

**Thames River Heritage Park**

**Transition Team Meeting - Minutes**

**Wednesday, December 9, 2015, 8:30AM (0830)**

**Submarine Force Museum**

**Groton, Connecticut**

**Attendance:** C. Cox (Chair), P. Parsekian, P. Whitescarver, Carl Lahti, D. Donovan, K. Clarke,

J. Hodge, M. Galbraith, B. Eugenides (Treasurer), P. Newbury, P. Adams (Secretary)

I. Call to Order: C. Cox @ 0838

II. THRP Chairman’s Report/Announcements

The two Navy boats arrived in New London on 30 November 2015 and are being stored at Crocker’s Boat Yard – Howard Street, New London

III. Approval of Minutes October 28, 2015 – P. Adams

MM: P. Parsekian - Approve Minutes as presented

MS: M. Galbraith

Vote: All in favor

IV. Fiduciary Report – J. Butler

J. Butler is not present but has been handling finances, invoices to date.

V. Committee Reports

A. Organization Committee – Chair: Juliet Hodge

Most of the Committee’s assigned work has been completed with the exception of the office. Juliet asked the committee where she should begin to look for office space…Groton?…New London? An address will be needed soon to establish the foundation as a 501C3 entity.

Committee members discussed the following:

- Centrally located within the Heritage Park

- Ample parking

- Inexpensive or, free.

- Would like to have identity hooked to Fort Trumbull.

- Should have a conference Room

- Perhaps rent a P.O. Box until the Foundation is established.

- The mailing address does not have to be the same as the park

- Who will come to or use the office? (Executive Director, Volunteers, Board Members)

- The Museum Building at Fort Trumbull SP was suggested as it has a number of empty offices.

- The TT does not wish to hold up the 501C3 while it is searching for office

space.

- Invoices involving vessels are currently being sent to Mayor Galbraith in Groton.

- It was suggested to use J. Selinger’s Office address to establish 501C3

MM: M. Galbraith – Use J. Selinger’s Office Address for items related to establishment of 501C3, Articles of Incorporation and other legal documents and J. Butler’s Office for Fiduciary materials, checks and bills.

MS: P. Parsekian

Vote: All in favor.

James Butler, Executive Director

Southeastern CT Council of Governments

5 Connecticut Ave.,

Norwich, CT 06360

Joseph Selinger, Esq.

TCORS

43 Broad Street

New London, CT 06320

B. Governance Committee – Chair: Joe Selinger

- J. Selinger is not present but P. Parsekian provided a report in his stead. Joe is currently working on The RFP, By-laws, Articles of Incorporation and establishing the 501C3.

- The Sub-committee is currently reviewing the By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation and should be getting comments back to Joe. Penny will resend information to Committee in an effort to expedite process.

- The sub-committee members (Chair: Joe Selinger, Members: Richard Grahn, Penny Parsekian, James Butler, Ellen Cummings, Deborah Donovan) will make a recommendation to the Transition Team.

C. Finance Committee – Chair: Brent Eugenides

- Brent has met with CPA Kathleen A. Steamer seeking advice for the TT on Business practices such as invoices/approvals, writing/approving checks, who

has authorization to sign, general business practices, etc.

- Chris suggested looking at the New London Main Street model for good

business practices.

- Chris Cox, Penny Parsekian and Brent Eugenides will meet soon with Kathleen Steamer to finalize financial processes.

- A question was raised as to whether a Bookkeeper might be a good idea.

- P. Parsekian suggested that an easy-to-use software program such as “Quickbooks for Non-Profits” might be a better option. This is a very easy and clear system for accounting.

- P. Parsekian also suggested that a Bookkeeper be hired.

- J. Butler has an account set up in the TRHP’s name.

- Annual Audit – Is this needed? Audits are very expensive ($5,000).

- Interim Officers are needed for incorporating the organization. C. Cox suggested using the current TT Officers. (C. Cox-President, P. Adams- Secretary, B. Eugenides-Treasurer)

D. Communications & Programming Committee – Chair: Penny Parsekian

- Water Taxi Marketing – Marketing needs to be started now.

- P. Parsekian is working with Bruce MacDonald for requirements for firm.

- Penny reports that “Holly and Ivy” is currently running and that an advertisement for the TRHP was placed in the program at a cost of $250. This had to be done quickly in order to make the printing deadline.

(Flock Theatre and New London Landmarks will revive their Christmas tradition of “Holly and Ivy,” a historical walking tour through New London. Audiences are guided to various historic locations in town as they get a glimpse of Christmas in New London throughout four different time periods.)

- Other critical and time-sensitive marketing pieces that the TRHP needs to be included in are: “Mystic Country Magazine” - $1,000 (deadline is next week) and “Connecticut Explored” – $900 (deadline coming very soon)

A discussion ensued regarding park funding, budgets, accessing State Funds or, whether State funds are still available in light of yesterday’s budget cuts.

- The TRHP has $45,000 now. The State money ($100,000) if it is still viable, will be a reimbursement program so, the TRHP must front the money.

- P. Parsekian said that approximately $15,000 would be needed for marketing although no budget has been finalized for this line item.

- M. Galbraith feels that since there is only $45,000 available at the present time, and, the boats will require significant money to commission and be upgraded to

carry passengers and be certified by the USCG, that $15,000 should not be

committed to marketing at this time.

- P. Adams suggested at $3,000 be committed to cover the three critical proposed marketing pieces proposed by Penny then, a detailed budget can be submitted at a later date for TT discussion and approval.

-P. Newbury asked what the Advertisement in Holly & Ivy looked like.

MM: M. Galbraith - That $3,000 be committed to cover the ad placement in “Holly & Ivy”, “Mystic Country Magazine” and “Connecticut Explored”.

MS: D. Donovan

Vote: All in favor

E. Water Taxi Planning and Operations – Chair: Marian Galbraith

The following report was presented by M. Galbraith at today’s meeting:

1. The Committee and smaller subcommittees have met on several occasions since the last TRHP meeting. Depending on the nature of the discussion, various committee members and non-committee members were present.

2. Utility Boat Acquisition

a. The City of Groton has been awarded the transfer of two utility boats from the Navy. The boats arrived on November 30 and are being stored at Crocker’s Boat Yard. Through the generous donation of Dave Crocker, the storage fee has been waived. (C. Cox noted that the donation is valued at $10,000.)

b. The committee has determined the following steps in moving forward preparing the boats for service

i. De-preservation of the engines. We have accepted a quote of $2,274.12 per vessel plus sales tax and freight charges. Atlantic Power Systems will do the work

ii. Marine Survey – Shortly after the de-preservation is done a marine survey will be conducted to determine additional work necessary

iii. After that work is completed, we will once again contact the Coast Guard for a certificate of inspection. It was incorrectly reported in the paper that we have not had conversations with the Coast Guard. They were simply with a different point of contact. (M. Galbraith pointed out that Mark Jalbert has been in touch with and, working closely with the US Coast Guard regarding requirements for Certification and outfitting for passengers.

iv. The boats do need some paint work. We will begin that process sooner rather than later, but we do not yet have a quote for that work.

Question as to whether Crocker’s will allow outside contractors to come in and work.

Answer: Yes, provided they have insurance. Volunteers would also need insurance.

3. Budget

a. Funding – The Town of Groton, City of Groton, and City of New London have all made $10,000 donations to SCCOG to be used toward the water taxi. In addition SCCOG is holding $15,500 in funds raised for the demo project that were not expended. To date, our only expenditure from these funds has been the $5,990 to Joule Yacht Transport for moving the boats.

b. State Funding – As of this writing, the state is working on the state budget. We have received no indication that these funds, which are being held by DOT, are in jeopardy. However, because the state offices have been consumed with working on the state budget issue, we have not been able to have the conversation necessary to determine how we access these funds.

c. Sponsorships – We will be seeking sponsorships particularly for costs associated with preparing the boats. A sponsorship package is being developed which outlines levels and benefits of sponsorship.

4. RFP – Because we now have the boats, the service we are looking for is substantially different from the one we specified in our original RFP. A new RFP is being formulated with an eye toward issuing it this month.

Proposers will have to submit a business plan along with proposals as to how they will operate on weekends and other services that the boats will provide.

Boats will continue to be owned by Groton/TRHP. They will not be leased or sold. Boats must be put into service within one year of receipt.

Question as to whether alcohol would/should be allowed to be consumed aboard boats if used for Fireworks viewing or other “party” functions. Further review of that issue will be necessary.

Question as to whether boats could be used as shuttle service for E.B.

All bidders will be required to attend a pre-bid meeting.

B. Eugenides suggested that a template for an agreement be obtained/developed.

Marian pointed out that all of the boat canvas tops have been taken off the boats and inspected. They are all in great shape but will need cleaning. This is very good news.

Need to meet with the DEEP to solidify use of the docks.

VI. Good of the Order

* C. Cox would like to acknowledge the following:

Bruce MacDonald - Business Practices/Marketing

Renee Fournier – (Chelsea group) Local sponsorships

Sam Quigley – Branding and Exhibit for Lyman Allen along with Edward Baker

Andy German - (with Edward Baker and Sam Quigley) Development of local identity for Heritage Park

Mark Jalbert - as an enthusiastic volunteer for his work with the USCG in compiling a list of what is required t bring boats into compliance with USCG regulations to carry passengers. Also for approaching Defender Industries to request that they sponsor all of the safety equipment aboard the Water Taxis.

Bob Ross (DECD) for assistance with regulatory requirements.

Senators Maynard and Formica – Budget assistance

Dennis O’Brien (Wayfinding Designer) - Wayfinding for Heritage Park and how to implement

* Captain Carl Lahti invited everyone to the Change of Command on Monday December 14 @ 1000 hours

- Capt. Lahti also noted that the Navy is still awaiting am updated proposal from the State (DEEP) for the dock at the Nautilus. Eleven year old agreement with DEEP would need to be updated. DEEP would fund bottom Survey (to see if conditions have changed), updated design, secure all permits (ACOE, State), Bids, Bonding, and construction. The US Navy would handle Real Estate Transaction (River bottom and land access), Lighting and Security Cameras.

- Agreement would have to be approved by Navy and reissued to State of CT.

- Bob Ross will pursue access and permitting for Nautilus Dock.

* D. Donovan noted that wheeled access from the Groton Landing to the Nautilus and Ft Griswold would be an important component until the Nautilus Water Taxi Dock is

completed.

* Penny Newbury announced that she has established a Twitter account for the TRHP. Please “Like” the site. @ThamesRiverPark

Also look for Blog and Facebook Page

VII. Next Meeting Date(s)

January 27, 2016 @ 0830.

VIII. Next Meeting Location

Fort Trumbull SP Conference Center - small Conference room.

IX. Adjourn @ 0954

Respectfully submitted,

Pamela Aey Adams

Secretary