

THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
OF
GOVERNORS ISLAND CORPORATION d/b/a
THE TRUST FOR GOVERNORS ISLAND
MAY 12, 2015

A meeting of the Board of Directors of Governors Island Corporation d/b/a The Trust for Governors Island (“The Trust”) was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, at City Hall, New York.

The following members of the Board of Directors of The Trust were present:

Ronay Menschel, Chair
Andrea Bender
Margaret Chin
Cheryl Effron
Catherine Hughes
Judy Rapfogel
Elizabeth Richman
Wendy Schmidt
Carl Weisbrod

Also present were staff members of The Trust and members of the public.

Ronay Menschel, Chairperson of the Board, called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance. Elizabeth Rapuano, Chief of Staff for The Trust, served as Secretary of the duly constituted meeting, at which a quorum was present.

Ms. Menschel mentioned that Leslie Koch, president of The Trust, would give the President’s Report, after which voting items would be introduced.

1. President’s Report

Ms. Koch presented the President’s Report. She first provided an overview of the Island’s 10 years of public access. Ms. Koch stated that the goals for this year’s public season were to welcome more people than ever, welcome more programming than ever and maintain 100% visitor satisfaction.

After the public access season overview, Ms. Koch then discussed the Island’s resiliency strategies in the context of the meeting’s voting item on Federal Emergency Management Agency (“FEMA”) reimbursement for costs incurred after Hurricane Sandy and related projects.

Ms. Koch outlined the steps that The Trust for Governors Island took pre-Sandy to design a resilient park that could sustain a 100 year flood scenario, replace and repair the seawall and other measures that demonstrate the Island's preparedness for climate change.

Ms. Koch then provided a construction update on the Hills. Her report included photographs of the Hills at current height and a description of tours and other activities for the public to generate interest and enthusiasm about this dramatic new feature of the park.

After Ms. Koch concluded, she asked Directors for questions or comments.

Wendy Schmidt underscored the importance of creating that emotional connection to the Island and talked about different ways that The Trust could work to foster the public's emotional connections, including opportunities to create a memento or physical memory. Ms. Schmidt also suggested ideas that could attract families and toddlers to the Island, including bicycles and other offerings. In terms of development, Ms. Schmidt mentioned that it may be interesting to look closely at accommodations for groups in the historic houses and other buildings. And lastly, Ms. Schmidt asked about the Billion Oyster Project, its progress and asked about the possibility of eating the oysters grown in New York Harbor.

Ms. Koch responded that the Trust staff is working on all of these fronts and underscored that she looks forward to exploring these ideas further. In particular she noted that Governors Island would be a natural place for a hospitality use, including the type of use Ms. Schmidt suggested. Ms. Koch agreed with Ms. Schmidt's comments on the importance of emotion in creating awareness and connection to the Island. She noted that, while the Trust does not have a marketing budget or a PR firm, there is a strong focus on press and social media. The Trust is looking at more ways to create and use various materials to create that powerful sense of connection.

Ms. Menschel suggested The Trust work with GIA to raise some funds to assist with this effort and supplement The Trust's work.

Catherine Hughes commented that the education component of what is happening on Governors Island is very important and the Billion Oyster Project's work is a great asset for the Island and for school groups and others who visit. Ms. Hughes mentioned she understands that some of the oysters grown on Governors Island are transferred to reefs in all five boroughs and encouraged The Trust to do what they could to keep many of those oysters in New York Harbor.

Judy Rapfogel also commented that Ms. Koch and The Trust have been working hard to get Kosher vendors to the Island. Ms. Koch noted that two Kosher food trucks would be providing food for visitors on Sundays throughout the season.

Ms. Koch asked if there were further questions and hearing none, Ms. Menschel commenced with the voting items.

2. Approval of Minutes March 9, 2015 Board Meeting

There were no questions or comments. A motion to approve such minutes, as submitted, was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted.

3. Authorization to use funds allocated through FEMA Section 428's Alternate Project program for Governors Island infrastructure upgrades

Jon Meyers presented this item.

Mr. Meyers stated that the item before the Directors is the approval to undertake capital projects funded by FEMA related to Superstorm Sandy. The item also asks the Directors to approve an increase in the capital budget to include these projects.

Mr. Meyers stated that in March of 2013, the Board had authorized The Trust to enter into agreement with federal and local governments in order to access funding available after Superstorm Sandy. The Trust worked with the NYC Office of Management and Budget, FEMA and New York State Emergency Management officials and identified three groups of projects. The first two were funding for preparation and immediate cleanup and recovery, and then necessary repairs. These projects include repair of the lift bridges in the Battery Maritime Building in Manhattan, as well as reconstruction of the waiting room.

The third group of projects that The Trust identified falls under FEMA's alternate projects grant program. The Trust has worked in collaboration with FEMA to identify a list of projects which could benefit from this program. These projects include replacing the heating and hot water system in Building 110, separating the system from that of the development project taking place in adjacent buildings, and installing the system to be resilient in the face of future storms. Another identified project is the creation of an operations and maintenance facility.

Mr. Meyers presented each FEMA alternate project, beginning with the maintenance building.

Mr. Meyers stated that The Trust did a feasibility study and determined that building a new Butler-style pre-fabricated building would be more cost effective than rehabilitating an old Coast Guard era building that has been used for operations and maintenance functions to date.

Ms. Menschel asked if The Trust was concerned with aesthetics regarding the building.

Mr. Meyers said these buildings are much more sophisticated now than they were in the past and they are highly customizable.

Ms. Hughes asked if the building will use solar power.

Mr. Meyers stated that using solar and wind power are options that The Trust can purchase from the manufacturer, and that the Trust would explore those options as part of establishing a final project scope and budget.

Mr. Meyers further stated that not only will the proposed building house the entire park operation, it will also house a building monitoring system, which will allow The Trust to monitor and communicate with the fire department and other emergency officers.

Mr. Meyers then stated that the last project before the Directors is to waterproof Building 920, which is where the Island's switch gear is housed. A small amount of water infiltrated that building during Superstorm Sandy and to ensure that it does not happen again, the Building needs to be waterproofed. The next project is a series of electrical and infrastructure improvements. And the final identified project is the replacement and upgrade of the electrical service within the Battery Maritime Building. The Trust would like to execute the project at this time because the entire electrical system that feeds the building is currently being replaced by a developer that is constructing a hotel atop the building.

Carl Weisbrod asked why this work was not automatically incorporated into the work the developer is doing. Mr. Meyers explained that everything within the Ferry Waiting Room and Slips 6 and 7 is The Trust's responsibility. The developer's responsibility is to upgrade the system from which The Trust pulls power.

Cheryl Effron asked if this was the last FEMA money The Trust will receive from Superstorm Sandy. Mr. Meyers responded that to his knowledge as of now, yes. Ms. Effron then encouraged The Trust to use a local purveyor of buildings for the modular maintenance building. Mr. Meyers said the project will be open to bidding from a wide range of companies and local ones will certainly be a part of the outreach.

Ms. Menschel asked if The Trust can move ahead with these projects now or does it have to wait for FEMA to send the money to begin. Mr. Meyers said OMB is developing the response to this question and as of now, OMB is trying to have the City advance the funds to proceed on the same schedule that The Trust has for other capital projects.

Mr. Weisbrod then asked how the increase in eligible FEMA reimbursement relates to the increase in the capital budget as stated in the resolution. Mr. Meyers responded that there were two categories of projects – alternate projects and others. The total increase in the capital budget includes the cost of all of these projects as well as a previously approved increase from March of 2013.

Ms. Menschel then thanked The Trust and our elected officials, including Congressman Nadler, Assembly Member Silver, State Senator Squadron and Council Member Chin for their advocacy on behalf of the Trust in its efforts to secure full reimbursement from FEMA.

Ms. Menschel then asked for a motion to approve. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously adopted.

Public Comment and Adjournment

Ms. Menschel then asked if any Directors had anything else to add. Hearing nothing, Ms. Menschel asked if any members of the public had any statements or questions. Hearing none, Ms. Menschel thanked all for attending and adjourned the meeting.