

**Town of Cape Elizabeth  
Fort Williams Advisory Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
September 17, 2009**

**9/18/09**

**Present:** Dan Chase (Chair), Bill Nickerson, Bill Brownell, Maureen McCarthy, Chuck Wilson, and Frank Butterworth.

**Staff:** Bob Malley

**Guests:** Carol Fritz and Lois Carlson representing the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation, and Suzan Hodgson from the Sentry.

**Call to order:** 7:03 by Dan Chase.

For the Record: Dan Chase confirmed that Greg Alznauer officially gave his resignation and was no longer a part of the Commission.

Approval of August 20<sup>th</sup> Minutes: Moved by Chuck and seconded by Bill Nickerson.

**Park Update:**

Bob advised that bus traffic had picked up at the Fort as a result of the cruise ship visits and would be increasing with the foliage season approaching. He informed us that the gift shop had grossed over \$7,000. on one particular day as a result of this increase in bus visits.

The lawn mowing frequency had decreased with the lack of rain, which was timely due to the exiting of summer help at the Park.

He also mentioned he had received some very nice emails complimenting on the condition of the Park.

The Lighthouse Tour conducted this past Saturday brought many visitors into the Park and 5 weddings were held on that same day.

**Budget Update:** There was nothing new to report.

### **Review of Goddard Mansion Public Hearing:**

The following observations were made:

- People misunderstood what we were recommending based on the comments made at the hearing.
- It may not have been clear that it was our plan to just fence it off and let it fall down.
- Should we amend our vision to make it clear that we were planning to let it fall down?
- At some point we would have to dismantle it anyway (as it gets progressively unstable).
- It was restated that the cost to save the structure would be prohibitive.
- This community concern may be a good thing as it is making the public more aware of the problems with the Mansion.
- Fragmented attempts by groups to raise money to save the mansion could have a negative impact on the charitable Foundation's ability to raise funds for the Fort projects we had identified.
- The legality of a group raising money for this cause without the approval of the Town or the Advisory Commission was questioned, and Bob said he would check with Mike McGovern.
- A discussion followed about the original charge given to the Commission by the Council and how it related to our recommendations for the Fort, and how these were being considered by the Council, and also the role of the Charitable Foundation.

### **Report on the meeting with community services on fees and facilities:**

Bob, Dan, Pat Fowler, and Janet Hoskins met and discussed increasing and adjusting fees for the Picnic Shelter, the Gazebo, and the Bandstand.

The fees for resident use of the picnic shelter were increased, and adjusted to narrow the disparity between resident and non resident fees.

Also, the hours of the ½ day rental in the afternoon were adjusted, and a post labor day rate was formulated.

It was also suggested that the ceremony fee for wedding should be waived in conjunction with rental of the Picnic Shelter.

Hourly fees for the bandstand and gazebo are recommended as the current rates are generating little usage.

Bob said the Commission needs to finalize the fee changes by October so they can go to the Council in November, for December reservations that will be made.

### **GPCOG Traffic Study:**

Bob reported that a delay in getting information from the DMV has helped up the finalized study, but that the Commission members would have these results hopefully a week prior to our next meeting so that we can review prior to discussing.

Bob distributed attendance statistics for the Maine State parks, and they were discussed.

He also confirmed that the lost day of statistics had been made up on another day.

### **Discussion of gate fees vs. parking fees and other revenue possibilities:**

Discussion included the following points:

-Pros and cons emailed to Dan favored the pay and display method as it was less intrusive than a gate; although revenue would be significantly less. (Dan will compile these and send them out to the Commission for informational purposes.)

-Issues that need to be dealt with regardless of fee method include: Special events (Family Fun Day, art shows, little league, walkers, bikers, outside gate parking, tour buses and school buses, impact on gift shop revenue, impact on donations.

-Should the upper gate by the tennis courts be closed off or should fees be charged there.

-Resident passes: separate park passes vs combined dump/park passes. To what extent can we differentiate between the cost of resident passes vs. non-resident passes without legal issues.

Bob said he would ask Mike McGovern if he could attend our next meeting or a fees workshop to update as to what his and the council's thoughts are on some of these issues.

Bob will also get a bus count to us for consideration as a part of our considerations.

Bob said we should probably have our recommendations finalized by November so they can be presented to the Council thereafter.

A workshop date has been tentatively set for Wednesday 10/28/09.

### **Battery Blair Subcommittee update:**

Chuck reported that the purpose of the proposed study would be to give us a blueprint and associated costs to restore Battery Blair to a level where it could serve as a classic example of the historic coastal defense system that protected Casco Bay and Portland Harbor, as well as a way for visitors to understand and experience the history of Fort Williams.

It would also serve as valuable document to pass along to the Council for approval of our plan, and a great vehicle for the purpose of seeking grants and other outside funding for the project.

The Charitable Foundation was asked to take the lead on raising the needed \$35,000 to fund this study.

Carol Fritz said she would bring this to their next meeting and discuss this as a part of their overall fund raising efforts including the endowment and the Arboretum.

Chuck made a motion that “The Fort Williams Advisory Commission accept the subcommittee's endorsement of the Renner and Woodworth Study and authorize discussions with the Fort Williams Charitable Foundation about raising the money necessary to fund it.”

Bill Brownell seconded this and it was approved unanimously.

**Other Business:**

Chuck discussed the scheduled 9/24/09 excursion to view the Cushing Island batteries.

To date 11 people are scheduled to go. It will involve a good deal of walking, but may not happen if it rains that day.

The vacancy on the Commission will not be filled until the regularly scheduled terms being.

Remaining terms of existing members were also reviewed.

**The meeting was adjourned at 9:15.**

The next scheduled meeting is Thursday 10/15/09.

Minutes submitted by Frank Butterworth