldwell answered that one of the motivating factors is to provide a framework so that it can then get drilled down into places like Sandy Hook. The duration of the investment will be based on this framework- which will also be able to define the condition the investment can be kept in. This tool will also guide superintendents in creation of a plan to deal with storms and/or regular flooding. The tool will be used to help transparently show the NPS direction in response to climate change and how we handle these types of investments.

Jen agreed that these are the types of questions this group hoped to answer. She continued that this framework would work on multiple levels in some instances, and on parks across the National Park Service. Gateway wants to apply this framework on a project basis at Sandy Hook. The park is trying to define how we look holistically at the whole peninsula considering the climate change information that we're seeing to help understand how important investments are. Should the park invest in protection features that are outside of a given structure? Or is it making the conscious decision that either we are not going to invest in something now, like the process we went through in our General Management Plan, or we may see that given the data and projections a 40-year investment would make sense. We want to keep this place open to the public and preserved but based on projections we may need to take a different approach.

Dave pointed out that this is difficult because it's about the future. What do you do? Wait until the physical change happened to see if the model is accurate, or do you do it proactively, you know. Capital changes are expensive; should they be based on speculation or on the actual impacts that are happening?

Gerry thanked everyone and said it was interesting for the committee to hear this and that he looks forward to hearing more.

### **Understanding Potential Climate Change Impacts at Fort Hancock – Manager, Resource Stewardship Division - Patti Rafferty**

Bennett introduced Patti's presentation by saying that the committee members who are on the working group decided the whole group should hear the presentations that Patti has been giving at the leasing working group. Today Patti is going to talk about climate change and the information she's presented around potential impacts and possible mitigation.

Patti Rafferty thanked everyone for the opportunity to speak with the FACA group again. She will share a slightly shorter version of the presentation that she provided to the working group last October to talk about climate change. The presentation begins with some background and foundation for why the National Park Service would authorize or make investments in historic structures at Sandy Hook, then provide information on what guides resilient rehabilitation of historic structures within a coastal national park, and then finally share an example from the

natural resource world in our Jamaica Bay unit of how we sometimes make management decisions when we realize that investment in a resource doesn't mean that we're necessarily going to preserve or maintain that resource in perpetuity.

Some of the foundational legislation and policies that relate to climate change come from the National Park Service Organic Act of 1916, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the enabling legislation that authorized the establishment of Gateway National Recreation Area, our management policies and our General Management Plan. The Organic Act puts us in the perpetuity business; it identifies that we are to preserve and protect our cultural, natural, and recreate our cultural, natural resources for the enjoyment of future generations. That provides a foundational basis for all of our national parks in terms of taking care of our natural and cultural resources and making them available for the public to enjoy. The National Historic Preservation Act was foundational for the preservation of historic buildings, and it recognizes that these structures are an important part of telling the American story; that they have value for preserving our history as well as for current society and identifies qualities such as aesthetics identity legacy of the past that are considered in terms of determining what is historic. It provides a clearly defined process for the preservation and management of historic resources to ensure that when we're taking federal action, we consider preservation, and we consider historic resources. It requires that we have established programs to be able to identify, evaluate, and nominate historic properties to the national register of historic places, and it sets up processes for consultation, to identify and assess and seek ways to avoid minimize and migrate adverse effects due to project federal projects or actions on historic properties. The National Historic Preservation Act, however, does not require the preservation of all historic properties. The enabling legislation of Gateway has some specific language which, with regard to Sandy Hook, identifies that the National Park Service is responsible to inventory and evaluate all sites and structures, having present and potential, historic, cultural, or archaeological significance, and to provide for the appropriate management, to be able to preserve, restore, interpret, and use those resources.

NPS policies have an entire chapter that deals with cultural resources and a lot of language that deals with how we manage our cultural resources. Patti highlighted two specific areas in terms of NPS policies, looking at leasing and using cooperative agreements and leasing as a tool for historic preservation, which is very much what the Fort Hancock leasing program is about. It's in in that authorization to do leasing and cooperative agreements to allow the lessee or cooperator to maintain, repair, rehabilitate, restore, or build upon property in a way that is consistent with the Secretary of Interior standards. Gateway's General Management Plan identifies fundamental resources. Fundamental resources and values are those attributes or features or systems or processes in the park that are critical to achieving the park's purpose and maintaining its significance. The General Management Plan (GMP) identifies specific fundamental resources and the Endicott and Taft Era Batteries at Sandy Hook, the proving ground, Officers Row, the barracks, the cultural landscape, and the Nike Missile Launch and Radar sites are all listed as fundamental resources.

The GMP also established a historic banding program and, using a variety of informational sources, the GMP looked at the park's historic structures throughout all three units (Sandy Hook, Staten Island, and Jamaica Bay) and identified those that are most critical to the park's mission. It looked at the significance of those in terms of contributing to the historic districts,

vulnerability to climate change, the condition of the building, and a number of factors to be able to prioritize the preservation investment in our historic resources. Eight factors are used to identify whether it's a resource. The National Register status, the level of significance for the National Register status, condition, uniqueness to Gateway, visibility, potential use, and vulnerability. A matrix was created using professional input from a variety of disciplines looking at our historic buildings and rating against these eight factors, to be able to identify and place buildings in three bands. The preserved band are those that will get the highest level of an investment where we want to be able to preserve them and use them for our own purposes, for partners, or for interpretation or operations. The aim for the buildings in the stabilize band is to merely maintain the building in a condition that is stable. If external funding is available to maintain these buildings or adaptively reuse them. The ruin band consists of structures that were generally in such poor condition or did not have any kind of viable reuse opportunities, and so investment in those buildings will only be for maintaining safety, or to be able to do a demolition to be able to maintain safe conditions within the park.

The approach that Gateway took in the General Management Plan with this banding program was really at the forefront of thinking and was recognized across the National Park Service as being a novel approach was recognized in the cultural resource climate change strategy that came out in 2016 as a case study of how other parks might want to look at their historic resources in a way of being able to manage them.

There are several strategies, plans, and guidelines that have been put into place to address climate change. Also, the information about the potential impacts of climate change is improving every day, as are the available tools and materials and approaches available to being able to respond to and adaptively manage in the considering climate change. Some of these documents are old and it's constantly a challenge of keeping up to date and document the most current science and opportunities, but these are some of the climate change reports and policies and programs that the National Park Service has in place right now. And when we're looking at resilient rehabilitation, it's not just the National Park Service that is looking at it. Other organizations, such as FEMA, are putting together documentation that provides some guidance on reducing flood risk for buildings and on floodproofing as well. When we're looking and thinking about rezoning rehabilitation, we're trying to pull from whatever resources available to make the best-informed decisions and to look at all the opportunities and options for doing that. The 2021 department of Interior Climate Action plan is very relevant in how it speaks to looking at resiliency for the project at, and the historic rehabilitation for leasing at Fort Hancock as a one under that promotes climate resilient lands waters, cultural resources, and it's looking to have those threatened by climate change, or manage, protected and or preserve for future current and future generations in addition just for your information. Patti said that both the climate response strategy from 2010 and the cultural resource climate change documents are available to read.

In looking at flood adaptation, the important historic characteristics of the historic structures and what are the tools that are available should be considered for reducing flood risk.

What are the feasible and affordable options?

The goal is to find the sweet spot of where you can do something that will be able to maintain the important historic characteristics of the building while also achieving the goals for flood, risk reduction, and do it in a way that is feasible and affordable. It can be challenging to find that that

intersect that works well for any given building or situation in thinking about flood adaptation for historic structures.

Things that are included within that adaptation umbrella are looking at planning and assessment for flood risk, reduction, employing temporary protective measures, considering site and landscape adaptations, protecting utilities, doing dry or wet, floodproofing. Some measures include things like filling in basements, elevating a building onto a new foundation, elevating the interior structure, abandoning the lowest first floor, or relocating a historic building, which we heard Dave to speak about regarding the lighthouse.

Flood elevation and the fact that Sandy Hook is in a flood zone were considered when the buildings in the Sandy Hook leasing program were identified. Most of these buildings have first floor elevations at or about the flood level plus three feet. This was a determining factor in choosing these buildings.

One method that the park is using post-Sandy is to protect utilities by raising them. So even with flooding, utilities aren't impacted since they are at a higher elevation.

MAST has used dry flood proofing in building 56 by filling in the basement and closing off the window.

The new maintenance facility was built on a raised-up mound, so that it had a higher elevation.

Pervious pavers were used for the new parking lot, so that it would be able to accommodate increased precipitation in the future with climate change and allow for percolation, and not have an impervious surface and then there was also a low-lying area adjacent to the site that was developed for stormwater retention.

In our Jamaica Bay unit, we have a leasing project where the lessee has suggested the use of an aqua fence. These are deployable panels that are put in place in advance of an anticipated storm event and are intended to withstand the storm surge and provide an elevation around the structure that will prevent the storm surge from flood from going into and flooding and damaging the structure. And so that's an example of a temporary protective measure for dry floodproofing.

A lot of measures can be incorporated into how we're redeveloping and the adaptive reuse of the buildings at Fort Hancock and throughout our other buildings and in the Park, both historic and non-historic. But we also are faced with the challenge of although we're in the perpetuity business, not everything will necessarily be able to be saved or be preserved in perpetuity. And there are some questions have come up about why we would consider investing in Fort Hancock if potentially down the road at some point in time there may not be adequate solutions to protect these structures. In the National Park Service, we have to look at what is the benefit, and how long we can get that benefit. Giving up on the resource now means there may be decades of reuse and preservation that could be achieved.

One example of that is at the West Pond in the Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge where the pond was breached during Hurricane Sandy. It's a man-made freshwater structure that is one of the most

visited areas in the park. There is a loop trail a little over a mile that is used by a large number and a variety of visitors. This is a popular area because it's very accessible. You can get there by public transportation. It's an internationally renowned birding area, and this freshwater resource that the pond provides is a critical freshwater resource on the North Atlantic flyway. As the New York metropolitan area and New York City in particular, has been developed, freshwater resources for the migratory birds on that migratory stopover have really been diminished, and it is important habitat for those reasons as well as an important visitor use area. The pond was breached during Hurricane Sandy. Through a very deliberate decision-making process the park decided to close the breach, with the understanding that the breach would not hold in the long term, that at some point in time sea level and storms would probably cause another breach. It was anticipated that we would be able, by closing that breach, would be able to maintain that that site for all those important visitor and ecological reasons for the next 20 to 25 years.

This site is recognized by the National Audubon Society for its importance; and the site receives about 600,000 annual visitors, with many school groups. Visitation decreased after the breach because it was much less accessible. You had to either walk one way and then turn around, or you had a very short walk out there. There was a 37% reduction in visitation between 2011 and 2014. The breach was closed as part of Sandy recovery, and then, over the last year there was a living shoreline that was constructed in front of the breach area to provide additional resiliency and wetlands were restored. We know that the breach closure at this pond is not going to hold in perpetuity that at some point in time the forces of climate change and future stores will create another breach. But the decision was made that, based upon the visitor and the ecological benefits that being able to do something that would get us those benefits for another 20 or 30 years, was a worthwhile investment. Similarly, at some point in time we may not be able to save all of the buildings within the Fort Hancock Historic Post, but through resilient planning we can be able to retain adaptive reuse of those buildings for the next generation, and at least a number of decades in the into the future.

Patti then said she'd be able to take any questions if there was time.

Bennett Brooks thanked Patti for being so thoughtful and sharing so much good information. He invited discussion and questions.

Gerry Scharfenberger thanked Patti for a wonderful presentation of in the context of what we heard from the associate directors. It sounds like the kind of process that led the park to decide let's close the breach to enable visitation for 40-50 more years.

Is it fair to assume that the deliberative process that led to that decision is not unlike what this new group might be doing in looking at the future for the Fort Hancock buildings, and other structures at Fort Hancock?

Patti Rafferty agreed. She said we're trying to bring those same considerations into discussion, providing the tools to identify what should be considered in making these kinds of decisions. The goal is to make these decisions consistently and with a degree of transparency.

Shawn Welch thanked Patti for her presentations. He continued that they are fantastic and that they've been needed for a while. He suggested everyone look at this in a different way. Fort

Hancock is the most complete former harbor defense installation, even though many others have retained characteristics. At both Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie almost all the housing and post area is privately owned and doesn't reflect what it used to look like during the period when the army used that to fortify Charleston Harbor. Fort Monroe has changed dramatically, and that's a recent turnover. Fort Hancock is probably the most complete on the east coast and the most complete that is NPS property. Patti's points about fundamental resources, the fortifications, the post areas are phenomenally important for people to understand, because we truly have a very unusual facility here. Most of Fort Hamilton's defenses were demolished. The vast majority of the fortifications at Fort Wadsworth from the Endicott period were buried so you really can't interpret them. Fort Hancock has the only seacoast artillery battery with its original WWII period guns still in place – and they are intact to the point they can be fully interpreted in a functional way. Shawn continued that a lot of Patti's presentations gets to the importance of Fort Hancock, the Peninsula, and how much of it is complete.

Bennett Brooks asked if any other committee members had a question or comment. He reminded everyone that Patti has already shared the environmental review process presentation, and, in the future, she'll share presentations about parking and ecological impacts.

Tony Mercantante thought that this is something we should take into consideration for the future. He said that we learned after Sandy that most of the buildings aren't much below base flood elevations. Most are at it or slightly above, but with climate change base flood elevation is probably going to change over the next several decades. The question becomes should we build into the long, long range, planning to elevate some of these buildings again. He wondered if the NPS should build that into the budget going forward.

Shawn Welch said that if this were still an active military base, and these buildings were at risk of being flooded, they would take actions to mitigate the risk of them being flooded. He asked if they could raise the houses. House lifting has become sophisticated and there are lots of contractors out there who have expertise in it and guarantee no damage to the building and to the structure itself. Maybe they can be preserved so that their risk is minimal for the next century.

Patti Rafferty responded that these decisions are difficult because we need to weigh out, for instance, with elevating the building the impact to the historic character and to the landscape that all would get to into consideration. But certainly, as we're looking at the future, we should be considering the full suite of options available to us to determine the best pathway forward. She added that even though she gave the Jamaica Bay example and indicated that Gateway has an awareness and clarity that it may not be feasible to preserve in perpetuity, that was in no way to imply that there's been a sunset date or there's any decision made to give up on that; and the science of climate change adaptation and how we can do things are evolving, as Joy said in her presentation. National Park Service and other organizations have been engaging in research and science to look at materials and alternatives and options. We are keeping open to anything that might be feasible and find those sweet spots of where you can retain the important historic characteristics, as well as find economically viable and affordable alternatives within the available toolbox.

Bennett Brooks started the public comment period. Below is a summary of public comments.

Susan Gardiner introduced herself- Susan Sandlass Gardiner author of Sandy Hooks Lost Highlands Beach Resort, published by Arcadia in 2020. Susan thanked superintendent Jen Nersesian and her staff for the recent review of the Sandlass house documents. These results give a better understanding of the present questions surrounding Building 600, Sandlass House. She continued that she'd like to continue the discussion to work together to reserve this important historical structure in the State of New Jersey.

The U. S. history of coastal resort development at our national beaches over 200 years is embodied in the Highland Beach resort. It is a primary example from 1888 to 1963 of this cultural movement, starting in the 1800s within the boundaries of the Sandy Hook and Highlands. This example of beach and bathing culture is also a cherished national history, just as the military and life-saving histories are valued in our national dialogue on this first slide. Susan said she would share what's new about SH 600 Sandlass House. Both the Seabright and Highlands town councils voted unanimously on proclamations of support for preservation of SH 600 Sandlass House. In March 2022 a private entrepreneur sought commission to facilitate a renovation. Legislators are reaching out to NPS in favor of the Sandless house Airbnb living history experience at Sandy Hook including Congressman Frank Pallone, State Senator de Lano, Scanlon, State Senator Vin Gopel. There is a state of urgency will the house is still salvageable as an AirBNB. Susan continued that there does seem to be discrepancies between some of the county and States information, and that of NPS.

We request a quick solution to the question of ownership. Look at the 1980s the Army Corps of Engineers Survey and discrepancies in the county, and States information due to the imminent threat of a roof collapse; and, second, as advocates a petition last July, which garnered over 1,800 signatures to gain permission for this AirBNB concept at the 1893 sandless house in Sandy Hook was delivered to NPS, the community, the legislators and local town councils champion This endeavor to preserve the last remaining remnant of the 1888 to 1963 Highland beach resort at Sandlass Beach. This history deserves a rightful place on the Sandy Hook Peninsula.

Matt Montekio introduced himself. He is from Representative Pallone's office. He thanked Superintendent Nersesian and members of the committee appreciate the time to read just a quick letter from Congressman Pallone today regarding the Sandless House. The letter reads:

I'm writing to you to urge the National Park Service to work with advocates on a resolution to preserve and restore the Sandless House Building, 600 located inside Sandy Hook at Gateway National Recreation Area. The Sandless home is an important part of our history at the Jersey shore has as the last remaining structure of the Highlands Beach resort. The National Park Service and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fort Hancock Advisory Committee have made commendable efforts in restoring and repurposing historical military structures at Sandy Hook is equally important to the local community that NPS make every effort to do the same for civilian structures that played a major part in making the Jersey shore the tourist attraction it is today. Despite the fact that the home has moved from its original location in 1940, its historic significance is not just diminished. As you are aware, the structure is in desperate need of repairs, and time is of the essence. Local advocates have pledged to refurbish the home, to create

an AirBNB, preserving its history and giving future generations the opportunity to enjoy its pristine location, and sharing its historical value. An AirBNB with limited occupancy, would have little impact on environmental and traffic issues at Sandy Hook. We've strongly urged the National Park Service to take the following action:

1. Accept New Jersey Department of Transportation Research, validating Sandlass house, Building 600's historical importance on the Sandy Hook Peninsula. Currently it's evident at New Jersey State parks, Navesink light station, historic landmark,
2. If it is determined that the Sandlass house remains on Federal land, would NPS be willing to work with advocates to preserve and restore the home for enlistment onto the leasing program, and
3. Return Sandlass House to the contributing structures list at Sandy Hook to match the National Archives Group designation for SH 600 on the landmarks list of contributing structures and qualify it for the leasing program in the Sandy Hook, NHL
4. Add the Sandlass House, Building 600, to the RFP list in the Sandy Hook leasing program and remove it from the ruin band to allow renovation by a qualified private entrepreneur has who has expressed interests.

Thank you for your attention and consideration. Once again, I urge the National Park Service to work with local advocates, to preserve and restore the Sandless House to its former glory.

Sincerely Frank Pallone, Jr. Member of Congress.

Thank you.

Kip Cherry with the Sierra Club spoke next. He said that as he understood it, the goal of the Fort Hancock project was to finance the preservation of this public asset by privatizing the reuse of the buildings and maintaining the public use of the open space and shoreline. The public use includes everything, from personal enjoyment by members of the public to organized events and activities for the general public. His concern is that it is not being achieved because of incredible demands by developers to include the surrounding open space and even the shoreline as part of private space. He is also concerned about the public financing of the seawall and the provision of marine facilities for personal used boats without first securing public access for posterity. He continued that it is critical that public use be maintained for the public through deed restrictions and through the language of the agreements between the developer and the National Park Service and between the developer and those acquiring the rights to use the buildings. It would be truly a violation of the public trust for anything else to be permitted, and for the language of any agreements not to absolutely be clear. But there is no reason it won't work so long as everyone understands at both the public and private building users can enjoy Fort Hancock and must do so in mutual respect and harmony. He gave as an example, the multi-million-dollar homes that sit right on the public streets of Nantucket, where the tarmac of the narrow streets goes right up to the house wall.

Lauren Cosgrove from the National Parks Conservation Association spoke next. She thanked The National Park Service and the Federal Advisory Committee for hosting this meeting, welcoming comments and for its leadership and pulling together the working group. It's her job to advocate for National Park Funding policy and programs, she leads advocacy campaigns for

northeast coastal parks, including Gateway, and she's also a resident of Rockaway, Queens, New York, in the heart of Jamaica Bay at Gateway. Many of the same climate threats plaguing Sandy Hook are the same or like threats in her neighborhood. Sea level rise, coastal erosion and storm surges are some of the most notable consequences of the climate crisis at Gateway. With these challenges alone, the National Park Service has struggled with underfunding and, staffing shortfalls and the challenges intensified in recent years. Over the last decade the National Park Service lost about 16% of their staff capacity while struggling to accommodate a 17% increase in visitation. Gateway is not unique in this challenge. They were the fourth most visited National Park Service Unit in the country, and Sandy Hook welcomed 2.1 million visitors last year. This number continues to rise. Although Gateway did receive about \$30,000,000 from the Great American Outdoors Act, it's simply not enough. We know that money is going towards some really critical projects that were mentioned this morning, but still hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred maintenance remain. This is one of the primary reasons why NPCA supports Gateway, using their authorities, to lease out historic structures at Fort Hancock. Save naturally significant buildings, upgrade their interior and exterior, and help them better withstand the next century of climate change and increasing visitation according to Gateway's GMP. The majority of cultural and historic structures in the park are either vacant in poor condition or in need of major capital repair. This is one of the primary reasons why we support this program. There are approximately 21 buildings that are either available for lease or have pending letters of intent, and she was very pleased to learn this morning about the \$3,000,000 that Gateway generated from other lease revenue in the park to stabilize these buildings. Lauren encouraged the National Park Service to consider smaller park units that may not be able to generate this type of leasing revenue as the National Park Service continues to think about this program as a potential national model. To stabilize historic structures, prevent further degradation in the interim climate change is one of the greatest challenges that's facing Gateway, and the impetus for this program Superstorm Sandy, as we learned from Patti, displayed a lot of the vulnerabilities of Gateway. The NPCA applauds the recent investments that the National Park Service is making in the vulnerability assessments under the climate change response program that joy mentioned this morning. We'd encourage gateway to think about executing an integrated vulnerability assessment and look at natural systems as well as cultural resources and facilities to determine the best renovation criteria. The NPCA also recommends that proposals be prioritized in this program that include backup power systems, generators and Wi-fi systems in case of an emergency. They also encourage robust and thermal materials to hold up to severe winds and precipitation in coastal flooding, that we know to be present any proposals that incorporate green infrastructure and renewable and clean energy sources to the greatest extent possible without compromising the historic character, of the building and proving grounds would be critical. Lauren would also like to include some of the resource studies and trainings available from the NPS on the Advisory committee website. Lastly, she wanted to emphasize the importance of public access and making sure that for Hancock remains accessible for people of all abilities and income levels with things like ADA standards, information in multiple languages and access for those who are visually and hearing impaired. She also said a sustainable economic model is important, and that this site will continue to belong to all the American people and having scaled rooms may be a way to achieve this, with high end and economy options.

John Lumi, a resident of Sea Bright and an active member of the Borough of Seabright, spoke next. He said that historic preservation has been described as a link to the roots of a community

adding to the quality of life. Preservation can provide the community's unique character. Buildings call out the aesthetic and cultural history of times gone by and maintain a connection to the past. Once they're gone, there's no chance to renovate or to save historic sites. What will be valued in the future and when a piece of history is lost once it's lost, gone forever. The Sandlass house established in 1887, and the story that surrounds it, is one of the few connections associated with the development of the Jersey shore, area, and specifically Highlands beach. On March 20, 2022, the governing body of nearby Seabright, issued a proclamation in support of the preservation of the Sandlass house, and urges with action stated by Susan while the possibility of land that the Sandlass house occupies is owned by the State of New Jersey, and managed by the National Park Service. It's a portion of our history. Two examples of historic value based on cultural sites identity are the Chelsea and Jane Hotels. The Chelsea Hotel is a New York landmark known primarily for serving as the home of famous musicians, writers, artists throughout its existence. The Jane Hotel is best known as the location, in 1912, that the survivors of the Titanic were housed during the inquiry into the ship's sinking. The Sandlass house is such a unique story which links the history of the area, and in so many ways brings it to life. John urged us to be open to consideration for saving this in this house.

Brian Samuelson thanked the committee members and Jen Nersesian for their leadership. He introduced himself as the first one to take on the mountain of paperwork and sign a lease and be successful (Building 21). He addressed the comments of Kip from the Sierra Club, and anybody else worried about "200 development policing program". This program enhances, enables more people to visit the park and get inside the buildings. There are no gas stations, no hotels, no keeping the public from these buildings. Brian welcomed people to visit his building to help explain the leasing program. We're saving these buildings, it's a long-term lease. He doesn't own the building, the taxpayers do. It will be handed back after a certain number of years, and after being preserved and helps the local economy and provides jobs and preserves these buildings, for future generation. He reiterated that the leasing program is not going to be all high-end hotels again.

Bennett read two letters. The first once was from State Senator Declan O'Scanlon, Jr. regarding the Sandlass House.

Dear Superintendent Nersesian:

I respectfully request your continued assistance in the historical preservation of Sandy Hook by considering the Sandlass House for inclusion in National Park System leasing program.

The Sandlass House/SH 600 plays a significant role in New Jersey and Sandy Hook history; it features prominently in the new exhibit at Twin Lights Museum prepared by NJ State Park historians. This has been recognized by NJDOT who specifically designed bridge construction around the house, due to research indicating its historical significance. There also appears to be documentation listing SH 600 as a contributing structure in the 1987 National Register Amendment.

There are time-sensitive roof-repairs which urgently need to be completed in order to preserve this shining piece of Sandy Hook history. It is my understanding that there are currently ongoing

discussions with parties interested in renovating the building should it be included in the leasing program.

I would ask that you reconsider the Sandlass House as a historically significant, contributing structure eligible for inclusion in the NPS leasing program.

Respectfully,  
Senator Declan J. O Scanlon, Jr.

The second letter is from Dina Long of Seabright.

Honorable Members of the Federal Advisory Committee – Fort Hancock  
Greetings!

I am appealing for your help in preserving the Sandlass House (SH-600). Before you roll your eyes and dismiss this request, I ask you to just consider the possibility it presents. As the former Mayor of Sea Bright (2012-2020), I am very familiar with the situation, and at one point even engaged in discussion with former Superintendent Pete McCarthy about relocating SH-600 to the borough, which -clearly by outcome—was deemed infeasible at the time. I do know the issue of what to do about the Sandlass House has been a recurring headache for the NPS for over a decade. Meanwhile, the structure continues to deteriorate.

The reason why locals, historians and the family will not resent is simple: Sandlass House (SH-600) is the last remnant of the Highland Beach resort that existed on Sandy Hook before it became a National Park. Highland Beach Resort's founder, William Sandlass, opened access to the beaches by providing facilities for a day at the beach to everyday people. Before that, the shoreline was mostly the province of the wealthy who could afford the spas and hotels. It was both a social and cultural movement that is not just a local story, it is the story of the Atlantic coastline, making it accessible to the average American. We carry this tradition forward today when we buy our beach badges.

So, there are numerous technical issues relating to what list and which designation and how. Moreover, the costs of repairing or relocating or even demolishing the structure are beyond the means of any public or non-profit entity. Yet a simple administrative solution exists: to allow the house to be entered into the Fort's leasing program, available to a willing developer to restore as an AirBnB living history experience that documents the contribution of Mr. Sandlass to the east coast beach culture. The cost of doing so could be passed along to the developer through assessed fees through the leasing program.

Local support exists for preserving the home, as you have seen through recent correspondence from state and federal legislators and resolutions of support from the neighboring communities. I ask you at least consider adding your support as well. Moving SH-600 into the leasing program would preserve the shore nostalgia, turn a dilapidated building into a cash-positive endeavor, and take away the persistent headache of "what to do about the Sandlass House."

Thank you for your time and also your service to our communities.

Sincerely,  
Dina Long

Jen Nersesian addressed the comments about the Sandlass House – SH 600. For the past few months, the NPS has exhaustively reviewed the materials that Susan Gardiner shared. We do not want to leave any stone unturned when we're making decisions about Fort Hancock historic resources and want to make sure we're doing our full due diligence. This review included documents from decades ago. After looking at everything Building 600 does not qualify as nationally historic. It does not contribute to Fort Hancock. It's not part of the military history that the historic landmark status is based on, so it is outside of our preservation mission. Jen acknowledged that the site is really important to many and maybe eligible for some historic designation on a regional or state level. That is a process that is outside of Jen's expertise, but Gateway is open to. It is not within the National Park Service mission to preserve this building, and the NPS is struggling to preserve the buildings that have been identified as the most historically significant on the national level, and the most important for preservation. The National Park Service's obligation is to keep our limited resources focused on trying to accomplish that mission. Building 600 also has other challenges. It's very low and near the water. Access is problematic, as is parking. Thinking about leasing, it doesn't fit within our preservation parameters that take staff and financial resources to manage from the parks operating budget. It takes a lot of work for Gateway to manage the leasing program, and then manage the buildings once they are leased in a responsible way. The offer remains on the table that if anyone is interested in moving the building off site, Gateway and the National Park Service will all work to identify pathways to enable that to happen. Within all these contexts as Susan pointed out, there is still some ambiguity in the land ownership. There are conflicting records between the county, the state, and the National Park Service. We will keep working to clarify this. Gateway did come up with the ownership documents from the 1981 transfer. This portion was transferred subsequent to most of the park coming into federal ownership. Anything that is before that is likely superseded by that transfer. Again, we remain open to looking at any legal documentation pertaining to the easements and transfer.

We really value the commitment of everybody to this to the structure to our history, to preservation and to fighting for what's important to the community, and we'll continue to work with you as far as we can go up until actually expending preservation resources.

Patricia Alcaro, the president of the Sandy Hook Foundation thanked the committee for their hard work and dedication.

### **Working Group Status Report**

Bennett Brooks reminded everyone that the Leasing Working Group was established eight months ago to (1) think about issues around leasing and creating an opportunity where different groups and interests that care about the leasing process at Sandy Hook have a way to learn about it, and (2) importantly, create an opportunity for the National Park Service to hear the kinds of issues and concerns that are important to stakeholders, and try to figure out how to integrate across the different perspectives. The group has met about five or six times and Jim Krauss will update us on where these conversations are. The two most recent conversations were around

ecological impacts. Other topics discussed are air quality, water quality, dark skies, etc. Bennett continued that the point is to have good discussions, understand the different perspectives, understand the concerns different groups bring to these issues, as well as the potential solutions they see to manage or mitigate for potential impacts. Bennett noted that we'll be creating time at future meetings to have much more detailed conversations about that.

Committee member Jim Krauss began with a little bit of background on the process. The purpose of the working group is to maintain a dialogue with the representatives of the public interest. Each of the approximately six meetings we've had we started with a presentation from Patti Rafferty regarding current National Park Service policies and management procedures. Participants then discuss options that are available to eliminate, reduce or mitigate potential negative effects. The working group includes representatives from the American Litter Society, the Sierra Club, the Audubon Society, Monmouth Conservation, the New Jersey Historic Trust and the National Parks Conservation Association, as well as five FACA members, including the two co-chairs. and Gateway's superintendent Jen Nersesian and Gateway's Manager of Resource Stewardship Patti Rafferty. The January working group meeting had four topics. night skies; soundscapes, migratory wildlife, and habitat. Four topics were also discussed in the March meeting: air quality, water quality, fertilizer, and herbicides and pesticides. There was a tremendous amount of detail in these discussions. Jim encouraged Committee members to take the time to review Working Group materials distributed prior to the meeting.

Bennett Brooks asked if any other FACA members who are also on the working group had anything to share. He also invited any members of the working group who are in the public to weigh in.

Gerry Glaser added that Jim did a very good job of summarizing all group's work. He wanted to emphasize the extraordinary level of detail and care and conscientiousness that the park applies to all these issues. He thought he knew how closely they paid attention to all the topics that Jim just mentioned (whether it's soundscapes or chemicals or climate issues) and it's even deeper than he ever imagined. It's saving an entire ecological, infrastructure, natural resources, all the things that you heard the associate directors talk about, and Jim, Shawn and he could probably easily spend the next hour just touching on that of course. He won't – but the park should have endless commendation on how much effort is put into these topics. Thank you to Jen and her staff.

Shawn Welch added that the group has created an understanding of the different moving pieces that the National Park Service must touch. It is critical because there's no one-stop shop. He thanked Jen and Patti, especially Patti for all the work she's done.

Michael Walsh also thanked everyone for all the hard work that's been put into this. He said one of the first questions people have when they hear about what's happening at the Sandy Hook Unit is, "Have you considered climate change?" He continued that as much as he is focused on saving the buildings out there and working with the leasing program, having a presentation like this for the public showing all the work that goes into this and all the thought that's gone into climate will impact the unit going forward is a critical public service. He especially likes that people recognize the fact that we we're taking steps to adapt to climate change We're looking to

save the history there for a period, and good money that will be spent on this will be well worth saving it whether for 50 years or 100 years – we don't need to save it for 1,000 years. This is a critical part of the assessment for this unit and all of Gateway's units.

Bennett Brooks urged the committee members to look at the nature of the comments Gateway is getting from the working group members in the summaries and discussion summaries. Patti is doing a phenomenal job of presenting the potential impacts, but occasionally there are ideas that come up that are new and helpful to hear. Look for these ideas and the potential impacts as new or potential mitigation measures. These are the kinds of things the committee will be talking about in the future and giving direction or guidance to Jen and her staff about how to weigh and consider these things.

Gary Casazza said he sees his role as a communicator. He summarized each meeting to the town of Rumson and people he knows.

Bennett Brooks asked if the group wants to continue to queue up the working group presentations for the full committee. There were two presentations on potential ecological impacts – so those might be the next presentations. There were also presentations on parking.

Mary Eileen Fouratt mentioned that she added a link in the chat for a project that NJ Department of Environmental Protection on a risk communication campaign for coastal New Jersey working with artists in different communities.

## **Leasing Update**

Jen highlighted that Buildings 24 and 25 are under letters of intent. We're getting close to a lease execution. You heard a lot of talk today about the IRB when our associate directors were on. That is the Investment Review Board for the entire agency. Big dollar projects all get reviewed by this national leadership panel to make sure we're making the right investments and wise investments. The park went through concept review for this entire leasing project so that the national leadership would have visibility on what it was we were moving forward. Any investment within this project that is going to top \$5,000,000 will go back for schematic design review.

## **Committee Roundtable**

Bennett Brooks opened the around-the-table portion of the meeting where Committee members are invited to reflect on the day's conversation. We've talked about climate change in a couple of different ways. We've heard from headquarters, from Patti, from the working group. Are there any thoughts anyone would like to share?

Karolyn Wray had three questions.

1. What can be done, if anything, to help businesses like McFly's get the word out?
2. Is the Sandlass House technically in Highlands or Middletown?
3. Are we going to continue using zoom – or will meetings ever resume at Sandy Hook?

Jen Nersesian answered that she'd love to resume in-person meetings. But we've realized that we can incorporate a lot more people when the meetings are virtual, and she doesn't want to lose that type of public participation. How can we integrate the virtual and in-person meetings? Meeting in the chapel is challenging because of the acoustics. She continued that we will absolutely continue to think about this and see what we can come up with even if it's not holding a full committee member.

Jen then addressed the Sandlass House. We don't know the answer. NPS documents show that it is now under our ownership. Monmouth County documents, like tax maps, show it is part of Sea Bright. It is part of Sandy Hook and thus part of Middle Town township.

Karolyn Wray asked if a meeting could be at McFly's? He probably has Wi-Fi.

Michael Walsh said he thought it would be nice if ownership of the Sandlass House was resolved, especially because he'd rather spend money on the fort. If there's a claim by the park, maybe that claim could be released and let that be part of the easement or the right to it so Seabright can deal with resolving that issue and let something happen there. He thought Shawn mentioned that Fort Hancock is a unique parcel at Sandy Hook, it's unique to the east coast and the only thing similar is the Presidio on the West Coast. He urged everyone to look on the Presidio's website and look at Cavallo Point for inspiration of why we're doing the work at Fort Hancock. He feels that we are working on something that could be truly incredible. He thanked everyone, especially since he was not part of the advisory committee at the beginning, but he appreciates being part of the work that the park service is doing and we're hoping to contribute to is a remarkable opportunity. Stay inspired and stick with it. We're doing a great thing.

Jen Nersesian said Gateway has looked very closely at those models and what can be learned from them, particularly at Cavallo Point, where they rehabbed officers' quarters for lodging. There are some differences to that project that make it a little more challenging for us. They don't have the seasonality that the Hook has - there is beautiful weather in San Francisco all-year round. More importantly, they had the opportunity to do new construction with that project. They built a large new hotel offsite that helps subsidize the expensive historic rehabilitation of those houses. That luxury doesn't exist on Sandy Hook as the entire peninsula is part of the National Historic Landmark District and there is not the real estate for that kind of development that can help change the investment equation in return for somebody looking to do that. That doesn't mean that this still can't be a profitable investment for somebody, and we will continue to work to try and see whatever we can do to make a positive equation.

Jim Krauss said that from his perspective serving on this committee he's always had an intention to try to achieve a balance of the recreational, the environmental and historic considerations, and he think things are heading in a very good direction. The National Park Service has done a very good job at maintaining recreational use, which is such an important factor in all our discussions. Being part of the working group really opened his eyes to the park service's concerns and practices to preserve and protect the environment and ecological issues. He's also very impressed by the input from the public interest groups. Despite all the detail that the National Park Service has, the public interest groups have come up occasionally with some new thoughts and ideas which the National Park Service has integrated into its plans. On the historic side, the fact this

facility was protecting our democracy for many years in our history it's just so important to preserve.

Bennett Brooks agrees that the education is good – and thinks the committee should be thinking about how to communicate that to the broader public. By design this is a very focused conversation and at some point, that focus needs to be greatly broadened and thinking about how to do that effectively will be very important.

Tony Mercantante said he looked up the boundary regarding the Sandlass House. When you come off the bridge there's about probably 3 - 400 feet past the Sandless house that's Sea Bright and then it becomes Middletown beyond that. He said it looks like the Sandlass House is in Sea Bright. Regarding the Stillman proposal, he continued that he was wondering if we are having any conversation with the developer regarding dwelling unit density parking requirements and what their thoughts are on the economics of those things. This is becoming particularly important now as we're seeing a change in the economy. Interest rates are going higher and higher, and he's not sure if this will have an effect on their ability to proceed with the project as planned, or some scaled-back version of what they had planned. He would like them to have them at a future meeting and have them discuss some of those issues. Thirdly – one of these things that came out of the working group meetings during a discussion of noise and light, etc. will how will future park uses affect these? If there are restaurants, will they have outside seating? How late will they be open? Will they have outside lights and how will those impact the natural sky.

Jen Nersesian answered that we've not thought of that level of detail yet, and those discussions should be had with potential users such as maybe we don't want lighting on the outside past midnight, or another time. Will there be outdoor music? Will that create ambient noise throughout the park?

If you had an outdoor concert that sound would travel a long way as there aren't a lot of obstacles in the way. Some of these things have not been done by private entities in the past. We will have to discuss whether we want to include any limitations on those things going in, so that the business owners in the restaurant owners or bar owners know what the rules are going to be rather than try to change them after the fact. With the Mule Barn there is a small outdoor seating area that they are authorized to use is under that lease. They are beholden to all our laws, policies, and regulations, and those regulations incorporate our compendium and roles regarding decibel limits, night sky policies, etc. So, there are certain embedded restrictions on what can be done in terms of noise, light, and other considerations. Any unintended impacts do need to be considered. NPS and Gateway reserve the right to make additional adjustments and what's allowed, and that that is all built into those terms as well.

Karen Edelman reaffirmed that lessees are obligated to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies, including the Park Compendium, and other management considerations that we determine are appropriate. So, while leases typically allow the occupant of the facility to use them at will, it's a different story when it's open to the public for coming and going because it must apply with park hours, and it has to comply with the types of use that are compatible with parks system.

Bennett suggested that some of these concerns could be discussed in greater depth at a future meeting. How do you regulate those things? What are the limitations? What are the broad environmental impacts of some of these changes?

Jen agreed that everyone should be aware of the level to which those things are regulated to allay the concerns of people. She added that to Tony's other point she'd be happy to invite the Stillman team to a future meeting to have a discussion of the issues he brought up.

Gerry Glaser thanked Gary and the county both for their respective platforms to communicate our work to the communities. He thinks it's critical to what the committee is about. He also wanted to note how important it was to have the associate directors today. Not only their engagement with this issue, but it's also noteworthy that Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook will now be on the mind of the NPS director and perhaps also reach the desk of the Secretary of Interior. That's the kind of notoriety that is critical to the success of this project. He also wanted to call out the eloquent message that NPCA brought to the table today. Gerry continued that Lauren Cosgrove, a member of the working group, spoke about the support that NPCA is giving to this effort. Other members of the working group have also come together to support what the National Park Service is doing at Sandy Hook. This wasn't always the case, and Gary credits the work of the working group in reaching out to these various entities and getting the word out.

Gary Casazza said there should be a way to let all the visitors coming to Sandy Hook know about the exciting things happening at the park.

Bennett noted that in the chat Michael Walsh mentioned there was a signage presentation several years ago.

Jen said that there was discussion about a sign that would list the various businesses. This sign doesn't exist, but there is a new entrance sign that is a digital rotating board where different things can be displayed.

Shawn Welch thanked everyone for a great meeting. He said that in addition to what Michael Walsh had said earlier about the Presidio there are two entities out there. The NPS is there and the Presidio Trust. This year the Presidio Trust received \$250,000,000- so they're well-funded. They worked with the park service and opened a whole new park site inside of the Presidio, with three former Endicott period batteries fully restored (they lack the artillery that is present at Fort Hancock). The NPS has 5,000,000 square feet of family housing that has been leased when they took the place, and they've been generating resources out of that. There is nothing equivalent to that at Gateway. Fort Hancock is only 750,000 square feet- including 15 concrete artillery batteries. We do have Battery Gunnison, which is the only battery in the US that has it's WWII era guns that traverses, elevates, working breach blocks, and the battery structure has a working chemical warfare system – the only one in the country much more significant and complete than the one battery in the Presidio that does have a 6-inch disappearing gun (which lacks the functionality of the Fort Hancock guns). The Presidio's ability to earn revenue is really big, and it's something to keep in mind as we compare ourselves to it. He continued that anything that's really happening out here with the Park service that's noteworthy, it is the discussions with the current lease holders, and that is blazing its own trail as to how the public private partnership

works. Understanding these discussions, and how it works will become an important point for us in engaging our own communities. It is different from what's happening out at Presidio. He also wants to go back to the working group and ask them what recommendations do they have for the committee - What recommendations do you have as a working group coming back to the committee?

Bennett said that next on the agenda for the working group is that they are going to review all that's been covered so far and talk about how it informs this process (the leasing process), and what recommendations the working group wants to make. He continued that what has come up in many ways today, is that it's about balance and integrating across lots of different issues.

Bennett thanked everyone for this around-the-table discussion as it leads to important conversations and an internal communication of how do we make sure that the businesses that are here get noticed and heard? How do you communicate back out? He thanked Committee members who are making sure that the word is getting out and encouraged them to continue doing so.

He also noted a few suggestions for future topics to consider at both the working group and this committee. Having the developer come in to talk about how they think about economics, how it influences the project; better understanding lease terms. He also said the park service would share the link provided by Mary Eileen around risk communication. Bennett also reminded everyone to read the working group summaries if they haven't already. There's a lot of good information there you want to start digesting that. All the materials from the working group will be posted on the website. Not sure about whether Tony's quick take on the Sandlass house question as to where it is needs more digging. But Jen and her team are thinking about.

Daphne said the next meeting would probably be in the fall. Look for emails.

Bennett then asked if there were any recommendations from the committee for the National Park Service.

Continuing to resolve the land ownership issue on the Sandlass House.

Bennet added that one the reasons these meeting recently have not been as recommendation focused is because of the learning phase of the working group. That's where a lot of energy is going on right now.

Bennett thanked Patti for her presentation and Jen for arranging the associate directors to be here. He also thanked the members of the public. The meeting was adjourned.

