

Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee Interim Summary

The first meeting of the Fort Hancock 21st Century Federal Advisory Committee was held on January 23-24, 2013 – just three months after Hurricane Sandy made landfall at Sandy Hook. The committee soon reached consensus that the most appropriate way to preserve the historic structures of Fort Hancock was through a lease program that would enable adaptive reuse of the buildings.

To support its efforts, the committee established working groups that informed the committee's deliberations and laid the groundwork for developing a formal Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI). These groups:

- Defined the committee's overall vision for Fort Hancock;
- Reviewed and analyzed park data on the valuation real property;
- Examined potential flood insurance requirements;
- Developed mechanisms for community outreach, conveying information about the Fort's military history, and;
- Drafted materials for inclusion in a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) that would invite adaptive reuse ideas.

The committee's *vision* for Fort Hancock emphasizes the need to find practical, long-term solutions that preserve and enhance the Fort Hancock Historic Landmark District. It also preserves the serenity of Sandy Hook and maintains its standing as an ecological oasis and as a prime recreational destination for millions of visitors. The vision also calls for preservation of the *historical context* of this site as a military facility once tasked with the protection of New York Harbor and development of the US Army's weapons of war.

Cost analysis of park data about *real property* offered perspective on the wide range of financial considerations critical to successful adaptive reuse of the facilities. In addition to restoration costs, operating and maintenance and repair costs were also evaluated. In the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, reports about *flood insurance* (its coverage and potential costs) served as a reminder to potential lessees about the requirement to protect their investments and the park's property.

Community Outreach activities engaged both traditional and social media to spread the word about adaptive reuse opportunities at Fort Hancock. Stories concerning the RFEI were published in the New York Times, Asbury Park Press, Star-Ledger and Two River Times. A Facebook page was created. Publicity from the October 2013 publication of the RFEI led to more than 150 individuals attending open houses and to 41 written responses from interested individuals, educational institutions and profit and not-for-profit organizations.

Work over the past year has provided a strong foundation for the preservation of Fort Hancock. The committee enters its second year assisting the park in the development of a formal *Request for Proposals* for adaptive reuse of these historic structures so that they may serve the nation in the 21st century.