

## **NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST**

### **NJHT Board of Trustees Meeting Wednesday, December 11, 2019 Via Conference Call**

#### **Note on Meeting Location**

Due to the potential for severe inclement weather, the NJHT Board meeting was changed from meeting at Wheaton Arts in Millville, Cumberland County to a conference call. NJHT staff was present at Wheaton Arts to accommodate any public that came to the meeting. No public attended and the NJHT staff person present participated from Wheaton Art via conference call.

#### **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 Meeting Act.

#### **Roll Call**

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

Trustees participating: Janet Foster, Deborah Kelly, Peter Lindsay, Katherine Marcopul, Kenneth Miller, Katherine Ng, Meme Omogbai, Chris Perks, Patricia Ann Salvatore, Robert Tighue and Gina Fischetti (on behalf of Sean Thompson, NJ DCA)

NJHT Staff participating: Dorothy Guzzo, Glenn Ceponis (from Wheaton Arts), Carrie Hogan, Haley McAlpine, Erin Frederickson, Sam Siegel and Ashley Parker

DAG participating: Beau Wilson

Public participating: Lisa Easton and Troy Simmons (both potential future board members)

#### **Public Comment**

No public comment

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Mr. Miller asked for comments or revisions to the September Meeting Minutes. There being no comment, Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Ms. Salvatore. The motion was approved unopposed.

#### **Communications**

Ms. Guzzo referenced a thank you letter and press releases included in the Board packet.

#### **Reports of Officers**

**Chair:**

No report. Mr. Miller thanked everyone for accommodating the meeting. He noted that there are agenda items that need to be addressed so it was important not to postpone the meeting.

**Vice Chair:**

No report.

**Treasurer:**

Mr. Tighue referenced the report included in the packet. Mr. Tighue began a discussion pertaining to the Trust appropriations in FY 19, specifically the \$1 million for this year and \$1M for the next. Similar to the Farmland Preservation Program, this additional request is to make funding available in FY 20 prior to the formal passage of the Trust budget in FY 21. Ms. Guzzo also noted that we are getting clarification regarding the availability of older funds as well as Treasury rectifying the actual amounts available from the CBT account since the program works off a 75% projection of available funding. Once Treasury does their final accounting of the business tax receipts over the summer, the accounts are rectified. Mr. Tighue stated that the Trust's finances are in good shape.

Ms. Omogbai asked for an explanation of the \$100 charge against the revolving loan fund in the Treasurer's Report. Dorothy discussed the state's role in maintaining this account. Mr. Ceponis added that the \$100 is the amount the Trust pays EDA to manage the account.

Ms. Guzzo explained that the appropriations bill, covering \$13 million in funding, has been introduced in the Senate as S4309. The Assembly version has not yet been introduced. The four trust board nominees need to be scheduled for a hearing by the Senate Judiciary committee. Anything that isn't passed by mid-January needs to be reintroduced again in the next legislative session, so it is important to try and get these items passed in the current session.

**Secretary:**

No report.

**Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Guzzo referenced her report, and the staff report included in the Board packet. She explained that database work is underway. Ms. Guzzo explained that the \$500,000 allocation for the Trust's database was a onetime set aside of the Trust's annual allocation incorporated into the appropriation bill. This has already been set aside into a sub account. The trust received a bid of \$343,000 for the database work. Staff anticipates that the database contract will not be for the full \$500,000 in order to allow flexibility for the Trust to potentially hire someone to assist in transitioning to the new database and for contingencies. DCA IT department has been very helpful. Mr. Miller asked for an anticipated end date, Ms. Guzzo answered that it will take a year. The next task is data clean up. While database efforts continue, staff are also working on the website and the annual report. Website development has been slower than anticipated, but is moving forward. The 2018 annual is complete and 2019 will be done shortly.

Ms. Foster asked if staff and/or board members who attended could provide their experience on last week's Tourism Conference. Ms. Kelly said Cheryl Hargrove did a great job and that

conference leaders are receptive to Trust sponsorship and allowing us to have a table. Ms. Kelly noted that the Trenton Barracks are excited to work with us at this and other conferences. Ms. Guzzo said Adam Sacks was a great speaker, and the first day's sessions about marketing and data analytics in tourism were extremely helpful. Speakers also addressed ways that tourists find sites and how sites can better market themselves. Some of the speakers may be useful to tap for the 2020 NJ History and Historic Preservation Conference. At the conference, Ms. Kelly spoke with Jeff Vasser at the NJ Division of Travel & Tourism about the importance of including historic sites and including us in their budget. Ms. Salvatore mentioned how TIA is influential with this conference and that we should also try and work with them. She also offered to be more proactive about incorporating the Trust's heritage tourism efforts with the state tourism office. Ms. Foster asked if she, Ms. Guzzo and Ms. Kelly can put together a bullet list of pluses and minuses so that we can better plan our participation in future years

Ms. Omogbai asked about the National Trust conference, which staff members Haley McAlpine and Erin Frederickson attended in October 2019. Specifically, Ms. Omogbai asked what staff took away from the sessions relating to climate change and its relevance given ongoing Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts here in New Jersey. Ms. McAlpine and Ms. Frederickson discussed some of the sessions they attended, and Ms. Frederickson explained that the climate change discussion was mostly based on viable building materials and limited to efforts in Colorado and the south. Ms. Marcopul added that additional information on climate change and its impacts on historic preservation can be found in recently published National Park Service materials, which she offered to share with the Board via email later.

Ms. Guzzo mentioned that the National Trust has a new Executive Director – Paul Edmondson and that the Trust is trying to get him to be the keynote speaker at our 2020 conference.

#### **Report of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA)**

No report.

#### **Report of the Department of Environmental Protection:**

Ms. Marcopul spoke about the \$500,000 beach restoration project at East Point Lighthouse. It started in November and included the installation of Geotubes to slow dune erosion. The project is scheduled to be complete by the end of December. DEP is also working on long-range planning for the area around the lighthouse. Ms. Marcopul also reported that DEP designated a Chief Resiliency Officer to coordinate with all state departments. This office will look at cultural resources not just natural resources.

## **Report of the Department of Treasury**

No Report

## **Reports of the Standing Committees**

### **Executive Committee:**

No report

### **Report from the Grants & Loans Committee:**

Ms. Kelly referenced the Committee's report included in the Board packet. Ms. Kelly asked if there were any recusals pertaining to grant extensions, there being none she continued her report.

*Bordentown Meeting House:* The project came in under budget by \$32,000 so they are requesting a change of scope to address other priorities from the preservation plan, including ventilation, stoop reconstruction and walkway repairs. Ms. Kelly made a motion on behalf of the committee to approve the request, Ms. Omogbai seconded the motion. The motion passed unopposed.

*Morris County Inclined Plane:* Request for extension to next December due to consultant and engineering issues. Mr. Ceponis said the new proposal is better and more preservation-minded. Ms. Kelly motioned to approve the extension and Ms. Salvatore seconded. All were in favor.

Ms. Kelly provided updates on some of the projects beyond their expiration, including:

Franklin Street School – Ms. Kelly provided a quick status update and noted that the current extension ends in June 2020.

Frelinghuysen House – Staff are processing the final reimbursement.

Sandy Recovery grants – Romer Shoal is the only project that is ongoing. The project has been delayed most recently by weather and rough seas. The grantee continues to work with the contractors to complete the project.

FY19 Senate appropriations bill is scheduled for Monday.

FY20 The upcoming grant round: the schedule has been presented. The due date is about two weeks earlier than previous grant rounds.

Ms. Kelly reviewed the applications under the License Plate grant program. There were twelve applications received during this quarter. Of these applications the Grants & Loans Committee recommends two projects for funding: 1. The Morris County Historical Society is requesting a countywide project on visitor readiness and capacity building. 2. The Washington Crossing Park Association is requesting funds for new signage. On behalf of the Grants & Loans Committee Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the two applications, seconded by Ms. Foster, the motion was approved unopposed.

Trust staff has developed an enhanced plan for marketing based on the recommendations from the consultant; Ms. Parker provided a brief overview of the three- phase plan that was presented to the Grants and Loans Committee in greater detail. Ms. Kelly stated how impressed the Committee was with the staff's work on this and the Board agreed. Ms. Omogbai asked if the donate button will allow for credit card donations, Ms. Parker answered yes.

Ms. Kelly discussed the Committee's consideration of a small grant program to replace the 1772 Foundation program which ended and will not be extended. The committee will meet again in January to further discuss the program. Ms. Salvatore suggested the Board revisit this at the March meeting after the committee has met. She reiterated the importance of small grants for small organizations, and Ms. Kelly mentioned the importance of weighing staff time. Ms. Omogbai added that she'd like to be included in the committee's discussion. Ms. Guzzo noted that the selected date for the January meeting will need to be rescheduled so that all committee members are available.

Rule revision – Any discussions we have may need to be incorporated into the rules. Ms. Guzzo asked that the board keep this in the back of their minds.

### **Acquisitions and Easements**

*Probasco-Dittmar easement amendment:* Mr. Ceponis discussed the request that the 100-acre easement be limited to the approximately ten-acre lot containing the historic buildings. The remaining ninety acres are covered under a farmland easement; therefore, the Trust's easement is redundant. This will allow the property owner to sell the farmland as a separate parcel. Mr. Ceponis mentioned that the protections will not decrease as a result and will allow the current owner to continue to utilize the historic buildings. Ms. Foster asked for clarification on how this will ease the owners' responsibilities and how we can be sure the historic buildings will be maintained. Mr. Ceponis replied that the owners are excellent stewards of the historic house and outbuildings. The sale of the farmland will provide additional financial resources to invest in maintenance. The committee motioned to approve the request, Ms. Foster seconded. All were in favor.

*Summit Old Town Hall easement application:* Mr. Ceponis explained that the application was received late and the committee reviewed the application separate from its meeting. The easement would cover the full exterior and some of the interior. The committee motioned for acceptance of the easement, Ms. Omogbai seconded. All were in favor.

### **Strategic Planning**

The retreat resulted in a discussion of potentially revising "The Challenge" language on the Trust's website. Ms. Guzzo reported that a draft of the "Challenge" is included in the board packet. Board members were asked to review and comments so that the final version could be incorporated into the Trust's website and in other instances. Board concurred with the Challenge as drafted. Ms. Ng asked how we could keep this effort manageable and hold the board accountable. She asked that a conference call be scheduled to categorize, organize and prioritize

the items listed in this section of the retreat summary. It is important that Board members get assigned to the various fifteen action items so that we can keep it moving forward.

Ms. Guzzo asked for the executive committee's availability for a phone call in January. The second Friday in January, the 10<sup>th</sup>, was tentatively selected.

### **Education and Outreach**

Ms. Salvatore reiterated her suggestion that the Journey through Jersey link be added to grantee websites. Ms. Guzzo explained that there is a question in the Preserve NJ grant application. Ms. Salvatore asked if it's also included in the license plate application. Ms. Kelly asked if we could ask previous grantees to add Journey through Jersey onto their website. Mr. Miller asked if we could send an email blast to previous grantees, Ms. Kelly asked if we could reach out to the League of Historical Societies of New Jersey. Ms. Guzzo explained that we need to do some planning for the Journey through Jersey website, as has been discussed, relating to the Trust website. She added that the website should be completed and further developed, and a discussion should be had regarding content, the amount of staff time required to make the website successful, etc.

### **New Business**

*Meeting Dates for 2020:* The March meeting date needs to be changed because of a conflict. Ms. Guzzo asked if the last Wednesday in March would work. Ms. Ng offered to run the meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> if Mr. Miller couldn't call in, since he cannot attend in person. Advocacy Day in Washington, DC will be on the March 11<sup>th</sup>. It was decided that June's meeting will be held on the 17<sup>th</sup>, the third Wednesday.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Miller moved and Ms. Foster seconded the motion to adjourn. All were in favor of adjourning the meeting. The meeting ended at 11:24pm.