

# **NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST**

## **NJHT Board of Trustees Meeting**

**Wednesday, June 17, 2020**

**Department of Community Affairs**

**101 South Broad Street, Trenton**

### **Note on Meeting Location**

Due to concerns of the spread of the coronavirus, board members and Trust staff participated in the meeting virtually via Microsoft Teams. A call-in number was included in the public notification for those wishing to join by phone.

### **Call to Order**

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:06am.

### **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, Chris Perks, Patricia Ann Salvatore, Robert Tighue and Sean Thompson

NJHT Staff participating: Dorothy Guzzo, Glenn Ceponis, Paula Lassiter, Carrie Hogan, Haley McAlpine, Erin Frederickson, Sam Siegel and Ashley Parker

DAG participating: Beau Wilson

Public participating: Edressa Kamal, Louis Gentilucci (interns with the Office of the Attorney General)

### **Public Comment**

No public comment

### **Approval of Minutes**

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

## **Communications**

Mr. Miller referenced the communications items included in the Board packet.

## **Reports of Officers**

### **Chair:**

Mr. Miller thanked staff for their hard work during the coronavirus pandemic.

### **Vice Chair:**

Ms. Ng echoed Mr. Miller's thanks to staff.

### **Treasurer:**

Mr. Tighue referenced the report in the Board packet and reminded the Board that \$2 million was drawn down for administrative costs for FY20 and FY21. There is about \$230,000 left through the end of the extended fiscal year. Mr. Tighue is in discussion with OMB regarding some funds that were removed from our accounts. CBT funds for future grant rounds remain a concern. Ms. Guzzo added that discussions with Treasury suggest that grant funding for FY22 will decrease by about a third.

### **Secretary:**

No report.

## **Executive Director's Report**

Ms. Guzzo referenced her report in the Board packet. There has been motion on our board appointments. Each candidate has been contacted and paperwork has been reinitiated. The database project has not progressed as smoothly as staff had hoped. The contractor argues that the project was underscoped by about 500 hours. DCA has been billed and the contractor paid without Trust knowledge.

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

Mr. Thompson noted that DCA staff continue to work reported on DCA's coronavirus recovery efforts, including rental, mortgage, and small business assistance, which utilize federal funds. Departmental funding concerns will not be addressed until September.

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

Dr. Marcopul reported that the Department of Environmental Protection continues to work remotely. The HPO has partnered with Rutgers' New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center and their Summer Climate Academy and recently offered a joint webinar this week to discuss flood resiliency and the new elevation design guidelines. Jonathan Kinney, HPO's Certified Local Government coordinator, has recently accepted a position with the Connecticut Historic Preservation Office. The office is currently down two positions and is anticipating two additional vacancies by the end of the year. Partners at the federal level are pushing for additional funding for state historic preservation offices, certified local governments and historic resources.

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

Mr. Tighue noted that the department is also working from home. He noted that the department recently sold the Burlington Armory to the city. The armory is eligible for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. Mr. Tighue added that the building would be eligible for Trust funding and is in need of major repairs. Additionally, Mr. Tighue noted that Trenton's Capital City Redevelopment Corporation is in the process of reassessing their renaissance plan. The new, draft version focuses heavily on the city's historic significance.

## **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. Mr. Miller asked if there were any recusals pertaining to the grant extension, there being none Ms. Kelly continued her report.

*Hudson County Courthouse:* Ms. Kelly explained that the applicant is requesting an extension to December 31, 2021. Mr. Ceponis noted that the project has experienced many delays, including a lack of bidders. He anticipates work will be complete in the fall. Ms. Kelly made a motion on behalf of the committee, Ms. Salvatore seconded. All were in favor of approving the extension.

Ms. Kelly referenced the past grant round status reports. Mr. Miller asked about the status of the Princeton Nurseries' 2008 grant, which is set to expire at the end of 2020. Mr. Ceponis explained that the project has been stymied by a local group against development in the area. Ms. Marcopul added that DEP put out a request for expressions of interest to develop the warehouse buildings on the property and received one response. Local residents were against the proposal. Ms. Foster asked if the Trust has any leverage to request documentation before the property is neglected beyond repair or demolished. Mr. Ceponis responded that there are some funds remaining in the open grant that could be utilized for recordation. Dr. Marcopul explained that a management and use agreement between the department and the township was created to encourage redevelopment of the area. The agreement requires that the buildings be demolished if reuse is not an option within a specified timeframe and has already been extended once. Recordation will likely be required as mitigation if the project is forwarded to the Historic Sites Council. Ms. Foster expressed a lack of desire to allow the grantee to utilize remaining grant funds on mitigation should the Historic Sites Council request recordation.

Ms. Kelly continued to reference the report and noted that the Trust has received 98 Preserve New Jersey grant applications this year. Ms. Guzzo explained that the cure process revealed there are actually 100 applications. Cure issues appear to be prevalent this round, including missing or incorrect documentation. Ms. Kelly asked how many multi-phase capital grant applications were received and Ms. Guzzo answered that more specific numbers would be

provided to the board upon completion of the cure process. She reminded the Board that previously awarded multi-phase grants seeking funding for a second phase will be prioritized.

Ms. Guzzo added that one special project application was received and that a special meeting of the Grants & Loans Committee will need to be scheduled for the near future.

Ms. Kelly noted that the Discover New Jersey License Plate Fund will be replenished at the beginning of the new fiscal year.

#### *Journey Through Jersey Strategic & Marketing Plan*

Ms. Kelly noted that she will need to recuse herself if there is a vote related to Journey Through Jersey due to a conflict of interest. Ms. Guzzo replied that she is seeking the Boards' opinion so that, when funding is available, the Trust can move forward on certain initiatives. It was confirmed there are no additional votes during this meeting.

Ms. Parker presented a Powerpoint on the Journey Through Jersey strategic and marketing plan, focusing on enhancing the tool as a tourism resource. The plan includes a mobile app, an expansion of educational resources and an increase in the number of sites, and sponsorship opportunities. Mr. Miller expressed his excitement for the project. Ms. Foster expressed that she was pleased with the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans' Affairs involvement in the project. Ms. Guzzo noted that the women's heritage context study sites will also be tapped for Journey Through Jersey content. Ms. Salvatore asked if the Trust is partnering with the New Jersey Division of Travel and Tourism and Ms. Parker answered no. Ms. Salvatore offered to work toward establishing a relationship with the division.

#### *Draft Rule Revision for Special Initiative*

Ms. Kelly explained that the line item for the special initiative will be put on hold to the September meeting once funding is confirmed. She asked if the Trust has heard if the interest on that account can be accessed. Mr. Wilson replied that his initial impression was that the answer is no, but that he will look into the question and contact Ms. Guzzo with an answer.

One special initiative application for a re-grant program in Passaic County was received. Ms. Foster asked about the potential to establish guidelines (e.g. limitations on extensions) to ensure the Trust does not encumber money for organizations that do not move forward on projects. Ms. Guzzo replied that the grant agreement would specify a grant period and stated that, due to lack of available funding in recent years, it has not been in the Trust's interests to cut-off funding for applicants. Mr. Miller suggested that a re-grant program would likely require firm deadlines. Other activities would also be permitted under the special initiative program.

#### **Acquisitions and Easements**

Mr. Ceponis explained that staff are continuing to work on previously Board-approved perpetual easements.

#### **Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning**

Ms. Guzzo asked about the status of the changes to the Trust's enabling legislation, which were initiated prior to the coronavirus outbreak. Ms. Ng agreed to follow up with Assemblywoman Murphy's office. Ms. Guzzo explained that she's had discussions with Preservation New Jersey's new executive director. There is interest in combining efforts to address changes to the municipal land use law, to provide historic preservation commission training, and to brainstorm funding opportunities for houses of worship. Ms. Guzzo hopes these discussions will continue in the fall.

### **Education and Outreach**

No report. Ms. Guzzo reminded the board that the conference is postponed to April, assuming the pandemic is no longer a concern. Ms. Foster noted that the virtual conferences she's been to recently contained excellent content and were extremely accessible. The Trust may consider this as an option if we can partner with a university. Ms. Ng added that many industries are planning for permanent remote work and virtual conferences and tours, and that the Trust may look to explore new technologies.

### **Fiscal Oversight**

No report.

### **Unfinished Business**

#### *Annual Retreat/Strategic Plan Implementation*

A virtual retreat will likely need to be planned.

### **New Business**

Ms. Foster attended a Keep it Green meeting focusing on reopening after the coronavirus and addressing diversity. They have planned two future calls in which they will discuss accessibility, diversity, and equity at public places. Much of the discussion is applicable to historic sites. Ms. Foster will share the link and encouraged the board and staff to attend.

### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Guzzo noted that September's meeting will likely be virtual and is currently scheduled for the last Wednesday of the month. Staff are planning to hold in-person evaluator meetings and the Grants & Loans Committee is still scheduled to meet on the second day of evaluations. The Garden State Preservation Trust is scheduled to meet on October 13.

There being no further business, Ms. Salvatore motioned and Mr. Tighue seconded the motion to adjourn. All were in favor of adjourning the meeting. The meeting ended at 11:29am.

