

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST
Wednesday, March 9, 10:00 am
Virtual Board of Trustees Meeting

via ZOOM

Call to Order

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:04am.

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, Chris Perks, Linda Stender, Kate Marcopul (DEP), Patricia Anne Salvatore, Bob Tighue (Treasury), Sean Thompson (DCA)

DAG Beau Wilson was present.

NJHT staff present: Dorothy Guzzo, Glenn Ceponis, Carrie Hogan, Judy Murphy, Ashley Parker, Sam Siegel, Vito Scocozzo, Shannon Bremer

Sara Cureton, Patrick Murray, Marc Lorenc, and Sally Lane were present from the public.

Mr. Miller welcomed new board member Linda Stender to the board, and Ms. Stender introduced herself and her credentials.

Public Comment

There was no public comment, aside from the presentation by Crossroads of the American Revolution described below.

Communications

Ms. Cureton, Mr. Murray, Ms. Lane, and Mr. Lorenc from the Crossroads board gave an update on Crossroads of the American Revolution Association and Revolution NJ.

Mr. Murray introduced himself and the organization. They are in a partnership with the NJ Historical Commission to orchestrate the semiquincentennial celebration. He described the advocacy work they are doing for heritage tourism in preparation for America 250, labeled Revolution NJ. The public-private partnership was formed in 2018 and the celebration period will extend from 2024 through 2033. Their

aim is to leverage the anniversary to create long-term impact on the state's heritage tourism infrastructure. Mr. Murray went on to describe their stakeholder input structure, the timeline of the planning and assessment phase (2019-2021), Planning Study Key Findings, potential return on investment, and explained the untapped economic benefits being left on the table. He also described visitor readiness requirements and outlined the next steps, namely short-term investments in core sites and spurring private investment in complementary sites. The proposed New Jersey Revolutionary War Experience Center is a new construction project proposed in Trenton on the State House grounds. Crossroads has put in a \$40M budget request to the Governor for FY23 but the status is unknown at this time.

Ms. Lane described more of Crossroads' consultant's work on the visitor readiness assessment, and some of her findings. The results demonstrate that New Jersey is not performing well compared to peer states in terms of visitor readiness at Rev War sites, and there is an immense amount of work to do to get up to speed before the 250th. Crossroads would like the appropriation for visitor readiness upgrades to go directly to the Historic Trust so they can administer the funds appropriately. Ms. Lane specifically referenced Proprietary House in Perth Amboy as a clear example of the immense capital need for visitor readiness. She also thanked Ms. Guzzo for the time and energy she's contributed to Revolution NJ.

Mr. Miller asked Ms. Guzzo about the Trust's staff capacity and capability to administer this type of program. Ms. Guzzo referenced the Sandy recovery grants that were administered by the Trust, and explained that the Trust's contribution would be expertise. She acknowledged it would be a huge lift for the staff, but could function much like the Sandy grants did. She also mentioned what a crucial opportunity it was to build heritage tourism mentality and be seen as a contributing part of the tourism revenue in the state. Capacity issues will depend on how much money is actually appropriated and what is prioritized.

Ms. Stender noted it will be an immense undertaking, and Ms. Foster and other board members agreed. Ms. Foster also noted this proposal overlaps with many of the initiatives that the board is trying to achieve in the short term.

Ms. Kelly asked about the proposal for a staff member at the Division of Travel and Tourism, which is part of Crossroads' proposal. Ms. Lane noted Travel and Tourism is going through their own strategic planning process, have received a significant amount of Covid-related funding, and are sensitive to the need to expand heritage tourism capacity. A similar conversation is taking place with DEP.

The discussion included conversation about the structure of Travel and Tourism, the need for expanded heritage tourism beyond RevWar specific sites, and the potential for this project to be a catalyst. Ms. Guzzo noted that the Trust will be focused on the capital needs, but other organizations are also addressing the human resources needs and marketing needs.

Mr. Tighue asked about the new construction project in Trenton and how far along that project is. Mr. Murray noted it is called an Experience Center and will be highly interactive. Most importantly, it will be oriented for people to then go out into the sites across New Jersey. The project is still in the conceptual phase. They identified Trenton as the most likely site and then looked specifically in Trenton to find space on the State House Grounds. Ms. Lane added that the proximity to the State Archives is central to their thinking.

Ms. Salvatore asked how many of the nine selected sites are visitor-ready. Ms. Lane explained some of the sites are ADA accessible but don't have restrooms. It varies by site and each site has different needs to become fully visitor ready. Ms. Salvatore raised concerns about getting sites ready on such a short

timeline. Mr. Murray noted the funds for primary sites will be non-competitive and non-matching, which will help.

Mr. Miller noted this will require the Trust board to pivot on some of their strategic planning and asked about timing of the budget decision. Ms. Guzzo noted this initiative wasn't mentioned in the recent budget briefing but should be announced in the coming weeks. Ms. Foster asked if Trust board members should be advocating to legislators to support the proposal. Ms. Lane said there is a template letter that Crossroads can provide, and that they have been actively advocating. Mr. Miller thanked everyone from Crossroads for their hard work and for sharing such great information.

Ms. Foster asked for a brief recess at 11:10. Mr. Miller asked that the meeting resume at 11:15.

Approval of Minutes

After the meeting resumed at 11:15, Ms. Salvatore moved and Ms. Kelly seconded a motion to approve the minutes from December 8. All others were in favor, except Ms. Stender abstained because she was not in attendance. Ms. Foster motioned and Ms. Easton seconded to approve the minutes of the January 26 special meeting about Romer Shoal Lighthouse. Ms. Stender and Mr. Lindsay abstained because they were not in attendance

Report from the Grants & Loans Committee

Mr. Miller asked that the voting measures be moved to the top of the agenda for the sake of time for any board members that need to leave early.

Ms. Foster explained there are 20 requests for extension being recommended by the committee, due largely to covid-related delays on the parts of grantees, consultants, and contractors. Ms. Foster recused from the Madison Borough Project, Ms. Stender recused from Oak Ridge, Ms. Salvatore recused from NASW and Cold Spring Village, and Mr. Lindsay recused from anything involving the Roebling Museum.

Ms. Foster moved and Mr. Tighue seconded to approve all of the 14 extension requests that do not require recusals. All were in favor.

Ms. Foster moved to extend grants for NASW and Historic Cold Spring Village. Mr. Tighue seconded, Ms. Salvatore recused, and all others were in favor.

Ms. Foster moved and Mr. Miller seconded two grant extensions for Roebling. Mr. Lindsay recused and all others were in favor.

Mr. Miller moved and Mr. Tighue seconded the extension for Hartley Dodge. Ms. Foster recused and all others were in favor.

Ms. Foster moved and Ms. Easton seconded the motion to grant an extension for Oak Ridge. Ms. Stender recused and all others were in favor.

Ms. Foster raised two recommendations for License Plate grants: NASW and Friends of Indian King Tavern

Ms. Guzzo offered a brief explanation of the License Plate grant program for the benefit of new board members. Ms. Foster explained how the number of applications has fluctuated over time.

Ms. Foster moved and Ms. Kelly seconded the motion to approve a grant for Indian King. All were in favor.

Ms. Foster moved and Ms. Stender seconded the motion to approve a grant for NASW. Ms. Salvatore recused and all others were in favor.

Ms. Foster relayed details of a conversation in the Grants and Loans committee to better support Heritage Tourism. Ms. Guzzo described options for traveling materials that could assist the Trust in promoting historic preservation and heritage tourism at conferences and other events. Several board members expressed wholehearted support for this type of expenditure. Ms. Guzzo noted this will be a budget item for the board to review at a later date. Ms. Foster noted this investment will also require board members to volunteer their time to attend conferences and other events to help staff the tables.

Reports of Officers

Chair

Mr. Miller had no report but noted there have been many staffing changes.

Vice-chair

Ms. Ng had no report but raised the need to revisit strategic planning in light of new programmatic responsibilities related to Revolution NJ. She noted the changes are all positive but will dramatically impact priorities and timelines in the strategic plan. Mr. Miller concurred there will be a need to recast the strategic plan.

Treasurer

Mr. Tighue referenced the Treasurer's Report included in the board packet and noted the Trust has a positive outlook in terms of available funding. The main concern needs to be increasing spending and drawdown to demonstrate need. Many funds are committed but have not moved because there have not been draw-downs

Ms. Guzzo explained that the question has come from OLS and the Trust has explained some projects have slowed their drawdowns because of Covid-19 but the reimbursement requests will be coming soon. She also noted some Trust funding could be tapped for Revolution NJ special initiatives, and that there are opportunities to expand the Trust's own special initiatives such as funding context studies. Ms. Kelly noted this may be an opportunity to raise maximum awards and there was general discussion about the Preserve New Jersey program and how it is advertised. Mr. Miller asked when the Trust typically knows how much money will be available. There was general discussion about how the timing of allocation versus drawdown has changed over time.

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 the Trust has welcomed a new board member but there are still two vacancies. She is working diligently to fill vacancies by collecting resumes and writing memos. Ms. Guzzo described draft legislation regarding Romer Shoal, which was expected to be introduced by Senator Gopal on Monday but was not. We are waiting on joint resolution to be passed by both houses so EDA can execute the loan.

Ms. Guzzo discussed with Allison Trimarco next steps for strategic planning. Ms. Trimarco identified four main areas that came out of the strategic planning process. One is the Revolutionary War. Another is professional development geared towards HPCs. Another big one is how to incorporate climate change in our programs. A virtual focus group on the topic could help hash out some ideas, as well as coordinating with HPO to see ideas from the statewide planning outreach. The last one is Heritage Tourism.

Ms. Ng raised a comment that the board has been discussing many of the same topics for many years without significant progress. She asked what the board might be able to do to move from idea to execution, especially at a moment when the Trust has significant funding. She raised the idea of adding an additional strategic planning meeting or ad hoc meeting to shift the mindset. Ms. Foster suggested a good starting point would be a meeting regarding Heritage Tourism considering the news about Revolution NJ. There was general discussion about how to get to actionable steps.

Mr. Miller asked about staffing, and Ms. Guzzo explained she will be looking for a new temporary employee and ask for an additional FTE. Mr. Miller noted the Revolution NJ project would greatly impact staffing needs.

Report of Department of Community Affairs

Mr. Thompson explained that DCA is primarily focused on budget talks, and supporting renters now that the moratorium has been lifted.

Report of Department of Environmental Protection

Dr. Marcopul explained DEP is undergoing some reorganization and HPO will likely be housed in the community investment and economic revitalization unit. Some new HPO staffers have come aboard and they are happy to have the increased capacity. The tax credit program has been approved and will be recorded in the New Jersey Register. EDA will first open the program for transformative projects, and then for other types of projects in late spring or early summer. Dr. Marcopul also gave an update on the statewide historic preservation plan update process. They hope to have a draft plan completed in April so they can submit the plan to the Park Service in June.

Report of Department of Treasury

Mr. Tighue stated that the Pinelands Commission will be returning to the Trust with a grant application. The Statehouse restoration is on track to be completed by the end of the year. He also noted the appraiser the Trust has been trying to engage with regarding the easement program was hard to get a hold of, but Mr. Ceponis noted he has been in touch with the appraiser. But there is another appraiser in North Jersey who might be a good additional reference.

Reports of the Standing Committees

Executive Committee

No report.

Acquisitions and Easements

Mr. Ceponis reported on the second appraisal for the Pointe Breeze easement, which is in the works. There are no new applications.

Education and Outreach

Ms. Salvatore reported on Journey Through Jersey and a need to incorporate additional sites in the directory. She referenced Linda Barth as a potential connection to drum up support for JTJ.

Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning

No report.

Fiscal Oversight

No report.

Unfinished Business

None.

New Business

Ms. Kelly raised the need to discuss the 2022 NJ History and Historic Preservation Conference. Ms. Guzzo explained the conference committee is in the process of securing speakers' headshots and bios and soliciting sponsorships. Ms. Foster noted that board members can pitch in for the conference in ways large and small. Ms. Guzzo offered to send sponsorship information to board members via email.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

Ms. Salvatore moved and Ms. Foster seconded a motion to adjourn at 12:17pm.

**Next Meeting Date & Location:
June 15, 2022
Location and Date TBD**