

**Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Federal Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Summary**  
**Twin Lights Historic Site, Highlands NJ**  
**July 18, 2014**

Gateway National Recreation Area (GATE) Superintendent Jennifer T. Nersesian opened the meeting at 9:15 am with a statement. At the last meeting, people wanted to hear from NPS about plans and next steps. Those will be presented today for questions and discussions and moving ahead.

For the benefit of those watching the meeting, committee members and the attending public gave personal introductions.

John Harlan Warren, external affairs officer at Gateway's Sandy Hook Unit, gave a summary from last meeting sent around for review and signed by a committee co-chair. He noted the "robust discussion" of next steps for Fort Hancock and the pace of future steps toward development. He also noted that the Call for Nominations to the committee has been extended by one week. So far, more than two dozen applications for committee membership had been received. Nominations close Monday, July 21. They come through the park but are ultimately chosen by the Secretary of the Interior (SOI). It takes some time to complete the process. We have asked Washington if we can extend terms of eight members who expire on August 25 until new nominations are approved by SOI; the answer is yes, we can.

**Increase in size of committee discussed**

Nersesian reiterated that we had a huge response to the Call for Nominations. Most of the eight members who will expire have submitted applications for renewal. Only one member has not opted to return. We would like to find ways to capitalize on the momentum and excitement generated by new applicants. Perhaps we can increase the number of members; bringing on a few new people might bring new energy and new perspectives.

Shawn Welch believed the Committee should be no higher than 30; average attendance then might be around 18 members. Co-chair Gerard Glaser noted that there may be a way to engage the talents of those who have responded to the call whether they are reappointed or not, such as including them in working groups and other tasks. A member asked if there is an attendance requirement in the charter; Warren said no. Co-chair John Reynolds asked us to consider the goodwill that is created by inclusion of more people, even if on an informal basis. Mary Eileen Fouratt agreed, especially if they are from a different sector or bring a different perspective.

Lynda Rose sounded a note of caution. She did not want the committee to move backward. New blood must contribute from this point forward without backtracking on the work already accomplished. Nersesian suggested perhaps forming a subcommittee to bring new members up to speed offline so we don't take any steps back. Welch, Fouratt, Karolyn Wray and Lynda Rose agreed to form this subcommittee for bringing new members up to speed.

Holenstein said the size of the committee presents a logistics issue and a timing issue. Rules and time spent addressing comments must be considered, for example.

Warren observed that the Charter states a limit of 20 members. We can change the Charter to increase the number of members, but it must undergo review by Washington. If we are going to increase the

number, that is all we should change to avoid prolonged review. He suggested that the Committee should avoid making any significant changes to the Charter until it is renewed. Warren erroneously stated that the date for renewal was in April 2015, but later corrected himself: it is April 2016.

Warren told the Committee that the park has asked if the nominations we have received can be used after the renewal of the Charter. We were told NO: applicants would have to reapply under a new call for nominations. If we expand the committee, interested parties would have to reapply. Nersesian stated that we can make a commitment that reapplication requirements is simply resubmission of previous materials.

Welch brought up that GATE enabling legislation has an advisory committee provision. It does not seem to be up and running. Can we rely on that to re-authorize the committee? Reynolds answered that the legislatively established advisory committee was limited to 25 years, so it has passed. He recommended we keep going with this committee as is except that we change the number of members and date so as to avoid prolonged legal review by Washington and keep it simple and straightforward. The Committee can do anything it wants so long as it is not illegal.

By consensus, the Committee agreed to an expansion to up to 30 members.

### **Presentation of Golden Gate Recreation Area Redevelopment Information**

Pam McLay, from GATE Business Administration, gave the summary of our call with staff from Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GOGA), our sister park. GOGA is ten years ahead of us in redevelopment, so we looked to them for a basic framework. GOGA officials stressed three important qualifications for anyone who wants to take on redevelopment at Fort Hancock.

1. **Lessee should be versed in leasehold interest vs. fee ownership.** GOGA ran into challenges regarding the types of legal instruments executed with respect to large scale rehabilitation efforts especially as leasehold interest vs. fee ownership affects financing.
2. **Lessees should have experience undertaking rehabilitation in accordance with DOI Secretary's Standards.** There were quite a few starts and stops in rehab efforts at GOGA.
3. **Redevelopment is locally driven.** We were advised to bring in local redevelopers. GOGA believes those that really understand the real estate market are local. If we could understand local redevelopment and reach out to other redevelopers, such as those undertaking activities at Fort Monmouth, those are the best parties to consider—not just the redevelopers, but also the authorities set up to establish redevelopers. Consider that, nationally, only a small number of redevelopers are able to tackle a project of this scale. Note also that DOD BRAC closure of Fort Monmouth transfers fee ownership of buildings as part of the redevelopment, which is not possible at Fort Hancock. (Fort Hancock buildings may be leased, but they cannot be sold.)

Lillian Burry agreed to provide a list of participants from the Fort Monmouth project. Some of those parties might be willing to come to a FACA meeting.

McLay was asked to explain the difference between fee and leasehold interests. She pointed out that financial terms are often harder to come by in leasehold projects vs. fee owned projects. Burry clarified that the US Army is looking to sell Fort Monmouth to the Redevelopment Authority. In the meantime, there are 18 month leases issued for interested parties to undertake due diligence. Welch suggested BRAC as one tool vs. Army enhanced use leasing authorities, which are similar to NPS for longterm

leases that amount to ownership. However, the Army can pull back some leased properties in times of military buildup. Reynolds replied that NPS authority from Congress is very limited as opposed to DOD and we cannot transfer properties back to ourselves if we need the facilities that are in use by others. He cautioned that the Committee should not go off track about this subject. McLay said that we just need to make sure developers understand the distinction between Army leasing/BRAC projects vs. limitations set by NPS leasing authority. We need to be clear about what we can and cannot do. Welch suggested that we avoid looking at BRAC and instead look at enhanced use lease with regard to leasing instruments and potential partners. Welch concurred with McLay that Fort Monmouth BRAC may be worth monitoring to determine which developers and/or potential lessors in the local area are potential partners.

McLay continued her discussion. GOGA does not use a lot of consultation in making their decisions now because they are ten years ahead of us in redevelopment. GOGA stresses that you should use local people who understand the market if you go the way of consultants.

4. **Finally, articulating the condition and requirements of the facility in a very clear way is the most important part of the redevelopment project, along with the historic significance.** Part of the proposed lessee's obligation is to come up with the figures/estimates necessary to allow them to rehabilitate the building. The information we would use internally. The Interior Department's Financial and Business Management System (FBMS), for example, can be provided as is but need not be perfected for proposed lessee's use. We must stress that the proposed lessee must undertake due diligence to determine the level of investment and rehabilitation required. We can provide the global overview as to condition of the building.

Some members speculated about how the current administration might change labor rates and Federal Contracting minimum requirements and looming requirements. NPS staff replied that there is NO information about this insofar as NPS is concerned.

### **Park proposes Phase 1 of Fort Hancock's Revival**

Nersesian began the presentation by saying she wanted to find successful uses for buildings which would be preserved and maintained over the long run. An occupied building is a saved building. We do not want to see this as just a bricks and mortar preservation effort. We want to build a viable, vibrant community as Fort Hancock had before.

The park wants to start the process through Phase 1, a pilot process to show success for subsequent phases. The Proposed Use Map, based on RFEI responses from December, was exhibited. Nersesian points out that the layout and responses did not come in incidentally but make sense in terms of how to redevelop an area. We are adopting this map as the plan for development.

Red – residential /office

Purple – Community (focused on programmatic commercial use, NOAA, kayaking, sailing)

Yellow – Educational/Commercial

Blue – Residential Office

Orange – Bed and Breakfast (B&B) Lodging

Burry asks about a 7-11 as an example. Everyone agreed that one could go in the purple zone as long as the developer adheres to the Secretary's Standards (no flashy signs outside, etc.). Nersesian said that we can start working with SHPO now but there is nothing as valuable as learning from practical experience. Howard Parish asked how this would affect NOAA, NJ Sea Grant, and other partners already located at Sandy Hook. Nersesian replied that they have always been required to comply with Secretary's Standards. McLay noted that MAST and NOAA are on site through legislative authority, which is different from our leasing authority.

Nersesian continued. The park is looking at infrastructure and utilities at Sandy Hook but there is nothing like getting out there and seeing what really needs to be done and determining what really can be supported at this time or in this condition. Getting out there will allow us to see what types of opportunities can be successful, to focus on priority needs of property management and address staffing while easing into this phase while we continue to show progress and build on our momentum.

What we are proposing for this pilot phase is a slate of different uses.

- Competitive solicitation for two non-profits in yellow areas.
- Two buildings (6 and 27) in the orange area, for competitive B&B solicitation.
- Two buildings in the blue area for residential use for competitive solicitation.
- Meanwhile, the NPS is aggressively pursuing funds to undertake rehabilitation of Building 7.

Rose asks how we came up with these building choices. Nersesian replied that we looked at what came in through RFEI, proximity to other features such as the Chapel, etc., and NOT due to condition of any one facility over the other. We will reach back out to all folks who submitted RFEI and get them back on board and also reach out to any newly interested parties so that we can move forward with the process of getting leases executed.

The park will create three Requests For Proposals (RFPs): one for B&B, one for non-profit, one for residential use.

Reynolds said that the Committee deeply appreciates the efforts made by the Superintendent and the National Parks of New York Harbor (NPNH) Commissioner, Joshua Laird. NPS is participating in the efforts to contribute and fund part of the rehabilitation efforts.

Rose asked if these will be 60 year leases and are they transferable? All would be negotiable terms, Nersesian replied. The park would build on the lessons we learned from Phase 1 to see what we can bring to the table as we move into further development.

Welch said that he liked the plan. The park "has skin in the game" by rehabilitating Building 7. Is there some way to seal the other buildings so that they do not further degrade/deteriorate? Nersesian replied that we have not gotten that far. We know we must consider the remaining buildings as they are deteriorating. We could take a band aid approach to more buildings or push funds into one building that can be saved, on which we will build success, and show momentum, build excitement, etc... We are not turning a blind eye to the other buildings but this is a project with many moving parts. Welch added that stabilization of the other buildings may be something that NPS should consider funding from national resources vice using internal GATE funds.

Margot Walsh asked how we could move the pilot program forward quickly and see results. Nersesian replied that we need to get proposals out first. McLay thought we could get RFPs out by September. Glaser said this was a huge step forward and a tremendous plan. As we begin to communicate with the public, we should address the fact that we are mindful that this is a start and that the broader picture addresses further growth and development. Meanwhile you rehabilitate an initial set of structures, keep Phase 1 sustained and continue the program over the long term.

Reynolds said that one of the things the Committee should do by the end of this meeting is to have a strong indication the committee is on board. The Superintendent and NPNH Commissioner should convey our urgency so that NPS can have the support required from higher levels. Let us hear public comments before we agree with the process as proposed. This is a real turning point. This is critical to the success of the project: showing the public that NPS is committed and ready to start.

Walsh said the Committee can help. She asked the park to provide them with a marketing plan so we can talk about it uniformly. NPS staff replied that the PPT is on our site and we will prepare a one page executive summary for use by Committee members. Guy Hembling thought it was a great idea to get something going.

Michael Holenstein addressed the length of leases. People seem to think that 60 year leases are what they are getting. It is possible that 60 years leases will be required to provide a market rate of return, but in most cases that IS NOT going to be the case. When considering uses, we should consider viability of the use at the onset and in the future. If the lease starts at \$2/sf, when it is rehabbed, and the lease terms rolls over, the value of the facility will have increased. We need to be very sure that with use of funds instantaneously at \$2/sf, there will be some trouble valuing those facilities the same way once improved.

McLay concurred. Yes, we are required to consider as short a term as possible and 60 years is very atypical. The maximum McLay has seen is 40 years with ability to revisit FMVR every couple of years. We do not have to discuss lease terms and negotiations at this time. That is a matter for the Interior Department's Office of the Solicitor and the proposed lessee. One justification for a long term is that historic tax credits kick in after 39.5 years. We are seeking people who have capability and experience in developing and rehabbing facilities.

Reynolds compared Fort Hancock with the experience of rehabilitation at GOGA. The first lease was done for a 60,000 square foot building. Since then, the Business Office was developed and the approach has turned more businesslike. No one approached all buildings all at once. It started with a series of pilots on individual buildings. There are two 59-year leases. One is a hotel with no earthquake stability. The other is in Fort Mason, on a set of piers which have not been stabilized. Burdens are on the Lessee to stabilize the facilities as required and for these reasons, the lease terms are stretched out as long as possible. The point is, that though there is authority to lease as long as 60 years, each individual lease must be negotiated. There are a number of GOGA facilities that are used for housing.

Bill Wilby apologized for missing the last meeting, but the advantage is that you can sense a change in momentum and direction, which he feels here. The way the original lease with Sandy Hook Partners was developed (the previous master developer) did not work. Some of us had the idea that we would like to see a better lease process with a real symbiosis with the Park. What he sees now is NPS taking over functions that might have been undertaken by a developer (such as adoption of the use map). He is worried whether NPS is ready to "ease into property management." Also, there was not much

discussion about the economic viability of any of the points discussed. Nonetheless, and in spite of the cause for concern, the shift in momentum is apparent. However, what will happen if we don't demonstrate success with the Pilot Program? There is a lot of interest concerning Fort Hancock in this area right now. Are we closing off options by doing too much and undertaking much of the development and management ourselves? He did not want to throw off the momentum but these are things we should think about.

Reynolds replied that the map is a now Proposed Use Map (no longer the RFEI map) because we are moving forward. If it fails, this is one way to find out. Yes, failure will result in angst but we will figure it out and we are feeling pretty confident about what is proposed. The other question is what will happen if we have more success than anticipated? We are being cautiously bold and we have to move forward. We have reached the point where we are tired of talking and we feel confident that we can do it.

Holenstein commented that the conversations mentioned by Wilby earlier were not conducted in the public forum. One of the phrases used in the last meeting was "analysis paralysis." We agreed that at some point it is necessary to move forward with a plan, even if it is not perfect. NPS is far more prepared to deal with a pilot program than it is prepared to deal with a comprehensive program. There have been different opinions at committee discussions re: developer vs. smaller scale. This is the best option to get something going. The incremental approach is prudent.

Welch asked how do you update and solicit input from folks of the committee prior to weekly meetings, especially since some of it results in making decisions. How do you pull info from the committee, especially if those weekly meetings result in what could be considered pre-decisional? Could the co-chairs provide an outline of the calls to the committee for consideration and information after they occur? This could be a way to solicit committee input prior to meetings and inform NPS of committee member thoughts as the NPS prepares for the next committee meeting. Glaser replied that the committee must understand staffing, infrastructure, and other demands on the park. Park staff has come to the Committee openly to report on funding and infrastructure problems.

Nersesian reassured the committee that we are not starting at square zero. We have the time to scale up. We will learn more about this during a future Phase 2 and offer additional buildings for leases.

Wilby wondered if a full-fledged RFP for all the buildings would not better serve Fort Hancock's rehabilitation. It is only under an RFP, not the RFEI from last December, where you gain a true snapshot of the fort's economic opportunity. Wilby preferred that the park would have issued an RFP last April. Then we could have decided whether we wanted to parcel out based on the response. The RFEI generated hope, but not any solid opportunity.

The committee discussed not only whether residential use would be approved but whether residences would be for a season or longer. John Ekdal cited concerns about vacation home buyers, who only occupy facilities for a certain number of weeks per year and therefore fail to build a community in the area where the redevelopment has occurred. Nersesian replied that the park is very aware of wanting to create a community at Fort Hancock. A summer community does not meet that ideal. We have been discussing this issue already. McLay added that, if this criterion is important to us, we can weight it accordingly in an RFP. Nersesian concurred; if we find out that year round use is not viable, and there were not significant responses to same, we can use this information in the next go round of the RFP. Welch wanted to make sure a convenience store would be available for the new community. This could be considered in the second Phase or maybe Phase 1A.

Walsh observed that, in our last meeting, we were very intent on getting an RFP out. We have waited so long for the RFP. It is the most critical point for the viability of the development. We can ask the Fort Monmouth group for help putting the RFP together. She said that the slow pace of getting an RFP embarrassed her as a committee member. Let's get a full RFP, for all buildings, out on the street. Burry observed that the Fort Monmouth process is subject to supervision by the State Attorney General. Nersesian replied that we want to move forward with an RFP under a pilot phase. We could learn more from Fort Monmouth. We need to be talking to local developers with leasehold interest and historic development experience. There are others in the NPS with expertise we can rely upon in drafting an RFP.

Holenstein countered that it is OK to begin with a seven-building pilot at this time and to study its results before we move forward with other development based on the success of Phase 1. Nersesian assured members that we are not losing sight of the rest of the buildings now that we are starting with the Pilot Phase. Linda Cohen agreed with Holenstein. We needed a focal point and now we will have one. Ultimately, year-round usage will be addressed. As far as February goes (meaning use of facilities beyond the high and shoulder seasons), get some park events underway that people want to see in February and ramp up.

Welch observed that this was the first strong, positive, move he had seen out here since 2003. Additionally, in spite of Sandy, buildings were improved. That implies there will always be lessons learned. He thinks full time use is viable and refers to Christmas events at History House. Rose concurred: we naturally focus on summer and weather related use of Sandy Hook, but there are lots of opportunities for winter use.

The park was asked when the RFPs would be coming out. Park staff promised them in September.

Guy Hembling asked if leaseholders would be forced to pay prevailing wages for work done on their building as they are with government work. Nersesian replied that this is applicable to the government but not leaseholders. Suzanne McCarthy clarified that it also applies now to Partnerships and Agreements, such as park friends' associations but, again, not to leaseholders.

## **Announcements**

An expansion of Sandy Hook's Multi-Use Path, known as the MUP, is going into a public comment period. The MUP, started in 2004, has been a tremendous success in its first two phases; this expansion would be its third and add another mile and a half through new areas.

A community workshop will take place in the fall addressing climate change impact. Partners include the National Parks Foundation and National Science Foundation. Rutgers is involved. NOAA could be involved too, as well as other community participants.

The park's annual All-Women Lifeguard Tournament takes place Wednesday, July 30.

The Record of Decision for Gateway's General Management Plan was signed June 9. It is now in effect.

Fouratt mentioned the recent 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the state of New Jersey. Also, a delegation from the Isle of Jersey (the original Jersey, off the coast of England in the Channel Islands) arrived for cultural arts networking and wanted to see the Jersey Shore. Fouratt took the delegation out from Asbury to Sandy

Hook, where Warren met with them. The delegation said it was the best part of the trip and looked forward to returning to the Hook.

Next Steps: GATE will develop the RFPs. Details are internal and there is a legal process on which the committee cannot weigh in. Should the committee continue its plans to have an August meeting, currently scheduled for August 22? If we are not having that meeting, we need to have the marketing and outreach plan ready to go in September. It was decided to reschedule the August 22 meeting for Friday, September 12 at a location to be decided. An announcement will be made in the Federal Register, as required.

The need for a committee to address communications and outreach was discussed. Since an outreach and communication committee already exists, it was decided that they should convene. Members include Rose, Ekdahl, Welch, Fouratt, Cohen, Karolyn Wray, Burry and GATE Public Affairs Specialist Daphne Yun.

At 11:15 am, the committee broke for lunch.

Work resumed at 1 pm with the Public Comment period, as stated in the Federal Register. Due to the number of commenters, initial comments were limited to two minutes.

Betsy Barrett, Sandy Hook Foundation: She asked McLay if she could address how GOGA manages their leases? Is it an NPS team? Is the team from outside the park? (Answers at the end of comment period.)

Richard C. King, Monmouth Hills resident: The fort is having “an identity crisis.” New Jersey has only 57 National Historic Landmarks, three of which are within walking distance of this location including Sandy Hook, which includes the lighthouse, Fort Hancock and proving grounds, which according to his research is the most significant part of the historic district. The identity of the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark needs clarification. The fort’s “Historic District” sign needs to be moved to the front of the park, where the National Historic Landmark officially begins. Also, many people do not know we are in Middletown.

Lydia O’Brien Moaty: A local resident, she is very impressed with the group and commends work done. She had been involved with efforts to revive and restore Fort Hancock in the 1980s but believes its time has finally come.

Anthony Mercantante, Middletown Township administrator: He is impressed with efforts to date and believes a pilot program is a great idea. He thinks we will learn a lot and have experience for a future RFP. He is curious about our land use plan. How strict is it? For example, if a B&B comes along and wants a building that is in a district designated for something else, would we consider it? We should have flexibility.

Mike Murray, Armed Ground Forces Association (AGFA): He thanked the park for the use of Building 108 by AGFA volunteers as they worked on Battery Gunnison that weekend. Volunteers need proper housing to do the work they do. The park map should be revised to identify the building area of Fort Hancock as Fort Hancock Main Post. He likes the Phase 1 plan we talked about earlier.

Donna Cusano, AGFA, marketing and communications professional: She is impressed with Phase 1 reconstruction plan of the seven buildings. The Fort Hancock map should identify Fort Hancock main post. Housing is important to AGFA. Members appreciate the use of 108 and they look forward to more housing coming on line for groups who are volunteers like them. They are excited about the future. She has seen much progress since the last meeting.

Gary Weaver, AGFA, Whitehall Township (PA) engineer technician: Signage is important. He thanked NPS for use of 108 and is impressed with the electrical wiring, which was a first rate job. Regarding weddings at the chapel, it would be nicer if NPS fixed up the Officers Club to be used as a banquet hall.

Kathleen Kluxen, AGFA: She thanked us for work with Phase 1. Discussions are progressing wonderfully. If they can get the "officers' quarters" [she may have meant the Officers Club] up and running as a club that would be great. It would draw more visitors to the end of the Hook. Overall, the process is moving in a positive direction. She thanks for the effort to house AGFA during their volunteer activities – we would not be here without it; more housing is required. It is really positive.

Paul Cusano, AGFA, physician: He is impressed with Phase 1, especially considering the progress from the April meeting until now. Thanks the committee for the progress so far and the proposals. Housing at Sandy Hook for volunteers is necessary. Building 108 is a start, but more is necessary. NPS could have more help from AGFA if there was more housing.

Gerald Still, Major General (retired), US Air Force Reserve and AGFA member: He noted that 22 people from AGFA are coming tomorrow and they are going to be squeezed into a small space in Building 108. AGFA has been working on Battery Gunnison since 2003. He works with historic sites. Sandy Hook is a gem and he would love to see more being done but the Phase 1 is a great start. There is more to do though. More housing like Building 108 is required. He offered to assist GATE Public Affairs in marketing outreach and offered his business card.

Eric Meiselman, AGFA member for seven years: He thanked the committee and the NPS for all they are doing. He is excited to see what we are doing and is excited to see there is work coming along. He is also thankful for volunteer housing at Sandy Hook. Many members of AGFA travel from places such as California and Pennsylvania, so they do not have places to stay within commuting distance.

Kyle Schaffer, AGFA: He thanked the NPS for the use of 108. He has come from Allentown to volunteer since 2011 and has fallen in love with the place. Phase 1 is a great stepping stone for future restoration, hopefully to get more done with park.

Thomas Minton, AGFA member, also assigned to US Army 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division of US Army: Minton asked for special leave to be here this weekend. It is outstanding to be at the fort again. The whole fort is a historic landmark and that needs to be noted on the signs. A seasonal park ranger at Sandy Hook for eight years, he said it is outstanding to see the park moving forward with work and thanks for the porch repairs and housing.

Henry Komorowski, AGFA, mechanical engineer, historian: He complimented us on the work we are doing, reminding us that we have an opportunity to make things right at Fort Hancock. He wants us to think of a future where people look back at this effort and are impressed by our foresight and efforts, 30-60 years from now, when the fort buildings have been saved.

Mary Komorowski, AGFA, teacher in Bogota, resident of Englewood Cliffs: Thanks for providing AGFA with accommodations in Building 108. She works with NPS and incorporates its resources into her curriculum. She encourages her students and teachers to participate in the web rangers program. Park Ranger Jennifer Cox is instrumental in getting the ranger program in the curriculum. She likes that the new brochures use the name of the Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark. That is the best way to teach kids history – by showing them living history. Kids understand community better when they can come here and see that people were protecting the country. “Rosie the Riveter” is part of her life and school (it is her AGFA job). She brings it alive for the kids and brings them down here to see it. The Phase 1 program is great.

There was still time left for public comment:

Jeff Tyler, corporate real estate executive, applicant for committee membership: He believes that the actions proposed are great, including the incremental approach proposed by the park. We have to see what works and doesn’t work, then be able to change or modify and learn by doing.

Mary Komorowski finished what she had begun to say. Our park is a gem. She hopes we can make this a living museum here. We are defending our country and it is part of life and is important.

Richard King also finished his point. He believes an RFP needs a minimum of 60 days to be out there. He thinks the RFP must be staged [sic—offered in stages?] in case there are no answers to the first iteration.

McLay answered Barrett’s question: The most recent organizational chart at GOGA shows 11 employees. Those employees are not dedicated just to leasing but to all concessions, agreements, permits and all leases. Barrett asked if the park is going to train employees for management of this Phase 1 and subsequent projects. Or, is the park going outside for help? Answer: NPS can rely on contractors and also get help from GOGA and Washington. We have resources and expertise within the NPS.

Mercantante again asked his question: Is there flexibility in the allocation of buildings? Can a building in one zone be utilized for a different type of use? He said he does not want to see us locked in to a location or use in the event we get a proposal that works but is not in the proper zone or space, based on a preconceived plan. Reynolds said the plan is as flexible as the park wishes it to be and can be changed at the park’s discretion. He reiterated that the RFP is based on the responses to the earlier RFEI. The NPS and the committee never anticipated that a map of proposed uses would emerge this way. Nersesian concurred. We are using the proposed use map as a guide because it is a good mix of uses and the areas will relate to each other. However, nothing prevents it from being flexible.

Wilby asked, if he has been in touch with developers who are interested in more than the Phase 1 part of the project, what is the communication protocol? Nersesian replied that we did not see a lot of developers respond to the RFEI. We have not yet made those connections or had those opportunities to work with that type of expertise. We would like to be in touch with them. Wilby asked what he should do if he gets questions about what those developers should do in response.

Reynolds asked, what if we get an RFP that states a group is interested in three blue (residential) buildings and one yellow (educational/professional) rather than two blue and two yellow? Could we write an RFP flexible enough to allow that? GATE answered yes. Wilby asked, should a group respond to one RFP or all RFPs (one for residential, one for B&B, one for educational/nonprofit)? NPNH

Commissioner Joshua Laird, commissioner of the National Parks of New York Harbor (NPNH), said that applicants who are interested in all should submit a response to all RFPs.

Wilby asked if there is some timeframe in which all buildings are expected to be out. What if someone wants 20 buildings? Could they respond to the RFP and say I want 20 buildings? Reynolds replied, only if the RFP is written that way; otherwise it will get thrown out. Reynolds pointed out that we have made a decision to move forward with a total of seven buildings based on comfort level and ability. We are interested in taking a strong, yet incremental, step forward with the confidence that we can get things done at a level that is manageable and is likely to work best.

These RFPs may not be for everyone, Laird said. There may be parties who walk away because the scale of opportunity they seek is not available at this time.

Nersesian added that, if those parties are still interested in large scale development come back in two years, after we have seen the results of the first increment, we would be interested in talking to them concerning a larger scale opportunity. It is a discussion point as to the amount of flexibility we leave in the RFP. Are we limiting the RFP to the six buildings? Yes. Scalability is less of a concern than the ability to move ahead with a Phase 1.

Glaser worries that we would preclude some very good opportunities if they are lurking out there based on the assumptions we are making today. Even so, he absolutely commends the pilot process but is sensitive to what we don't know about what is out there if we limit to the pilot program.

Holenstein favored a vote of confidence for the pilot program. Sometime, somewhere, a decision must be made. There have been opportunities for comment, for meetings, as well as the gathering of RFEIs. He thinks some people avoided the RFEI for fear of giving away the idea that they wanted to keep close to the vest. However, that is a risk people take when they choose to hold their cards close to the vest. The park and the committee have been talking for a long time and we have finally decided to take a step forward. It is appropriate to make a decision and stick to it. We should proceed with Phase 1.

Walsh moved that the committee come to consensus and move forward with three RFPs for a total of six buildings in September 2014. Burry asked for consensus and it was achieved.

**The consensus is for the park to issue three RFPs: two buildings for not-for-profits, two for B&Bs and two for residential use, as described to the Committee – Agreed.**

### **Communications Plan**

Yun described the park's plan for communicating the reasons behind Phase 1 and how it will work. The park's objectives are as follows:

- The park wants to save historic buildings and the corresponding historic landscape, and to create a newly revived community at Fort Hancock that will serve the needs of park visitors, the local communities, and breathe life back into a national historic landmark.
- While time is of the essence in saving these buildings, a thoughtful phased approach (pilot project) is most sustainable in the long run and will guide future development.
- The pilot project will sustain the existing excitement and hopefully encourage others to make a unique investment.

The park's communication goals are to:

- Convey that our goal is to save historic buildings and their corresponding historic landscape.
- Describe how the pilot program will work.
- Explain rehabilitation requirements (no new buildings; variety of legal instruments available and DOI Secretary's Standards).
- Note the support of FACA Committee, local community, and other organizations.
- Attract potential leaseholders.
- Expose the opportunity.

The park will issue a press release about Phase 1 within the next few weeks to print media and electronic media. Tear sheets and other materials will be created. Public meetings with municipalities will be scheduled as well as a public information open house at the Sandy Hook Chapel.

Questions from commenters:

Has the park considered the Philadelphia Inquirer, Bergen Record, Morris County Paper, etc? The park will pursue whatever media contacts are suggested, focusing especially on New Jersey media. Some AGFA members in Pennsylvania will share their media contacts. Fouratt suggested Comcast Newsmakers.

Does the park have plans to emphasize NPS role in describing what will be there? What services will the NPS provide to leaseholders as part of the pilot program? Will we have a "PX" at Fort Hancock? Nersesian replied, no PX will be started during the pilot phase. Services offered by the park to leaseholders such as plowing, maintaining grassy areas and other common area uses will be covered under a Common Area Maintenance charge yet to be determined. Yun noted that press releases will have more information as we get closer to decisions and development. Burry recommended the park get in touch with the Monmouth County Economic Development Board to publicize the effort.

Reynolds asked how we intend to do share information at local municipal meetings. Also, he hopes the park will have some public meetings of its own in surrounding communities – not just in the park. The park must be focused on the community as well as the park if it wants to spread its message effectively.

Mercantante, who works with Middletown city government, suggested that the park ask towns to allow use of their facilities to host separate meetings on this topic so that our message does not get mixed up in a town meeting's local agenda.

Donna Cusano, member of AGFA, suggested a media tour (including local community members) of Sandy Hook to show the media progress we have already made. Reynolds asks her if she would consider being a part of the marketing committee. She replied, maybe, if time permits. Cusano and Yun exchanged contact information.

Jerry Still, member of AGFA, commented that he can help with marketing outreach. He and Yun exchanged contact information.

Walsh said that when press comes out, it is good to have members of the FACA Committee out there with them. It builds rapport and works even better when reporters hear from the FACA group rather than the NPS.

Barrett asked, as part of the RFP, will there be any statement from the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office or general guidance (even at town hall meetings) that a certain type of roof or windows are to be used? GATE replied that the Interior Secretary's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation are the starting point. Nersesian said that we will share all resources regarding historic standards and will put as much as we can into the RFP. We do not know yet, for example, what we will require for HVAC systems.

Glaser suggested that the committee be given a one-page fact sheet to distribute to people asking questions about Phase 1. The park and committee agreed by consensus for the park to create a shortened version of what has been distilled in today's meeting with a small map and perhaps a PDF with live links, similar to the tear sheet created for the RFEI. McLay agreed, as long as some sections could have a "coming soon" sign.

Holenstein noted that not only the Secretary's Standards are important. HVAC and major mechanical systems are also important. There should be something for potential leaseholders that suggests minimum heating and mechanical standards and similar items.

Reynolds thanked Yun for the presentation. Wilby thanked the park for the communication plan. In spite of his skepticism about the phased plan, he believes the plan will raise the level of success.

## **Wrap up**

Holenstein wanted to know if it was appropriate to discuss the manner by which leases are approved. GATE explained that this is an internal matter. McLay explains that committee's recommendation to move forward by September 2014 is enough for us to move forward with RFP. Reynolds asked if the committee could help move forward anything with which the park gets resistance from above. Not yet, Nersesian replied.

NPNH Commissioner Laird thanked everyone and is impressed with the efforts put into the project. Reynolds responded to Mary Komorowski's comment earlier that she felt as if it was her park. He noted that it was indeed her park; national parks belong to the American people and we must never lose sight of that. He also thanked everyone who thanked the park for the use of Building 108, for the suggestions on referring to the heart of Fort Hancock as the Main Post, and thanked those who spoke in support of the Phase 1 Pilot Program.

Glaser commented that the day had been quite a milestone. This has been substantial and heartening to see. FACA Committee is a sounding board and park is now going to move it along.

Reynolds noted a July New Yorker Magazine article about the 9/11 museum, which contains a comment about NPS. It referred to the Immigration Hall at Ellis Island as being a place that did not tell everyone what they should learn from being there. Nonetheless, the place is a catalyst for learning through experience. Kudos to the NPS.

Nersesian thanked members of the public who made comment, committee members for all thoughts and feedback that got us to this point and to all who gave support that led to this point. We have been in this together and we continue to move forward together. We look forward to this next step.

Meeting adjourned at 2:14 pm.

**Attachments**

A. List of Attendees

Meeting Summary approved by Committee Co-Chair

Signature: 

Date: July 31, 2014

## Attachment A

### Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Advisory Committee Meeting #12 – July 18, 2014 Attendance

**Members:** Lillian Burry, Linda Cohen, John Ekdahl, Mary Eileen Fouratt, Gerard Glazer, Guy Hembling, Michael Holenstein, Howard Parish, John Reynolds, Lynda Rose, Margot Walsh, Shawn Welch, William Wilby, Karolyn Wray.

**Absent:** George Conway, Arthur Imperatore, Timothy Hill, Frank Nolan, Daniel Saunders.

**NPS staff:** Karen Edelman, Pete McCarthy, Suzanne McCarthy, Pam McLay, Jennifer Nersesian (superintendent, Designated Federal Official), John Warren, Daphne Yun.

**Public:** Betsy Barrett, Steve Bassett, Donna Cusano, Paul Cusano, Richard C. King, Kathleen Kluxen, Henry Komorowski, Mary Komorowski, Eric Meiselman, Anthony Mercantante, Thomas P. Minton, Lydia O'Brien Moaty, Mike Murray, Kyle Schafer, MaryAnn Spoto (reporter, Star-Ledger), Gerald Still, Robert Thuss, Jeff Tyler, Gary Weaver, Rachel Zeresny.