

**Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Federal Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Summary #15**  
**Lighthouse Keepers Quarters, Sandy Hook Unit, Gateway NRA**  
**February 20, 2015**

Gateway National Recreation Area Superintendent Jennifer T. Nersesian, the Designated Federal Officer for the Committee, called the meeting to order at 9:20 AM. Some committee members arrive late due to the change in location from the Sandy Hook Chapel, which had lost power and heat the night before.

External Affairs Officer John Warren presented a summary of the last meeting on December 12, where the park presented final Requests For Proposal (RFPs).

Trouble with the FACA website prevented the last minutes from being uploaded for public view. Those who wish to have copies of the last minutes meetings should contact Warren.

**Meeting dates in 2015**

Meeting dates for 2015 were discussed. The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday, May 7. Meetings have been held on Fridays in the past but, due to the popularity of the Chapel during wedding season, the next meetings are scheduled for: Thursday, May 7; Thursday, June 25; Wednesday, September 9, and; Thursday, October 22. People seem to prefer Fridays and so NPS will look at NOAA and MAST as alternative locations. We will change the dates after we find a location that is ADA accessible. Thompson Visitor Center at Thompson County Park was recommended as a good, and free, location. Sandy Hook Unit Coordinator Pete McCarthy will inquire.

**Updates from the Superintendent**

- Names of the latest nominees to the Committee have moved on to the White House Liaison's office for clearance, the final step before formal nomination by the Secretary of the Interior. We hope to have new members installed before next meeting.
- The third phase of the Multi-Use Path at Sandy Hook should be complete by June.
- Holly forest construction should start by spring.
- Sandy Hook Unit is scoping for alternate locations for its maintenance facility locations. There are issues with both sites which were proposed to the public (near the water treatment plant and so-called "tent city" across from the Marine Academy of Science and Technology High School). New scoping of both sites with public comment will start in mid-to-late March.
- Telecommunications upgrades at SAHO will start soon. The tower to Building 26 will start in May. The rest of the lines will be constructed in late summer early fall depending on birds.
- Building 102 repairs are in engineering review.
- Contract for History House rehabilitation should be awarded by the end of the year.
- Approximately 20 houses for staff should be up and running for next season and are currently in final design review.

- Sewage treatment facilities need upgrades for long term that are resilient. It is “held together by duct tape and band aids.” Park will build a new sewage treatment plant over the next couple of years. Sewage Treatment and Telecom infrastructure improvements are important so we have capacity to serve Lessees that we hope to have out at FOHA.
- Building 23 has held up so far this winter without further damage in spite of snow and winds. We hope it continues to hold up. We were looking at a potential cost of \$1M for stabilization (just to hold it up), which would have taken those funds from rehabilitation of Building 7. It has led to a serious conversation about preservation of most historically significant buildings as a priority vs. stabilization without major investment in restoration.
- It should be noted that some significant areas at Gateway were classified as ruins by the 2014 General Management Plan (GMP) because they either cannot be rescued or would be too cost-prohibitive to do so. Even things in the “preserve” category we don’t have the resource to attend to at this time. We must consider whether we address what is at its worst in the preserve category. Should we make more systematic decisions? Is it smarter to invest in Building 24, adjacent to 23, which is the same layout but in better shape, and can be saved? Gateway’s approach is precedent-setting for the NPS. All parks will have to make this decision due to aging infrastructure and resources. We are working closely with the Region to take the next steps that will impact the program on a national level.
- 2016 is the NPS Centennial. There will be a national marketing campaign with a lot of visibility, events and programing to celebrate. Hope is that we will have some buildings leased by then and some under the rehabilitation construction process. How can we leverage these accomplishments and show progress?

Gerry Glaser asked, regarding the three tiers of preservation (priority, stabilization, ruins), is the park going to declare a new nationwide policy on how that should be examined? No, replied Nersesian, it is a learning opportunity that will be valued for future application.

Michael Holenstein asked, are you receiving reasonable cooperation from the powers that be? Nersesian replied that there is cooperation behind the idea. Everyone wants to see this succeed. There is no magic pot of money and resources are stretched thin. NPS capital funds are incredibly small. Budget hits over the past decade impact those funds. There is no magic reserve from which to draw. In any case and in spite of this, people want to help move this process forward.

Holenstein asked, are you finding that powers that be are entertaining everything that comes along and give a good listen? Nersesian: Yes.

Glaser: there must be some other way to get someone interested in Building 23. Is that still on the table? Nersesian: Yes. Glaser: Could we brainstorm for ideas? Nersesian: Yes, we are open to ideas. Lynda Rose: How long are going to let it sit there before you raise it or watch it collapse? Nersesian did not have an answer to this question yet but wanted the group to be aware the Building 7 is moving along.

## Spreading the word about the RFPs

Warren spoke about what people were thinking concerning the leases at Fort Hancock, specifically people who had expressed interest by calling or emailing, showing up to meetings and attending visits.

Karolyn Wray of the Committee sent out a survey to about 250 email addresses, 34 of whom responded. A copy of the PowerPoint used to discuss the results is attached.

- All but one was aware of the RFP, with five planning to submit proposals.
- 28% felt the RFP gave them the information they needed.
- 28% cited affordability as the reason why they would not submit a proposal.
- 50% are willing to talk to the park.

The survey prompted a great deal of discussion. Many respondents pointed to confusion over the application process and cost vs. risk as reasons they were not applying during the pilot phase. Warren read all comments aloud, verbatim. Some of the comments gave good information.

He maintained that even confused or incorrect information from the respondents teaches us how to better communicate with our audience. For instance, based on the comments, people want to know that you can have a dishwasher, you need not have a coal furnace and these things need to be clarified against the Interior Secretary's Standards for Historic Preservation. The park can address some of the questions posed by those surveyed in the form of FAQs.

Fifteen respondents gave permission for the committee to contact them. Warren asked committee members if they would be willing to contact some of the survey responders.

Lynda Rose said she would be willing but she is confused about what information to share and would like a fact sheet. Committee agrees to prepare a fact sheet or talking points so that there is consistency. Nersesian pointed out that info must be consistent. We need to ensure there is no bias or favoritism or the appearance of same.

NPS would like more information about the survey responses in order to take questions and fully answer them in a manner that allows everyone to benefit from the answer. The Committee is not there to answer questions, but rather to provide or obtain information insofar as the survey goes.

Wray explained that the survey was open for one week. Pam McLay, Gateway's chief of Business Services, suggested that the Committee should feel free to share the survey with people on their own contact lists. Lynda Rose has 3,000 people on her list for example and would be willing to send it out.

Holenstein said that the Committee should thank those who responded and tell them that we encourage them to provide more details. The Committee should take the responses and flesh them out/do it again. Also, sooner or later, NPS will have to put out examples of finance and investment. If you put out an example, the cap rate will be the cap rate, and the rent will be the rent. But some of those questions must be put to rest. People want to know what it costs. Rose agreed: people want to know what it will cost and how long it will be "mine."

Holenstein stated that people are not able to understand how the leasing program returns fair market value (FMV) to NPS. The general public is not aware of what we as a Committee know. We need to put out some examples showing how a lease will be structured.

McLay asked Holenstein if there is a way the Committee can be part of this? A FACA workgroup can look at things that can be shared as a committee project. Holenstein asked the NPS to provide some sort of example but realizes that it will be problematic. McLay agreed to come up with some case studies that can be issued as a Committee product. Holenstein will chair this group.

Glaser suggested that the Committee run a two or three line ad that says “what do you think the property is worth?” We are running out of time and a case study should be out there right away so that people who are considering the RFP have something to rely on. Additionally, there is a need for some sort of networking capability. Do we have time to launch a blog? It could discuss some issues with Historic Preservation; one recent email asked if you can put in a dishwasher. Maybe take the survey results slides and use them to try and generate some continued conversation. Feedback from those who provided survey answers is important. We can include case studies in the FAQs proposed. We are running out of time.

McLay urged the Committee to share information by letting the public know we conducted a survey, with a recap of the results. Also, all Committee members could all send the out the Survey and could gather much more information in that manner.

Glaser asked if the Committee can send out the survey results to the 234 people who were on the initial survey request and ask them to work with it or redistribute. Daphne Yun, Gateway’s public affairs specialist, will put it up on the Gateway RFP webpage. Dan Saunders agreed to look at it once it is generated but before it goes out.

Walsh: We really need this survey information because as we go out to town councils, we need to look at them as investors. They are community spirited and have a broad interest in what is happening around them. They can convey the message to others but the message needs to be clear. There are also business organizations that we should be contacting. Walsh agrees to be on the sub-committee.

Dr. Howard Parish’s experience in conversation with businesspeople is that they don’t want to be first. They want to join in after some success is visible. Nersesian acknowledged the element of risk, but noted that Sandy Hook already has successful leaseholders. We need to capitalize on that information. McLay added that Gateway is making major investments in infrastructure, which should be better publicized. Perhaps we can put together a brochure of all the partners at SAHO and share that information. This idea reaches consensus with Committee members.

Warren and Sandy Hook Unit Coordinator Pete McCarthy have given RFP updates at four nearby town meetings to date. Responses have been positive. They have distributed a lot of information and seem to be getting a lot of buzz.

There was a media day out here two weeks ago and there was coverage of the event by the Asbury Park Press and the Star-Ledger. Positive press and photos have been published. Glaser said that links to these articles are floating around our websites and the photos are GREAT. Some of us have not had a chance to walk around the buildings, and even those of us that have, should be aware that this is a great option and is possible.

McLay recommends Committee add the following question to the survey: Have you seen the recent photos published in the \_\_\_\_\_ newspaper (then add a link).

Wray said that, before she joined the committee, she was not entirely convinced any of this would work but, looking at the buildings, she became convinced.

Rose asks if we are sharing photos of buildings that are in use with members of the public so they can see what is possible. We do not.

Walsh asks if we contacted the papers which published the stories. Walsh will send them a thank you letter because the follow up is important. That encourages people to remember you and to continue working with you. Yun will give Walsh the contact info for press and the letters will be issued by signature of the Committee.

Holenstein asked about “self work” vs. cost of renovations by professionals. We should address this at the same time we come up with models/case studies. He noted that the amount of renovation that can be accomplished by a lone leaseholder is limited. McLay answered that sweat equity CAN be converted to common value, which can be accounted for as part of the project cost. Holenstein said we must make that clear.

Pete McCarthy reminded members that, before a leaseholder starts anything, he or she must submit plans to be approved by the NPS. These plans can be accounted for in the pre-approvals required before the project starts and should be part of the proposal submitted by the applicant in any case. A budgeted proposal is required and should be based on customary expenses. That is how it gets approved.

McLay assured members that the park will answer the questions that came from the survey and will find a space to explain that self work is valued and will contribute to the cost of the project.

### **Advertisements**

The park has designed and paid for ads in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, New Jersey Business and New York Nonprofit Press. NPS has developed and shared ads with Committee members, who are free to use those ads to provoke interest. Fouratt has posted the info on “Build with Purpose” website which matches non-profits with projects.

### **How Committee members can help get the word out**

McLay segued into the Role of the Committee in getting the word out on the RFP (on NPS website). PPT about how Committee can help.

McLay thanked Wray for taking the lead on the survey. That will allow the Committee to move to the next step, sending it out with additional questions and broadening the net.

McLay reminds the group they have the NPS pens/flash drives with the FACA RFP documents. Please share these documents with anyone who expresses interest in the RFP.

Committee members can also attend town meetings with NPS staff. The next town meeting is in Middletown on Monday, March 2. Wray attended the meeting at Sea Bright. Rose and Tim Hill went to Atlantic Highlands. Hall was also present at the Highlands meeting. John Ekdahl, who is mayor of Rumson, was present at that meeting as was Walsh. All feedback is positive to date. Atlantic Highlands had the most questions.

McLay asked what questions were asked. Pete McCarthy replied that there were questions about rent and lease terms. There were some questions about infrastructure (natural gas), how rent was amortized. McLay asked that meeting attendees provide a list of the questions asked at the meeting for use in a future FAQ. McCarthy added that the Interior Secretary's Standards are always a question.

Walsh: There is still a Sandy mentality that the infrastructure is terrible at the park. Questions about electric and sewerage system keep coming up. Walsh said that if you have not been up here, you think there is not water services or that the roads are underwater. Pete McCarthy knows where these things really stand but the public may not. Also, Walsh notes, the leasing process is very unique and people need answers. We should include information about infrastructure and SAHO partners for future meetings.

Pete McCarthy replied that the window of time is very short. We have to be wary. One example of infrastructure concerns is what to do if Hurricane Sandy flooded a basement? We are telling people to lift utilities to the first floor. It is important that we get out the message that buildings are fare enough outside the flood plain (or that there are sustainable alternatives) to alleviate related fears.

Rose believes we should emphasize that this is not a profit-making opportunity but rather something that is good for the entire community.

Parish believes photos of rehabbed buildings would be helpful. Gateway can use before-and-after pics (New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, Sandy Hook Day Care, NOAA). Wray thinks we should use quotes from existing users and we need to include photos and photos of amenities and that we should mention ferry service as an amenity and as an accessibility issue. Glaser points out that there are cooperator/lessee meetings every two weeks. Nersesian asked Warren and Yun to pull this information together for public use.

Nersesian thanks Rose for the design of the postcards, which she facilitated through Solari Creative Graphic Design in Red Bank. They are available for distribution as are posters and are appendices to this document. Rose asked if we have a space for displaying the posters. Didn't we talk about posting them at the park entrance? Yes. Suzanne McCarthy, deputy superintendent of Gateway, said that the park was hoping that postcards would be distributed by the Committee. Yun asked members to let her know

who needs posters. Rose asked for 700 postcards. Glaser asks for posters. McLay thinks a billboard is a good idea.

McLay reiterated the important dates coming up. Responses to RFPs, which were released on December 12, are due April 17. Questions are due March 16.

McLay: We are trying to provide the Committee with tools. If there is something we are not giving you, let us know. We want to be sure everyone is delivering the same message all the time. Please let us know what you need from NPS.

Once the deadline passes, McLay stressed, the NPS will convene a panel of experts on leasing to evaluate proposals. Gateway staff members do not serve in the selection process and may only be consulted as technical advisors. Once evaluations are complete, recommendations are provided and the deciding official will issue the decision.

Glaser reminded members that the Committee does not have a role in evaluating the proposals. The Committee has provided lots of input that led to the RFP and the park will keep committee informed. But as you heard, even park employees play a minimal role in evaluating the proposals. That is the way the federal rules are written but that does not prevent us from continued discussions. We will not be given the opportunity to see the RFP responses. Only NPS officials are able to participate in selection. We probably will not hear anything about selections until the Panel has completed its review and recommendations have been made to the deciding official.

Walsh asked if the Committee will know how many proposals are submitted. McLay replied no, not until the selections have been made. You are participating in the creation of the process and so you have a sense of who might put in but once the RFP closes, you will not hear anything about the process until the selection. Walsh asked if we will know whether no proposals are received. Yes, says McLay, because there would be no next step.

Glaser cautioned the Committee to be realistic about what to expect and where this will go depending on the outcomes from the RFP. There are constraints that are a result of the closed nature of the RFP. We have to provide advice to the park if the first phase does not go as planned and will have to move quickly. We do not want to wait any extensive time period before we start thinking about next steps. We have to strike a balance between our ability to know what is going on with RFPs and determining what is the next step. Maybe the short answer is we learned something. Here are the next steps and this is what we learned.

Wray asked, who is going to follow up on Survey by making calls? We have a limited time before the RFPs are due. Glaser observed that there is confusion/lack of information. We should get the bottom of what has emerged as issues as a result of the survey.

We are thanking people and trying to better inform the questions we plan to ask. Holenstein recommended not spending "90% of your time" on the 15 people who agreed to talk. We should be working on extraction of information.

Holenstein asked about base numbers for lease value. How far along is the NPS with CAM costs in terms of getting an understanding of those? When will NPS have a market value analysis done to address rent?

McLay: We have a utility expert working on behalf of the park and hope to have answers fairly soon. As far as appraisals, we are working with Region to obtain a waiver on the first six buildings but there is no guarantee. Holenstein pointed out that this is a lengthy and time consuming exercise. McLay said that the park will ask **OVS?** to take the lead so we can bypass use of third party contractor.

### **Potential Open House – Discussion**

Warren: Survey shows us what messages are out, what messages are not out that we should clarify, what messages need to be out. It also points out that there are opportunities to match partners willing to do the work with fund source, that there are questions about how to respond to these RFPs, what the rent would be and how long a lease can run. These are issues that can inform and structure an open house. There are four dates being considered for the open house: March 14, 15, 21 and 22. The park will ask those interested in Fort Hancock to identify a date they prefer and to submit a question they would like to have answered.

Some buildings may be open to attendees. Rose says she may be able to get some Public Service Announcements on the radio. Nersesian considered having cooperators open their buildings to open house attendees. Suzanne McCarthy suggested that we should have cooperators speak at open house.

Walsh said that there was fear of being first but we may be hosting people who have skills that need a partner. Maybe we should present this as a networking opportunity at the open house: meet your neighbors with like interests (like a National Public Radio green space match-up).

Holenstein noted that the park has multiple projects underway to restore park buildings, such as the repairs to History House. This is one way to answer the “I don’t want to be the first” concern. A question on a follow-up survey should be, “Are you aware that you would not be the first?”

A theme of “Meet Your Neighbor” for the open house reached approval by consensus.

### **Public Comment period, part 1**

At the last Committee meeting, it was discussed that several attendees to the meeting had to leave before the official public comment period at 1 PM and that a mid-morning comment period might better serve the public. Since the 1 PM time has been announced in the Federal Register, it must be followed until it is changed by the Committee. However, additional times can be permitted. Therefore, comments were opened at 11:30 AM. The speakers are below.

**Richard C. King, local resident:** The term “ruins” inadequately describes what we are facing. We have a lot of unanswered questions such as what we will do about roofs, windows, kitchens, and bathrooms which can be worked out in the lease negotiation. The one issue that is most important: what is the rent going to be? What is the rent going to be on a pile of rubble? The park should start out with a decision tree and consider starting with non-profits and giving them a sixty year lease without rent as a matter of



negotiating. You are better off with a building than a pile of bricks. The park can start negotiating with a non-profit behind the scenes for Building 23, for example. You won't be faced with the issue of rent and the organization will take on the design and engineering costs. We've gotten too far away from the market and are considering sweat equity and outside labor. Let's save the buildings.

**James Krauss, Atlantic Highlands Environmental Chair:** It is important to get out FA questions immediately, deal with website problems, follow it up with a survey and get these done before the upcoming open house. A case study is a great idea. People reading the RFPs are not sure how it would work. He was at the Atlantic Highlands council meeting. The presentation by Warren and Pete McCarthy, with Rose and Hill, received great support. Most of the council members are all business people. The tougher questions are about rent and how that will work. Thanks for all the good work.

**Phil Wagner, contractor:** He submitted a response to the RFEI for a bed-and-breakfast (B&B). He would need an investor but he is a contractor and can do design and build. He says with respect to how much rent would you be willing to pay, that depends how nice he makes it. If he spends \$1 million now, is he raising the rent he will have to pay? Is he taking all the money he is putting in and applying it to rent over a period of time? He is surprised at how this turned out. His concerns with Sandy Hook Partners was that the buildings would be saved but then there would be no public access. He thought this would be a public interest project and was surprised that there was so much interest in private residence. His concept for a B&B is that people want to stay at Sandy Hook whatever it ends up being. If there are seven B&Bs and a bunch of residences, it does not sound like a public space. Some of the restrictions on the buildings do not make sense. He has questions about requirements such as single pane glass, limitations on landscaping based on historic military standards. Military landscaping was "a bunch of bushes."

**Nancy Bevacqui, local resident and business owner:** She has looked at the proposals and states she is unafraid and capable. She asked people what they think of this (generally, in speaking to members of the public with which she has contact)? People have expressed concerns about who their neighbors are going to be. She found out about the project on Facebook. She wants to know how much money she needs to put into this. Is there Sandy funding available to help with this? The deadline for applications of April 17 is too close to Tax Day (April 15). She'd love the opportunity. Her family history is closely tied to the area. She has a grandfather that owned Raccoon Island and has another grandfather who is a lobster fisherman. She is concerned that no one will be able to meet this challenge but people are not world thinkers. She says there are a lot of people in Sea Bright who don't even know this RFP is out. She could be involved in any of these but she does not have time to rally up investors and bankers.

**Denise Hannigan:** Regarding returning the phone calls of the 15 people who are interested in responding, if I agreed to talk to you and you didn't call me, I would be upset. Please take the opportunity to reach out to the people who agreed to provide more information. Flexibility is important with the lease. If I decide I want to lease a building as a private residence, can I change my mind and have a beach shop in the front room? Is there flexibility? What about transferring the lease? You may have new lessees if you transfer or sublet the lease. That means in a year or two after the contractors invest, your turnover will be great. What happens after that?

**Oliver Spellman, National Parks Conservation Association:** If there is a blitz of information NPS wants to get out, NPCA is willing to help.

**Keith Kilgannon, Romer Shoal Lighthouse:** He is amazed at the level of talent this project can bring to the table. He wants to contribute. He is a “marketing guy” and observed that “arm’s length marketing gets you arm’s length results.” He is one of the 15 that is open to a call back from the Committee on the survey. He would be happy to talk about what the fundamental question is. People are going to have to be brought to the close. We are not marketing free gold. It will frame itself like a franchise opportunity. You will walk people to the financing, the contractors, etc. The folks that join first will pay less than those that join later. In his world, you would not send people out to town council meetings without a prepared message. He wants to be talking face to face of prospective applicants so he can communicate thoughtfully on behalf of the committee. He wants to be able to help pick targets and walk them to the project. What is keeping NPS from talking directly to developers? What don’t you know that you need to know to be in touch with developers? He is willing to be the liaison.

The Committee broke for lunch at 11:50 AM and resumed Public Comment at 1 PM, the time required under the Federal Register notice.

**Paul Casalese:** This member of the Army Ground Forces Association (AGFA) asked to attend in the absence of Shawn Welch, who was delayed by car trouble.

**Krauss:** The current posters are great. When posters went out last fall which were designed by NPS staff, he felt they did not address the needs of the park. It is a mistake to do only one open house. Do one on a Saturday and another on another weekend on Sunday.

#### **Committee responses to comments**

Walsh agreed we need to contact the 15 people who said we could contact them after the survey. One of the commenters asked about extending the deadline – is there flexibility with that deadline? McLay replied no; we have to let this process play out. There is no benefit in worrying about what to do if the RFP generates no responses until the initial period has run. If we get no proposals, we will have to figure out what we can do generate more interest. This is the reason we have a pilot.

Dan Saunders: Regarding single pane windows, there are some buildings at the Hook where people can walk through and look at to see what has been done.

Glaser addressed concerns that the RFP may result in what is not public space anymore. That is not the intent. It is unfortunate that that is the perception out there.

Holenstein replied that, for as long as he has been coming here, no one has been able to get in to the buildings in question, so the idea of public areas being “lost” is off base. Do we stand to better ourselves by having the exterior facades rehabilitated in a uniform manner, with viable use for the interior of the buildings, while some are open to the public? It’s true that something different will be here but it is not true that the public will suffer as a result of our efforts to restore the Fort.

Glaser noted that New Jersey Sea Grant Consortium, located in Building 22, is wide open to the public. They would love to have people walk in. So would Clean Ocean Action and American Littoral Society, located in Building 18. Maybe it is a way to get the message out. If the perception is out there, maybe there is a way we can help the park correct it. Even the B&B spaces at Cavallo Point in Golden Gate National Recreation Area are open. Anyone can walk in.

Holenstein stated that the goal of the Committee is to rehabilitate and reuse existing structures. That is the answer. We do not have federal money to complete this and the efforts we make are the best way to accomplish the goals of the charter. We can direct people to the charter if they have questions. Do we have a mission statement that we can share?

Nersesian reminded the Committee that RFP proposals will score higher if there is a public component/complimentary to park mission. Second, zones of land use were designed for the exact purpose of knowing who your neighbor might be (another resident, not a business). As for the public component, there does not yet seem to be a demand for a public activity in every single building at FOHA. If we have public activities in some of the buildings and we manage to maintain the cultural landscape, this is the path we should follow. It is important to save the whole.

Pete McCarthy stated that there is no public access at this point except for Building 18 and the proposed use will increase access to the public.

McLay remarked that a B&B will increase access to the public by its very nature. Also, if you read the RFP, there are specified points about landscaping that address the commenter's concerns within the cultural landscape. Pete McCarthy added that, if you look at Building 22, you can see some measures to address landscaping and water capturing measures that fall within the prescribed cultural landscape.

Holenstein suggested that perhaps this question should be added to the FAQ: Does this serve the public interest? Yes, it serves the interest the public and is keeping with the mission of the NPS.

Nersesian addressed the concern that there will be six more B&Bs: if you are bringing in a business that supports the public, we want you here. We want to show that you have our support.

Fouratt mentioned that, sometimes, you need a critical mass to get something going – one is not enough. She cites an example in Detroit of Craftsman Houses which are part of a larger whole B&B, where six or so historic houses were rehabilitated and operate as a single hotel. Holenstein replied, tell Cape May that four B&Bs are too many. We are within 35 miles of eight million people and you can fill 40 rooms every weekend with no problems.

Glaser believes that people should go to our website and look for the information and correct their information based on what they learn. What kind of strategy can we use to pop out those pieces of information? How can we use social media platforms in surgical ways to get that information out if there is a potential lessee who needs information on whether he can install a new dishwasher? We need to facilitate a networked community in terms of available information.

Holenstein replied that the park has come up with the zoning plan – a suggested use for a suggested number of buildings. We should direct people to that document and tell them we will be informed by the results. It is very difficult to get people to do their homework. There is a lot of information on the website now and the easier the better. To encourage people to become familiar with the information should be our goal.

Suzanne McCarthy said that, once the FAQs are completed, the park could have a Question of the Day, with links to all of our questions.

McLay stated that Facebook is not the only answer. Most of our answers are coming via email. We should come up with a quick phrase that is used across all platforms that will direct people to the information. It should be a multi-pronged approach that catches people's attention.

Walsh: We should have a link to our website whenever we post to FB. Yes, we should “pop out” information, perhaps in the form of “did you know” or “people are asking.” Facebook is a great opportunity and, since it is linked to our website, what we do on one format shows up on the other.

Saunders warned that the Committee should be careful when we talk about public vs. private access. We crossed that threshold at least 1.5 years ago. We should be looking at questions that will help us close the deal. Regarding the neighbors, you never know who your neighbors are going to be. Also, the people who are most interested in the Interior Secretary's Standards on Historic Rehabilitation are the ones who will apply for this opportunity. Chances are their neighbors will be very much like themselves.

Wray commented that the survey responses were low but not that bad. We should be more concerned that our email list has not grown. We should utilize the email more to capture more and provide more information to those who are not checking other media platforms such as Facebook on a daily basis.

Wray also suggested creating some YouTube “infomercials” to generate some excitement. Fouratt added that we can gather testimonials from current lessees. Glaser liked the YouTube idea: could we have our own channel? Yun replied that Gateway already has its own YouTube channel. Pete McCarthy suggested we could have a Committee channel but there is already a YouTube video. We will have to identify it as a Sandy Hook or Fort Hancock YouTube video so it is easy to find.

Holenstein commented on the neighbors question: regarding the spacing of homes, we should let people know that the Officers' Row houses are not on top of each other and that, while they require a lot of work, they are spectacular. Proximity is not an issue in the same way it is in a typical Jersey shore community.

### **Calling up those who wanted to talk to us from the survey**

Glaser wanted to be sure that he captured what will happen next about survey follow up results. He understands that he should not be deterred and should follow up with the people surveyed. Are we divvying up the list? Wray replied, what if we call and collect information rather than provide info? McLay answered that the park prefers you not answer questions. We need to make sure everyone hears the same answers and to remind them that an FAQ will answer questions or that we can address them

at the open house. Glaser added that we could also ask if there are other things they could tell us that would help with the open house.

Holenstein said he heard loud and clear the opinion that we should make these calls. What does it say about the process? That we should or that we may? Holenstein feels that we are allowed to call, not that we are compelled to call. Will it be a co-chair response or a designated individual who will provide the answer? We should not divvy them up. We want a cohesive response. Glaser agreed to start making "cold calls" to the 15 people who agreed to be available. Holenstein warned that the caller will exhaust his/her resources even talking to just three people. If you want to make the calls, do so but don't keep engaging in public questions. Anyone who has questions can come to the FACA meetings; otherwise you will exhaust yourselves trying to respond.

Wray reread aloud a response from the survey as an example of questions the Committee should consider from the public: "RFP does not provide enough information. I need an acceptable template that can be amended in an acceptable format." This sounds like there is something specific about the form or template that we can help with. Wray recognizes it can be frustrating for users. Maybe we need to add something or remove something.

Walsh agreed with Wray and also points out that these are not cold calls, because they are to people with whom relationships have been established. They are people we have heard from as willing to respond to the survey, who have already submitted responses to RFEIs, and they have told us that they are willing to talk. The next step is our response. If I have someone expressing an interest that they would like to learn more, I call them immediately because I need their support. Yes, people often want to talk or vent, but they would not have contacted us if they did not think we are not interested in their problem. They will feel satisfied that we have listened and we will feel satisfied that we have enlisted a new supporter. Glaser, who will make the calls, finds this discussion helpful.

Holenstein respectfully suggested that Glaser direct them to RFP information already made public. If this Government opportunity was simple and straight forward, it would be the first and only one. Glaser replied that McLay is the person empowered to answer questions. Holenstein asked if that was correct: do you answer questions at this stage of the game? McLay replied no; we take the questions in and answer them collectively at the same time. Pete McCarthy said that Walsh made the point he wanted to make. Once we engage the people we have a relationship with them. Three minutes on the phone is worth a larger, longer term investment. McLay agreed: you never know who the recipient of the call will talk to. Simply having a positive message is important to those who are reaching out to us.

Saunders said he would be surprised if 1/10 of 1% of the eight million people geographically surrounding Sandy Hook know that there is an open RFP. We should think about who have not heard about the RFP and how can we provide them with the information.

Kilgannon said that his non-profit is interested and are probably close to applying but no one on the committee is asking why he is not applying. He is low hanging fruit. YouTube is a tool but what activator is going to engage others using it? In advertising, 98% of those efforts fall flat. In this case, in a challenge to Holenstein, near hand are at least half of the potential April applications and those people should be

coddled. He favored a YouTube video as an entry to the application, a primer-interview form of questions that address the public. You will never know why I can't bring my board to apply. I don't want to talk about Roamer Shoal but I will be happy to answer questions. Nersesian thanked Kilgannon for his comments and told him that we could stand to learn anything we can from him. He replied that he would be happy to make some of the calls on our behalf. Glaser will follow up with him.

King noted that the Committee will be operating in the dark until the proposal period has closed. From the proposers perspective there is nothing preventing the public from talking about what they are anticipating or what concerns they have, unless there is a reason according to the charter that the proposed applicant could not share that information.

Casalese asked, is there a list somewhere that tells the public what is open and available to the public at SAHO? Warren replied yes, on the website all the buildings are listed with info. Casalese continued that people do not know anything about Sandy Hook and NPS should have a media day and invite the press and do a documentary about what they have and what they've done. Putting it on Facebook does not get the message out. He's lived here for 49 years. People only know that Sandy Hook has beaches and used to be an army base.

Wray summarized the park's recent media day (two weeks earlier) and past press coverage. Casalese replied that it wasn't enough: "You've got to get it out in front of their face." McLay responded that the RFP tells people who to contact and who to send questions to. Warren is the contact person and if someone submits a request, we answer.

Public comment period closed at 1:30 PM.

### **Moving forward on the RFP**

Glaser posed a broader question: what are some of the things we can do as a committee moving forward? It is important to talk about some of the things we can provide to the park. What are some of the broader things the Committee can do to move ahead? Glaser believes the committee plays a critical role in interface with the community at large. It is an important role we will continue to fulfill and we have to be more articulate about how we will do that.

Nersesian encouraged the committee, once the Pilot phase is done, to think about how things went in the first round as they develop a second round. While that is going on, we will already have lessees out here, working with them to redevelop and create the kind of community we want to see out here and managing needs as appropriate. Consider how you would manage that role. The Committee acts as our advisors and NPS benefits from their perspective and experience.

Saunders said, "This is a big slow moving project." That is important because it is a national park that belongs to all of us, so we should move carefully. At the same time, we should think about what happens if it fails. Failure is how you learn and FACA will have to be a force to keep the project moving.

Fouratt replied that connecting with the community is important. If there is an opportunity to connect the community with the NPS Centennial in 2016, that would be great. Fouratt would like to put in an NEA application for activities that may occur in tandem with the Centennial.

Glaser asked, what is the park thinking about how it wants to promote itself during the Centennial? What would the park like to see in terms of its visitors? How can the FACA help engage in Centennial activities? FACA needs to learn more about what the park is seeking. Fouratt points out that connecting with the next generation is important as a component of Centennial.

Nersesian suggested that in the next meeting we can provide a presentation on the Centennial.

Walsh suggested that, once the first phase is over, we need to analyze what went well and what needs to be done. But we also need to know whether we can manage this successfully going forward. The NPS as a landlord to a large diverse constituency is a shift. Do we need to do this differently as landlords of this property? I know it is a slow process but I think the evaluating process has to begin before the RFP period closes so that we do not lose time. We should accelerate our intent and be thoughtful in how we move forward starting now.

Glaser replied that the Committee's advice is free and the park can accept it or not but it is important to overtly talk about what various pathways might be. We can make up scenarios about what will happen beginning April 17. Come May, we might learn there are successful proposals, or not. What I have taken away is that we need to be sensitive to what those pathways are and should not wait until May to identify what happened. Glaser does not know how to operationalize that but did want to reflect back that he heard we should come up with scenarios that could be predictors for what happens over the next few months.

Saunders said that we will be in a blind spot. NPS may get a marginal response—a wait-and-see aspect. It is knowing what to do with "marginal" (proposals) that has to be addressed because we know what to do with good ones and have to figure out what to do if we get none.

Glaser asked if applicants get do-overs? What if there are weaknesses? McLay replied that the NPS can ask clarifying questions depending on what the weaknesses are. The panel can go back and ask any questions but if it is a material weakness in the proposal, it will be deemed a non-responsive proposal.

Glaser reiterated the last point: Non-responsive proposals are eliminated. If there is room, "foggy" proposals will be clarified with other questions.

McLay answered Holenstein's question: any one can apply for a future opportunity. Just because they are not a successful applicant in the first round does not prevent them from applying in the future. Additionally, it's not unusual that a panel would go back with questions and provide fair opportunities to respond in a manner that can be evaluated by the panel. Suzanne McCarthy asked if RFP responses are typically prepared by professionals. McLay says we receive a whole range of proposals.

Walsh asked, when will the Committee know that proposals have been accepted? McLay replied that the panel will not have completed evaluation of proposals between April 17 and the next meeting in

early May. During that meeting, we can present info about the NPS Centennial, while the Committee continues to provide information and collect questions. McLay understands that people are nervous. Those that are serious know how to navigate the waters and will put their best foot forward. As Saunders said, failure is also a way to learn and that is why you have a pilot program.

Wray said that is why you have to continue the outreach. You can't stop now. Nersesian replied, neither should you stop when the RFPs close. We know we are going out with more RFPs at some point. There need not be dead silence in between. People should be getting primed in the meantime.

McLay said that there is nothing preventing the NPS from negotiating directly with non-profits. Do we want to open those doors after the pilot round? We can discuss this at our next meeting. Nersesian added that the park asked for a list of all non-profits applying for the RFPs so that we can begin negotiations with those non-profits beyond the RFPs. Walsh asked if non-profits know they do not have to compete for an opportunity to occupy a facility. Should we release the RFP again right after this first one closes? McLay replied that they all have to submit a proposal, regardless of competition.

Nersesian said that, if this RFP is successful, the park would like to ride on its success. However, "We don't know what we don't know just yet."

Walsh worries that we are more reactive than proactive. We are doing well in the ways we respond to the public, but need to be more strategic in the way we move forward. We are at a crossroads and we should not wait for what could or has happened but have a strategic place at the table before June. Nersesian asked, what does that look like? Walsh replied that we have to explore some options, some "what-ifs." At least we would have some kind of a planning process where we explored options. McLay asked, do you want a brainstorming session that develop a couple of scenarios at the next meeting? Walsh replied that she thought it needed more than brainstorming.

The Committee will continue to run, Holenstein noted, and will bring on new members soon. Members should talk about what is next, not what happens if the RFPs fail. We should have a planning session.

Glaser interjected that the Committee has to support the effort in Gateway but we also have a role to play in supporting Gateway interface with the NPS Northeast Region, whatever that help is. Maybe the Committee needs to take on a role in helping the park get the backing it needs with Region to move forward. Maybe we have not done enough of that. We should consider ways to move into that purpose to get resources for Gateway and for the Region. We are empowered to do those things. Holenstein suggested writing a letter to the Secretary on Gateway's behalf.

Pete McCarthy asked, can we roll an RFP (issue a rolling RFP)? McLay answered yes, once we know the use of the RFP. Pete McCarthy suggested that we may want to keep the RFP rolling. McLay said that the park will be able to get rolling RFPs up and moving after this round easily if that model works. That is why the Committee wanted to move forward with the pilot. We owe it to ourselves to let the process play out. Pete McCarthy suggested that commercial use be added in the next RFP (food).



Holenstein posed the idea of coming up with a wish list of things that could be tied to FACA mission. Example: We cannot do our job if we don't have \$1 million to fix sewer infrastructure. Maybe that should be part of it.

### **Committee affairs: co-chairs, charters and incoming members**

Glaser noted that appointment of remaining members is still on the list of topics to discuss. How are business practices and our work to date affected by a new committee member? A number of FACA folks have concerns about this. Nersesian replied that the park will be thoughtful about onboarding new members, who may need mentors from current membership. Are there other things we could be doing before the next meeting to help prep onboarding members? Fouratt suggested meeting with current members prior to the next meeting. Nersesian added providing a tour to new members.

Holenstein reviewed FACA operating procedures and thinks a discussion about FACA structure is needed in which everyone should take some time to review. At the next meeting we should talk about the Charter. The Charter was approved in April 2014 and allowed for increase in committee members. We need to get revised charter up on the site with the primary charter. Do new members just come to the next meeting? Nersesian: Yes, they receive an official notification from the Secretary and it is distributed to the current board. Also, Nersesian reminded the Committee, a number of current members terms expire in the summer 2015 and will need to reapply to be renewed. (However, they remain official members if their term expires until they resign or are renewed or replaced.)

Holenstein asked how we create an agenda. Is it based on what we discuss at the FACA meetings? Nersesian replied yes, as well as what we discuss during the weekly meetings and the interim results of committee work that is going on during the week. Holenstein: Is the informal meeting satisfactory? Nersesian: We could send out an informal email to address agendas. Do we need to change the operating procedure or is it satisfactory?

Glaser has found it to be satisfactory and also open and inclusive. We make every effort to address things that we think should be discussed. Requests to see the agendas earlier than we get them out are acknowledged but that is not always possible. Sometimes we are good at getting them out one week prior to the meeting. Also, Glaser has tried to make sure there are opportunities to bring things up at the meetings that we might have missed. There is very little that does not come up at a meeting if it is on someone's mind. We seem to have a workable process.

Shawn Welch, who had just arrived after car trouble delayed him, said that the Committee should have a record of the weekly phone calls between NPS staff and the co-chairs and that committee members should be asked what is on their mind before the call. McLay responded that NPS staff on the weekly call look at the minutes of the FACA meetings and develop the agenda based on that. Also, there is a lot of work going on in between meetings. The weekly calls are for the co-chairs to make sure that what was discussed at the main FACA meeting is moved forward.

Wray asked Glaser if he was OK chairing meetings by himself now (after the departure of co-chair John Reynolds). She worries that, with Reynolds gone, there is a lot more work to do. Glaser replied, "If I feel

like I am underwater I will be the first to scream.” However, he stated, the question is really one for the rest of the Committee. How do you think it should move forward? You need to be comfortable with me continuing as the committee chair.

Holenstein reminded the Committee that the Charter calls for two co-chairs. We should ask Glaser if he wants to continue. We need to provide succession process for the next co-chair and in the case that Glaser wants to step down. Holenstein recommended having two co-chairs who run for non-consecutive, overlapping terms. We are operating with one co-chair and we should be operating with two. Nersesian said that this was discussed at the last meeting. If we are not sure where we are, we need to revisit the issue.

Holenstein observed that nothing prevents the Committee from changing operating procedures, but we should examine what we wish to do: continue and fill the empty co-chair and provide for succession. We do not need six new members who have no prior experience telling us what to do.

Pete McCarthy suggested adding this topic to the agenda for the next meeting. Nersesian agreed that it is appropriate. The discussion will ground the incoming members. If the new members are not on board at the next meeting, we should make this an agenda item for the following meeting where we review the charter and address responsibilities.

Holenstein asked, are we talking about having a reorganization meeting when the new members are appointed? The consensus answer was yes.

Nersesian committed the park to work on the open house, while the Committee can design and hold on a second survey. Other issues we should be working on in the interim? Holenstein mentioned that he and Glaser were working on a report of the history of the Committee to date. So far, it is a two page bulleted history and in its final form will contain links to the materials created throughout the term. They will share it with anyone interested on the Committee.

Glaser added that the report is intended to put on the record what we have done over the past two years and also to serve the park in getting Region and Washington to pay attention to what we have been doing at the park. It is just a draft; Glaser desires feedback on how the document can be useful.

Wray urged members to commit to “Outreach, outreach, outreach.” She asked that RFP attachments be resent to committee members so that resources are in the same places. McLay recommends they use Google Drive to share materials. Wray: Right now the biggest priority for all committee members should be using their own email contacts to make people aware.

Casalese told the Committee to put together presentations for the local municipalities and Chambers of Commerce. (The park is already doing this with town councils; this was mentioned earlier.)

### **Final thoughts**

Glaser wanted to touch base with everyone around the table to collect final thoughts.

Pete McCarthy: We are probably going to rebuild the Committee website onto Google and establish email accounts to everyone on Gmail. We will flow emails and materials through Google/Google Docs.

Saunders thought the meeting was useful. We are in a promotion pattern and will be waiting in suspense!

Walsh: It is time that we go through a reevaluation. Let's not call it a waiting period. Each time we get together we move forward. She felt much more comfortable at the end of the meeting than at the start.

Holenstein: I am glad we are repurposing, that our mission is viable, and that our time is well spent. Thanks to the professional staff for all the efforts.

Yun: Will email all poster images to Committee members for their use.

Welch: Did you discuss a FAQ? McLay clarified that, by federal regulation, FAQs will be answered after March 16 when they are due.

Welch asked about comments to his post on Linked In for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. One writer, a contractor, had maintained that Hurricane Sandy completely flooded the Hook, which is not accurate. Welch wanted NPS to post info about the number of buildings that did or did not flood what got damaged. This is separate from the FAQs we are working on for the RFP. McLay and Nersesian answered that the park can add it to the FAQs.

Glaser thanked the group. Their thoughts help him get information in front of the park. He is very happy as the co-chair. Nersesian thanked committee members for bringing us this far and for taking us into the future, building on Holenstein's kind acknowledgement of NPS staff. We all really want this to succeed and there is no other project the park staff spends this much time on. It is a major commitment of resources and she appreciates the level of commitment and quality.

**Meeting was adjourned by Nersesian at 3 pm.**

Meeting Summary approved by Committee Co-Chair

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

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

## **APPENDICES**

**A: List of Attendees**

**B: PowerPoint, Survey results**

**C: PowerPoint, roles of Committee members in RFP process**



**APPENDIX A: ATTENDEES**

**Fort Hancock 21<sup>st</sup> Century Federal Advisory Committee  
Meeting Summary #15  
February 20, 2015**

**Committee members:** Gerard Glaser (chair), Mary Eileen Fouratt, Michael Holenstein, Dr. Howard Parish, Lynda Rose, Dan Saunders, Margot Walsh, Shawn Welch, Karolyn Wray

**NPS employees:** Jennifer T. Nersesian (designated federal officer), Suzanne McCarthy, Karen Edelman, Pete McCarthy, Pam McLay, John Warren.

**Public:** Nancy Bevacqui, Paul Casalese, Denise Hannigan, Keith Kilgannon, Richard C. King, James Krauss, Oliver Spellman, Phil Wagner.