

**Fort Hancock Working Group Meeting #2
September 21, 2021**

DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The Fort Hancock Advisory Committee Working Group, convened to discuss and consider issues related to the Stillman project proposal, met via webinar September 21, 2021. The agenda focused on the following two topics:

- Seeking Working Group input on topics important to consider related to the proposed Stillman development
- Providing an overview of the environmental review process routinely conducted by Gateway staff for any proposed project.

The meeting was attended by the following Working Group members: Dorothy Guzzo, NJ Historic Trust; Eileen Murphy, NJ Audobon; Bill Kastning, Monmouth Conservation Foundation; Tim Dillingham, American Littoral Society; Lauren Cosgrove, National Parks Conservation Association; Dr. Harold Zullo, NJ Sierra Club; and FACA members Kate Stevenson, Jim Krauss and Anthony Mercantante. Additionally, Committee co-chairs Shawn Welch and Gerald Glaser attended; Gateway Supervisor Jennifer Nersesian and Consensus Building Institute Senior Mediator Bennett Brooks facilitated discussions.

Discussion: Stillman Project – Topics of Interest

J. Nersesian provided an overview of candidate topics important to discuss based on the first Working Group meeting and earlier public workshops and feedback. These topics centered on the following:

- Ecological impacts
- Parking
- Capacity/density
- Climate change considerations
- Social equity/justice
- Review process/public input

Working Group members suggested several other issues important for the group to consider in the coming months. The table below summarizes possible additional issues raised.

Add historic preservation as an overarching issue	Include traffic when discussing parking
Include infrastructure services when considering capacity/density issues	Consider the potential for private use “creep”

Include opportunities / impacts for youth/disadvantaged communities when considering social equity / justice	Understand the economic multiplier effects of an adequately funded Fort Hancock
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The Working Group next began to identify sub-issues and information needs associated with several of the overarching topics. The table below summarizes the main discussion points.

Issue	Sub-Issues	Information Needs
Ecological impacts	Dark night skies, soundscapes, migratory wildlife (turtles, nesting birds), habitat, air/water quality, groundwater impacts, stormwater, fertilizer/herbicide/pesticide use	Use pattern changes 24/7; baseline info on current overnight use
Parking	Impervious surfaces, parking options, assumptions per unit, transportation alternatives, accessibility	Historic/current look at parking / traffic
Capacity / Density	Sewers, weight carrying capacity of roads, archaeological impacts	Current level of use compared to “with project” (time of day /season); case studies from elsewhere; looking at Coast Guard townhouse impacts
Climate Change	Consistency with NPS policy; account for sea level rise; emergency evacuations; design implications; mitigation needs / potential; costs to protect; restoration needs given possible impacts to habitat	NPS policy, 1 st floor elevations, USGS report on sea level rise
<i>J. Nersesian noted that the list of issues, sub-issues and information needs can be broadened as Working Group members identify new topics meriting discussion.</i>		

In response to points raised regarding Gateway’s funding needs, J. Nersesian noted the critical importance of Park funding needs, but suggested such a discussion is likely beyond the immediate scope of the Working Group, which is focused on understanding issues tied to the Stillman proposal.

Discussion: Environmental Review Process

Patti Rafferty, Chief of Resource Stewardship for Gateway, provided an overview of how the Park Service considers environmental impacts for any proposed project. Her presentation focused on the following topics:

- Summarizing the legal and environmental reviews required for any proposed project
- Reviewing Gateway’s process for identifying possible environmental issues associated with proposed projects (direct, indirect and cumulative impacts)
- Discussing examples of the process to identify and assess a range of potential impacts, from night skies and environmental justice issues to transportation and access

Committee members said they greatly valued the presentation and posed a number of clarifying questions and offered a handful of comments. Discussion points included:

- The need to consider the Stillman project in the context of the goals and objectives included in Gateway’s current Management Plan. To that end, Working Group members asked that the plan be provided for their background.
- One Working Group member stressed the importance of reaching out to environmental justice stakeholders to engage them in discussions related to the Stillman project.
- A suggestion to consider re-engaging the Affordable Housing Alliance in future discussions.
- The importance of assessing the possible loss of potential jobs/youth engagement associated with any proposed development.

Given the value of P. Rafferty’s presentation, Working Group members suggested that a similar presentation be made at a future FACA Committee meeting. J. Nersesian recommended that P. Rafferty continue to attend Working Group meetings on a regular basis so she can continue to share her expertise with the group.

Next Steps

Below are specific next steps identified during the meeting:

- Committee members agreed to meet every 3-4 weeks (from 9-10:30 a.m.; dates TBD) to continue discussion of the issues outlined above
- J. Nersesian is to distribute the Gateway Management Plan to Working Group members
- Committee members voiced interest in participating in a site visit at a future date
- Jim Krauss agreed to provide a discussion summary at the September 23 FACA Committee meeting; other Working Group members were invited to attend and fold in their perspectives.