

NEW JERSEY HISTORIC TRUST

NJHT Board of Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, March 18, 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 most Trust staff participated in the meeting via conference call. In addition to regular public notification of the meeting, a call in number was provided for those wishing to join the meeting by phone. NJHT staff were present on-site in the event members of the public came to the meeting site.

Call to Order

Mr. Miller called the meeting to order at 10:03am.

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 Sean Thompson

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

DAG participating: Beau Wilson

Public participating: Lisa Easton (a potential future board member)

Public Comment

No public comment

Approval of Minutes

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

Communications

Ms. Guzzo referenced thank you letters included in the Board packet.

Reports of Officers

Chair:

Mr. Miller noted that the new board members have not yet been nominated by the Governor's office. He requests that the Board's current committee structure continue to operate as usual until the new board members are approved. Given the current situation, it is not clear if appointments will continue to be made or how state government will operate moving forward. Ms. Guzzo said that appointments are still being made and the Legislature is still meeting.

Vice Chair:

Ms. Ng echoed Mr. Miller's concerns and added that the economic ramifications of the health crisis may extend for six months. She noted that, ideally, Trust-funded planning grants will move forward but capital projects may be hindered. Mr. Miller asked that staff be cautious at site visits and noted that applicants will likely have difficulty acquiring a match. The Board should likely prepare for requests for extension in June and will reassess the situation at the next meeting.

Ms. Guzzo explained that yesterday was the deadline for state agencies to create remote work plans and that Trust staff are currently working from home. For now, staff are instructed to alert applicants inquiring about a Preserve NJ application extension that attachments will be accepted after April 23 as part of the cure process. The application due date will not be changed at this time. If inquiries from the public increase in number, Trust staff will reassess. For now, staff seeks to keep the current schedule. Mr. Tighue asked if next years' CBT funds will be negatively impacted by the current health crisis. The Trust's CBT funds may be lower next year, so some new initiatives may need to be tabled for another year.

Ms. Salvatore asked if the revolving loan fund is still available for organizations struggling to make ends meet at this time. Ms. Guzzo answered yes. If the funds need to be accessed, Trust staff can put in a request. Interest rates are currently low. The board generally discussed the financial implications for small organizations.

Treasurer:

Mr. Tighue referenced the report in the Board packet. There is a little over \$4 million available for grants. The operating budget until the end of the fiscal year is a little under \$400,000. Mr. Tighue reported that the Trust remains on budget.

Secretary:

No report.

Executive Director's Report

Ms. Guzzo referenced her report in the Board packet. The conference, originally scheduled for June 2020, has been postponed to April 26 & 27, 2021. Most session speakers have announced their plans to give their sessions in 2021. The locations selected for the June conference will remain in Trenton (the War Memorial, the Masonic Temple and the Trenton Barracks).

Ms. Guzzo referenced the latest version of the state tax credit bill (A3561/S412), as well as the bill allowing voluntary contributions by taxpayers on gross income tax returns to support preservation (A3499), included in the Board packet. The state tax credit bill is the version originally supported by the Trust. The governor's version of the bill has not yet been introduced.

Ms. Guzzo added that the Trust has submitted a nomination to the National Trust for Historic Preservation for the Trustees' Award for Organizational Excellence. Nomination documents, including letters of support, are included in the Board packet. If the Trust wins, we will be invited to the National Trust's conference, PastForward, in Miami.

Ms. Guzzo referenced the staff report included in the Board packet and noted the intensive nature of the database migration, which entails weekly meetings with AGATE.

Report of the Department of Community Affairs (DCA)

Mr. Thompson echoed Ms. Guzzo's remarks regarding state operations during the Coronavirus outbreak. He suggested that the Board forward any struggling organizations who reach out to the Trust to the Business Action Center.

Report of the Department of Environmental Protection

Dr. Marcopul reported that HPO staff are working from home effective today. Next week's State Review Board meeting has been cancelled. The Historic Preservation Awards may be announced in a press release in the spring and an in-person presentation (originally part of the conference postponed to April 2021) may be planned for the fall of 2020.

Dr. Marcopul updated the Board on the National Park Service's proposed revisions to the National Register listing process. It is anticipated that rules will be adopted in the Spring. Dr. Marcopul will keep the Board up to date.

Report of the Department of Treasury

Mr. Tighue said that yesterday, the Trenton Downtown Association announced grant funding from the NJHT in the form of a heritage tourism grant. Mr. Tighue reiterated Treasury's efforts to work from home.

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.

Ms. Kelly explained that the Grants & Loans Committee met in February to discuss a small grants program to replace the 1772 Foundation's grant program. The program would first be offered next fall to accommodate the Preserve NJ grant program. Ms. Salvatore made a motion to approve this new program, Mr. Miller seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

The second recommendation made as a result of the February meeting was that a \$50,000 line-item from the CBT funds be used to supplement the Discover NJ History License Plate fund, which is often exhausted before the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Miller added that the license plate grants and new small grant program will be limited in some way by staff capacity. Ms. Salvatore motioned to approve the \$50,000 line item from CBT for the license plate fund. Mr. Miller seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

Franklin Street School: Ms. Kelly explained that the applicant has acquired several partnerships and funding commitments and, as such, is requesting an extension to June 2022.

Essex County Jail: The applicant has completed most of their activities and has already required one extension. Staff is recommending, and the Committee concurs, extending the grant to December 2020 to complete cost estimates and close out the grant.

South Park Presbyterian Church: Ms. Kelly explained that the applicant has recently reorganized. They have requested an extension to December 2020.

The committee recommended that all three extensions be approved. Ms. Kelly motioned to approve all requests for extension. Ms. Omogbai seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

Ms. Kelly reviewed the applications under the License Plate grant program. The committee reviewed two strong applications with \$5,400 remaining to grant out. The first strong application, A Race Through Time, was applauded for its focus on countywide interpretation in Cumberland County, a county that is not often represented. The second application was for historic interpretive signage at the Parker Homestead. Ms. Kelly explained that the committee discussed funding A Race Through Time and either partially funding, not funding, or fully funding (using the Fund's corpus) the Parker Homestead project. The committee agreed that

both projects should be funded and that the corpus should be used to make this possible. As a result, no further applications will be funded through the end of this fiscal year. Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the two applications, seconded by Ms. Omogbai. The motion was approved unopposed.

Acquisitions and Easements

Mr. Ceponis reported that the Trust received three perpetual easement applications.

Charles S. Schultz House: Mr. Ceponis explained that the Montclair History Center currently owns the building but has recently acknowledged that they cannot adequately steward the building. They seek to sell the building with a preservation easement. The easement would cover the exterior of the main house, the garage, and likely aspects of the first floor of the house. Mr. Ceponis explained that staff would work with the seller and the purchaser to determine protected features. Ms. Foster noted that the building retains significant integrity and, as such, it would be smart for the Trust to acquire the easement. She continued that the building should be documented before a buyer begins renovations, as the kitchen dates to the early 20th century. Mr. Ceponis explained that the house has been documented and that plans are likely on file. Mr. Ceponis will request copies of existing documentation for the Trust files. The committee motioned to approve the request, Ms. Salvatore seconded. The motion passed unopposed..

Mr. Thompson recused himself from the easement applications for Fort Monmouth.

Mr. Ceponis reported that the Trust received two applications from Fort Monmouth. Since these buildings are currently publicly owned, the NJ Historic Preservation Office is requiring that the buildings be protected by perpetual easements as a condition of sale to comply with NJ Register of Historic Places.

Allison Hall, Fort Monmouth: Allison Hall is a former hospital/administrative building. Based on a walkthrough with the Historic Preservation Office (HPO), the Trust's easement will only cover the exterior. The committee motioned to approve the request, Ms. Foster seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

Buildings 270, 271, 328 (also known as Scriven Hall, Gardner House and associated garage, together the Bachelor's Officers Quarters), Fort Monmouth: Mr. Ceponis explained that staff have not visited the interior of these buildings, but that at minimum the easement would cover the exterior. Staff will conduct a site visit with HPO staff. The committee motioned for acceptance of the easement, Ms. Foster seconded. The motion passed unopposed.

Legislation & Policy/Strategic Planning

Ms. Guzzo stated that the last significant piece from the 2020 Strategic Planning that still requires rule addition/revision is the easement acquisition program. Mr. Miller inquired about the re-grant proposal discussed at the Strategic Planning meeting and Ms. Guzzo answered that a proposal was expected from Passaic County but never received. Ms. Guzzo proposed establishing a special project category rather than trying to fit these project types into our existing programs. Creating a separate category will provide needed flexibility for these projects

which will further the goals of historic preservation. Ms. Guzzo will address this, as well as the easement acquisition, in the rule revisions.

Education and Outreach

No report.

Fiscal Oversight

No report.

Unfinished Business

No unfinished business.

New Business

Ms. Kelly explained that several Board members and Ms. Guzzo attended Advocacy Day in Washington D.C. last week. Meetings went well and discussions focused on the tax credit and funding for preservation. Ms. Guzzo mentioned to Ms. Omogbai that, as a resident of Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman's district, they should consider arranging an in-office appointment with her. Mr. Miller added that Board members should meet with the sponsors of A3499, the voluntary income tax donation bill. Both sponsors, Assemblywoman Gove and Assemblyman Rumpf, are representatives of District 9. Ms. Kelly stated she will reach out to their district offices.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Kelly moved and Ms. Salvatore seconded the motion to adjourn. All were in favor of adjourning the meeting. The meeting ended at 10:59am.