

## **NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST**

### **NJHT Board of Trustees Meeting Wednesday, June 17, 2015 Hunterdon County Courthouse Flemington, Hunterdon County**

#### **Call to Order**

Ms. Omogbai called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

#### **Open Public Meetings Act**

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

#### **Roll call**

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

Trustees present: Carolann Clynes, Janet Foster, Deborah Kelly, Peter Lindsay, Kenneth Miller, Katherine Ng, Meme Omogbai, Chris Perks, Sean Thompson, and Robert Tighue.

NJHT Staff present: Dorothy Guzzo, Judith Adams, Glenn Ceponis, Lauren Giannullo, Marie Elise Haremski, and Michele Racioppi

Also present: Carrie Fellows (Ex. Dir. Division of Culture & Heritage, Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission), Laura Jones and John Kuhl

Ms. Omogbai asked if there were any conflicts of interest with Board members regarding the agenda. Ms. Kelly responded that she would have a conflict with the Alice Paul Institute's 1772 application. No other conflicts were noted.

Ms. Omogbai then acknowledged our hosts the Hunterdon County Cultural and Heritage Commission. Ms. Omogbai used the historic Hunterdon County Courthouse as an example of the many wonderful sites New Jersey has to offer and that the NJHT Board has been privileged to visit.

#### **Public Comment**

Ms. Jones welcomed the Trust and thanked them for past grants including a grant for the interior restoration of the courthouse.

#### **Communication**

Ms. Omogbai referenced the various articles included in the Board packet and remarked it covered much of what has been happening lately both good and bad.

#### **Approval of Minutes**

Ms. Omogbai asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 2015 board meeting. Ms. Kelly moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Clynes seconded the motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Tighue and Mr. Thompson, having not been present at the last meeting, both abstained from the vote, the motion passed

## **Reports of Officers**

### **Chair:**

Ms. Omogbai began her report by thanking Ms. Guzzo and the staff for a successful conference and for the work done during the last quarter. Ms. Omogbai welcomed Sean Thompson to the Board as DCA's representative and conveyed thanks to Mr. Richman, DCA Commissioner for making the appointment.

Ms. Omogbai notified the Board that John Hatch resigned his board position with the Historic Trust. She thanked him for his service and made a point of saying how she believes he will continue to be a strong advocate for the Trust in the future. Ms. Guzzo mentioned that this courthouse building was one of his preservation projects. Ms. Omogbai requested formal recognition of Mr. Hatch's service through a Board resolution.

Ms. Omogbai reported on legislative advocacy and its challenges. She reported that the citizen members of the Board have done a great job advocating on the Trust's behalf. While appreciative of all citizen member efforts, she particularly noted the efforts of Ms. Kelly, Ms. Foster, Mr. Perks, and Ms. Ng. She also asked the Ex-Officio members to represent the Trust within their departments and convey the important role the Trust plays in the State. She also stressed the importance of our constituents and thanked them for their support and stressed to the board members the importance of showing our appreciation for their support and efforts.

Ms. Omogbai spoke on how recent efforts focused on the budget and budget hearings and that the foundation and guide for future funding was the ballot initiative that passed last November. All the work centered on the budget will in some way connect back to the initiative and our strategic plan. Ms. Omogbai thanked Ms. Ng for introducing Fran to the Trust who has helped the Trust regarding its strategic plan and while she will not be able to continue, she has recommended someone else who will step in and provide assistance.

The 1772 Foundation would like Ms. Guzzo to attend its July board meeting in Newport, RI and present the recommended list of 2015 projects under the cooperative grant program between the Historic Trust and 1772 Foundation and funded with 1772 Foundation funds. The travel funds will come from the 1772 Foundation honorarium account. The motion was made by Ms. Omogbai, seconded by Mr. Miller. The motion passed.

### **Vice chair**

No report.

**Treasurer:**

Mr. Miller referenced the Treasurer's report in the board packet and briefly went through the report. Ms. Omogbai asked for clarification regarding the amount available for grants. Mr. Miller stated that the Bond Fund contained \$2.2 million and the GSPT Account contained \$400,000 and there was approximately \$900,000 available for administrative purposes, which is about one and one-half years' worth of administrative funds. The amount allocated through CBT funding is not enough for administrative costs since it is limited to 5% of CBT funds allocated to the NJHT. Ms. Omogbai stated that she is not willing to accept this and that the Trust board needs to challenge this so that it does not become the new normal. People need to know that the current situation is not acceptable.

Mr. Miller also noted that the revolving loan fund is still frozen by Treasury and is being held as collateral. Ms. Guzzo that the administration funds currently held should be released back into the Trust's account by June. Mr. Miller concluded that the Trust is within its budget. A question was asked if the History and Historic Preservation Conference will break even. Ms. Giannullo responded that staff is still working on final bills, but that should be known in the next couple of weeks (the conference did break even following review and processing of final invoices).

**Secretary:**

No report.

**Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Guzzo referenced the Executive Director's and the staff reports in the board packet. Ms. Guzzo reported that things have been very busy over the last quarter. Ms. Guzzo relayed that Ms. Salvatore was able to relate the Trust's current situation to the State Treasurer. Ms. Guzzo reported that Mr. Richman's nomination to be DCA Commissioner was voted out of committee and it should be voted on by the Legislature next week (Mr. Richman was approved as DCA Commissioner).

Ms. Guzzo reported that the Trust has been proceeding with a capital grant round based on the \$1.4 million provided for the Trust in the Governor's budget. The grant applications will be due on June 25<sup>th</sup>. There had been some discussion about possibly using the \$2.4 million remaining in existing accounts or that the \$1.4 million budgeted amount might increase; however, it was decided not to change anything at this point and move forward with the grant round as planned. The maximum grant award per applicant will be \$150,000, which corresponds with the Trust's traditional Level I Capital grant amount. Ms. Omogbai suggested sending an email to Board members with five talking points regarding the information we received from the letters of intent submitted for this grant round. Board members then will have at their disposal facts to convey the actual need of our constituents.

Ms. Guzzo reported that the four session nonprofit financial management training workshops held at Seton Hall provided very useful information. The workshop was sponsored by Seton Hall's Nonprofit Sector Resource Institute. She and Ms. Giannullo were able to attend.

Ms. Guzzo informed the board that following review of proposals, the Trust hired History in the Making for the Interpretive Theme Development project. Also, a consultant hired using federal Sandy funds is revising the guidelines for completing Historic Structure Reports and Preservation Plans.

Ms. Guzzo reported that we were very happy with the conference and the reception held the night before at Senator Allen's house. There were over 400 total registrants for the conference. This was the first time we used a hotel for the conference. It was a great experience, the hotel was very accommodating. Ms. Guzzo stated that will be a full accounting at the next board meeting. Ms. Guzzo stated that the feedback so far has been excellent to very good with very few negative responses. Next year's conference will likely be at held at Seton Hall University on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Report of the Department of Community Affairs**

Mr. Thompson thanked the Board for the warm welcome. Mr. Thompson then provided a brief history of his over twenty year tenure at DCA, specifically his time at COAH and Local Planning Services. He saw opportunities for Local Planning Services and the Historic Trust to work on projects together in the future.

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

No Report

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

Mr. Tighue reported that there are still some issues with completing the sale of Eagle Manor and recording the historic preservation easement. Currently treasury is working with the low bidder on negotiating over damage (subsequent wear and tear) that has occurred at the site since the auction. Mr. Tighue reported that the low bidder has indicated that he will probably resell the property after taking ownership. Mr. Tighue also reported that Fish & Wildlife is still interested in keeping the property if the sale falls through, so Treasury is pushing hard to get the deal done and getting closer to closing, so that the property will be protected with the easement.

#### **Report of the Executive Committee**

No Report

#### **Report of the Grants & Loans Standing Committee**

Ms. Kelly referenced the Grants & Loans Committee Report in the Board packet.

The Grants & Loans Committee met on June 10, 2015. The Committee reviewed and recommended approval for the following requests for extension:

**Grantee:** Maurice River Historical Society

**Project:** East Point Lighthouse

**Grant Award No.:** 2000.2041

**Grant Award:** \$300,000.00

**Drawdown:** \$47,782.04 (16%)

**Municipality:** Heislerville

**County:** Cumberland

*Committee recommends an extension to the work and grant periods from June 30, 2015 to December 31, 2016.*

**Grantee:** Raritan Borough

**Project:** General John Frelinghuysen House (Raritan Library)

**Grant Award No.:** 2008.2134

**Grant Award:** \$264,075.00

**Drawdown:** \$0.00 (0%)

**Municipality:** Raritan

**County:** Somerset

*The Committee recommends an extension to the grant period to December 31, 2015.*

Ms. Kelly reviewed the two extensions and then made the motion to approve these extensions. Mr. Miller seconded this motion. The motion passed.

Ms. Kelly then briefly reviewed the status of the Sandy Recovery Grants as noted in the Board packet.

#### 2015 Grant Round

The Board was asked to consider changing the September 2015 Board meeting from September 9<sup>th</sup> to September 16<sup>th</sup> to accommodate the schedule for the 2015 capital grant round utilizing Corporate Business Tax funds. There was no objection and Ms. Omogbai authorized the change in the September meeting date from September 9<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup>.

#### 1772 Foundation 2015 Grant Round

Ms. Guzzo provided an overview of the number of applicants and amount of funding available for this grant round. A PowerPoint presentation reviewing the projects being recommended for funding by the Grants & Loans Committee was provided. Ms. Guzzo provided a summary of the evaluation criteria and stated that it was similar to the Trust's other grant programs. A total of twenty-nine projects were recommended for funding. Ms. Omogbai asked for a motion to fund all recommended projects except for the Paulsdale project. Mr. Lindsay made the motion, seconded by Mr. Miller, the motion passed. Ms. Kelly then left the meeting due to a conflict with the Paulsdale project. Ms. Omogbai then asked for a motion to fund the Paulsdale project. Ms. Foster made the motion, seconded by Mr. Miller; the motion passed. Following the vote Ms. Kelly returned to the meeting. The entire list of funded projects is provided with details in the Grants & Loans section of the Board Packet. The recommended list of projects will be presented to the 1772 Foundation Board at its July Board meeting.

Members of the Trust Board asked if the 1772 Foundation will continue its grant partnership with the Historic Trust next year. Ms. Guzzo responded that the 1772 Foundation has not officially asked us, but there are no indications that they would not continue these grants with the Historic Trust. Ms. Guzzo also stated that we are still looking for a partner to assist with a new revolving loan program that the 1772 Foundation also wants to work with us on. Ms. Guzzo reported that we will continue to search out a partner. It was brought up that we may be able to use the Trust's Revolving Loan Fund as a potential match. The Board will be kept apprised of any developments.

Discover New Jersey History License Plate Fund

Ms. Kelly noted that the fund contains \$10,647.40 available for FY 15 grants.

The Fund received the following three applications in the last quarter.

**Applicant:** Atlantic Highlands Historical Society

**Project:** Atlantic Highlands Architectural Tours

**Request:** \$3,800

**Applicant:** Essex County Park Foundation

**Project:** Heritage Tourism in South Mountain Reservations

**Request:** \$4,600

**Applicant:** Somerset County Cultural & Heritage Commission

**Project:** Somerset County Weekend Journey through the Past Enhanced Promotional Campaign

**Request:** \$5,000

The Grants & Loans Committee recommended funding the Atlantic Highlands Architectural Tour and the Heritage Tourism in South Mountain Reservation projects in full. The Grants & Loans Committee recommended funding \$1,600 of the proposed \$5,000 of the Somerset County Cultural & Heritage project. Ms. Kelly noted that there were not sufficient funds to award the full grant request. The Committee recommended these limited funds be applied toward banners and palm cards before broadcast advertising. Mr. Miller moved to fund the projects as recommended, seconded by Ms. Foster. The motion passed.

**Report of the Easements and Acquisitions Standing Committee**

Mr. Miller referenced the committee report in the board packet and noted no significant changes from the last quarter. Mr. Tighue previously reported as part of the Treasurer's report an update on the status of Eagle Manor. Ms. Foster asked if we put a limit on how long we will wait before an easement is recorded. Mr. Ceponis responded that these easements are donated from property owners, so it depends to some degree on when the property owners choose to make the easement donation. Currently, a number of the pending perpetual easements are contingent on the sale of the property, which can be a lengthy process. In general, as long as the property retains its integrity and significance, the Trust will continue to be willing to hold the easement.

### **Report of the Legislation and Policy Standing Committee**

Ms. Ng referenced the earlier discussions and the summary provided earlier by Ms. Omogbai.

### **Report of the Education and Outreach Committee**

Ms. Foster referenced the Committee report prepared by Ms. Salvatore included in the Board packet. Ms. Foster noted that in addition to what is included in the report, the Education and Outreach Committee is possibly considering ways to educate people on how to replace their vinyl windows.

### **Report of Special Ad Hoc Committee – Strategic Planning**

Mr. Miller referenced the report summary provided to Board members at the start of this board meeting and stated that most items included in the strategic planning committee report have already been covered in the meeting. Mr. Miller stated that the Board needs to make the point that the Trust needs funding for both grants and administrative costs and to look at what we are capable of doing in relation to what is realistic. We need to start to work on next year's budget. We need a rational idea on what the budget numbers ought to be. Ms. Kelly made the point that we need to keep in touch with the legislators we reached out to regarding the budget and that it is important to stay in touch year round not just in times of crises. Mr. Lindsay asked if the State Government, Wagering, Tourism, and Historic Preservation Committee was involved with our funding issue. Ms. Kelly replied that we had asked the committee to hold hearings on the issue. The enabling legislation being developed would eventually make its way to that committee.

Ms. Omogbai stated that we need to continue meeting our obligations and that we are in the last stretch of budget hearings. We need a baseline plan for when the money becomes available. As of right now we need to be spokespeople for the Trust. She reiterated Ms. Kelly's point of establishing ongoing relationships with legislators, especially until we get a budget resolution. Ms. Kelly mentioned that we can provide a list of past projects by legislative district as well as preservation needs by district. Providing numbers of projects and need seems to get the point across better. This could also be used for advocating for next year's budget. Ms. Foster asked if there were any specific tools board members would like to help with their briefings. It was suggested that the committee develop a list of action items. Hopefully by September there will be a strategy in place to move forward. Ms. Omogbai summarized what needs to be done to move forward. Ms. Foster stated that we need a thoughtful process on how to respond and be prepared to react. This is something the committee can put together.

### **Unfinished Business**

None

### **New business**

A discussion ensued regarding the cancelation of the class, Getting Your House in Order: Foundation Documents for Managing Your Historic Property, at Kean University. It was a last minute cancellation, but will be rescheduled for the fall. It was agreed that it was not handled well. In retrospect it seems like Kean needs to get more involved. If they decide they are not interested then it is the type of class the Trust can run on its own.

**Public Comment:**

No public comment.

**Adjournment**

There being no additional business, Ms. Kelly moved to close the meeting, seconded by Mr. Lindsay. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 11:52.