

Town of Cape Elizabeth  
Fort Williams Advisory Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
November 19, 2009

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

**Absent:** Maureen McCarthy

**Also:** Lois Carlson, Fort Williams Charitable Foundation; Jeanne Gross, PHL Museum and Gift Shop

**Staff:** Bob Malley, absent

**Call to order:** Meeting called to order by Dan Chase at 7:00 in the Public Works Conference Room

**Minutes:**

Upon motion by Bill Brownell, seconded by Frank Butterworth, minutes of the October 15th meeting were unanimously approved.

Upon motion by Bill Brownell, seconded by Bill Nickerson, minutes of the October 28<sup>th</sup> workshop were unanimously approved as amended.

**Update on tour bus traffic within the Fort**

Jeanne Gross joined us for the first half of the meeting to provide information regarding tour bus and trolley volume in the park, and the impact which might be seen if fees are to be assessed.

During the past summer and fall 637 tour buses visited the park. Volume is greatest during September and October, with 587 bus visits. During these 2 months 500 of the visits (85%) were related to cruise ships in port. Typically these buses stay no more than a half hour, but their riders contribute substantial sales volume to the gift shop.

Buses related to the cruise ship trade are arranged by Intercruises Shoreside and Port Excursions, which is based in Miami, but has an office in Portland. Jean emphasized that if tour buses are to be charged fees, they must receive notification about 18 months in advance, to enable bus companies to build the park fee into their overall passenger fee structure. It is already too late to initiate a charge for the 2010 season, and the deadline is approaching for the 2011 season. She will check to determine the exact deadline, but believes it will be prior to year end. Buses related to cruise traffic will be invoiced.

Discussion then focused on an appropriate fee schedule for tour buses. It was ultimately decided to charge \$40 for buses related to the cruise ship trade, because many buses bring multiple loads of passengers, and \$50 for others unrelated to the cruise trade.

We then discussed the trolley traffic which at this time is operated by one company with several vehicles. The trolleys visit the park multiple times a day throughout the summer season. The number of trips is seasonal and weather dependent. Because they make a quick turnaround, trolley passengers are not a substantial source of revenue for the gift shop and museum. It was decided to charge the trolley operator \$3000 for the season.

### **Office space rentals**

Attention was focused on prospects for generating greater revenue from commercial occupancy of the vacant office space within buildings at the Fort. It was pointed out that the town has had the vacant space listed with an agency in hopes of generating greater occupancy, but to no avail. It seems the restriction limiting potential tenants to non-profit agencies significantly reduces the prospect for finding new tenants.

For years the maintenance of the buildings as well as the rental revenue was included in the park budget. However, the council subsequently chose to have the income and expenses shifted into the Town budget. Chuck pointed out that there are many variables to consider in arriving at a recommendation for the future of the buildings. These include:

- Planning Board approval for a change in occupancy restrictions to something other than what is now dictated by the Master Plan for the Fort.
- the cost of renovating the buildings to make them more suitable for occupancy as well as subsequent maintenance requirements.

### **Pay and display fees**

A long discussion took place concerning the appropriate assumptions and structure for Pay and Display fees, as well as fees for buses from camp and out of town recreation programs. Ultimately the Commission settled on the structure included in the attached revenue projection.

### **Park vendors**

A brief discussion followed on the prospect of allowing vendors into the park as a means of generating additional revenue. It was concluded that so many issues need to be addressed first (sanitation, incremental trash, town operation vs. vendor licensing, etc) that a decision was tabled until a later date.

**Fort Williams Charitable Foundation:**

Lois reported that the results of a feasibility study to determine whether or not the FWCF should undertake an endowment campaign will be available within the next few weeks. She also reported the Foundation's annual fund drive will start shortly after Thanksgiving.

With no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 9:13.

**The next meeting is scheduled for December 17<sup>th</sup>.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Bill Nickerson