

**Fort Adams Foundation
Meeting Notes**

July 21, 2016

Members Present:

Janet Coit, Chair & Director of DEM

Larry Mouradjian, Associate Director for DEM Natural Resources Bureau, representing DEM Parks and Recreation

Chris Behan, Esq., representing the City of Newport

Lee Whitaker, representing Rhode Island Historic Preservation

Greg Hall, representing Fort Adams Trust

Others Present:

Joe Dias, Executive Director, Fort Adams Trust

Mary Kay, Executive Counsel, DEM

Bruce Thompson, Regional Manager, DEM Parks & Recreation

Terri Bisson, Chief Program Development, DEM Bureau of Natural Resources (meeting notes)

Matthew (Doc) Perry, FAT Volunteer Archivist

Robert Paquette, Chief, DEM Parks & Recreation

Jay Sweet, Newport Festival Foundations

Jill Davidson, Newport Festival Foundations

Danny Melnick, Newport Festival Foundations

Barrie Lindsay, Newport Festival Foundations

Meeting was called to order at 2:15 p.m.

Major Discussion Points, Agreements and Action Items:

1. Roll Call – See members present above.

2. Minutes

A motion was made by Mr. Whitaker and 2nd by Mr. Behan to approve the minutes of May 5, 2016. The minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Action and Discussion Items

- a. 2016 Folk and Jazz Festival – Jay Sweet provided members with an overview of the Festivals and preparations. Mr. Sweet stated that security would be heightened this year through a variety of best practices and that Jill Davidson was the point of contact for emergencies throughout the Festivals. Mr. Sweet also discussed the plan for traffic. NFF's aim is to ensure that both bicycle and vehicular traffic move as efficiently as possible as concertgoers enter and exit Fort Adams. He noted that traffic would not be allowed to turn right upon exiting. The group discussed the impact and the possibility of working with the City to allow right turn exiting in an effort to diffuse traffic and allow faster egress. Mr. Sweet also discussed protocols in the event of severe weather. Director Coit asked about the fire safety modifications required by the Fire Marshall. Both Mr. Dias and Mr. Thompson assured members that all had

been implemented and approved by the Fire Marshall.

- b. Newport Festival Foundations – Ms. Davidson stated that now that the lease agreement with DEM is in place NFF plans to move into Building 16 (formerly the Museum of Yachting building) in the fall. She stated that the jazz and folk festival displays should be in place by next spring. In the meantime, NFF will share the space, through a sub-lease, with Sail Newport. She also stated that NFF would like to meet with DEM in the fall to discuss the next license agreement for the Festivals. Mr. Whitaker asked if they were contemplating any renovations and, if so, were they working with historic preservation. Mr. Thompson stated that historic preservation has been involved with both the visitor center and building 16. Mr. Melnick mentioned that NFF will also looking into seeking historic status and historic renovation grant funding. Mr. Hall stated that he talked with George Wein of NFF about how the Festivals could benefit the Fort infrastructure and plans to follow up with Mr. Wein at a later time. Director Coit noted how important it is to have NFF as a partner and located on the premises at Fort Adams. NFF's tenancy will help ensure that the Fort continue to be the venue for the Festivals, which will be a great benefit to the City of Newport and to the park. She also noted that maintaining the infrastructure is critical.
- c. Fort Adams Trust Report
 - i. Strategic Planning & Fundraising – Mr. Dias reported that the Trust has signed a contract with Cause & Effect to begin strategic planning and board development. \$7,500 of the \$13,000 contract was funded by a grant from the Rhode Island Foundation, Newport County Fund. Director Coit requested that the planning effort include interviews with Foundation members. Mr. Dias agreed.
 - ii. Capital Development – Mr. Dias stated that in addition to fire safety improvements, bids were out for the renovation of the northeast officers' quarters. The project will be funded with RI Capital Funds (RICAP) and a RI Historic Preservation grant. Bids are due August 10th and the Trust will have a scoring committee evaluate the bids.
 - iii. Events-Mr. Dias reported that both Fort tours and the number of weddings is up over last year. He stated that Cara Wortley has been doing a great job promoting the venue and is participating in wedding shows. He also stated that the Fort is now doing multiple events/weddings at the same time. Mr. Dias stated that the National State Troopers Olympics will be coming to the Fort next year. Mr. Dias stated that the food truck has been a big hit. Mr. Paquette noted concerns about the high prices the vendor charges and asked if there is an opportunity to review rates. Mr. Hall stated that it is in the vendor's benefit to charge market-based rates. Mr. Dias noted that the Summer Solstice fundraiser was very successful this year, raising \$15,000.
 - iv. Financial Report – Mr. Dias reported that the Trust has a contract with a CPA to complete the 2014 and 2015 compilation reviews. Mr. Behan asked when the 990's would be completed. Mr. Dias stated by October. Director Coit asked for the compilations reports to be placed on the next meeting agenda (November) and asked Mr. Dias to provide the reports a couple of weeks in advance so that members have time to review.

Mr. Dias stated that the Trust has also reduced the number of accounts from hundreds to ten. Mr. Dias stated there is approximately \$47,000 in Trust operating accounts, with two large receivables pending, including a \$27,000 donation from the International Bridge and Turnpike Authority (IBTA) project. Mr. Hall stated that there is a need to have a larger reserve at the end of the day.

Mr. Dias reported that the Trust survived the legislative grant and discussed the new process to receive the funding. Mr. Mouradjian expressed concern that eventually the annual legislative grants could end and that the Trust will need to increase revenues to offset the loss.

Mr. Dias stated that the Trust needs to purchase equipment to maintain the Fort and that he and Mr. Thompson have talked about jointly purchasing and sharing equipment. Mr. Mouradjian asked Ms. Kay to look into ownership/operation issues. Director Coit noted that there may be an opportunity to increase RICAP funding to pay for some equipment and suggested that Mr. Dias talk to Mr. Mouradjian.

- v. RI Bridge and Turnpike Authority Project Results – Director Coit congratulated the Trust and IBTA on the success of the project. She stated that it was an amazing example of volunteerism and an impressive restoration of the redoubt. Mr. Dias reported that volunteers removed over 40 tons of trash. He also reported that the Trust will offer guided tours during the Folk Festival.
- vi. Other – there were no other Fort Adams Trust reports

4. Progress Reports

- a. DEM - Mr. Thompson reported that Sail Newport acquired a donated floating dock, which was positioned off the North Alophsin pier and will make ferry service more efficient during the Festivals. Mr. Thompson also noted that there has been too many back-to-back sailing events and he is working with Sail Newport to reduce the number and the impact on the park.

Mr. Thomson also reported that he has received several complaints from neighbors about the Ike House allowing parties to run until 2:00 a.m. He directs all complaints to Joan Kelly, who oversees Ike House operations. Mr. Mouradjian noted that the Ike House has not been subject to Rhode Island State Properties rules and operates autonomously. Members discussed the potential transfer of the Ike House to DEM. Director Coit stated that a transfer needs careful consideration and concrete plans need to be in place well in advance of a transfer. The possibility of the Trust running the Ike House because of its capacity to plan events and weddings was discussed by members. Mr. Hall stated that the Trust took a straw poll of its Board to determine interest in assuming the responsibility. The Trust board saw no issues and felt it would be an opportunity to grow what it is already doing. Mr. Behan asked what the mission of a transfer to the Trust would be. Mr. Hall stated it would be to preserve/restore both the Ike House and the Fort. Mr. Dias stated the Ike House could also be added to the menu of tour

options it offers of the Fort. Director Coit stated that it could also be an asset for major events like the 2018 Volvo Ocean Race. Mr. Mouradjian stated that the Department pursue further discussion with the Department of Administration and will keep members apprised of further developments on the transfer.

- b. Other – Mr. Mouradjian discussed the status of the Navy land in Fort Adams. He understands that ownership of the buildings on the land has been transferred to contractor Balfour Beatty. He also stated that when he inquired about the future of the land was told that the plan was to transfer the property to Balfour Beatty as well. Mr. Mouradjian also stated the he understands that the City of Newport has been negotiating with Balfour Beatty. Director Coit asked Mr. Behan if he was aware of the deliberations between the City and Balfour. Mr. Behan stated that he understands that the City has been dealing with Balfour for a few years on emergency services but was not aware of the transfer. Mr. Behan agreed to ask the City Manager about the transfer and report back to the Foundation. Both Ms. Coit and Mr. Mouradjian expressed grave concerns about both the transfer and the process. Ms. Coit asked that the Navy transfer of land be placed on the agenda for the next meeting agenda.

Mr. Dias reported that PBS is filmed a documentary of the Fort which it will release next July. The Trust will get the profit from the sale of the DVD's. Mr. Whitaker mentioned that former Channel 10 personality Joe Rocco filmed the IBTA volunteer work of the redoubt. Mr. Dias said that Rocco is now in the process of editing the 4 hours of film to 50/55 minutes. Mr. Mouradjian reminded members that there is a special use permit process for filming that includes the RI Film Office.

Director Coit asked Mr. Dias if the Trust has developed a policy to deal with ordnances found in light of an incident that occurred at the Fort recently. Mr. Dias stated the Trust has developed, adopted and communicated a new policy to staff to deal with any potential ordnances that are found on the property.

Ms. Coit noted that member's terms on the Foundation will expire in January of 2017 and that the Department will be in touch regarding the appointment/re-appointment of members.

5. Other Business and Public Comment – Mr. Perry reported that the Fort now has 1,807 artifacts catalogued and noted the recent acquisition of an 1862 artillery officer's short sword, which was much rarer than originally thought.
6. Adjourn – Mr. Whitaker made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Behan and approved unanimously by members. The meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.