

UPDATE for 6/16/2016 FWAC meeting.

Pursuant to the discussion of Goddard Mansion at a prior FWAC meeting, this is an update. It is regarding the progress of the informal group of Cape Elizabeth citizens, Friends of Fort Williams History currently working to promote stabilization and/or renovation of the Fort Williams historic Goddard Mansion.

It appears that a group member may not be free to attend the entire Commission meeting this evening, but we wanted to let Commission members know that there has been continued work on the idea. (At least one FWAC member mentioned, during the last FWAC discussion, that he would to hear about continued work/and or funding potentials, and that these efforts not simply disappear, thus this communication).

The investigation of preliminary ideas and possible funding sources has continued. Initial exploration involves a low impact model, respectful of close neighbors, and one that involves preservation and highlighting the military history of the park. The group continues to look at possibilities for non-taxpayer funding for such an endeavor, given the other financial demands on FWAC budget.

Summary: Since the FWAC discussion earlier this spring, the following has occurred:

1. The grass roots group has meet several times and at present calls itself: Friends of Fort Williams History

2. Two group members met with Lynn Shaffer, incoming chairwoman of the FW Foundation and elicited her views on how to proceed. While the Foundation is currently maxed out regarding fundraising at this time, Lynn agreed, "Historic elements of the park are part of our mission". She encouraged continued investigation into the Goddard idea, and supported the idea of coming forward with a proposal. She stated the following (quoted with Lynn's permission):

"The (FWF) Board all agreed that the Arboretum project sets a good model for the Goddard project... to launch an effort to restore historic elements in the Park: find people with passion and people with money to pay for the projects, then come. ...with a proposal. The idea would be to create another project committee of the FWPF focused on the historic elements".

Lynn pointed out that the FWF is working on a project with the CE Historical Society and CEHS students to record oral histories from people who lived and worked at Fort Williams. This would involve "continuing to find people with passion and people with money to pay for the project(s)", then a proposal, and of course approval from you, the FWAC and Town Council, to proceed with fundraising at that time. Lynn closed by suggesting that with sufficiently expressed interest, the another FWF project committee could be formed that focused on the historical elements of the park, in the future, but that any fund raising efforts of such a committee, should "complement, not cannibalize", (FWF's) current fundraising.

3. Members of Friends of Fort Williams History then met with the head of the Cape Elizabeth Historical Society and brainstormed about ways the Goddard Ruins, when stabilized, could be used, once again letting visitors and CE citizens walk through the ruins. The group decided to

look at examples of other similar situations around the country and in Europe regarding options for stabilizing ruins and opening them to the public.

4. The group met with a Maine based structural engineer regarding what might be required to stabilize the ruins for safe passage, and to consider possible renovation options. Areas that could be renovated in a staged, small-scale, staged project were explored. For example one area that could be renovated on a small scale was the old Stable (that lower part of the Mansion most removed from Surf Road residents) to provide a covered area for historical displays and facilities. Possible uses were discussed. The most popular of which was an open air, or partially covered museum of the military and other history of the park. The engineer will work on specifics regarding cost estimates to render the structure safe for entry. This work is being funded by the Friends of Fort Williams History.

5. Dick Gilbane, member of the Friends of FW History group informally contacted several Surf Road Residents to try to understand their worries, concerns and visions for the Goddard Mansion, and incorporated them as interested parties in any phased stabilization or reconstruction of parts of the ruins/building.

6. An architect met with one of the groups' members on site, and suggested that the Goddard Mansion/Battery Keyes area might qualify for a historical, cultural landscape and thus possibly eligible for some outside funding as such. Different approaches in the US and Europe for stabilizing and opening up ruins, renovation, perhaps in a staged approach were discussed. Preliminary estimates of the cost of stabilization were discussed, but are too preliminary at this time. Walk through self guided tours about what happened in and around the mansion was most appealing.

7. Dick Gilbane continued to meet with potential contributors interested in preserving Fort Williams History over the last month.

The group would like to request that they be on the agenda two FWAC meetings from now.

Respectfully Submitted,

Friends of Fort Williams History  
Cape Elizabeth