

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST
Wednesday, December 8, 10:00 am
Virtual Board of Trustees Meeting

via ZOOM

Call to Order

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:02am.

Open Public Meetings Act

Ms. Guzzo notified the Board that public notice of the meeting was made in accordance with the New Jersey Open Public Meetings Act.

Roll Call

Ms. Guzzo called the roll and confirmed the meeting had quorum.

Trustees present: Kenneth Miller, Katherine Ng, Lisa Easton, Janet Foster, Debbie Kelly, Peter Lindsay, Kate Marcopul (DEP), Chris Perks, Patricia Anne Salvatore, Bob Tighue via phone (Treasury), Gina Fischetti on behalf of Sean Thompson (DCA)

DAG was not present

NJHT staff present: Dorothy Guzzo, Glenn Ceponis, Carrie Hogan, Haley McAlpine, Judy Murphy, Ashley Parker, Sam Siegel, Rachel Ericksen

No one from the public was present

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Lindsay moved and Ms. Salvatore seconded a motion to approve the minutes. Ms. Fischetti abstained, and all others were in favor.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Communications

Ms. Guzzo referenced the communications included in the board packet.

Reports of Officers

Chair

Mr. Miller repeated his thanks to staff for the efforts working during the pandemic, welcomed new staff members.

Vice-chair

No report.

Treasurer

Mr. Miller referenced the Treasurer's Report included in the board packet.

The board engaged in conversation about potential excess funds impacting the Trust's future funding because GSPT has ability to reallocate funds to other initiatives. The Trust should be cognizant of spending down funds and avoid stockpiling. Many funds are committed but have not moved because there have not been draw-downs. The Grants & Loans Committee expressed a commitment to getting money to worthy projects.

Ms. Guzzo noted the Trust is moving forward with hiring new employees through the temp agency. Everything progressing as planned.

Secretary

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Guzzo referenced her report and the staff report which were included in the board packet. She noted this quarter was spent largely on administrative and personnel concerns, and she welcomed two new staff members.

Ms. Guzzo noted the Trust will be administering two Grant Agreements for Church of the Presidents and for Newark Symphony Hall, funded by direct appropriations separate from the Trust's grant programs. The board discussed the details of this additional grant administration and the potential impact on staff capacity, now and in the future.

Ms. Guzzo noted the conference planning committee for the 2022 NJ History and Historic Preservation Conference has been meeting and is still planning to hold an in-person conference in the spring, with the ability to pivot to virtual if need be. There was discussion about potential ways to add virtual elements to an in-person conference.

Ms. Guzzo attended the Tourism and League of Municipalities conferences this quarter, accompanied by staff and board members. She relayed lessons learned to the board. NJ's hotel industry is still operating with a 20% labor shortage, but short-term rental markets are doing well. Ms. Kelly thanked Ashley Parker of Trust staff for her hard work at the Tourism Conference.

Ms. Guzzo explained that the appropriations bill for the 2021 Preserve New Jersey appropriation has been proposed in the Senate with an Assembly counterpart, but nothing has been adopted or signed by the governor. DCA policy staff are also tracking the bills, which need to be signed in the lame duck session. The appropriations bill introduced by senators Turner and Beach as S4147 should be passed by the Senate this coming week. The bill needs to move in this legislative session in order to execute Grant Agreements early next year.

Report of Department of Community Affairs

Ms. Fischetti referenced a Main Street update in the board packet. NJ designated four new Main Street communities this year: Toms River, Maplewood, Fair Lawn, and Bernardsville.

Report of Department of Environmental Protection

Dr. Marcopul explained HPO is taking up an update of the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan, which will include a community survey. The kickoff will be this week, which will include announcement of the online survey for both internal stakeholders and the public. HPO hopes the Trust can help publicize the availability of the survey. Stakeholder meetings and public meetings will follow in January and February.

HPO is working with EDA on emergency rules for the State historic tax credit program. EDA plans to post the rules for public comment in the next week or so. The intent is for EDA to vote early in 2022 on the rules. Public listening sessions are scheduled. They are “emergency” rules because they are not going through the standard procedure for public comment. They still need to go through a formal rule-making process, but this will be a way to get the program up and running as soon as possible. Applications will hopefully be available in late spring.

Report of Department of Treasury

Mr. Tighue stated that the State House renovations have been underway despite the pandemic. They are on-target for their scheduled completion date. The former Taxation Building RFP has gone out and the State is actively seeking someone to purchase the building.

Reports of the Standing Committees

Executive Committee

No report.

Report from the Grants & Loans Committee

Ms. Foster referenced the summary report in the board packet. She noted there are no Requests for Extension this quarter, but the board should expect several in the near future because of the pandemic. The 2022 grant round is upcoming. Assuming the Governor signs the appropriations bill, the grantee workshop will proceed in early February for 2021 grantees. Grantee workshops have been very successful over Zoom as a way to reach grantees all over the state without concern of travel, weather, etc. The applicant workshop will take place in January, also over Zoom for similar reasons. The Cultural Trust met on November 29 and Mr. Miller was in attendance. Ms. Guzzo noted the Cultural Trust is about to launch a search for an Executive Director.

Mr. Ceponis provided an update on progress with Princeton Nurseries in North Brunswick Township. The grant funds are programmed specifically for the Propagation House, and the Township is hoping to secure a line-item appropriation to expand the scope of work. Their Trust grant is set to expire at the end of this year so they will need to apply for an extension, but Mr. Ceponis is confident they will be able to complete the project within a year or so.

Ms. Foster raised the Committee's recommendation of raising the maximum grant award for HSM projects from \$50,000 to \$75,000, accommodating HSM project costs of \$100,000 or more. The committee discussed raising other thresholds but opted not to at this time, but they would like to continue discussing it.

Ms. Foster moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to adopt the committee's recommendation to raise the maximum grant award for HSM projects from \$50,000 to \$75,000. All were in favor.

The committee did not award any Discover New Jersey License Plate grants this quarter.

Ms. Foster raised the idea of offering scholarships for JTJ sites to attend the Tourism Conference in future years. Ms. Guzzo has discussed with conference organizers, and suggested one option of acting as a larger sponsor of the conference in exchange for additional registrations. The board discussed different elements of conference sponsorship and registration costs. Ms. Salvatore noted there used to be a larger focus on Heritage Tourism at the tourism conference and more outreach might be helpful to reinvigorate that focus. Ms. Guzzo suggested a potential session for next year's conference, focused on NJHT Heritage Tourism projects that leverage new technologies. Ms. Salvatore offered additional insights from recent and past tourism conferences, and suggested additional marketing and advertising resources.

Acquisitions and Easements

Mr. Ceponis reported on the status of the potential perpetual easement on the Van Gelder Studio in Englewood Cliffs, a legendary and active music recording studio designed by an apprentice of Frank Lloyd Wright. The property retains high integrity and has associations both with Frank Lloyd Wright for architecture, and for the high-profile musicians who recorded watershed albums at Van Gelder Studio. The current owner is interested in obtaining an easement on the property and potentially establishing a non-profit to promote preservation efforts. Ms. Foster inquired about the potential connectivity or incorporation of an easement with the Palisades Park.

Mr. Miller moved to accept the motion from the Easement Committee for the Trust to take on a perpetual easement on Van Gelder Studio. All were in favor.

Mr. Ceponis provided an update on the potential Pointe Breeze easement purchase. He has been in touch with an appraiser in Philadelphia, who expressed interest in providing an appraisal and potentially developing a model appraisal for the Trust to use in the future. There have been communication challenges and the appraiser is not yet in the State's vendor system, but Mr. Ceponis hopes to engage soon and secure a proposal.

Education and Outreach

Ms. Salvatore stated that she provided most of her updates during the Grants and Loans Discussion, but she noted it was a busy tourism season in Cape May and they have developed many new tours and outdoor programs. She noted many peer organizations in Cape May are not familiar with Journey Through Jersey, but that her restaurant contacts are excited about the prospect of being incorporated.

Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning

Mr. Miller stated that the board is planning for a strategic planning exercise. Allison Trimarco was unable to attend this meeting but plans to meet with Trust Staff in January and facilitate the board retreat in February. Ms. Ng has offered her office space in Mt. Laurel to host the board retreat. Ms. Guzzo has met with Allison Trimarco and they are developing materials to distribute to the board ahead of the retreat. Mr. Miller encouraged the board to think of things they can actually accomplish in 3-5 years and come to the retreat ready to share ideas, particularly as increased funding is available.

Fiscal Oversight

No report.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

None.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

The board discussed the location of the March board meeting, and whether it should be held in-person or over Zoom. Mr. Miller thanked everyone for their time and wished every

Ms. Salvatore moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to adjourn at 11:05am.

**Next Meeting Date & Location:
March 9, 2022
Location and Date TBD**