

# **Newport World Heritage Commission**

## **Steering Committee**

**Minutes of the February 4, 2015 meeting**

**Colony House, Newport, Rhode Island**

### **Attending**

**Ruth Taylor, Co-Chair**

**Jonathan Stevens, Co-Chair**

**Ken Yellis**

**Karen Jessup**

**Jo Yellis**

**Thomas PI Goddard**

**Naomi Neville**

**Paul McGreevy**

### **Not Attending**

**Mohamad Farzan**

**Kaitlynn Ward**

**Pieter Roos**

**Meeting called to order by Co-Chairman Taylor at 9:07 am.**

## **1. Technical Committee Work Group- Chairman Yellis**

**\*Technical Committee Work Group members met January 30 to discuss “Think Pieces” which presented cogent narrative points and identifying opportunities and constraints to possible nomination approaches.**

**\*The Technical Committee and other commissioners had a conversation with Bill Dupont, representing the San Antonio Franciscan Mission World Heritage nomination presently under consideration by the World Heritage Committee. Chairman Yellis also had a follow up conversation with Susan Snow of NPS (who directed the San Antonio application process, and distributed notes from that conversation.**

**\* What is the OUV (outstanding universal value) that Newport can present? A wide range of approaches offered. Teams were created to address some of the questions that arose. What properties would best illustrate each approach?**

**\* What is our process? What resources are needed to prepare the application? We need the ability to pay graduate students and professionals to do research and other services.**

## **2. Discussion about the Technical Committee Work Group report.**

**\* Ruth Taylor. Do we need to be perceived as refreshing the original Colonial “Lively Experiment” application? Jonathan Stevens. Yes, that was the Governor’ charge and that addresses our status as “worthy of future consideration”. Ruth Taylor. Then the steering committee needs to give that charge to Ken and his committee.**

**Ken Yellis. The Committee is working on a consensus. \*Ruth Taylor. The “dictionary of American architecture” is one path to take. But for many of us it would only be the case that this would be appealing if we could not make the case for religious freedom/church and state. Ken Yellis. The richness of the 18th century and even 19th century life might be seen as flowing directly from the originating ideas. This would make the story more interesting. Karen Jessup. We probably would not be inscribed for architecture alone. Intangible heritage is increasingly important.**

**\* Jonathan Stevens. Ideas need to be expressed, but then we need to get everyone into the same corral. We need to assemble the data, perform a comparative analysis relative to other sites which might be seen as competing for the OUV we may claim, and to make sure our cases present the strongest possible case in satisfying World Heritage criteria. Ruth Taylor. Concerned about the Technical Committee becoming enamored with narratives that may suffer once subject to a sufficient level of peer review.**

**\* Karen Jessup. We need to manage the expectations of the National Parks Service and what they may hear through back channels. NPS is**

**a gatekeeper via the Tentative list. We should think about an informal reporting to the NPS as we move forward, and understand whatever their plans to revise the tentative list. They deemed the original application as ‘worthy of future consideration.’ At the same time, we should informally brief Rhode Island’s Governor, General Assembly leadership, and Congressional delegation, once we are organized and have a presentation prepared. Paul McGreevey. We need to get ready to brief the Outreach committee.**

**\* Ken Yellis. We need a high-level advisory council to review materials and ideas generated by the committee. Will assemble all of the work of the committee into a drop box and then will schedule a session of the whole technical committee with some sort of statement of where we are going with OUV?**

**Ruth Taylor. It would be appropriate for the steering committee to be the final arbiter of the nomination. Naomi Neville. The steering committee should give the technical committee some basic guidelines with timeline as well.**

**3. Motion by Naomi Neville. The Steering Committee authorizes the co-chairs on its behalf to issue a guidance document to the technical committee that specifies criteria, assumptions and timelines for their work in refreshing the Colonial nomination. This includes establishing the Steering Committee as the final arbiter of the nomination proposal. Seconded by Tom Goddard.**

**Discussion: What should be included in the guidance document?**

**\*Tom Goddard. Bullet points number one and number two are concurrent. We need to have a scholarly defensible OUV. Ruth Taylor. We need to define the process; the tasks haven't changed. Karen Jessup. The process is iterative until the end. Jonathan Stevens. The guidance document should include this sense of process and an end of April deadline.**

**The motion was passed on a unanimous vote.**

**4. Karen Jessup offered to work with Jeremy Wells to create a glossary of World Heritage terms.**

**5. Outreach committee: Paul McGreevy. No report, as the committee has not yet met. They are working on a new website, refreshing the website created by the original Newport World Heritage Committee in 2006. The Newport County Chamber sponsored this, and is helping now.**

**6. There was a discussion of a Strategic Two-year plan. The committee needs to know what the Parks Service's timeline and plan are. Paul McGreevy. Upon receiving list of specific of areas for which the Commission needs resources, he will begin to put together a critical path analysis for a strategic plan document. Paul will work with Mohamad Farzan on this. The guidance document will be part of**

the plan.

**7. Resource development. Ken Yellis stated the committee needs a home base, technical support, staff support, etc.**

**\*Jonathan Stevens. What home base candidates might there be? The Chamber of Commerce? They are our fiscal agent. Could Salve or Roger Williams University be considered? How do we choose? Karen Jessup: we could put out an RFP for services. Ruth Taylor. Does it make sense to find a home base that is also able to provide seed money? Salve Pell Center? Who has preservation programs? RWU, Salve, who has fellowship programs? Brown? Ken Yellis. Other budget items include consultants, travel, economic impact study.**

**\* Karen Jessup. Is it the Steering Committee's responsibility to look for funding? Jonathan Stevens. We need seed money to prepare a grant proposal, specifying mission, members, process, nomination themes. He approached Ron Fleming for \$25K for seed money. Ron is has approached the 1772 Foundation on the commission's behalf. Ruth Taylor could talk to Mary Anthony as a follow-up. NHS could hire the fellow.**

**\* Ken Yellis. Can Elizabeth Francis approach the RI Foundation? Also need to get community buy-in as a set-up for requests for support. Ruth Taylor. RIF has some real hurdles in perception about the importance of history. But we could probably get \$10K from RIF for capacity-building for the process. The Commission should try to align**

with Catalyzing Culture. There is some centering of influence and authority there – the Van Beuren Foundation, others.

\* Naomi Neville. What did Newport World Heritage Committee spend? Jonathan Stevens estimated they raised about \$15,000 in cash and in-kind services, including producing a video at about \$8K, a website, and expenses relating to hosting the US/ICOMOS national conference in 2006. The NRF and Newport County Chamber were the major contributors. Discussion: we need more money this time around.

\*Karen Jessup. We need to build an economic justification for this to help with fundraising. Evan Smith and Mark Brodeur (state director of Tourism) can help. The Congressional delegation and General Assembly should be approached for an appropriation. Is there IMLS money? \*Ken Yellis. When we know what we want to say, we can start to pitch this as a collaborative project.

Motion. On a motion by Ken Yellis, seconded by Ruth Taylor, the Committee authorized Karen Jessup to approach Rhode Island Foundation with a grant request for \$10K. Motion approved unanimously. Jonathan Stevens will check with the Newport County Chamber to verify it will serve as a fiscal agent, and what if any overhead charge may be requested.

Final thoughts: Tom Goddard. Message, process, funding. Naomi Neville. Need timetable. Ken Yellis. What does the Parks Service

**think we need to do to get onto the Tentative list?**

**8. On a motion by Karen Jessup, the meeting was adjourned at 11:11 am.**

**Respectfully submitted by Ruth Taylor 2/10/15**