

**Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Advisory Committee  
Draft Meeting Summary  
January 10, 2014**

The Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Advisory Committee (Committee), chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), held its eighth meeting, January 10, 2014, at the Sandy Hook Unit of Gateway NRA, Building 22 Conference Room.

**Summary of Decisions**

1. The Committee unanimously recommended to begin work on a Request for Proposals (“RFP”) for Fort Hancock.
2. The Committee created an RFP working group to begin work on the RFP and make recommendations to the Committee at the next meeting. The working group’s charge is twofold: develop recommendations or scenarios with pros and cons on how NPS can proceed with an RFP, and identify areas where additional information is needed to develop a credible RFP.

**Welcome and Opening of Meeting**

Jennifer Nersesian, Superintendent of Gateway National Recreation Area, and Acting DFO opened the meeting at 9:43 a.m. and welcomed everyone. Ms. Nersesian stated that the park received many Requests for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) responses; many more than anticipated. The park looks forward to continue working together with the Advisory Committee on the next steps.

The Committee members briefly introduced themselves, and Facilitator Robert Fisher provided an overview of the agenda for the day.

**RFEI Recap**

The RFEI was released on October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, and closed on December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013. Gateway NRA hosted site visits of Fort Hancock on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup>. All questions asked during the site visits, as well as “Frequently Asked Questions” crafted by the Advisory Committee were posted to the Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century website, along with the answers. A grand total of 41 RFEI responses were received.

Each response was checked to see if it addressed the basic 8 RFEI criteria questions. Pam McLay and Shawn Welch put together a color coded (RFEI category & geographic) map of Fort Hancock based on the responses sent in.

The RFEI categories received are:

- (14) residential, (2) residential/office uses,
- (4) master developer (master lease that included use of most or all buildings),
- (3) art studios,
- (7) bed & breakfast and restaurant,
- (1) hospice,

- (4) concept (non-building responses and concept statements only),
- (2) museum (museum operations including onsite housing), and
- (4) recreational uses.

The RFEI responses were grouped together, and put on an Excel spreadsheet. If the responses allowed the public to see their proposal, it was linked to the Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century website.

The U.S. Army has done successful partnerships with residential short-term leases in the past, with the stipulation that they can take this property back.

With 41 RFEI responses coming in so far, the park and Advisory Committee expect to receive even more responses should an RFP be issued.

### **RFEI Evaluation Process & Matrix**

The evaluation work group consisted of Pam McLay and Robert Vohden from the NPS, and Margot Walsh, Bill Wilby, Linda Cohen, Shawn Welch, Howard Parish and Guy Hembly from the Fort Hancock Advisory Committee.

The evaluation work group did the following:

- Reviewed the proposals
- Established a process to summarize the submissions against the eight RFEI criteria, including a brief description
- Categorized proposed uses and suggested initial pros and cons
- Analyzed building use demand and developed a potential RFP/Building use map base on the RFEI responses
- Formulated outstanding questions for discussion by the full Committee

### **Recap of RFEI Responses by Category**

#### Residential and Residential/Office Use

(14) Single Residential Uses – Most are from local families with personal connection to Sandy Hook. Most are proposed as second homes for seasonal uses that can be handed down for generations.

(2) Residential/Office uses:

1. Joshua Levine – Proposed administration office and seasonal summer residence in one building.
2. Indian Arrow – Proposed locating their headquarters at Fort Hancock and use of another building for residential use.

Residential & Residential/Office Use Considerations:

- Establishes year-round community
- Creates demand
- Heightened level of interest in Fort Hancock
- High demand already
- Capital in hand
- Precludes other uses long-term
- Management complexity, span of control
- May reduce Master Developer interest
- Private property vs. public use/perception

Master Developer

(4) Master Leases that included all buildings:

1. Simshabs Capital Partners – Broad multi-use proposal. Includes restoration of all buildings, museum and ferry service.
2. Sentry Hospitality – Multi-use proposal encompassing all buildings offered under the RFEI. Includes business, fitness, cultural, hospitality, and food service components.
3. NativeOne – Proposes a broad variety of uses in a large scale rehabilitation plan. Includes business center, cultural uses, rehabilitative center, and nature center.
4. West Point Services (Ross Rock, Danza Group) – Proposes a number of ideas (list and choose concepts) they are not tied to any one concept. VA housing, Museums, Theater and job training opportunities.

Master Developer Considerations:

- Reduces NPS management effort
- Uniform vision
- Risk based on lack of diversification
- Limits NPS flexibility
- Will we lose any prospective Lessees by pursuing a master developer?

Studio Use

(3) Art Studios:

1. Ani Art Academies – Maintains five academies worldwide and proposes their sixth academy at Fort Hancock. They have funds and 15 years of operation expenses available. They would charge tuition. This location would be dedicated to serving disabled veterans.
2. Julie Ann Barber – Would use as personal residence and art studio. Has owned and rehabilitated two historic properties.
3. Molly Rausch – Proposes use of Building 64 as an art studio, gallery and Fort Hancock Post Office. Art centers on postage themes.

Studio Use Considerations:

- Educational/cultural component
- Harmonizes with nature
- Brings in a cultural community
- Share space
- Year-round usage of buildings
- Precludes other uses
- Equipment needs may be challenging

Bed & Breakfast/Restaurant Use

(7) Responses:

1. Joe Crane – Proposes a combination of Bed & Breakfast and restaurant/café uses. Interested in pursuing a farm to table concept.
2. James Bovaso – Would use Building 27 or Sergeants Row to create a Bed & Breakfast or small group or rental units. Has previous successful rehabilitation experience.
3. Phil Wagner – Would create a small restaurant and Bed & Breakfast called the Peace House with supporting shuttle service.
4. Confidential – Bed & Breakfast
5. Paul Ziajski – Would turn Building 76 and Mule Barn into an outdoor outfitter and restaurant respectively.
6. Leslie Hoffman – Works a non-profit called Second Life Bikes that helps youths work their way toward their own bicycle, and seeks to bring this work to Fort Hancock. Would run a bike shop/café out of a rehabilitated structure.
7. Denise Hannigan – Proposes a multi-use structure for a Bed & Breakfast, café, bike rental and yoga studio.

Bed & Breakfast/Restaurant Considerations:

- Creative uses
- Alternative housing opportunities
- Promotes tourism
- Food service
- Increased visitor base
- Seasonal
- Financial investment

Hospice Care

(1) Response – Visiting Nurses Association Health Group (VNAHG) – Is a statewide provider of home health and hospice services. The VNAHG is interested in turning three Officer's Row structures into a hospice care facility. The facility would provide care for patients, lodging for families, and office space.

Hospice Care Considerations:

- Unique utilization of park resources
- Drives demand for hospitality
- Brings medical professionals to Sandy Hook
- Possible increased EMT demands
- Medical waste disposal

Museum Use

(2) Responses:

1. Romer Shoal – A non-profit dedicated to the restoration and stewardship of the Romer Shoal Lighthouse, located in New York Harbor and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This non-profit would create a museum and housing for volunteers out of a waterfront building in Fort Hancock.
2. American Military Historical Society – A non-profit group that focuses on military history and battle re-enactments, conferences and workshops. Proposes use of Building 40 and all of Officer's Row for a museum and group volunteer housing. Rehabilitation would be conducted through physical work of group members.

Museum Use Considerations:

- Connected to Fort Hancock NHL
- Potential to promote existing users
- Year-round destination
- Could support NPS and park partners
- Drives demand for hospitality
- Encourages youth participation
- Needs to be an appropriate balance of land use
- Financial commitments
- Educational use

Recreational Use

(4) Responses:

1. Manhattan Sailing Club – Established sailing school based in the World Financial Center in Battery Park City with over 900 members. Would rehabilitate waterfront structure with seasonal docking structures for a sailing school.
2. Outside New York – Group promotes active recreation such as paddle board, kayaking, small boats and cycling. Seeks to rehabilitate a structure to house programmatic work dedicated to bringing people outside to interact.
3. Strut and Fret – An independent theatre company that manages productions, events, performers and venues. They are interested in outdoor performance space and temporary

staging facilities for dance events, and hosting an international dance festival at Fort Hancock. [www.strutfret.org](http://www.strutfret.org)

4. Confidential

Recreational Use Considerations:

- Compliment to park resources/activities
- Supports current partnerships
- Attracts youth groups/programming
- Financial investment
- Large semi-permanent tent use for theater may have impacts on park resources

Conceptual Uses

(4) Responses:

1. Fee-based dog park
2. Military School – Contemplates starting up of a new military/political science school at Fort Hancock.
3. Mixed Uses – Proposes a range of commercial and residential uses at Fort Hancock. Some uses include residential rentals, event space, Bed & Breakfast, restaurants and outdoor activities
4. Farm – Proposes using a lot of land near building 80 for an organic farm.

**General Reaction from the Committee Regarding RFEI Responses Received So Far**

- Most Committee members seemed pleased with the responses, given the fact that the RFEI timeline was very short.
- The responses include a range of unique ideas with great imagination.
- The Committee needs to use responses (developed into an RFP), that really work for Fort Hancock.
- The master developer's responses seem good.
- The residential use responses may not be in the best interest of the park.
- Does the NPS want the master developer's response and individual responses under one "umbrella"?
- There needs to be a balance (a good mix/diversity of responses) to get the Fort Hancock buildings preserved in a public/private partnership.
- What uses does the Committee want to allow that fit the NPS's mission?
- Does the NPS want to have 1 contact for all 35 buildings, or individual contacts for multiple buildings?
- The master developers took on all buildings in their responses, whether they want to be property managers is not clear at this point.
- In an RFP, the NPS needs to be clear on what the responsibilities are (Who does what?)
- It's possible that there are individuals who are interested in the RFP process, that haven't submitted any RFEI responses.

- It's not clear if a master developer would necessarily want to work with individual ideas expressed in the RFEI.
- Some of the RFEI individuals may lose interest, once they see the financial commitment, and amount of work necessary to compete in the RFP process. But, the NPS may gain new serious proposals during the RFP phase.
- Does the NPS have authority to limit (or define), what will be allowed in the lease contract? The answer is "yes".
- The NPS needs to manage the Fort Hancock buildings. Can they define a model that they want?
- Some responders only want to develop/manage "X" amount of buildings based on their financial capability.
- The previous master developer at Fort Hancock, tried and failed. The master developer's risk may not be acceptable to the NPS.
- Should the master developer be allowed (yes/no) to be the property manager?
- What is the financial viability of preserving Fort Hancock's buildings?
- A "hybrid" developer plan is proposed. It would allow one master planer to develop the majority of buildings, but permit other individual planers to develop the remaining ones.

### Public Comment Period

- 1) **James & Barbara Bovaso** – They thank the Committee for allowing them to sit in on their discussions. If a master developer plan is accepted, the "small developers" won't be able to compete, and will ultimately be lost. But on the other hand, if an individual developer's plan is accepted, will they still have to pay a monthly rent and pay property taxes? Also, he and his wife are ready to invest now, not in 1 – 2 years' time.
- 2) **David Watson** – His company "Strut and Fret" was founded in 1979 in New York and Connecticut. This company manages cultural arts, productions, and events. He plans to renovate the gymnasium in Building #70, as dance performance facility. He also expressed interest in building an outdoor temporary stage/tent to host dance festivals at Fort Hancock.
- 3) **Goran Igev** – Gunnison Beach was destroyed by hurricane Sandy. Will it be rebuilt, and remain a clothing optional beach? He is interested in a small business venture at this beach.
- 4) **Tom Polk** – He's a resident of Neptune, New Jersey. He's been married for 40 years, has 3 children, one of which (Christopher) is a U.S. Navy submarine captain. The only people who are going to make the rehabilitation of the Fort Hancock buildings a reality, are the people who invest in it. How do I work with the NPS? He believes he can rehabilitate a building for much less than a million dollars. He is worried that there will not be enough people to get this development started. He believes that the rehabbed buildings need to be owned by individual people, and not by the NPS. Any unknown steps in this process need to be explained to the public.

- 5) **Jim Wassel** – He has been developing buildings for 35 years. He favors a master developer, because the smaller developers scatter and fade away. The master developer needs to financially sustain the rehabilitation of the Fort Hancock buildings. The master developer should entertain smaller developers.
- 6) **Denise Hannigan** – The Committee has done a great job so far! She is terrified that one master developer might have dominion over the whole redevelopment project. She asks, “How would a master developer help the local community?” She is against one master developer. She asks, “Will I be able to afford my home, once a master developer rehabilitates Fort Hancock?” She is in favor of having lenders available for this project.
- 7) **Janice Burpee** – The history aspect of the Fort Hancock houses is important. Let’s make this rehabilitation of Fort Hancock happen – and quickly. The houses on Officer’s Row should be used as residential houses; or lower rent houses for veterans. Tours of these houses should be done at Christmas time and other times throughout the year.
- 8) **Tom Polk** – His question: “How many buildings would I need to be rehab in order to have a successful proposal?”
- 9) **James Bovaso** – To restore a building at Fort Hancock would be the ideal of his life.
- 10) **Art Addie** – He believes Fort Hancock needs a property manager, and not a master developer.

### **Committee Responses to Some Public Comment Questions**

- You don’t pay property taxes on federal property. You can’t sell federal land or federal property.
- The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), has the building standards that the developer needs to respect when rehabbing the buildings.

### **Motion Passed to Move to the Next Step – Developing a Request for Proposal (RFP)**

A general recommendation was made by Committee members to vote to start work on the RFP process. The vote by the Committee was unanimous to approve this recommendation.

There was some question as to whether the Committee should allow (2) RFPs to be sent out simultaneously: 1) Cultural/Non-Profit RFP, and 2) Residential/Commercial RFP.

### **Working Group Set up to Develop the RFP**

Volunteers were requested to form the RFP Working Group. The following Committee members volunteered: Gerard Glaser, Frank Nolan, Shawn Welch, John Reynolds, Daniel Saunders, Bill Wilby, and Karolyn Wray. Gerry Glaser will serve as the working group coordinator.

Robert Vohden will ask if other Committee members want to join this working group.

This working group is charged with completing the following actions:

- (1) Develop recommendations or scenarios with pros and cons on how NPS can proceed with an RFP
- (2) Identify areas where additional information is needed to develop a credible RFP.

#### Next Steps

- The RFP Working Group will meet on Friday, January 17<sup>th</sup> (at Fort Hancock), to work on developing a RFP. The deadline to finalize it will be by Friday, February 21<sup>st</sup>.
- Pete McCarthy will provide a Fort Hancock building standards guide to the RFP Working Group. This guide will give technical solutions as to how to rehabilitate buildings at Fort Hancock (from past NPS construction practices).
- The Committee/NPS should thank all RFEI responders for all the effort they put into formulating ideas which may help in the process of re-developing Fort Hancock.
- The Committee/NPS needs to schedule a few public meetings (after 2/28/14), regarding the RFP, in order to avoid false rumors and to provide correct, timely and adequate information. This information should also be posted on the FOHA website.

**Miscellaneous Items**

What is a programmatic agreement? An umbrella agreement is an agreement that allows parties to move forward on a project, and is a tool to delegate a review process.

The Committee needs to provide as much detailed information as possible regarding the RFP/RFP process, so people know what they can/can't do.

There was general consensus by the Committee that the public will be allowed to continue providing RFEI responses to the Committee, even after the December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 deadline.

The information on the previously failed public/private partnership at Fort Hancock, needs to be revealed to the public. This information would be helpful, to avoid making the same mistakes again.

The Historic Context Working Group, and the Flood Insurance Working Group have completed their work, and are now officially disbanded. The Public Outreach Working Group and Property Costing Working Group will continue their work until it is completed.

The next FACA Committee meeting is scheduled for Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at Sandy Hook.

Gateway Superintendent Jennifer Nersesian thanked Committee members and the public for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

**Attachments**

- A. List of Attendees**
- B. List of Materials Distributed to the Committee**

Meeting Summary approved by Committee Co-Chair, Gerard Glaser

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Advisory Committee  
Meeting #8 – January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2014  
Attendance**

**Committee:**

George Conway	John Ekdahl	Frank Nolan	Bill Wilby
Mary Eileen Fouratt	Daniel Saunders	Shawn Welch	Gerard Glaser
Guy Hembling	Karolyn Wray	Tim Hill	John Reynolds
Lynda Rose	Margo Walsh		

**National Park Service:**

Marilou Ehrler	Rich Dvorak	Tim Hudson	Barbara Repeta
Karen Edelman	Jen Nersesian	Suzanne McCarthy	Pete McCarthy
Pam McLay	Robert Vohden	Daphne Yun	Joshua Laird

**Department of the Interior:**

Robert Fisher

**Public:**

Greg Butler	Paul Ziajski	Barbara Bovaso	James Bovaso
Christopher Growr	Kathy Schneider	Stephen Bassett	Wayne Masters
Linda Masters	David Watson	Bill Rush	Art Addie
Jim Wassel	Denise Hannigan	Goran Igev	Tom Polk
Kimberly Carroll	Rodney Alberts	Janice Burpee	Steven Burpee
Richard King	Tom DePofu		

January 23, 2014

Attachment B

**Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Advisory Committee  
Meeting #8 – January 10, 2014**

**List of Materials Distributed to the Committee**

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Discussion Questions
3. RFEI Excel Spreadsheet