FORT HANCOCK 21st CENTURY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING #37
September 23, 2021 (Draft)

Agenda Items for Next Meeting:	● Presentation by Gateway's Chief of Resource Stewardship ● Working Group Updates ● Leasing Updates ● Discussion of Ombudsman/subcommittee/communication link
Action Items for Next Meeting:	● Recommendation for park about ombudsman/subcommittee

Attendees:

NPS: Jennifer T. Nersesian, Gateway National Recreation Area Superintendent and Designated Federal Officer (DFO); Karen Edelman, Gateway Business Services; Daphne Yun, Gateway Public Affairs; Pete McCarthy, Sandy Hook Unit Manager; Patti Rafferty, Chief of Resource Management, Nadya Nenadich Historic Preservation Architect
Facilitator: Bennett Brooks
FACA Committee Co-Chairs: Shawn Welch, Gerard Glaser –
FACA Committee members: Gary Casazza, Linda Cohen, Mary Eileen Fouratt, Michael Holenstein, Jim Krauss, Tony Mercantante, Dr. Howard Parish, Gerry Scharfenberger, Kate Stevenson, Karolyn Wray
Brandon Chambers CBI- Tech Help

Welcome, meeting overview, and committee context – Bennett Brooks and Jen Nersesian
Welcome from Jen, Shawn and Gerry
Pledge of Allegiance
Overview of meeting agenda

- Leasing Updates
- Other Updates
- Leaseholder Feedback
- Working Group Update
- Public Comment
- Key Messages and Next Steps

Review of technical instructions for zoom call and how to participate/ask questions

Leasing Updates – Karen Edelman

Buildings currently leased or under Letters of Intent (LOIs):

- Buildings 23 and 56- Monmouth County (MAST)
- Building 53- Barney Sheridan – McFly's on the Hook
- Building 21- Brian Samuelsen
- Building 104 – Tom Jones
- Building 56- Dan Ferrise

Letters of Intent- Letters of intent are issued so NPS and potential lessee have a period of due diligence when potential lessee can investigate the condition of the building and begin compliance review work.

- Buildings 25 and 24: two barrack buildings under letters of intent. The plan is that these will be multi-unit residential buildings. Building 25 has a lease that's been issued for signature. This building will have eight residential units. Building 24 has a similar layout and that lease will be negotiated after the lease of 25 is finalized. Since many of the terms will be mirrored, it is expected to move quickly.
- Building 36: The compliance review is complete for building 36 (the mule barn), and the NPS is in the process of issuing the lease for signature. The plan is that this building will become a restaurant with space for events and outdoor seating. There will also be retail use associated with the area and plans for transportation to be available to and from the restaurant around Sandy Hook.
- Buildings 40 and 114. Building 40 is the gymnasium and 114 is the officer's club. Both are very large buildings. NPS is reviewing the information that's been received about the schedule for rehabilitation of these buildings and will extend the LOIs based on the review of that information.

The remaining 21 buildings that were available under the RFP are officer's row, the gas station, the remaining mess halls, the civilian family quarters, and the post exchange. The park received a proposal from Stillman Development to come up with a plan and work on these buildings. The park and Stillman are in the process of negotiating an agreement to best address the overall use of the buildings, while considering many factors, some of which we will talk about later, that impact Sandy Hook and the community. The proposed general agreement is meant to address the buildings in two phases. The first phase is to develop two prototypes for the buildings on officer's row to see how many units, for example, they can support, see how the use can be linked into, looped in so the whole fort is active and viable. Once the prototypes have been developed then the park and Stillman will be better able to determine the viability of the remainder of the project.

Shawn Welch said that Scott Hegney is working on Buildings 24, 25, and 114.

Karen confirmed that and stated that buildings 24 and 25 are the most imminent.

Tony Mercantante asked if buildings 24 and 25 would be used for short-term rentals like what Brian Samuelson has or are they more permanent.

Karen Edelman answered that it will be a combination, but the intention is longer-term.

Michael Holenstein asked about the Stillman proposal. Will there a certain number of units which will be available at one price point versus a middle price point versus a high price point or is that not yet park of the discussion?

Karen Edelman answered that price points are not yet a part of the discussion. The concentration is on the issues of density and availability and how to maximize the use of the buildings.

Michael Holenstein asked Karen to clarify what she meant about density and availability.

Karen Edelman explained she meant how many units a building could support while at the same time retaining its character-defining features.

Michael Holenstein asked what the term availability refers to?

Karen Edelman answered that it means the overall number of units that will be available when considering these factors.

Michael Holenstein continued that one of the overriding themes that had been discussed in the past is the suggestion that residential spaces were being created or would be created would be beyond the capabilities of many people. Michael suggested that a discussion of a broad range of opportunities should be more in the forefront rather than an afterthought in these discussions with the developer.

Jen Nersesian added that Mr. Stillman has indicated an interest and willingness to explore different models, such as veterans housing or some affordable housing component or partnership. This does require a different business model than just straight market rate housing, but they are certainly interested in looking at that and are open to it. This will continue to be part of the discussions, and this feasibility phase, as what the buildings can physically accommodate in terms of the number of unites, and what the site can sustain in terms of level and activity is explored. This will help form the business model and be part of the discussion under this pilot to see if there is a feasible concept moving forward.

Kate Stevenson wondered if Gateway had replaced Marilou with another historic preservation architect.

Jen Nersesian answered that Gateway's new historic architect is Nadya Nenadich.

Nadya Nenadich introduced herself and let everyone know how excited she was to work on these projects.

Bennett reminded the public that at this point the conversation is among committee members but that there is a public comment period beginning at 11:15. Specific questions can be put into the Q&A. Gateway staff will answer questions as they come in when possible, other questions will be folded into the public comment period.

Garry Cassazza commented that it will be difficult to balance availability of affordable units with the fact the project needs to work financially for whoever is going into the project.

Bennett agreed that this is all a balancing act with lots of different interests to be considered that have to work together.

Other Updates- Jen Nersesian

- **Roof Project – Fort Hancock Buildings**

As the NPS started to look at the roofs it was evident that stabilization work needed to be done before staff could even get in to assess the roofs. The current project is for stabilization first, then to look at the roofs. The park will look for more funding once the current funding is used, and there is a contract in place. A team of about 15-20 contractors and sub-contractors was out earlier this month to begin the assessment of all of the buildings. The team is not able to access some of the buildings, so are using various technologies for the assessments. There should be a report within the next month or so for the next steps for the stabilization. There was an addition to the scope of work that they give some type of recommendation before the full report in time for some short-term measures to be put into place, since the full report won't be out until late fall. The initial assessment phase costs more than $2 million.

But it's good news that the project is moving forward and there were people on the ground. The goal is to stabilize the buildings until a bigger project happens, so that the buildings don't continue to deteriorate further until the fuller project starts.

Shawn Welch asked if this was internal Gateway money that was being used for this project.

Jen answered that yes it was. The money is mainly from leasing revenue. Leasing revenue has to be spent on deferred maintenance. This is the perfect project because it's deferred maintenance on a potential leasing project. The park does not expect the buildings at Fort Hancock to generate revenue because of the necessary level of upfront investment that's necessary to rehabilitate them. The rent will be offset against the investment for the duration of the lease, so they will be revenue neutral, but get the buildings rehabilitated. In other cases where buildings have been leased and the buildings don't require as much investment for rehabilitation then revenue is generated. That money goes toward deferred maintenance.

- **Status of Great American Outdoors Act projects**

This was an act passes by Congress in August of last year that brought money (about $1.9 billion annually) for deferred maintenance to the National Park Service and a handful of other agencies for the next five years. The Chapel Revetement (also seawall work) are included in agency wide

list of projects for the first year of funding, and is being paired with work on the Officers Row Seawall. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the lead on these projects. Design work will be started soon. These projects are very important to keep the main post areas and historic structures protected in the face of climate considerations and general storm events.
There is also a multimillion-dollar project to rehabilitate all of the lines for the Sandy Hook water and wastewater systems, including all of the sewer line and water pipes. This is really old army infrastructure which has required many emergency repairs. This was on the list of proposed Great American Outdoors Act projects for 2022 as listed in the president's proposed budget; however that list is not final until a 2022 budget gets passed. Congress must ratify the budget and those projects then become funded. This ratification is still in the works.

Shawn Welch asked if the Fort Hancock roof stabilization project could be funded out of the Great American Outdoor Act.

Jen Nersesian answered that this was not a Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) project. The park's stabilization project is to try to keep the buildings from further deterioration until a lessee can come and rehabilitate them or there's some other solution for full rehabilitation for the buildings. There are [GAOA] projects being evaluated for 2023-2025, but only the 2021 projects are funded, with the 2022 projects in the proposed budget.

- **Open Call for Nominations**

Call for Nominations is open until October 25. Resumes and cover letter should be submitted to Daphne Yun.

Daphne Yun reminded everyone that they must nominate themselves, although they can include letters from others. Her email is Daphne_Yun@nps.gov. There are many slots to fill in addition to the members whose terms are up for renewal. We send everything up to the secretary's office. The Secretary of Interior appoints the members.

Gerry Sharfenberger asked if the letters should be addressed to Jen Nersesian or Daphne Yun?

Daphne Yun said she would find out for him. (Letters can be addressed to either Jen Nersesian or Daphne Yun but sent to Daphne Yun).

Gerry Glaser asked what some of the functional areas that need to be represented are?

Daphne Yun answered that they are real estate, scientific community, business community, education, cultural community, tourism, and the surrounding towns. The complete list can be found in the Federal Register announcement.

- **Leaseholder Feedback**

Leaseholder Feedback- Brian Samuelson, Tom Jones (also comments from Dan Ferise and Barney Sheridan that were shared by Shawn Welch)

Bennett introduced Brian Samuelson and Tom Jones, who are both leaseholders at Fort Hancock. The committee has been including a time to hear from the leaseholders for about three years so that the committee can hear what's on their mind and how things are going. This hasn't been done in a while, so everyone thought hearing from the lessees would be a good addition to the meeting.

Brian Samuelson (leaseholder for Building 21) asked about Stillman. Brian is worried about what Stillman will charge. Brian's had a great summer, and the NPS has been very supportive of him. He has lots of concerns, he has put in other proposals, but his proposal for 21, the duplex, was accepted. Brian thinks public accessibility will be increased by saving these buildings because fencing will be removed. Brian says he is concerned that Stillman has locked up the entire landmark with 21 buildings. He said Scott Hagney also has had buildings tied up for a while- with no drop-dead date. Brian says he thinks that architects should be in and construction should begin in six months. Brian understands the leases are complicated and things get dragged out, but he is still concerned that there's been no movement on the 21 buildings that are under the developer [Stillman]. Brian said that this site is the significantly the most important part of the Jersey shore and as the buildings continue to suffer, he wants to see movement. Brian is worried that there will be a repeat of the failure of 15 years ago with a single developer.

Bennett Brooks asked Tom Jones to share his perspectives as a leaseholder for how things have been going and any concerns or policy issues that the committee should hear or be thinking about.

Tom Jones (leaseholder for Building 104) explained that he is in a unique situation because he does not have a commercial venture but is fixing up Building 104 as a place to stay when he's in NJ and to use as an office. Tom said that to be honest, despite the best intentions on all ends, if he was asked by someone if they should pursue this, he'd say no. He said it has been a difficult process, which in a large degree is the nature of the beast. There are competing agendas and priorities and he doesn't envy the people that have to make this work as it's a very difficult situation, and neither fish nor fowl. He feels that he and his contractors have done a great job at 104, which was scheduled for demolition. They have been working on this for a number of years. Tom said that the cost has spiraled out of control. It is now more than double or triple what they thought it would be and taken far longer than they expected, or it should have. He said it is a very difficult situation with a square peg in a round hole. Tom said that he thinks this leasing program is an interesting but not great solution to the park's deferred maintenance solution. In other words, having other people pick up the tab. It's a great idea, but the execution is very difficult. Tom continued that his earliest and fondest memories come from Sandy Hook. Tom does not currently live in New Jersey, he lives in California, and the problem is that he's not on site often enough to shepherd the project through. His contractor is on the committee and is a fantastic guy although he's sure that his contractor rues the day he agreed to help him since this has taken a lot of effort and time. Tom said the process is difficult and it feels like it needs some sort of a different solution or translator. Tom understands that the process is necessary, but his contractor says it is very difficult to interface with.

Bennett asked Tom to expand on what he means when he this process needs a translation. What would it look like.

Tom answered that, for example, he has spent hundreds of thousands of dollars, but does not feel he'll get recompensed in the form of rent. He said the whole process is arcane, dark, and mysterious, and even adversarial. Tom doesn't believe that this is intended on anyone's part, but he and other lessees are not commercial vendors, neither fish nor fowl, but partners. Tom is spending a lot of money to improve this building which is owned by the park service. It's a loan that will be paid back by being able to stay there without paying rent. This is more of a partnership and this is an unusual arrangement for both the government and him. There are lots of necessary things in place for the federal government to do business like this, but it's difficult for an individual to interpret and play by the rules, or even figure out what the rules are. Tom continued that a lot of time has gone by, and some time was just wasted to look for the sewer and water lines. Tom said he still couldn't stay at Building 104 since he doesn't have the certificate of occupancy. Tom said he understands that rules need to be in place but he feels that there must be an easier way to get home then this. He still has to stay in a hotel every time he visits NJ, instead of the house that he expected to be complete by now. This is an added expense that he didn't expect. Tom feels that he is a dream client as an individual who just wanted to fix up a building and live there occasionally. While he is happy, if he was given the opportunity to recoup his money and time he would take it, even though he's loves the place. Tom feels there must be a new idea, a new type of structure if the park hopes to save all these buildings which are starting to crumble.

Gerry Glaser asked Tom what he feels should be different. Gerry continued that the committee over the years has heard of concerns with basic approvals, basic historic architecture considerations, and so forth. Gerry wondered if Tom's concerns could be put into one of these categories; and also, how these concerns could be addressed with other lessees going forward.

Tom Jones answered that he feels communication is very difficult; and it's hard to interpret the materials. He continued that he feels that by definition this is a somewhat adversarial relationship. He doesn't feel that the NPS feels like they're on his team. He understands that the park acts like a governor on a machine, especially if other buildings are developed by or as commercial entities. He restates that he understands that there's hundreds of millions of dollars of deferred maintenance and that there has to be a solution, or the buildings will fall down.

Bennett Brooks said that it sounds like the underlying economics are tough for leaseholders coming in. The process has structure, but it is cumbersome and makes it hard for individuals to push through it.

Tom Jones agreed and said that the economics wasn't as much of an issue for him as he doesn't mind spending the money, but he would like to be assured that it will come back to him in some kind of way. Tom thinks the process is very difficult and wonders if it could be made any easier. He feels that there is an intent on the part of the people he has encountered to try to make it easier but it's still difficult, and there are competing agendas and he just feels that there needs to be more partnership versus a vendor client relationship. He understands that might not be possible so he thinks that the Stillman proposal- with one entity taking on all of the buildings is a

good idea (at least on the surface). There would be as many learning curves as individuals taking on each building. Tom offered to put together a best practice guide for lessees; something that lists what he's learned.

Gary Cassazza wondered if creating some type of subcommittee that meets on a monthly basis with a set agenda to deal with the issues of the lessees and letters of intent holders would make things easier. They would bring issues that they couldn't solve to the bigger committee.

Shawn Welch said that this idea was brought up in the committee earlier, to form a check-in working group. It didn't happen, but maybe this idea should be revisited. Tom brought up a lot of issues that are process related, which could be addressed by this smaller group.

Patrick Collum agreed that there should be a subcommittee to help the lessee, but that group would only be able to empathize- they wouldn't be able to address the required standards. The NPS needs to find a way to enable and loosen some of the regulations.

Kate Stevenson thought that this type of subcommittee is a bad idea. She continued that there would be a lot of amateurs trying to second guess what park service professionals need to do in order to follow the various rules that are put forward in the Secretary of Interior standards. These standards call for a certain process and a certain result, particularly for a national historic landmark. Even if one wishes for a different window or wishes that the standard could be ignored, it can't. Kate suggests instead that the park has some type of ombudsman who is assigned to the projects and would be in charge of seeing it from beginning to end and assisting with people in resolving or at least addressing their various issues with the park. She understands that there are staffing issues, but this fixer would be able to address the issues head on and deal with the lessee.

Gary Cassazza added that he thought sometimes a small group can accomplish things a larger group cannot. He also thinks that maybe the windows for the whole project should be put out for bid, not just each individual house. That's a very different bid than an induvial house. A bid with a larger number is more attractive and you'd also get a lower price. Investigations that take time, suggestions like that could come out of a small committee that have both construction and government experience.

Linda Cohen suggested that rather than having a small committee what if each new lessee had their own member liaison. A committee member would be appointed or be chosen for each new lessee and that person would be the communication with the park service to help them with some of these problems. Linda asked Tom Jones if that would have been helpful to him.

Gerry Scharfenberger agreed with Kate but also with Tom Jones about communication. Gerry added that whether it is a a smaller subcommittee or an ombudsman there should be some type of vehicle to aid in communication and keep the lessee in the loop. Gerry added that he thinks that would help move things along and perhaps ease the frustration of the lessees.

Bennett Brooks clarified that Gerry thinks the focus should be on the problem of lack of communication instead of what the vehicle is to solve it. And that there should be some solution.

Gerry Scharfenberger agreed that is what he meant and that it could cure a multitude of ills.

Gerry Glaser said that he's supportive of what Kate said about an ombudsman and some combination of that function plus some other connection to the committee would be good. Gerry continued that the committee had heard this request from time to time for a more direct line of communication between the lessee and the committee or between the lessee and the park. Gerry supported that idea. Gerry added that he felt some of the Secretary of Interior standards are outdated in light of new construction practices and materials and so forth. He thought that the standards should be reviewed and perhaps updated. He thought that the last review for these standards was the late 1980s but realized that this is a bigger picture question then this committee can handle.

Shawn Welch had statements from Dan Ferise and Barney Sheridan, who weren't able to make it. Shawn also acknowledged that there are a lot of issues embedded in what Tom's doing. Shawn said that some type of subcommittee wouldn't be bad. No matter what there seems to be something that addressed how the parks service (the whole NPS) addresses private investment. What we just heard from Tom is that his estimate of how much this would cost and how much time it would take went askew. Shawn thought this was problematic especially since the building Tom has is a small building that is in relatively decent shape and doesn't have the same types of structural maladies that affect the majority of officers row buildings. Some type of interface and an ability to get something like this on the table to be addressed quickly is important, Tom said multiple months passed between issues.

Dan Ferise's building (Building 52) went operational around January. It has two units and is available for short-term rentals. Every time Shawn drives by the house someone is there, Dan has had steady business since he's opened. Dan said there can be some improvements in the process.

Barney Sheridan is in Building 52 which used to be the old post exchange, so is a large building. He has a convenience store. Barney does not have the level of business that he needed and is in discussion with the park service about how to advertise through signage. He and his family have not decided as whether they're going to open up again next year. Barney didn't have a lot of comments about the preservation process or what it took to renovate the building.

Gerry Glaser added that he thought that a subcommittee or an ombudsman would be a good idea but cautioned against anything that would add another layer of bureaucracy to the process.

Shawn Welch added that all of the lessees we've heard from are individuals. There is a proposal that isn't from an individual, but a group with the power, skill sets, and capacity of a corporation. We've had individuals have varying degrees of success but not seen the capacity of a major skilled corporation, which may lead to a far different outcome. Shawn cautioned not to apply the issues that Tom, Barney, and Brian have had across the board. Every lessee is different and has different issues.

Tom Jones agreed with what Kate had said. He equated the situation to the one at the Newseum – where the news culture and museum culture have continuously clashed. He continued that he understands the importance of historically accurate features, and doesn't mind the cost, but he has had problems in finding someone to make the windows to the necessary specs. He wondered

if that process could be streamlined, and if there's a professional who can be an ambassador and translate the needs to him and other amateurs.

Jen Nersesian thanked Tom and Brian for their feedback and insight. She continued that these projects are hard, the process is hard and expensive, and the restoration requirements are onerous. But the end goal is historic preservation, which is the NPS mission. The requirements are in place to safeguard that. This use in the public-private partnership is new- and is a square peg in a round hole, but Gateway and the park service are committed to work through this. The committee members and park staff have seen that these are difficult projects for individuals who aren't developers or historic preservation specialists and who don't have that type of expertise at their disposal. The lessee's feedback can help us understand how to make it easier, to the extent that we are able to. The idea of some kind of ombudsman is intriguing, but Kate's caution is important. Committee members are not necessarily experts in the secretary's standards, historic preservation, and the processes that need to be completed, but we do have those experts on staff. Some type of intermediary could help with communication and move issues that seem to be taking to long to answer. A third layer that may slow down the process isn't what is wanted, but there's no harm in piloting this idea and see if there's a benefit for the projects that we have going right now. The Stillman project where there's a professional development corporation is at a different scale and may need a different model. Anything to help make the process easier and more successful is important. If it doesn't work it can be stopped.

Bennett Brooks said that he felt a comparison is a patient advocate. They're not there to replace the heart specialist or other specialists but can be helpful to someone who is trying to navigate the complexities of health care. This was an important conversation, and we may come back to it after public comment to see if there's anything to add or a formal recommendation from the committee today or if we need more deliberation and time. Bennett thanked Tom and Brian for making the time to join the meeting and invited them to stay on as attendees. Bennett reminded members of the public that public comment would begin in about 45 minutes, and their questions will be answered at that time. Bennett also invited the public to put their questions into Q & A.

Committee took five-minute break.

Bennett let everyone know that information about the call for nominees was added to the Q&A. He asked committee members and the public to pass along the information.

- **Working Group Update- Jim Krauss and Jen Nersesian**

Bennett Brooks reminded the committee that the idea for the working group cam from the April meeting, when the benefits of setting up a small working group that would bring together a handful of committee members with a handful of broader stakeholders was discussed. This group was started to discuss and comment on the Stillman proposal. This proposal raised lots of thoughtful and challenging issues, and the idea was it would be beneficial to have a small group to take on a more focused conversation on behalf of the committee to list issues and inform the park service's thinking on this. The committee has met twice now, and Jim Krauss shared a report but first Jen discussed her vision and hope behind the working group.

Jen Nersesian thought that Bennett described the committee and how it came about very well. Jen continued that over the course of the past year or so, the committee has heard concerns from various corners, and a lot specifically from environmental groups about the kinds of impacts restoration projects would have on Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook. The park and committee want to understand those concerns to look at how we can marry the park service's historic preservation mission while being good environmental stewards in the rehabilitation of these historic buildings. The working group was formed to look at these issues and also to hear about these concerns and determine if there were legitimate showstoppers, or things that can be worked out. The working group has been the beginning of a very productive dialogue.

Jim Krauss continued with an overview of the last two meetings. The first meeting was on June 30 and the second was on September 21. The committee wasn't able to meet that much over the summer but has committed to meeting monthly. The first meeting was primarily introductions. The public stakeholders include Bill Kastning from Monmouth Conservation; Dorothy Guzzo from NJ Historic Trust; Dr. Harold Zullow from the Sierra Club; Lauren Cosgrove from the National Park Conservation Association; Eileen Murphy from NJ Audubon Society; and Tim Dillingham from American Littoral Society. Just to remind everyone American Littoral Society is a park tenant at Sandy Hook. The committee members who are part of the working group are the two co-chairs: Gerry Glaser and Shawn Welch, Kate Stevenson, Tony Mercantante, and Jim Krauss. Jen Nersesian, Gateway's superintendent, attends the meetings, which are facilitated by Bennett Brooks. Everyone discovered in the first meeting that many of the working group members have a long history with the park in one way or another. Jen Nersesian also introduced the topics that could be discussed, and a work plan.

Jim continued that the second meeting was held a couple of days ago. It was (in his mind) divided into three sections. One- begin the outline of the topics that will be addressed in future meetings; two- a particular topic that Tom spoke about today but is out of the scope of the committee and working group; and three- a presentation by Gateway Chief of Resources, Patti Rafferty.

The topics were created from public comments and are as follows and are not in any order of importance:

- Ecological impacts – such as dark skies and soundscapes. The working group added habitat, wildlife, and air and water quality.
- Parking- The group added issues of traffic, impervious surfaces, and also potential innovative ideas related to parking and traffic such as a possible one-way loop around the post instead of the current pattern of two-way traffic.
- Capacity and density. The group added what the potential use by developer add to the various impacts on the hook and how private use creep can be prevented. Especially increased infrastructure and amenity demand from future tenants.
- Climate change considerations. The group added flooding issues, including base flood elevation requirements.
- Emergency Issues. Will an increase in residents accelerate the already occurring changes on the Hook?
- Social equity and justice and how privatization would affect that.
- Review process and public input.

Jim Krauss elaborated that the topic beyond the scope of the working group was that many of these problems would be resolved in the Federal Government had come in and provided the necessary funding to rehabilitate these buildings. There was some discussion in the group about the amount of money the park service gets and how much money the taxpayers of New Jersey receive from the Federal Government, but the group realized it was not realistic for the working group to try to raise money from the Federal Government.

Patti Rafferty's presentation covered the seven laws and regulations that deal with the review of environment, wildlife, and historic issues and the considerations that the parks service has to address for any project. This presentation was eye-opening and showed the group the evaluations and review that is already being done. Including Patti in future meetings will allow public interest groups to communicate directly to the person responsible for evaluation of project reviews and impacts on the development of these buildings. Jim said he hoped that the Patti would give this presentation to the whole committee.

Bennett Brooks thanked Jim for the comprehensive overview and added that there is a tremendous amount of expertise in the working group which has led to good and necessary conversations.

Gerry Glaser added that he had underestimated the complexities that the park has to deal with around issues like rehabilitation and really appreciated Patty's presentation.

Tony Mercantante agreed that this was all useful information and showed a commonsense view of how the National Park Service has to look at all of these proposals and why an ombudsman would be a better idea than a subcommittee. With a subcommittee you have to schedule meetings and work around individual schedules, but a single person who could represent the interests of the lessees and shepherd them through the process would work well, especially if the ombudsman is from the park service, who has familiarity with all of the components and players involved.

One other point is that when people with various areas of expertise weigh in on the projects, they look at it as if it's vacant land with brand new buildings. Whatever happens at Fort Hancock will be far less intense than when it was a military facility with thousands of military personnel working and all of the buildings occupied. The temptation of looking at this as if it's a brand new use of land should be avoided. This perspective sometimes gets lost because the perception is of one developer building a lot of buildings. There are already multiple residential units that have been approved and are already leased or in the process of being leased. Tony continued he doesn't understand the focus on the Stillman proposal since this is probably the most realistic way of seeing a successful finish for this project vs waiting another decade or two for each building to be rehabilitated individually.

Michael Holenstein said that he thought Kate's earlier comments were well-said and well placed. Going back to the beginning is all throughout this entire process the ideas that are being discussed have a lifespan. They continue to evolve and come back to the surface. One of the problems with the redevelopment of the facility has always been the issue of funding and the returns that are required by people undertaking the project. Very early on it was evident that,

among the only possible funding sources were tax credits or private investments and the nature of private investment here is similar to the lease of a pad site for a commercial building such as a supermarket. You come in, develop an improvement, and then have the right to use an occupancy for a number of years and at the then end you turn it back over again. The investment has always been the prepaid rent but the point is the costs of development and the inability to fund it any other way than tax credits and private funding creates a situation where the costs are high, they are acknowledged as being high, and the necessary return for the outside private investment is significant. The movements of the project in a theory and perhaps with a single developer is that in order for the developer to get a reasonable rate of return they will need to be able to charge an aggressive price. This makes perfect sense to anyone in real estate development world but a bone of contention amongst the public. Their reaction, or the general feeling by the public that there shouldn't be a redevelopment project that doesn't include all people and if it's going to be residential it should allow for everybody to be out there. The cost of the investment and the necessary returns required should be weighed against the mission of the park to see if it makes sense.

Gerry Glaser said that Jim mentioned the topic within the topic from the working group of the notion of baseline measurements. In other words, what things are happening and what reaction is anticipated? This could be environmental issues, social equity issues, or infrastructure issues which has context in terms that Fort Hancock is a former military base, which is useful to keep in mind when we're looking at current impacts compared to what was going on during the fort's heyday. As we move forward, we are in fact mitigating impacts that were left for us to take care of. Gerry continued that he doesn't know how to construct a menu of baseline measurements but thinks this was a very useful point and he'd like to keep it on the table.

Bennett Brooks agreed that it had come in a number of different points across the different issue areas. There is a desire to see what the change from the current use to the historic use is and also the use at various times of day and week, and across seasons.

Jim Krauss added that Michael made some good points, but one of the things relating to that is that a single developer has the advantage of economies of scale. By spreading the cost by ordering several hundred windows instead of 40 windows and dealing with historic considerations with the park and spreading the architectural costs over several buildings this will all bring the cost of the project down which could allow the developer to charge lower rents but still get a proper return. Some of these concerns could be addressed by having a single developer instead of multiple developers.

Michael Holenstein responded that there's no question that a large-scale approach to things like buying windows or roof materials will result in economies of scale and save some money, but his concern is that a lot of time is spent discussing something that is fundamentally flawed. If, the basic requirement that the properties be developed in a diverse manner to meet the mission of the park isn't satisfied after nine years or however long the committee has been meeting, and even what happened in the 1990s failure was the public outcry that what was being created was not going to be created for the general public. If a private developer who wants to take on this project doesn't understand or on board with that concept at the get go that there has to be some parity to in order to meet the mission of the park then we're wasting our time and we're revolving

and returning the same concepts and looking at them again and again without really furthering the mission of the committee to facilitate redevelopment.

Bennett Brooks added that one of the advantages of a committee like this as we frame out the issues and the different approaches on the available options and see how the pieces fit together or do the pieces fit together and what does that mean for the economics- this conversation is helping the committee learn about the different pieces that people care about. We will see which approaches work or see that some of the pieces are not compatible.

Jen Nersesian agreed. The issue of affordability for different segments of the public or accessibility to the buildings is one of the many things that we have to work through. Many people have spoken out with concerns. Jen added that there is no requirement that the buildings be rehabilitated for residential use or commercial use or that it should be accessible to all segments of the public, or even that a percentage be set aside, but there is public interest. The committee and park need to work through what makes sense in a combination of looking at the economics of the project and look at what opportunities are available in the areas and all of the different dimensions. We are working through these factors for this particular project, the Stillman project. Looking at what the feasible different models for housing and residential use in the context of private investment to see if we come up with a project that is palatable to a broad segment of the public. We won't know until we get there, but one of our tasks in the immediate future is to parse through this issue.

Bennett Brooks said that these types of conversations and comments are exactly what we want the working group to start. Everyone is looking forward to a healthy and productive exchange, regardless of where it leads.
Bennett Brooks asked Jen Nersesian and Daphne Yun if public comment could be started earlier.

Jen Nersesian answered that it was listed in the Federal Register for 11:15 so it should remain at that time.

Gerry Glaser thanked everyone for joining and participating in a valuable discussion. He has to leave the meeting early. He continued that the working group is an incredible contributor to what the committee and park are doing and he's looking forward to future meetings.

Bennett Brooks confirmed that there was one person who had signed up for public comment. Bennett invited others to comment after Susan Gardiner finished. Susan signed up in advance and had a couple of images to share.

Susan Gardiner began. She is seeking permission to include SH 600 in the Ft. Hancock Leasing Program. Susan grew up on the Sandy Hook Peninsula and is a recent author published by Arcadia publishing and the history press for "Sandy Hook's Last Island Beach Resort". She has tried to become an expert of sorts on this history and her Sandy Hook memories that revolve around the feelings and sensations she had from the over 19 years that she lived there.

Susan provided the following transcript of her comments.

Sandy Hook memories…can you imagine waking up to the sound of ocean waves lapping on the shore? A breeze of sea air to cool your face as the river passes by on a warm summer night with a view of the highest peak, its castle lights beaming down on you at night or watching the moon rise on the horizon in all its varieties over the sea? These are just a few of my personal memories in one of the most glorious spots on earth at Sandy Hook. I'm here to represent the 1,800 plus community members who recently signed a petition sent to NPS to allow an Airbnb living history experience by including SH 600 in the Ft. Hancock leasing program at Sandy Hook.

The tale of a Golden Era resort and the 1893 Sandlass House, SH 600, evolved over 75 years from 1888 to 1963 connected by a border with Ft. Hancock on the Sandy Hook peninsula and inextricably linked by history. SH 600 earned designation on the Historic Register July 13, 1987 (page 66) as a contributing structure in the Sandy Hook NHL just as the houses on Officers Row. The Fort Hancock and Sandy Hook Proving Ground National Historic Landmark designated in 1982 covers the entire peninsula and SH 600 retains this historic status today in the National Archives. SH 600 is a cultural resource of unprecedented entrepreneurship in recreation and entertainment history on the Sandy Hook peninsula. The NPS mission preserves the natural and cultural resources of the National Park System. We can all agree this Ft. Hancock Leasing program Airbnb concept succeeds as shown in the Sandy Hook duplex, McFly's and others at Officers Row over the last several years. The river laps at the edge of these homes along Officers Row just as it does at SH 600. This 1893 Sandlass House survives longer than Officers Row and Spermaceti Life-Saving Station, a testament to the construction of these buildings in the past and their sustainability.

This small paradise on earth we call Sandy Hook still draws thousands to its shores seeking tranquility, respite and nature. We are grateful to NPS for caretaking our treasured land. The Ft. Hancock leasing program, inaugurated in 2016, offers us an opportunity to look at this idea in a new light. It opens avenues to explore for adaptive use in response to a private entrepreneur who has expressed interest in this particular Airbnb renovation idea. The structure is most historically relevant on the footprint of former Highland Beach Resort. Imagine a summer night in the restored 1893 resort home of the visionary builder, William Sandlass, surrounded by all its natural beauty.

The location access has already been tested over 40 years as a residence for park rangers' families similar to an Airbnb. We believe it is the right time in 2021 to begin the process of inclusion for SH 600 to enter the Ft. Hancock leasing program. We ask you to embrace all of Sandy Hook history. It is the right thing to do! Thank you.

Bennett Brooks thanked Susan and called on Michelle.

Michelle Pezzullo is from Highlands, NJ. She asked how the increase of people living in Sandy Hook would impact that set number of cars and people allowed in Sandy Hook. Will this take away from the public's ability to get on the hook? How will the people who live there be able to get on the hook when the lots are full? Will residents get special passes?

Bennett Brooks said that there had been a question recently raised about how residents would be treated and asked if the park can address this.

Jen Nersesian answered that there is no set number of people or cars allowed on Sandy Hook, but there are parking capacities on all of the beach lots. When these lots fill up the entrance is closed for an hour or so, until people filter out, and then re-opened. These closures are purely based on the parking capacity of the beach lots. The capacity for the beach areas are many thousands of people and cars. Jen continued that the number of people and cars that will be using the buildings at the main post for Fort Hancock is very small in comparison to the level of use at the beach parking lots. Jen added that there is no magic wand to getting everyone through the beach traffic, which impacts everyone, but the park experimented with a express lane for season pass holders this past summer. This lane helped people get through more quickly, and that's something the park will look at for lessees. Lessees would be allowed to get onto their property when the beach parking lots are at capacity.

Pete McCarthy said that Sandy Hook had 4,218 designated parking spots. 4,170 are public spots and 48 are for operations. When you add the Fort Hancock spots the total is almost 4,926.

Roy Stillman said he has enjoyed the conversation and appreciates the variety of well thought and considerate opinions, including those that do line up with his opinions. Roy added that there is complete openness to discussing the identity of his project, by which he means whether that is subsidized housing, market housing, veterans housing, or something else. Everything is available for discussion and in the spirit of Mr. Holenstein's commentary, which was very insightful, anything can be had, but it must be paid for. Certainly, if we take $2 worth of parts and produce something that is worth $1 it won't work. If certain societal goals are required, some sort of public subsidy would be required in order to have the project exist. The project is at a point of reflection from a physical perspective, there is an acceleration of deterioration. If a hole opens in the roof, damage can proceed in an accelerated rate, to the point of no return. Roy Stillman continued that he is appreciative that the NPS has recognized his opinion, along with others, and that they have undertaken a stabilization project. He was also appreciative of the Army Corps of Engineers and the infrastructure for the water and sewer. Roy predicted that the economic viability of the property will depend on further activities in this direction. Roy ended by saying he has great sympathy for Mr. Jones. He is a bright individual but somebody who is not especially versed in the challenges of a project like this. It is an absolute truism that there is a need to have the architectural engineering, planning, expenses, and lessons amortized over the entire book, the largest number of buildings that are possible as well as the procurement of labor and resources and materials also has an economy of scale, as has been previously noted. Roy Stillman continued that his group is well versed in these things; they do them basically every day. He said it was a challenging project, but would happen, based upon good faith and the patriotism of the people involved and the desire to see a preservation result. Roy said he takes personal pleasure and pride in working on projects like this, and thinks the common good will be achieved, with the high-quality dialogue like today's and then a consensus on how to move forward and a process that is tailored to curtail as much excessive process as possible. The process of this job is necessary to protect the public good, which the Stillman group understands. The project will be delivered with a desired talent, time, and money. Stillman said that an earlier commentor said that shovels should be hitting the ground and hammers hitting the nails in six months. This is not true, because there's a great level of rigor and discipline that is required and the review process is quite considerable. The Stillman group is prepared and looking forward to participating in this.

Colette Buchanan is the president of Monmouth County Audubon; a local Audubon society based in Monmouth County that partners with the National Park Service and hosts about six-seven public programs at Sandy Hook in coordination with the National Park Service. The group has a lot of concerns about the redevelopment of Fort Hancock. Colette was grateful to hear that a representative from the NJ Audubon is part of the working group, since the Monmouth chapter coordinates with them. Colette continued that she'd listened to the meeting all morning and was disappointed that the money from the Great American Outdoors Act is solely being spent in the support of buildings and infrastructures with the work on the seawall and the retaining wall around the Chapel and then the plans for the sewage and water lines next year. Colette continued that she was disappointed that the park is not putting any of the money available from the Great American Outdoors Act into protecting and restoring the natural resources at the park. She said that a fraction of the money that is being used for the sewer and water line project, which she imaged, is quite expensive, could be put into something about the incredible deer problem at Sandy Hook, which are just destroying the habitat. Colette continued that she knows there is a plan to build a well, which she thinks is part of the sewer and water-line project, in an area of the holly forest that has many trees earmarked for removal and she thought it was disappointing that the National Park Service at Sandy Hook has very little interest in the natural resources. She wished that some of the money would be redirected. She would say planting trees but realizes that won't do anything unless the deer are managed since they are preventing the tree regrowth that should have naturally happened after Hurricane Sandy. Many trees in the maritime forest especially around the old maintenance building off Randolph Road were flooded during Hurricane Sandy and are dying. Colette and Monmouth Audubon would prefer to save the money and see some focus go into restoration of natural resources. Sandy Hook is a vital stop for migrating songbirds, and therefore it is very important to preserve what natural habitat still exists there.

Jen Nersesian thanked Colette for the partnership between the Monmouth Audubon and the NPS and addressed some of the points that Collette brought up. She clarified that the Great American Outdoors Act's funding is designated specifically for deferred maintenance and infrastructure. It can't be spent on natural resource projects. She continued that she would certainly welcome a new funding source that was dedicated to these types of projects, because the park recognized that we have needs and that funding is hard to come by. There is no local discretion over Great American Outdoors Act funding. How the money is spent and what projects it goes to is a big national process, but she did want to clarify that this money is specifically for infrastructure.

Bennett Brooks read a comment from Susan Gardiner stating that her group felt they had a solution to the feasibility concerns expressed by the NPS regarding building 600. There is an entrepreneur interested in a lease for the building, and she wants to make sure NPS is aware of that request.

Jen Nersesian answered Susan Gardiner. Building 600 is not part of the leasing program, it is not within the RFP (Request for Proposals) and it's not something that can be addressed because there are additional concerns about historical significance at the federal level. The building is not a contributing resource to the national historic landmark. Jen said she was willing to look at the new documentation Susan has, but doesn't believe that it's within the landmark designation as a contributing source. There are also accessibility concerns. The building is right below the road

and there's no safe access. A lot of investment in roadwork and bridges would need to be made for safe access. Resiliency is also a concern for the park service. The building is right next to the water which limits the ability of what the park service can invest. Gateway went through a very public process in 2014 when the General Management Plan was developed. All historic structures were examined through that public process and that building was not designated for investment. For these reasons it is challenging for the park service to look at shifting on this. Jen continued that she has the utmost respect for Susan's passion about history and the case she's made of the place. It may rise to the level of being significant at a local or regional level, but it does not have national significance. Given the number of buildings that the park has been so challenged to rehabilitate and look for investment and are fundamental resources within the national historic landmark; those are the park's priority. The park cannot take on something that doesn't rise to that level when there is a struggle to complete the initial buildings. Jen continued that she is open to further discussion and looking at Susan Gardiner's additional materials, but that building 600 is not in the RFP nor under the leasing program.

Bennett Brooks thanked all the commentors and said that these comments broaden and enrich the conversation. Bennet began to summarize the meeting and stated there were thoughtful comments from current lessees which triggered an interesting conversation among committee members around tackling the communication need between lessees and the park service. The idea of both a subcommittee was raised and there was more interest gathering around the idea of some type of ombudsman. Bennett doesn't know if the committee wants to make a recommendation about this today or if this is something that Jen and the co-chairs should discuss offline a bit more and then give the idea some shape at the next meeting.

Jen Nersesian wanted to discuss this offline and then at the next meeting. She continued that she heard two ideas as the conversation evolved, and also the idea of an NPS staff person being the ombudsman. She doesn't know if having an NPS staff person in this role is feasible, especially since NPS staff are already working with the lessees. She wants to come to better clarity on who fulfills the role offline.

Shawn Welch agreed that this idea of a subcommittee or ombudsman should be further discussed offline.

Bennett Brooks asked if other committee members wanted to weigh in on this.

Michael Holenstein said he remembered a past discussion about the creation of a type of book that would contain previous decision about renovations and would be available to all lessees. If someone asked what kind of windows were used in building X, they could look at this and say – the building next door used this type of window, and so on. Michael suggested that when the superintendent and co-chairs discuss the subcommittee/ombudsman idea they also take a look at that and see what the status is. Michael thinks it was discussed four or five years ago.

Jen Nersesian answered that she will go back and look. Jen doesn't believe that a book is in production (or has been in production) but will look for that recommendation. She continued that the park does do its best to share a solutions network, or the lessons that each lessee has learned with the other lessees. The co-chairs have connected the lessees with each other as well, in terms

of methods and contractors used. Jen agreed that putting this information in a book would be useful. But in the meantime, some of this information is being shared.

Michael Holenstein said that in light of the discussion of an ombudsman, or whatever, that he wanted to remind the committee that this has been discussed in the past.

Bennett Brooks thanked Michael. He reminded everyone that the park service is seeking nominations to serve on the committee and if anyone is interested, they should submit a resume and letter nominating themselves by October 25. If anyone listening to this conversation is interested or knows of someone who would be a great candidate and be interested, please spread the word. Submit the letters and resumes to Daphne Yun – Daphne_Yun@nps.gov.
Bennett noted that for the next meeting a couple of the ideas discussed today will be addressed again, and there will be another working group update. Bennett added that the hope is to have those meetings every three to four weeks, so there may be two or three before the next committee meeting. The idea of the ombudsman or subcommittee will be discussed again and there was also interest in having Patti Rafferty's presentation for the full committee.

Shawn Welch thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and participating. Shawn said that it's complicated but we're seeing some light at the end of the day.

Jen Nersesian said that today's meeting had a really rich discussion. This kind of insight and working through issues together is what is going to get these projects cross the finish line. She also thanked everyone and ended the meeting.