

**FORT HANCOCK 21st CENTURY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING #36
April 23, 2021**

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pilot Program Update
Action Items for Next Meeting:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Leasing Update
Committee Recommendations - ADOPTED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create working group open to members outside of the committee ● Pilot program with Stillman

Attendees:

NPS: Jennifer T. Nersesian, Gateway National Recreation Area Superintendent and Designated Federal Officer (DFO); Pam McLay, Gateway Chief of Business Services; Karen Edelman, Gateway Business Services; Daphne Yun, Gateway Public Affairs; Pete McCarthy, Sandy Hook Unit Manager; Justin Unger, NPS Associate Director for Business Services
 Facilitator: Bennett Brooks
 FACA Committee Co-Chairs: Shawn Welch, Gerard Glaser –
 FACA Committee members: Lillian Bury, Gary Casazza, Linda Cohen, Chris Doxey, Mary Eileen Fouratt, Jim Krauss, Tony Mercantante, Dr. Howard Parish, Dan Saunders, Gerry Scharfenberger, Kevin Settinbrino, Kate Stevenson, Michael Walsh

Welcome, meeting overview, and committee context – Bennett Brooks and Jen Nersesian

- Thanked Committee members for convening after a long hiatus.
 - Explained the origin of the Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee and where to find information about the Committee and prior meetings (forthancock21.org)
 - Introduced herself
 - Purpose of today’s meeting is to get restarted, catch everyone up on what has transpired since the last meeting (Feb. 2020), and discuss how to move forward.
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- Gerry welcomed everyone back and looks forward to resuming in person meetings. He thanks new and returning members.
 - Shawn led the pledge of Allegiance
 - Thanked committee members and NPS staff for all the work ongoing in spite of the temporary halt to the public meetings
 - Bennett welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviews the Agenda
 - Developments at the park

- COVID Impacts
- Stillman Proposal
- NPS Leadership will discuss the leasing program
- Representatives of Congressman Pallone's Office will speak
- How do we move forward with opportunities?
- Public Comment – 45 minutes. This is one of many opportunities for public comment
- Looking forward discussion will resume after we have the benefit of public comments
- Breaks will be peppered throughout the virtual meetings
- Review of technical instructions for the Zoom call and how to participate/questions and comments
- Committee member and staff introductions

9:15 Taking Stock of Last Year- *Jennifer T. Nersesian, Gateway Superintendent*
Park Updates

The park spent the last year continually adapting operations for COVID. The park was directed to follow state and local COVID guidelines so Sandy Hook was closed when state parks were closed.

Visitation for last year was way up, especially weekday visitation. Although it was challenging, it was nice to be able to offer this much needed resource for the public in a time of crisis.

Projects:

Last three Hurricane Sandy recovery projects should be done this year.

- Demolition of buildings 119 and 120, the white wooden barracks buildings is complete. The contractor is finishing up some of the site work.
- The exterior work on the theater and the Spermaceti Cove Lifesaving station should be finished this year as well. Interior rehabilitation is needed for both of these buildings to open again. (The current projects are only for the exterior.)
- The Guardian Park restroom rehabilitation will be finished next month. This is a historic building and was the former morgue for the post.

Great American Outdoors Act

Last August Congress passed the Great American Outdoors Act legislation that will bring over \$1 billion a year for five years to the National Park Service to spend on deferred maintenance. Gateway has well over \$200 million in deferred maintenance at Sandy Hook alone. 2021 projects include rehabilitation of the Officers Row seawall and the Chapel revetment. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the partner on this, and design will be starting shortly.

The Officers Row roofing projects have finally really started to move despite the challenges. Some of the buildings will need stabilization first so they can be assessed safely. Thus, just the design is likely to be very expensive and it remains to be seen how many roofs will be completed with the park's available funds. A lot of credit for this goes to Justin Unger, who will be on the call later. Justin has been able to help utilizing emergency contracting authority to expedite the process and get the right people focused on it. Sandy Hook has Washington's attention in a very positive way.

Basic park news

- Beaches will be open for swimming on Memorial Day weekend but indoor destinations, like visitor centers and museums, will remain closed while the area is still in COVID mode.
- Camping and picnic areas will reopen at a reduced capacity. Social distancing is required as well as wearing masks when six feet of distance can't be maintained. This year there are federal guidelines in addition to state and local guidelines for safety protocols. The park will still be tracking on what the state is requiring, and generally deferring to whatever is more protective.
- A new electronic sign is at the entrance to Sandy Hook.
- Beach parking fees at Sandy Hook are increasing. The charge will go from \$15 per car to \$20 per car. This is the first fee increase since 2012. Now 80% of those fees stay in the park and help to fund projects as well as our lifeguard program. The other 20% still stays within the National Park Service and gets distributed throughout the agency. Seasonal passes can be purchased this year online through recreation.gov (www.recreation.gov).
- The park hopes to pilot a new seasonal pass lane during periods of heavy traffic this summer to see if we can relieve some of the pressure on the roads leading to Sandy Hook.

Leasing Program updates

Six buildings are currently leased.

- Buildings 23 and 56 are part of the partnership with Monmouth County, who has taken these on to rehabilitate them for use for the Marine Academy of Science and Technology (MAST), the high school that's at Sandy Hook. Construction on those is underway.
- Building 53 is complete and McFly's on the hook is now officially open for business.
- Building 52 is also complete, and the leaseholder began short-term rentals this March.
- Building 104 is in construction and should be completed by summer for use as a residence and office.
- Fort Hancock's first lease, building 21, continues to go strong doing short term rentals.

Five more buildings are currently under Letters of Intent or LOIs. This is the agreement used to guide the due diligence process that happens in the period between the NPS accepting a proposal

and when the final lease is signed. This is when consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) happens as well as negotiation of lease terms.

There has been a very active back and forth on building 25, which is one of the large barracks buildings. With the proposed use of 16 short or long-term residential units, this is almost at the finish line, and once that's done, building 24 should go pretty quickly since it's a similar building and proposed for the same use by the same potential lessee. That same applicant also has LOIs on the gymnasium and Officers Club. And lastly, we have the mule barn which we're also getting close to finalizing with the same leaseholder that did building 52.

Past Year

The committee's last meeting was on February 28, 2020. This was just after the National Park Service had received and deemed responsive the rehabilitation proposal from Roy Stillman and his team. The NPS presented this proposal at that meeting which was met with enthusiasm by the committee. Roy Stillman is someone with financial wherewithal and historic preservation experience.

Congressman Pallone publicly objected to the proposal shortly after the meeting, and this was followed by concerns expressed by some environmental organizations. And then COVID hit. An agreement was made with the congressman to hold off taking any action for a couple of months, both because of the focus on responses to the pandemic and to give everyone a little time to do some homework and assess the situation before taking any next steps on the proposal.

The committee charter had expired and had not been renewed by the Secretary of Interior in the middle of all of this. This was not unique to our committee but was happening with advisory committees across the country. Finally, in December of 2020 the committee received an official sign off. However, with the new administration coming in, all advisory committees were then put on hold until they could get their feet on the ground and review what was what, which is not unusual, when a new administration comes in but was bad timing for the Fort Hancock committee. In the end the park and committee received special approval to move forward in advance of the other committees, which is what allowed this meeting today. And of course, COVID woven throughout this just made everything that much more complicated in all ways.

Last year Gateway held a virtual public meeting because we wanted to move forward in a more transparent way, as well as understand better some of the concerns that had been raised, and since the committee was not operational to do this in the normal way. The meeting was a way to share information about the leasing program and specifically the Stillman proposal. Some of the concerns expressed with the proposals generally center around the following issues:

- limiting public access
- capacity issues, particularly related to the proposed density of units
- generating negative impacts to the natural environment, and
- creating opportunities that are available only to the rich.

The Stillman proposal includes all the remaining Officers Row buildings and four other structures. Building 60, the former gas station, was proposed as a commercial structure. Between the rest of the buildings 93 residential units were proposed.

No type of agreement has been signed as the park has worked through the challenges of the past year. A general agreement has been proposed for consideration. Under this the NPS would move forward on designs for one or two buildings with Stillman as a pilot to help determine what's feasible and give us the opportunity to see if the park and Stillman can come up with solutions that help address some of the concerns that have been brought forward. This would be in place of an LOI for all the buildings.

Mr. Stillman has heard the public concerns over the proposed density and our concerns as well and understands that there will need to be a reduction in density for this to be able to move forward. There is of course a point at which the density is so low that the project no longer makes financial sense. But no one knows what that magic number is until design and analysis process is underway.

Hearing the concerns about market rate units that are available only to the rich, Mr. Stillman has also proposed focusing on veterans housing for the project. Again, this is conceptual at this point and the model would need to be developed and tested under some kind of agreement.

And lastly, Stillman is proposing to rehabilitate Building 60, the former gas station, for use an ice cream shop and is looking to move forward on that separately from the other buildings.

In addition to the workshop last year, the park has continued the conversations with Congressman Pallone as well as had some very productive and enlightening meetings with local conservation organizations and are committed to keeping that dialogue going.

One of the silver linings of this past tough year is that by moving to virtual meetings more people are involved in the process. In the past, there was always a struggle to get the word out about the leasing program and get people involved. Now there's a whole new level of interest and participation. Granted, some of that's come up because people have concerns over what's being proposed, but that is healthy input too and all perspectives should be considered in charting a path forward.

Jen Nersesian asked committee members if they have questions and comments on summary of last year.

Lillian Burry introduced herself. Discussed restoring (rather than rehab) 23 and 56. Progress is being made and this is quite a project they have tackled. County has committed \$14 million to this project and "it will be finished; I can assure you."

Thanked Jen and her staff for engaging the public and moving this forward.

Committee Member Cassazza asked if there is federal money available to utilize tides and currents to provide energy. Can we ask about the options?

Shawn Welch talked about Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA)'s activities and how their restoration work on site and the requirements for providing compliance documentation to the NPS for that work allows them to see what the park is doing. The process of working hand in hand with NPS enables the members of the organization to better understand at a much deeper level the requirements for protecting historic and natural resources and the role of both NPS and partner teams in meeting those requirements. He is impressed with what NPS has been doing. Hats off to the park service for what they have been doing with limited resources and authorities.

Jen thanked Lillian and Shawn for their kind words.

Q&As submitted from the public will be answered at a later time.

Chris Doxey asked about season pass costs in effect for increase – \$100/season

Linda Cohen wanted to know about proposals for the Mule Barn. What is the function as it has been described (restaurant, bar event space, Dan Ferrise building 52)

10:00 Introduction and Discussion with National Leasing Program Leadership
Justin Unger, Associate Director Business Service NPS

In charge of broad portfolio of business services which includes leasing.

Justin Unger stated that one of the projects that certainly rises to the very top of the leasing program, not only in terms of importance of moving forward, but also in terms of its success story, is Fort Hancock. Critical to the success is the engagement from the committee members who are passionate about the places that the NPS cares for. This is evident in the earlier comments, that in the middle of the pandemic, the folks under Jen's leadership are continuing this important work.

The leasing program for the National Park Service is a critical, important tool in the NPS toolbox. It's not the only one that exists, but it is certainly one that for some NPS structures, is one of the most viable. In some communities, it is about revitalizing and bringing to life some of the places that the park service is charged with caring for.

An example that has really been a shining success story is a place like Hot Springs Arkansas. Tens of thousands of square feet of bathhouses that were in one point very popular, had fallen into significant disrepair, requiring 10s of millions of dollars' worth of investment. The National Park Service did not have the means or the mechanism to actually pull together, but by leveraging leasing authorities, was able to address this requirement with private sector investment.

Fort Hancock is another success story in that regard. The leadership team, including those of you guys that serve on this committee, have really been pioneers in helping pilot projects time and time again. Justin spoke to the developers a couple of weeks ago to give them the same form of encouragement while the committee have been on hiatus and we've been working through the process of the committee to get everything back up and running.

There are places in our country in which both private and public sector investment can really come together to transform and to revitalize NPS landscapes. And fundamentally, that's what it's all about. There are 10s of thousands or millions of acres of space with inside the National Park Service that should be utilized in its most effective manner. And there are examples from residential leases all the way through brew pubs to bed and breakfasts and they literally span across the country. Sleeping Bear Dunes has a current project to convert an old hotel that financially was not effective for the NPS to run. But a leasing scenario can recapitalize and reinvest in that property and bring back life to that particular place.

Justin thanked the committee for their work and assured everyone that his team stands ready to support the park and the committee. Justin is not only the head of the leasing program, but also the head of contracting for the National Park Service and he and Jen have been working very closely with our partners at the Denver Service Center to make sure that money can be quickly put into the stabilization of the structures so that they do not fall into further disrepair. Jen and Justin share a similar perspective in that they do not want the cost to continue to escalate unnecessarily and realize the need to make this strategic investment now. Justin said he was available to take any questions.

Tony Mercantante asked Justin if there were other parks that had used multi-family housing as a way to restore or preserve a building, or if most other leases were bed and breakfasts and nonresidential use.

Justin Unger said residential leasing is actually one of the most successful ways of actually doing leasing across the National Park Service. Residential leasing is certainly one of those areas where there is long term stabilized income. Justin doesn't know exactly what percentage family housing (specifically multi-family housing) is within the national leasing program but will go back to the chief of the leasing program and ask that question.

Tony Mercantante answered that he'd like to get some examples of parks where that specifically has been the option that was needed. He feels the only things that people find objectionable with this proposal is multi-family housing. So, if we had some other examples that the committee could take a look at that would be helpful.

Gerry Glaser thanked Justin for taking the time to address the committee. Gerry said he struggles with some of the administrative and bureaucratic complexity associated with all the thing that has to be accomplished. Whether it's historic preservation or whether it's simple things like putting up for lease signs. Gerry thinks that there is an opportunity to test things at Fort Hancock that have potential for nationally important use at other parks.

Justin explained that protection of natural and cultural resource is critical. So is public engagement. There are ways to streamline the processes while continuing to protect these critical resources. Starting and continuing dialogue will allow us to find methods to clear the bureaucratic hurdles.

Gerry Glaser asked what suggestions Justin has to deal with the misunderstandings about what it is that the program is trying to accomplish, and how to move forward in crafting a coherent, simple message about the Fort Hancock Leasing program.

Justin Unger suggested engaging the local community and seeking understanding. He then discussed inholdings, and how those park managers are able to work through those complexities.

Shawn Welch asked Justin to give some examples of inholdings.

Justin Unger described residential inholding, inholdings that are associated with Native American and other communities. Everglades National Park, for example, has something like 84,000 acres of private sector inholdings related to subsequent mineral rights. Some inholdings can be multi-generational, others are retained use and occupancy.

Shawn Welch defined inholdings - an inholding essentially, is something where someone else there has a claim or an ownership on the facility. And asks if there are any at Fort Hancock.

Jen Nersesian answered that we have the Coast Guard. They own their own land (Secretary of Homeland Security is the real property landholder) and it's within the boundary of the national park (Secretary of Interior is the NPS real property landholder). While not an "inholding" per say, it is an example of a claim that lies entirely within the National Park reservation boundary.

Chris Doxey wondered if Stillman is still interested in Sandy Hook.

Justin Unger answered that Stillman is still committed to working with the National Park Service.

Jen Nersesian commented that they remain committed to this project. They have eyes wide open that you know there are concerns that have been brought to the table that we have issues. Stillman is committed to working through these issues and seeing it through to see where it leads us, even if it's not a workable project in the end.

Justin Unger commented when it comes to the leasing program, there is a requirement to make sure that the income the park receives is a fair market value. That is a fair market value assessment that is generated by the National Park Service and by the appraisal and valuation office. This means when you actually run the business case against the fair market value, there are some business opportunities that will make sense and there are some that won't. NPS has to make sure that when a developer or somebody who wants to participate as part of the leasing program, that they actually have the financial wherewithal to complete and execute the project. In some cases, depending on the level of investment that they have to make, they can receive an offset of their rent that they would actually pay as part of that fair market value, and that helps determine the length of the lease. The lease should always be the shortest period of time that's possible, but in some cases the amount of investment could be substantial, so the leases are longer. The government has to consider what the financial resources that somebody actually has. The other component is the National Park Service also has the ability to write, fundamentally, the terms of the lease. So, in terms of sustainability, making sure that NPS is being thoughtful in development. Those are principles that are back to that core part of our mission in terms of

natural and cultural resource protection, those are paramount to what we do. And those pieces are often incorporated as part of our leasing structure. We want leases that are fundamentally compatible with the purpose of the national parks.

Jen Nersesian added that environmental safeguards are built into the process. Laws, policies, and procedures are followed to ensure that moving forward on preservation work does not compromise any part of the NPS mission. It is all wrapped up in one package and that we do firmly believe that we can accomplish both hand in hand.

Bennett Brooks added that there is a need to balance the activities that are happening at Fort Hancock and throughout the Park Service and the potential to tap into expertise right and learning this is not a first ever event, so there's a lot of learning and a lot of expertise that the committee and park can benefit from. In getting information out and maintaining transparency as we know there is a passion for Gateway and for Fort Hancock, finding and creating the mechanisms to bring that passion into the conversation and really sort of understand what all the motivations are.

Gerry Glaser said there are three big issues that the committee is struggling with at the moment.

1. There is a perception that the leasing project conflicts with a commitment natural and cultural resources.
2. There is a perception that there is a lack of environmental sensitivity.
3. The last is around density and access.

What are other parks doing in the face of these issues? As we move forward, does Justin have other thoughts for the committee about how the correct information can be disseminated about those issues around density, and access and the environmental sensitivity that we have, that will help at least inform how we can go forward addressing those concerns?

Justin Unger stated that we restore these structures following the Secretary of Interior's Standards down to the minute details, which often get us bogged down but are critical to the success of our projects. Lead abatement, asbestos – making sure we know how and where we dispose of those contaminated liabilities. Making sure that our contractors, when we hire them, or the contractors that work with our partners, making sure that they dispose of that type of hazardous material in an appropriate manner. Those are highlights of how serious we take environmental stewardship as we continue to move forward. Justin will work with his team and Jen's to come up with examples that would be applicable to the density that is similar to Stillman's proposal.

One of the major differences between the leasing program and the inholdings is about access. Inholdings are private property within a national park. A lease is different. The public has access to those grounds. We want to showcase those buildings. They are part of that heritage that we're trying to fundamentally preserve now. Does that mean you have access inside that house? No, not necessarily, but certainly to the outside grounds and their outward visual presentation. That's the reason that we are trying to bring these facilities back into good condition, because the alternative, quite frankly with the money that we have available to us, is to not invest in these

structures. There are some tradeoffs that we have to make in order to bring these facilities back into life. Fundamentally preserving access is the purpose of a National Park. It is for the public after all.

Gerry Scharfenberger is glad that Justin allayed many of the concerns that the mission of protecting the cultural resources and historical infrastructure would be compromised through bringing private funds into Sandy Hook. It's valuable to the committee in being able to promote this initiative by reinforcing that whole guarantee that this is not going to impact the cultural resources of Sandy Hook or Gateway. Also wondered if there are examples of other parks or other areas within the National Park system where this sort of initiative has been done successfully without encroaching on cultural resources and the historic structures out there but enhancing them while protecting them.

Justin Unger said that Fort Vancouver is a similar example. It also had barrack type buildings inherited from the Army and are excess to NPS needs. Historic leasing has been a valuable tool for restoring them and getting them back into use.

Gerry Glaser pointed out that these examples Justin will provide will help us fulfill one of the primary roles that he has set forth for the committee, which is that it's our job to get the word out.

Shawn Welch agreed with Gerry, that communication is key. Also asked Justin about timing of stabilization of Fort Hancock's Officer Row buildings. There are also some other buildings outside of the leasing program that need things like envelope sealing.

Justin Unger stated that the park currently has a couple of million dollars available for this project. Justin and the park are talking to Denver Service Center to see if anything can be accelerated. The trade-off for speed is cost, so a balance needs to be found. What is that balancing act between what we're willing to pay, what we have available, what we need to stabilize, and who can we get to do that work at a competitive price?

Kate Stevenson asked about the use of IDIQ (Indefinite Quantity, Indefinite Delivery, a contracting mechanism) for the pilot designs.

Justin Unger stated that NPS looking at all types of contracting vehicles available to expedite this pilot.

Message from Congressman Frank Pallone's office (Frank Pallone NJ-6th)

Jen introduced Matt Montekio, the 2nd District director at Congressman Frank Pallone's office. And continued by stating that Frank Pallone is very interested in what's happening at Sandy Hook on all fronts and has spoken up about his concerns with the Stillman proposal. And we have continued a dialogue with his office over the past year

Matt Montekio delivered Congressman Pallone's statement: Congressman Pallone's main opposition to the Stillman proposal still remains that the development will bring a large and permanent residential community to Sandy Hook. Who or what kind of business end up as tenants isn't the main issue. In regard to the proposal for veterans housing, the congressman also has concerns regarding the types of services that veterans may need for their quality of life,

including health care and transportation. Especially given Sandy Hook's remoteness. So, we just want to make sure that that is something that's seriously considered. The congressman would prefer if the Park Service started with a pilot program in one or two buildings as the Superintendent indicated and does not have a problem with the proposed ice cream shop for building 60. So really, that's all there is from the congressman. We'll continue to work with you all and hopefully find a pathway forward.

Dan Saunders asked Matt to elaborate a little bit about a concern about residential use that was, after all of the historic use of these buildings.

Matt Montekio said that who the tenants are is not the main issue, the main issue is the density of the full proposal. He added that any follow up questions could be sent to Congressman Pallone's office.

Bennett Brooks addresses Q & A. They are being answered in real time when possible. Others will be answered during the comment period.

10:45 Looking Forward- Where to Head Next

Jen Nersesian began to answer some of the questions.

Q. Will meeting be recorded?

A. Recordings of the meetings are helpful. A recording of the meeting will be posted, although that is not typically what's happening with advisory committees. We checked into this how they're typically operating is posting notes and not recordings, but we want to be as transparent as possible here.

Q. Will we push to utilize solar power, wind power, and waterpower and adopt a zero-waste policy for the area?

A. We certainly believe in all those things also and in the RFP for the leasing program proposals get rated across five or six criteria like historic preservation experience, financial capability. One of the criteria is sustainability, so proposals that integrate that into what they're doing get rated higher and the better job they do with that, the higher they'll get rated. So that's one of our selection criteria and we certainly want to encourage that on anything that goes out goes on out at Sandy Hook.

And with that, let's get going into the other segment and will return to the questions later.

Bennett Brooks introduced the next topic- looking forward. How do we take the concerns and the interests that people have and move forward in a way that is possible and helpful and lead to the kind of conversation that is instructive? We have two things to discuss: the idea of some type of working group and then also how to shape public involvement, since this is an issue the public cares deeply about.

Gerry Glaser gave some background for including this on the agenda. The Town Hall revealed substantial concerns about the Stillman proposal. The committee has spent so many years trying to get the word out about the project, and the fact that so many people still have incorrect information means we have failed in that regard.

There is also a public concern that we had less than adequate sensitivity to the ecological and environmental resources. However, this is a top priority. Asked the park if a working group could be created. The working group will address these fundamental issues about how we communicate broadly and accurately to the people who need to hear this. And this working group will include leaders of several environmental organizations that are critical of the Stillman proposal. This group will also give us a better perspective on how the public could have gotten these misunderstandings. The working group structure allows us to bring in people from the outside who are not formally appointed by the Secretary of Interior and the working group would report to the committee. And then the committee, as we have with other working groups, would decide whether to move this forward in any way, as recommendations to the park, recommendations to Jen, recommendations to Justin who looks like he's very well positioned to help us out.

Shawn Welch seconded that there are misunderstandings. Also wanted to highlight the administrative and statutory underpinning for how the park service approaches natural resources and historic preservation. The Park Service has a lot of charges but a small budget. So, with that they are doing some very substantial things, not on a shoestring, but on a spider web string. It's important that people understand what the law's calling for, what the administrative issues are and then also understand what the park is doing. There are misunderstandings about buying property at Fort Hancock. The National Park Service does not have the authority to sell property.

Linda Cohen said that we have to foster public trust and we need a venue where people can air their views and concerns and they could be addressed. She proposed that there should be some type of an educational center or cultural center at Sandy Hook; a place for expressing views.

Bennett Brooks wondered how the committee can engage the interested public outside of the working group.

Jen Nersesian pointed out that while it's important to dispel the misinformation that is out there, there are also a lot of people and organizations out there who have concerns legitimately about the project itself. The project should be as strong as possible and take into account and achieve all parts of the NPS mission. There needs to be a direct pipeline for those perspectives into the work of the committee. The park and committee have continued to try to get the word out about what we're doing to be as transparent as possible, to hold open houses, public meetings, send out press releases. Some people have clearly been missed, but now they are engaged. We should take advantage of having those folks at the table and bring those voices in because it will make our project stronger.

Gerry Scharfenberger said it's a great idea to have a working group but is concerned with including objectors. We should make sure we are not getting people who will paralyze the

whole project. We need people who understand the value of what we are trying to do; not those who are adamant about a refusal to have public money come into the park for this purpose.

Shawn Welch said working on participation is very important. There are 29 attendees at this meeting. That's twice the most that we've ever had at a meeting, even the early meetings. The working group can help get those people interested involved as well as spread the word further. Shawn agrees that a physical location is important and asks Linda if that what she was thinking about.

Linda Cohen asked Shawn to ask the question again.

Shawn Welch asked if the Fort Hancock Museum would work for Linda Cohen's idea as a place where people could be engaged.

Linda Cohen would like an educational facility at Sandy Hook, and thinks that it would be a place to foster public trust as well. She feels that if the community was involved in some types of citizen science and environmental awareness, and if we offered a place like that, we would foster trust in the community. She likes the idea of the pilot, and has researched Stillman.

Chris Doxey agreed with what Gerry Scharfenberger said before about having too many people in a committee situation. Wondered if town halls or public meetings have been held to publicize the leasing program.

Gerry Glaser proposed that the working group should have three or four members from the local groups criticizing the project as well as three or four members from the committee. Jen and Shawn agree.

Public Comment Period

Greg Remaud: Greg is from the New York/New Jersey Baykeeper, a conservation group that works from the Navesink River up around Raritan Bay in New York harbor. Greg thanked the superintendent and the committee for all their work and the open communication with the public. He doesn't think folks should be dismissive of members of the public who don't know everything that's going on or are concerned that there's going to be mission creep or problems because that's happened in many parks. Don't think there should be a, that's part of the public process, and he thinks that should be understood. He appreciates that both Jen Nersesian and Linda Cohen acknowledged that there were legitimate concerns with the Stillman proposal, not just reactions to misinformation. He wanted to know how the park would deal with the need of increased law enforcement and other resources to handle the increased population.

Michelle Moon: Michelle Moon is an independent consultant in museums and historic sites. She said when you believe you are communicating well and yet your audience is not getting the message, it isn't their fault. It is really important for this committee to set the tone that is not dismissive or has an unfair characterization of the audience of the messaging and their understanding. The communication effort needs to be well thought out. Michelle asked how a working group is expected to change that, and especially if it's a volunteer effort and also recognizing the sophistication of a messaging strategy that can do what the committee wishes.

How will the working group bring any additional explanatory power? Michelle wanted to know how the group will actually boost the messaging effort and not just create another body that discusses and yet doesn't get the message out? She also wants to note that it isn't quite fair to suggest that people oppose the Stillman plan because they don't understand it. Certainly, that's not true of many of the leaders of environmental organizations, the legislators in their offices, or citizens like herself that read every proposal. Some people simply feel that this type of proposal with its intensive focus on residential year-round full-time operation is just not the right proposal. And she also wanted to speak to that notion of hearing people say, "let the buildings fall". That comment often turns up in response to when a sacrifice is being discussed. And if we're looking at a sacrifice of environmental, recreational, natural resources, and even historic resources to make this happen, that's what's being talked about. What are we willing to sacrifice to make this happen? No one really wants to see the buildings fall, but that if it requires a massive sacrifice of the environmental, recreational. quality of Sandy Hook, then perhaps the buildings don't deserve to be at the top of the list. It's a question about what we want to sacrifice. So that should be spoken of, you know, with thoughtfulness and respect when people raise that up. It's a question of the priorities of preservation for the park.

Carole Balmer: Carole thanked the committee for including the public and also the comments that hopefully are going to be addressed as the process goes forward. She is curious about the length of the lease. She heard it was going to be something like 90 years. Is that correct?

Jen Nersesian answered that the maximum legal lease term is 60 years and the length of the lease term that's given to a lessee is really dependent on the level of investment they're making, that's there is a chance to recoup that investment over the term of the lease. Because of the state of these buildings is so severely deteriorated, it's a really big investment that's needed, and it's likely that any project that's undertaken in them is going to be close to, if not at the full 60 years.

Carole Balmer asked what is meant by recoup?

Jen Nersesian answered that it's the potential for investing and getting the money back

Carole Balmer said that this raises many concerns for her. Sixty years, we know water levels are rising, we know that we have environmental changes and what happens when these residents flood or become unusable? Does the lessee get their money back?

Louise Usechak: Thanked the committee for the meeting and for including the public. This is a terrific opportunity and zoom has certainly benefited a lot of us for a lot of reasons. Louise is from the Natural Resource Committee for the League of Women Voters of New Jersey. She has a very simple question: what is the ground level elevation of Fort Hancock?

Shawn Welch answered that it's in the 100 and 500-year NPS floodplain map that shows first floor elevations between 12 to 20 feet above sea level across the post area.

Jen Nersesian added that there is another question that related to sea level rise to and that will be answered.

Louise Usechak also asked what the elevation of the access road is.

Tom Warsi had a question on timing with the Stillman proposal. Warsi and his wife submitted a proposal and feel that Stillman is holding everybody else up. Warsi continues that Stillman did not submit plans nor a design. Warsi and his wife are in the ownership and management of properties, so they have the expertise. How long will it take? The selection process and where do we stand in line? Are we for example number two in line, number five in line?

Dina Del Rousseau, member of the public, asked if there was a way that to connect people to form some kind of cooperative so that they could collectively work towards fixing our buildings and do something that would be similar to like Chelsea Market or Grand Central or the Denver market where there's a bunch of businesses in one location? She doesn't know how big the buildings are and if it would allow for that. But if you could form something where every, people could connect with one another, because she doesn't know who to connect with, who's interested, but maybe doesn't have enough money and would want to partner up with somebody else.

The following topics that have come up in chat:

- Sea level rise
- Flooding
- Competition
- Fiscal issues (including taxes)
- Who does the stabilization work when a lease ends or the lessee walks away?

Jen Nersesian responded to the public comments.

What about additional costs the leasing program going to create for managing conflicts, services. The park recognizes that there is an increased cost. The park always anticipated this and has planned that there would be a common area maintenance fee that went along with these leases. (The common area maintenance was waived for leases for the first five buildings.) These fees will help offset those services that the Park Service provides which includes law enforcement, emergency medical services, plowing the roads, mowing the lawns, etc. This is something we're used to managing, since we also use a lot of these buildings for park housing, for housing our own employees who pay rent to live there, but it's made available to them. There are around 80 families that live in the park right now (all units, not just Sandy Hook), and NPS employees have the same kind of tenant issues too. So that is something that we are accustomed to managing, and can plan for in terms of the cost, some of which we would hope to recoup.

Jen agreed that Michelle was right on in saying if people don't understand the message, it's not the fault of the audience, and that legitimate concerns shouldn't be dismissed. A better job should be done in getting out the information to decrease the misunderstandings people have. Many legitimate concerns have been raised and are things that we can and need to learn from. All the things that are coming up: climate change, natural resource preservation, equity, fair access these are all part of our mission too, and if something is missing, we want to make sure that it's brought to light and that we're taking it into account moving forward. Messaging will be

part of the proposed working group's task, although we don't know how that will roll out. But certainly, better understanding people's concerns can help us be better equipped to share information. The most important thing there is really the opportunity to hear directly and have a deeper conversation about what's at the core of those concerns and is there a way to address it in what we're trying to accomplish here. These things are all a part of our mission, historic preservation, natural resource, conservation, preservation, and visitor access. It's important to point out that these things are not competing. The best thing we could accomplish is marrying these things together so they're moving forward in a harmonious way and they're not inherently in conflict.

Climate change is on the park and committee's radar and is a concern. The agency has developed standards for taking into account sea level rise and an increased frequency and intensity of storm events. Flooding impacts are included within construction standards even before getting to construction. It also became built into a filter of what will be rebuilt and what are we going to divest from knowing that it's not going to be resilient in the face of these changes in the near or medium term. Now, you know, who knows if any of these things are going to be resilient for what we know you know for the long term, 100 years, 200 years out, Sandy Hook may not be there and that may be the reality. But for the 50-year horizon, you know 60 years for the term of the lease, we are hoping that we can set standards that you know ensure we're being as resilient as possible. For example, all of the critical utility systems have to be located at a minimum of three feet above the 500-year floodplain so that you know those systems aren't going to be wiped out by the next storm and cause all other kinds of problems. Resilient finishes are required in basements and lower elevations.

Flood insurance is required for all of our lessees, and so far, they've all been able to get it. If there is damage, you know they're required to address that. If in the worst-case scenario, if they can't do that, the property reverts back to the Park Service and we are no worse off than when we started.

The access road to Fort Hancock is a concern for all of us. It is low, but a road is a much easier thing to repair than a building. During Hurricane Sandy we had not only flooding but four to eight feet of sand on the road that had to be put right. It's a major undertaking. Maintaining access is a concern. This is the access road to the sewer treatment plant, the water treatment plant, all of the Sandy Hook headquarters, and operations. So that concern goes far beyond the leasing program, and if we lose that, you know we're essentially losing the access to Sandy Hook. That would be a much bigger issue, but I don't think is a deciding issue for the leasing program any more or less than for the rest of our operations.

How does the process to make buildings available work? What is the timing like? The thinking on the way the pilot would work is this would be pilot design process that we work through on one or two buildings to see what can be done in there. The original Stillman proposal included 93 residential units. We all know that's too much, but what should it be scaled down to? How many units can you feasibly put into one of the officers' row buildings if you consider the historical

standards and managing the parking capacity. All of these things are what has to be worked out through a design process. And there's no private entity that's going to commit to investing in the design process, without knowing that there's the potential if it's successful to move on to the bigger project.

We do not know how long the pilot will take. It could be a year, some of these we've seen have taken a lot longer, but I suspect this one would move more quickly, and we would hold the rest of the buildings until we knew what the outcome of that pilot was.

If this isn't feasible, and Stillman is not interested, we put the buildings back out. If it does work out then Stillman would have first right of refusal on moving forward on the whole project. And that is per the terms of the rolling RFP that has been open for probably seven years now. It works on a first come first serve basis as long as the proposal is deemed responsive. If two proposals come in at the same time, then they get rated against each other. When a proposal comes in, the park works with that potential lessee, but backup proposals are taken. We will look into what the queue looks like right now. The park does not rate the proposals, instead they go to the regional office with a panel to keep it separate from the ongoing operations of the park.

In terms of forming some kind of cooperatives or getting businesses under one umbrella, like Chelsea market or something like that. It is a great vision but beyond the capacity of the Park Service to serve as that umbrella and organize it. We have over the years tried to connect people with each other where it seemed like there were common interests or the potential for collaboration, but soliciting that kind of participation and managing it is beyond our capacity.

Jen Nersesian's Responses to Questions from Q & A

Q. Can the amount of space one person or company can lease be limited to ensure a fair process and allow individuals?

A. The RFP has been open for seven years and it wasn't until recently that we had a proposal on most of the buildings. The current buildings under lease or letter of intent are with smaller entities, other than the two Monmouth County properties. There is also an individual who has leased Building 104 to be used as his residence.

Q. Is there an actual proposal, for the Stillman project, not just a handful of slides?

A. The Stillman proposal does not have more detail than what was shared in the Feb. 2020 meetings. The types of details regarding plans and specifications are usually developed during the Letter of Intent phase. We have not signed a Letter of Intent or agreement with Stillman and have pushed back the due diligence period from which that would emerge. We hope to move forward with a pilot that will result in more details.

Q. What are other leasing projects in the United States, on public land?

A. We will compile information about these other rental properties (Cape Cod, Hot Springs, etc.)

Q. The Letters of intent have expired in 2018.

A. Those letters of intent have continued to be renewed so they are all current.

Q. Can the identities of individuals involved in leases and LOIs be revealed?

A. All of the lessees have joined us at the meetings. We will see if we can share their identities.

Q. Can you provide examples of coastal redevelopment?

A. When we compile examples, we will take a look at that specifically. Both San Francisco and Cape Cod are coastal locations and both areas are focused on sea level rise and other sustainability issues.

Q. How much money has been spent to stabilize and improve the buildings and how does that work?

A. Not a lot has been spent yet, but we're discussing spending a couple of million dollars to try to seal up the roofs to stem the level of deterioration that's happening at Fort Hancock. This expenditure is in the RFP, letting everyone know that the park service may make this investment in roofs. Lessees will not have to pay this back because it was in the RFP and this possibility was always on the table. This expenditure may result in a benefit to a proposed Lessee but the ongoing deterioration that has taken place in the last year or so has resulted in a much greater project cost.

Q. What if every for-profit partner were required to offer certain amount of sport or restored space to a nonprofit partner?

A. This can be looked into, but that requirement again changes the financial equation. There are a lot of challenges here. The location is relatively remote, the visitation to the site, while high, is relatively seasonal. It all happens from June through September, and the rest of the year you don't have many people coming through there. Not a lot of public transportation to the site there, the buildings are really deteriorated, so there are already obstacles for potential lessees. Putting other requirements on it may dissuade any interest. This idea shouldn't be dismissed or taken for granted because we'd all love to see more nonprofits at Sandy Hook. The committee has often spoken of our vision for being the Woods Hole of the area, with a conglomeration of entities that have overlapping missions. The funding is not there with most non-profits and attracting private investment is the greatest hope we have to accomplish restoration/reuse. It will remain our goal to do this in a way that's protective of the resources and accomplish all of our mission.

Q. How would the working group offer additional explanatory power?

A. We would need to discuss the messaging part of the group. The importance of this is having a direct dialogue and hearing directly people's concerns are, particularly some of the environmental concerns that have been brought to the table so we can work together to see if there's a way to address those. Members of this working group would be unpaid volunteers. That's the way this committee, and all Federal Advisory committees operate. It's the way ours has always operated.

Q. Taxes

A. These are taxable by the by Middletown Township and Middletown does levy taxes on the leasehold interest that already exists out there. They are discounted for a variety of factors that you know you don't have the land, you don't have any privacy, for a whole host of other factors and so it's not at the rate that you would find in other properties along the Jersey Shore, but there are local taxes that are charged.

Q. Can you ever recoup the cost of preservation investment?

A. If we can't recoup the cost, we probably won't be able to attract private investment. If there are folks who come to the table with very altruistic motives, we certainly welcome that. But we have to try to make the financial equation work, if we want this project to work.

Q. Can you share your email address in terms of connecting with other entities.

A. Yes, we can certainly do that. And you know, if you want to shoot us an email, maybe you know outside of the Q&A box you know with more detail on what you're thinking about. We would be happy to share your contact with others.

Q. If an officers' row house collapses what will be the NPS response?

A. We will keep trying to push forward. There are different levels of historic preservation under the Secretary of Interior standards. Restoration to a specific period with the same use is the highest level. Rehabilitation or adaptive reuse that honors the historic configuration, and that's what is happening at Fort Hancock. If something collapses, reconstruction is also a valid method of historic preservation. Building 23 is a prime example of that. This building collapsed and a lot of the structure was lost. Monmouth County is adaptively reusing this structure.

Shawn Welch added that the working group is an advisory body to advise the committee which advises the NPS. So, while the working group is going to be formulating ways to look at things and pulling together information, at the end of the day other than what working group members take back to their host organizations, this is advisory working group, which then is advisory to the Park Service. That chain is important to understand as we move forward. Also many people probably are unaware, but it's helpful to understand that this peninsula changes. In the last 60 years the peninsula has increased by over 200 acres and the size has changed.

Bennett Brooks thanked everyone for this thoughtful and helpful conversation.

12:00 Continue Looking Forward Conversation.

Gerry Glaser wanted to develop a more comprehensive strategy for engaging the people. He is also interested in involving the non-profits that are at Sandy Hook such as NOAA, American Littoral Society, Clean Ocean Action, and Sea Grant.

Lillian Burry pointed out that the conservation foundation was critical of the Stillman proposal, but she was able to arrange a meeting between the foundation and Gateway. She stated that Bill

Kastning, the chairman of the Conservation Foundation, has been invited to join the Federal Advisory Committee.

Jen Nersesian clarified that there will be a general call for members, although no one's sure of the timing. She encouraged Bill and others to apply. The final decisions are made by the secretary of interior, not decided at the park level.

Kate Stevenson agreed that the idea of a subcommittee is excellent. She thought five to seven would be the best number. She reminded everyone that under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, a member of the board must be the head of the subcommittee. So, one or more committee-members need to be a part of that group. Kate also suggested to get both local and perhaps a national representative of these organizations that have concerns. They would both be useful and contribute significantly.

Bennett Brooks clarified that Kate meant five to seven external members for the working group.

Kate Stevenson agreed and added that more than one board member would not be necessary, even though more than one would probably want to join.

Jim Krauss agreed that the working group is a good way to start to engage those who are opposed to the Stillman proposal. It's always good to get people together to hear different ideas and correct any misunderstandings. Thinks that someone from Clean Ocean Action should be part of the group, even though they are no longer have offices at Sandy Hook.

Dan Saunders thought that a lot of the people who've called in (and it was great to hear from so many people, to hear their thoughts and their concerns) haven't been involved or haven't been aware of what's going on the way committee members are. The committee has been working on this for nine years. The process was worked through, slowly at first, and many of the issues that have been raised including flood elevations, flood insurance and more, were discussed at meetings. Some of the products that might come out of this might be sort of an explanation of how the RFP process get to be, where it the way it is. That might help people in the future. Some of the commenters didn't seem aware that we've all been to quite a number of these public meetings in very organized, very, a rigid structure. And that all of those meetings, every single one of them has had a public comment period at a specified time like we had today. So very true, that's a useful thing for people to be aware and what are the potential products that this committee might bring or working group might bring to the committee if we're going to get something productive out of this. Bennett asked Dan if he had any thoughts on how the committee can strengthen its outreach going forward? Especially regarding Dan's last point, what will that sort of broadcasting out from the working group look like? Dan continued that a working group should air and consider concerns and the group can try to find ways to balance and to combine preservation and the environment. They should also give a summary of the committee's progress and what its future should be.

Tony Mercantante added that it's important to keep in perspective here is that nothing is actually being built. A lot of people may be looking at this development as an environmentally impactful development, as if it was new. If the Fort was still operational all the buildings would be full,

there'd be cars out there that be activity there'd be things going on. Turning single family homes into multi-unit homes does change things and five units in each of those buildings is a lot. One hundred or 93 units would mean 180 plus parking spaces. Trying to envision where 180 parking spaces would be, plus the spaces you need for visitors, and that those sorts of things, is hard. Tony thought that amount was not a very viable concept. But at some point, the fact that some level of private investment is the only way this going, and the buildings preserved needs to be accepted. The federal government for the past 40 years hasn't stepped up to do anything to restore these building, even with recent opportunities like the stimulus bill. The only way to solve this problem is to deal with the private sector and have some sort of outside money come in to help restore and preserve these buildings. The idea of a working group is a great idea. But the ball has to be kept moving forward or else, the cost is getting greater each year and cost is already the biggest inhibiting factor to getting this done.

Jen Nersesian added some other organizations for consideration, and these are organizations who have commented, reached out to us, or expressed an interest in this project. New Jersey Audubon would be a great voice to have on this. The Sierra Club has commented publicly on this about concerns with this project. Their conservation committee has been involved and they will be a helpful organization to have in the mix. Someone had mentioned Clean Ocean Action. They are still very active at on Sandy Hook. The committee should also try to think of people who are located at Sandy Hook. American Littoral Society still has their headquarters on Officers Row and is very involved in environmental matters as well. They would be a good potential prospect. So just some other ideas for consideration.

Gerry Glaser thanked the group for being supportive of the general idea for the outside working group, he thinks it would be tremendously important. Gerry believes it is essential to engage the external press corps and make sure that they have the information that that is important and valuable. The press has been very good about covering our activities and one charge for the working group would be to make sure that external communication mechanisms are incorporated. Another good way to advertise would be something akin to a small set of descriptors or diorama or something, maybe in the museum, maybe in the visitor center, maybe somewhere else up on Sandy Hook there could serve to basically, in some modest way, illustrate what it is that we have in mind. And how it would look? You know, one of the big questions that people raise, how is it going to look after you do all this rebuilding? Well, it's not going look any different. There isn't going be any rebuilding. There's going to be a cleaned-up building next to a building with a porch falling off. Gerry thanked Lillian for triggering that thought Gerry thinks that that one gesture of putting that big billboard up there showing what the buildings were going look like really made it understandable.

Gary Cassazza added that anytime the group can be expanded for communication purposes it's a win. Gary would like the committee to reach out to high school students who were involved with their own government to try and get them to be proponents. After all, this is their future we're building for, and I think there are good way to get the word out there to the community. And the more we do that, the better off we are.

Linda Cohen and Gerry Glaser discussed the importance of having a vision for public education.

Lillian Burry added that they used billboards at Fort Monmouth and on Route 35 where people would drive by and can see it. She thinks that there should be some type of signs at the entrance.

Shawn Welch agreed that there should be something showing a before and after.

Kate Stevenson added that she hates to see natural and cultural separated artificially in a subcommittee. Recommends talking to some people from the National Trust for the subcommittee

Jen Nersesian agreed the signs are a great idea and suggested future talks to discuss this idea. Jen also suggested that we add some kind of commemorative plaque that all of the lessees get to put on their building that acknowledges hey this person, entity, whatever, has invested in historic preservation for the good of the American public, or something. Some kind of special thing to put on the building that acknowledges what happened there and what they've done.

Jim Krauss disagreed with Kate and thinks that the purpose of the committee has to be focused on the critics, not the proponents. There isn't a problem with the people are in favor of historic preservation. Thought it was important that the committee not just gather information, suggestions, and recommendations from the environmental community, but also to educate them on what already been through in terms of evaluating what's environmentally appropriate with the infrastructure out there, with resiliency, and the protection of natural resources, because as both Tony and Dan said, the committee's done a lot of work on that, particularly in the in the early years.

Gerry Glaser thought that some people from the historic preservation world should be on the working group. If they are in the room, they could be then in a position to address those historic cultural resource issues on the spot. He will think more about how the how they would fit with the overall composition. He'd like to at least keep that possibility on the table because of their ability to react in real time to issues that may come up that others that were, that we've been talking about so far, might not be able to address.

Jen Nersesian agreed with both Gerry and Jim. The working group should be small and nimble and the real focus is a better understanding of the concerns that have been raised. There needs to be a dialogue with the critics of the program to see if there are ways to address these concerns within what we're trying to accomplish here. If part of the group's focus is to work on messaging and communication, then it would be helpful to have some historic preservation expertise and representation as a part of the group so that they can help inform that, answer questions, you know really help bring these things together. Jen thought that Kate was right in stating that we try and artificially separate these things, but they really are married, especially in the Park Service. We don't want a 15-person group, but having historic representation may be beneficial.

Shawn Welch thought it was a good idea to combine both.

Bennett Brooks thanked the group for their comments and suggested that a way to think about including both groups is as sort of expertise and resources into perspective that makes the conversation richer.

Gerry Scharffenberger agreed with Kate that six or seven people is a good number for the committee. Critics of this project are important members for two reasons: to either clarify what's not clear, and what is clear, but they object to. He thinks those are the two things that we have to take away, and it's most important to the larger committee to hear that sort of thing, because that's really a microcosm of the public at large.

Bennett Brooks thanked Gerry and asked if there were other committee members who wanted to weigh in before the meeting is wrapped up.

Howard Parish said that all of the other comments are right on target. He feels the most important issue with the working committee will be education. The committee hears the issues from the public with a small group that appear at our meetings, but that's just that. It's a small group. The working group could be the medium to educate the public and a way to get the media involved. It should be a two-way street to educate the public and for the public to educate the committee. Howard endorses the concept of the working Committee. He agreed it should not be a large group, because too large a group and nothing gets done.

Tony Mercantante wondered why we haven't gotten any proposals for bed and breakfast. At least that that have gotten anywhere, and that would seem like a natural. Adaptive reuse if you will, of the officers' row type buildings, right? Tony brought up the fact that in New Jersey there's a regulation that says for to have a bed and breakfast the owner has to be one of the occupants. He feels that this regulation may be a discouragement to a lot of people who might want to invest and create a bed and breakfast here. Tony wondered if there's a way (through legislation or NPS) to get an exception from that and thought the committee or park should look into this.

Jen Nersesian said that the park would look at this. The park has heard that the economics for a bed and breakfast for one of these buildings doesn't work. There aren't enough rooms to generate enough revenue to offset the investment that's needed in the property. No one has come forward, willing to invest in that, but that it does kind of beg another question, which should be addressed before the meeting ends. This is the pilot project that has been proposed by Stillman. An agreement needs to be signed before this can proceed. Nothing has happened for many months because the park wanted to come back with the committee and wanted to have more of a public dialogue. The working group we're talking about setting up would be a really instrumental piece of trying to work through that feasibility and understanding what the concerns are and then seeing if there are ways that this project can be designed to incorporate solutions to those concerns. Or you know to have a design that has a light impact or mitigates concerns in other ways. The first step is we need to really understand what those concerns are and talk through together and discover how the concerns could be addressed. The committee heard from Congressman Pallone's representative today that they, are comfortable with the pilot on a couple of buildings. At what point do we move forward on that pilot process? And you know Stillman has been waiting for a very long time. He is still committed but he's not going to be there indefinitely. Also, there is building 60, too, the ice cream shop. Are people comfortable with giving them the green light to go forward on the ice cream shop independently of anything else?

Bennett Brooks asked for quick feedback from the committee.

Jim Krauss agreed that ice cream would be very nice at Sandy Hook. He also doesn't see any reason why we should hold back on allowing the pilot project to go forward. Jim thought that going forward with the pilot project and with the working group at the same time is the way to go. The time is ticking on these buildings. The committee has been at this a long time and needs to keep moving forward, forging ahead, and seeing whether this Stillman project makes sense for us and for Mr. Stillman.

Bennett Brooks thanked Jim and noted that there were only 10 minutes left. He'd like other committee members to weigh in.

Chris Doxey said it's important that the committee address the critical misbeliefs and reach the most skeptical people and educate them. The pilot program should take precedence and move forward. The developer won't wait around forever.

Linda Cohen remembered when Jim Wassel made proposal to renovate buildings in 2006. She noted those buildings would have been renovated by now. So, it just points out how important it is to allow someone who has an interest to go forward.

Bennett Brooks thanked Linda. He said that so far, the committee members are supporting moving forward on the pilot and also on converting Building 60 to an ice cream shop. He asked if there are committee members who do not agree. That's going to be really important here.

Dan Saunders agreed that ice cream sounds great. He thought that the pilot should be small, and the question of density is an issue that's one of the concerns for environmental groups. It's important not to go forward with a project that's too big on one hand and have this committee to discuss it at the same time. The committee and park need to find a way to reasonably accommodate those concerns.

Gerry Glaser was pleased to hear that there is consensus that going forward with the pilot is a good idea. In Gerry's view, the committee is prepared to support park's move to go ahead with the Stillman General Agreement. The only unresolved issue is the other buildings incorporated in the originally Stillman proposal unaddressed/unspoken for. It is important to understand how those remaining buildings can be held aside give the fact that we are trying to also generate new interest. What happens next to the remaining buildings?

12:30 Key Messages and Next Steps

Bennett Brooks –

- Committee members have agreed for the park and Stillman to move ahead with the pilot
- Need to find a way to use the working group to move ahead
- Support to move ahead with ice cream shop
- Working Group should have six-seven members, centered on groups that are struggling with the Proposal.
- Working Group to ensure that participants understand history, decisions to date, and learning/hearing what the outside concerns are.
 - Brainstorming about how can it go forward.

- Working group needs to be a communications/broadcasting mechanism.
- Public outreach and recognizing there is a gulf and a need, and the burden to communicate more efficiently and effectively is on us.

- Thanks to Justin Unger and the lessons from elsewhere we can use to draw on.
- Gateway and the committee will use Q and As or FAQs to provide information to the public as much as possible
- Gateway and the committee will use national and local representatives of organizations with overlapping missions to disseminate information.

Jen Nersesian appreciated everyone's comments and adjourned the meeting at 1 p.m.