

SUFFOLK COUNTY VANDERBILT MUSEUM

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees was held on March 19, 2008 in the Planetarium Lobby, Centerport, New York.

The following were in attendance:

Dr. Steven Gittelman - President
David D'Orazio - 1st Vice President
Michael B. DeLuise - Treasurer
Gretchen Oldrin-Mones - Secretary
Dr. Anthony Pecorale - Trustee
Dr. William Rogers - Trustee
Carol Ghiorso-Hart - Acting Executive Director
John Pokorny - Staff
Ann Marie Pastore - Stenographer

Excused Absence:

Effie Gicas - Trustee
Susan LeBow - Trustee
Matthew Swinson - 2nd Vice President

Absent:

Maria Figalora - Trustee
William Macchione - Trustee
Daniel Olivieri - Trustee

(Dr. Gittelman called the meeting to order at 7:20 P.M.)

DR. GITTELMAN:

This is a meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum. Do we have a list of guests in attendance?

MS. PASTORE:

Yes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We will just open up with approval of the minutes. Is there a motion?

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

I looked over the minutes from the meeting of January 16, and I noticed on page three that we need to make a correction. On the fifth paragraph, third sentence where it says "kick it," it should say "ticket it." It might have been the enunciation. I didn't notice anything else. I move to accept the minutes.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Is there a second?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? **Minutes are approved. (Vote: 6/0/0/9 Absent: Mr. Olivieri, Mr. Swinson, Ms. Figalora, Mr. LeBow, Ms. Gicas & Mr. Macchione. Three vacant positions.)**

Public Relations Report, Todd Shapiro.

MR. SHAPIRO:

I haven't been here in a while. Let me explain some of the things we worked on to make things right. Working with Carol has been really terrific and wonderful. In the beginning we came there and things were broken, as far as our part, not the museum, with getting out the listings right and making sure we got everything to the papers. A lot of times they weren't appearing, and they were sporadic. They weren't organized on our part at public relations. So we spent days and weeks just cultivating every report or every magazine, every listing, calling up and going through lists – everything from social writers for the *Daily News*, *New York Times*, to everything. I think we worked out a good rhythm where now things are really starting to appear in *Newsday* and are starting to appear in the weeklies and magazines on a very regular basis. In fact, they are even emailing us a week later if we don't have it in the *Times*. So I think it's really working. I think it's become very successful in that regard.

We had our first major event where we worked on the new telescope. We had the ribbon cutting for the telescope. I think it turned out to be really good because we came up with the idea, and it was Carol's idea, to combine it with the cluster in the air – the star thing. I tell you, it turned out to be terrific. We had four TV stations covering it from Channel 5. Since we've been doing PR, which is about eight years or so, Channel 5 has never come down here during

the day, and they did come down and covered during the lunch time. We had News 12. News 12 came twice. I think they came back at night. We had *Newsday*, which did almost 80 percent of a page on the issue. It had a big picture of the telescope. It was on the internet. Long Island News Tonight came down. Channel 55 came down. It was in all the other papers, as well. I think it's been working really well as far as getting the word out. It turned out to be – you said it was one of the most successful events that we've had in that time. The publicity helped a lot.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The publicity made all the difference starting right on the Friday before President's Week. There was a nice article in *Newsday*. Saturday was a very, very busy day, and then once the media got hold of the lunar eclipse combined with our new telescope, the response was incredible. It was the busiest President's Week in decades, we think. We had sold out performances every day. We sold out three performances per day.

MR. SHAPIRO:

You couldn't walk in here. I've never seen this museum so crowded. It was the Smithaven Mall during Christmas or the holidays. There were so many people. It was such a joy to see. It was really terrific to see.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Thank you, and Todd was here on that Wednesday helping to handle the media. We did have a few different people here at the same time, so there was some juggling going back and forth. It was quite an event for us all.

MR. SHAPIRO:

It worked out really nicely. We will hopefully be sitting down and planning bigger events and stuff like that, but I think the listings have been going really good, right, as far as getting stuff in.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Natalie has been working really hard to make sure that we get the stuff out there from different parts of Carol's office and different people that work here.

I'd like to get something, if we could. Do you guys do an annual photo of the board every year?

DR. GITTELMAN:

No.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Could we set up a photographer on our dime to come and take a picture of everyone dressed up maybe at the next board meeting and take a picture of the board and send it out? Maybe we could do this every year saying that these are the board members, the Vice President, President, etc. Then we could send it out every year.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Sure.

MR. SHAPIRO:

I didn't want to come today with a camera and then get thrown out. I figured I would ask beforehand if that's okay.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That would be fine.

MR. SHAPIRO:

We could send it out. We also talked about Motor Parkway and stuff.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That was an idea that you ran by me. I think you ran it by Carol, and I spoke to Michael. Michael asked the question, what are we going to do?

MR. DELUISE:

I somehow said that I would work with Todd on that.

MR. SHAPIRO:

And Carol also. Carol had something planned, I think, already.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We do have an event. Dave will talk a little bit about it. We have an event in October at the end of the month. We have been talking to Garden City. There are a number of different organizations that are trying to plan something for the end of the month. We'll probably have a monthlong celebration to look forward to with different kinds of events.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Maybe we'll even invite the County Executive and the Legislature to come down and maybe do a bigger event – combine it as one, the whole thing. We could really brainstorm. It could be really amazing. Way back when we did the race, we came before the board and talked about the race. The board was like, "Oh, the race." *Newsday* did 11 pages. I don't think any museum has ever had 11 pages in *Newsday* unless there was a fire or something going on.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It was a lot of fun, too.

MR. SHAPIRO:

It was an amazing event.

DR. GITTELMAN:

This is a big year in Willie's life, so we should celebrate it.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Great.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I do have a disk with some of the coverage. Can you set that up?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Before you do that, I'd like to make a comment. We had the ribbon cutting on the new telescope, and I was in Chicago at the time. I received a phone call, and Bill Bleyer asked me a question, if I wanted to make a comment. I said something akin to, "It will be great for kids to be able to go up the hill and see the biggest telescope on Long Island." As it turns out, there is a bigger one out in Montauk. I have called Bill and apologized for my gaff. It was my error completely. I was quoted correctly. Only I was incorrect. I spoke to Bill and they probably will print a small retraction, but my apologies for anybody who was offended by my error. That's what happens when you try to be extemporaneous in the middle of a business meeting and then try to think museum at the same time. So my apologies.

MR. SHAPIRO:

We have one side note. WBAB is going to do more with the laser light show, as far as with their internet and put the museum on their internet every month, which will be really good. A lot of people at WBAB go on the internet. It will help cross promote.

**Presentation RE: New Telescope: 7:30 – 7:40 P.M.
News 55, News 12, Channel 7 & Channel 5**

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you very much.

MR. SHAPIRO:

Next month come fully dressed.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Actually, the month after.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Education and Exhibits Committee.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

You already heard a lot of what I was going to say from Todd and Carol. They already mentioned some of the high points. I think it's worth repeating because I think that Carol and her staff can't really get enough praise for the huge success of the Winter Fest. I'll just go ahead and repeat it.

The Winter Fun Fest continues to be a stand-out success. In fact, this year was the best ever, even with a day lost for a snow storm. I have the Fun Fest flyers, which I will pass around, just so that you can see what was offered – front and back. As you look at them, you see just how action packed and diverse the programs often were, from mummy to dinosaurs, to touch stations in the marine museum, royal scavenger hunts, mansion tours, and the ever popular planetarium shows. We had it all. Every show sold out every day, as Carol and Todd mentioned. In fact, on Wednesday, three shows were added making it a total of seven shows which were all sold out.

Wednesday, which was February 20, was the busiest day of the Fun Fest, and so many things happened on that day, that it is credited with being the busiest and most exciting day in the memory of staff.

Beside the regular Fun Fest Programs, Wednesday was the successful debut of our new telescope, as we just watched, and the launch of the new program for children and parents called, "Our Night Out." Staff worked non-stop to accommodate the record numbers of people attending the programs and planetarium shows. A special effort was made to be attentive to people while they were waiting in lines that were often wrapped around the building. Staff kept people informed and generally lessened the agony of waiting.

Of course, all this highlights the need for on-line ticketing capabilities. Many thanks to staff for working hard to make this Fun Fest the best ever. Special kudos to those people, like Stephanie, Lorraine, Jenna and Barbara, whose efforts were above and beyond any reasonable expectation.

Congratulations to Carol and her entire staff for this record breaking event. To paraphrase an article in *Newsday's* February 15 edition, "The Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium deserves great praise for its carefully and cleverly crafted programs offered at their Winter Fest Celebration." I'm going to pass around that article so that you can read what they think about our exciting programs here at the Vanderbilt. There is a great graphic on that article also.

The Fun Fest was promoted through our website through in-house advertising in the form of 10,000 flyers delivered to local schools and by a four by eight sign located for the first time in a new spot at Pulaski and Park Avenue.

Besides the previously mentioned article, *Newsday* also reported on our new telescope and the lunar eclipse. Different radio and TV stations, which we just saw, like Channels 12, 5, 7 and 55, as well as NPR, reported news of the eclipse and of our new telescope. In fact, Dave's mother -- Dave is our Planetarium Technician -- called to say that she saw him on TV and she possibly heard him also in sound byte on NPR. So there was no paid advertising but lots of coverage and fabulous results.

The new telescope is a wonderful addition. Its debut was a well structured and organized event attended by hundreds of people who hung around after the planetarium show to talk to amateur astronomers.

A schedule of upcoming events will be posted outside the observatory and eventually on the web. Groups and individuals will have the opportunity to have time with the telescope, and it's hoped that girl and boy scout troops will use this exciting resource.

At the end of March, around the 20th and the 27th, there are plans to tie in a telescope event with a laser show. The "Dark Side of the Moon" show would be followed by a telescope viewing.

Laser programs have been added to the weekly schedule. Seven and 10 p.m. programs were added to the existing shows on Friday and Saturday. It's interesting to know that the "Beatles" show was a very successful show with all age groups. Because of the success of "Our Night Out," a new "Story Time under the Stars" pioneered by Lorraine and Dave, staff was looking into instituting an early morning program for grandparents and grandchildren. What could be better than a program that uses our planetarium to help promote reading.

Our ongoing projects, such as the new Star Projector and the restoration of the whale-shark are progressing nicely.

Stephanie found this article that was just passed around on how Hubble Space technology and the internet are helping to give researchers a better understanding of the whale-shark. I think you'll find it interesting, especially the fact sheet, which gives some great information about this amazing creation. Our whale-shark has recently had its skin resurfaced. Stephanie has put the restoration specialist on an accelerated schedule, which may mean our whale-shark will be ready by this summer.

Stephanie also provided some flyers. I have a few of those, which I will pass around. They announce Howard Kroplick's new book entitled, "Vanderbilt Cup Races of Long Island." Howard has generously donated five copies worth \$100 for our gift shop and he signed one for our archives. Amazingly, he has a second book coming out this year.

This is a big year for the Vanderbilt Parkway. It's the 100th anniversary, and there will be an event here in October, an antique car show and other activities, as Carol mentioned.

In another matter, all our paintings on loan to the New York Yacht Club have been safely returned.

Beth and the Education Department reports that they will be represented at the Sweet Briar Nature Fair on June 14. Flyers, these yellow papers that are being passed around, have been distributed for the spring work shops for children and adults. If you take one or two, please give it to someone who you think might be interested. Beth and the staff hope to be back in the Education Center soon.

Finally, we thank Tony Pecorale for his many donations to the Education and Exhibits Committee over the years. Thanks for the most recent donations of paper and paper products, digital cameras, proxima and scanners. These contributions and his continued support are much appreciated.

That's the end of the report.

DR. GITTELMAN:

What's Howard's second book about?

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

I don't know the name of it, but it's pretty amazing that his publisher would want him to put out a second book in the same year. Carol, do you know what the second book is about?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think it's about races.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That was a good report. I think that we should discuss Cornell.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

As far as the bridge and Cornell, the bridge is currently off limits. No pedestrian or vehicular traffic is allowed under or over so right now, except for an emergency delivery of fuel, the Cornell staff is supposed to walk up and over. No public, no staff, nobody is going under that bridge or over the bridge.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We received a letter from the County engineers telling us to shut down use of the bridge because fragments were breaking off of it. It was considered to be in unsafe condition. We are awaiting another engineer's report, which should come either tomorrow or Friday, which might give us some flexibility because it's critical for us to have at least pedestrian access to the mansion. This is a very serious concern for the museum.

In light of the bridge being a concern, we don't know how much it will cost to get it repaired or how long it will take. Of course, that puts any traffic which might feed Cornell Cooperative Extension down in the boat house under question. As Carol has said, we have asked them to – they are restricted to parking their cars in the parking lot. That, of course, represents a problem.

They also seek a contract with us, but until the issue of the bridge is clarified, I don't feel that we can consummate a contract. But it would be good to look at the old contract and see what there is that we can perhaps salvage.

One suggestion that Tony made earlier to me was that I appoint a committee to look into this. I would ask for volunteers from the board.

DR. PECORALE:

How many people do you want?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Two would be adequate.

DR. PECORALE:

I'm willing to devote time to it with one caveat. I'm leaving on Tuesday of next week for 10 days to Lisbon.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're not going to consummate a contract that quickly.

MR. DELUISE:

I would be happy to work with Tony, but again, I will be gone on the 29th. My suggestion is that the responsible thing might be to at least consider suspending those programs until we really know what's going on. It's putting people possibly in danger with the bridge. I would suggest at least we hold up on these programs until we know what's happening.

DR. PECORALE:

They can still get into the building.

DR. GITTELMAN:

They can get down to their building, but they have to walk around the bridge.

MR. DELUISE:

What about use of the vehicles not being –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No one is allowed. No one is in danger because everyone is being kept away.

MR. DELUISE:

And they can do without the vehicles for now?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Right, but we have a number of issues that we have to consider regarding our contract with Cornell. One of them is that we have a capital project stabilizing that building. Another issue is that we have approached them for a revenue share on the programming. We have never had revenue from them. In fact, we subsidize them for something like seven years. We just cannot continue a subsidy.

I feel that somebody on the board – we ought to look at either as a Committee of the Whole or a Sub Committee to look at it and see what we can salvage. They are saying to us that they need a contract because of insurance issues, which brings up the point that if they don't have insurance, then we have a real problem. I think we have to look into this. It's become an issue. The bridge has certainly, shall I say, forced focus on it. Perhaps we were all willing to just let it go by, but if there is some issue now, and they seem to be very anxious about it, I think we just have to take it the best way we can. They have many programs scheduled, and we had brought to their attention that we wanted to at least be paid for the use of the facilities that they were using because when they used the facilities, we can't use the facilities. So in essence we're competing with ourselves on our own campus. Our understanding is that they told us today that they were rejecting our proposal, so I think that we have to talk to them and come to some agreement.

DR. PECORALE:

There's something that maybe I'm reading into it, but is there some reason why they can't park up in the parking lot?

DR. GITTELMAN:

No more than our staff.

DR. PECORALE:

Are they objecting to it?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Frankly, I really don't want them driving their cars down there anyway. I never really liked the idea of that.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, it's an inconvenience for them, but I think they understand and they're aware of the situation.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It was a very uncomfortable situation. I saw it. I don't have to rely on anyone reporting it to me. I saw it. They had cars parked on the road going down to that circle. When you were in the mansion, you could just see all these cars parked down the road. It was definitely visual pollution that we don't want at an

historic site. I would never allow our staff to park that way. Their staff took the liberty of parking that way. Under any future agreement, we would have to restrict the traffic down there.

DR. PECORALE:

But I'm still not clear. Were they giving us a problem once we told them that they could not take their cars past the parking lot up at the –

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, they wanted to park in the area of the turntable gallery. We told them they couldn't do that.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That's correct.

DR. PECORALE:

Did they conform to the request that they stay up in the parking lot?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, obviously, they did and they didn't because today we had an accident between two vehicles in the vicinity of the turntable gallery.

DR. PECORALE:

There was an accident?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes. Our truck hit one of their vehicles.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Steve, I brought this point up in the past, that the staff here at the museum – I'm going to say it on the record that I do not like the idea of cars being driven around during the day or at night on the historical grounds of the museum. There is unnecessary driving down there, not just Cornell, but other people. It doesn't look good. It's marring up the property. Now you're going to run into problems with all these cars parking down there. It's going to be an eyesore. I have brought this point up unofficially, but I'm going to bring it up officially on the record that I don't want – I don't like the idea of people driving their cars down there. I don't think Cornell should be doing this. They should be parking up here and taking transportation down.

DR. PECORALE:

Can I just ask a question so I can understand this? Are you saying that they were told they were to park up in the parking area and they didn't do it, that they actually disobeyed the direction and parked in an area that we asked them not to park in?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I believe there have been some instances of that. I have to say, though, that I did make an exception for loading and unloading because they cannot drive down to the boat house, that they could for a short period of time park in the

turntable area and unload and then walk back up. In this case, it could be that they were in the process of loading and unloading. But I am aware of other instances where the rule has been disregarded.

DR. PECORALE:

I want to be very specific. Have they received these directions in writing?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

And you're not sure as to whether or not they were just unloading something when this accident occurred.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I believe they were loading into the car, in this particular instance.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Can we find out? We can ask if they were loading or unloading.

DR. PECORALE:

Are they permitted to use the electric carts, if they need to move something that they had to load and unload.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I did advise that if they needed transportation to ask the guards and that they would drive them down or pick them up, if it was bad weather. It is a long hike for them. Again, we can't go past the bridge. They did leave one vehicle on the other side so they have a vehicle that goes from the boat house up to the bridge and then they have to walk up through the habitat and around and down the other side.

DR. PECORALE:

You said vehicle, are you talking about one of the electric vehicles?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, they have one of their own at the boathouse.

DR. PECORALE:

So you permitted them to have one car that can go down to the boathouse.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

That stays there. It never goes under the bridge. It just stays there.

DR. PECORALE:

It never goes down to the bridge, but then again it doesn't leave that area.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Right.

DR. PECORALE:

I would ask that you send them written communication clearly outlining what it is you want them to do and ask them to sign one copy and return it to you for filing for your records. That's what I would ask. I'm not saying that anyone else

might have a different suggestion. I believe that is the way you must deal with situations of this nature.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Just tell security not to let them down. No one is allowed down.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, I don't think that's a good solution.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Well, this is a temporary fix for the bigger problem. You said they refused a proposal. What do you mean by that?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We had asked for a – let me just give you a little historic perspective here. We had a contract with them. I think they have been on campus for seven years, something like that. The original contract was really to help Cornell, which was like a seed. It was two people originally, I believe. We didn't charge them for anything. They had use of the boathouse and paid us nothing. We received no revenue. They didn't pay for their utilities. They were supposed to take care of any improvements they made or any changes they made to the boathouse, but other than that, we, in essence, paid for their utilities. I think they paid their own phone – or did they even pay that?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No.

DR. GITTELMAN:

They didn't even pay their own phone. That lasted for six or seven years. We are now at the point where the contract, the agreement, which was a five year term agreement, ran out. I think last I counted they had 21 staff members.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

In the summer they probably do have something like that.

DR. GITTELMAN:

And so we started by asking them to pay for utilities, which they have done. We also asked them to give us a site use fee. In other words, when they use our facilities, they would pay us. What else was there? We asked them for a revenue share.

DR. PECORALE:

They paid for the site use?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, that's under dispute, what's a fair fee.

DR. PECORALE:

And they haven't paid anything other than utilities?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No.

DR. GITTELMAN:

In other words, they now have programs, they are using our facility, and they have offered us 10 percent of their gross from programs. So if they get \$1,000 we get \$100. I would frankly prefer – I would like to see our programs grow. We have the fiduciary responsibility of this facility. It gets down to whatever the board deems as fair, then we have to pursue that.

MR. D’ORAZIO:

What was our proposal to them that they rejected?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I was proposing \$40 for a site use fee, which is about half of what we would have charged for a birthday party or something like that per hour.

DR. PECORALE:

Did you say \$40 per hour or per event?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

For them it was going to be per event, which was an hour or an hour to two hours.

MR. D’ORAZIO:

That’s fair.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

For us we charge for that same space. For a birthday party it would be twice that.

MR. DELUISE:

Do you charge anything else besides the site fee?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

No, not if they stay at the site.

MR. DELUISE:

And they rejected that?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

MR. DELUISE:

My suggestion is if they reject that and they don’t do it, I mean, then they had an offer that I think is very fair.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

If they had ten children it was reasonable.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We weren’t --

MR. DELUISE:

If they can’t do that, and you need insurance, I would just say –

MR. D’ORAZIO:

The problem is the building is going to have to be renovated.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The building is being stabilized. We can use the building, just like they use the building.

MR. D’ORAZIO:

Aren’t we improving on that building in the near future?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, now.

MR. D’ORAZIO:

And we’ll have to vacate the building while we’re doing that, correct?

DR. GITTELMAN:

It depends which aspects of the project we’re talking about. When they get in full swing, if the contractors are in full swing, they’re going to be in each other’s way.

MR. D’ORAZIO:

That concerns me.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But I think that that could be worked out after seven years of absolutely contributing no money to this facility. I think that they should be flexible.

MR. DELUISE:

Is it worth presenting a motion that if they reject the proposal that we give and then they be told that maybe they should find someplace else to go? To me it sounds like a very reasonable proposal that they have been given. Did they just outright reject it? How can you say that \$40 to rent the space is –

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I guess the argument is if they only have four children in a class, that –

MR. DELUISE:

But they might have 30 in a class at times.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Exactly. I think looking at what they’re charging for the private – this isn’t school – this is for the private use.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The original program was not supposed to have them moving up here. They were supposed to be down there doing waterfront programming and primarily they were supposed to be doing research, not educational programs. This was not an educational – but they grew into it, and we did not object. We encouraged the use. Why not? But the problem is now they’re coming up here and using our collections to our exclusion, and they don’t want to share revenue.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We talked a little bit – and I just have to say for a while they were also coming into our planetarium shows and eventually we did say, “No, we have to charge you.” So they do pay in the summer when they bring their camp up. They now pay a fee per child.

MR. DELUISE:

How many students are in their camp?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

They have a very active, very good camp program. I don’t know the exact numbers.

MR. DELUISE:

And there is no site fee for that?

DR. ROGERS:

I don’t understand how an organization is using our facilities. We’re running the expenses, and they don’t want to contribute to us. Is there anything we can do about it, unless you don’t want to do anything about it.

DR. GITTELMAN:

There’s quite a bit we can do about it. I would be reluctant to hand them an ultimatum. However, I’m pretty concerned about their approach to us.

MR. DELUISE:

But you offered them a very good, reasonable, fair proposal. If they reject it, they have every right to reject it, but then they shouldn’t be here anymore.

DR. PECORALE:

I’d say that their concern, if they have small groups, is a legitimate concern. So why not instead of having it on a per event basis, why not have it on a per student use basis? If they have a group of 100, they should certainly pay more than they would pay for a group of ten.

DR. GITTELMAN:

One of the problems is that I get the impression that they don’t want to disclose what they’re doing.

MR. D’ORAZIO:

They have grown in such a rate of seven years, where does it go from here?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We never anticipated a camp here.

DR. PECORALE:

I understand that, but if they have a camp of 125 kids, and they are charging so much per child for that event, there has got to be a fee involved in that so much per child for use of the property here.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We weren't even getting into the camp, which is down on the beach. What we were just talking about is that –

DR. GITTELMAN:

They are fighting us up here.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

In the mansion there are two rooms that we have given them use of and no fee.

DR. GITTELMAN:

They have refused to give us a fee.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The fee I'm charging you is they block that up, it means that we can't rent that for a birthday party, we can't do anything with it. I effectively gave them a half price sort of fee on it, and I'm aware of what they charge.

DR. PECORALE:

And I think that's why you have to know. I think you should have thrown at them the fee that would be the most reasonable fee, which is more than just an event fee. If they have 65 kids in a program and they're charging \$10 a kid, that's \$650 they're bringing in. That \$650 should have a fee that's more than \$40.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Well, these rooms the capacity is 30. They are very small rooms. We were giving them a break based on our site use. We do rent these sites.

DR. PECORALE:

That's why they're saying no to you, because they had it so good, they're not willing to now share the wealth.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think one of the problems that I have is that we had a meeting with the County about the endowment. At that meeting, I have to justify – both Carol and I – had to justify our use of the endowment. We're a separate institution. As much as we may appreciate the mission that Cornell has, I think we have an obligation to our charter and our mission. Part of it is not to eat into the endowment and if we have programming, there has to be a revenue share. So I guess I'm asking for a complete disclosure by Cornell of the programs they have. I want an immediate assessment as to – I want to be fair to them and discuss with them what the revenue share is. If we can't come to an agreement, then we'll have to bring it back. But two months from now will be too late.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

It has been dragging on for too long.

MR. DELUISE:

If they're bringing a camp in, do they have insurance for the camp?

DR. GITTELMAN:

We don't know what they have. We know what the earlier agreement was. We had an earlier agreement, but since that agreement expired, I don't think that that agreement carries forward. There is no re-signed agreement. I don't see how they can run a camp without an agreement.

DR. PECORALE:

Do they file a form with the museum on use of the facility when they are putting something on?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

They request the use of a room on a certain time at a certain day.

DR. PECORALE:

So you have that use form. Do you have a packet of those use forms so that you can see the percentage of time that they're using certain facilities?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We have a list.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

But not for what they're doing down there.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Not down there. Just up here.

DR. PECORALE:

If we have a form, one of the things that we maybe have to put on the form is where they put down how many individuals are going to be part of that particular activity.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think that the structure of what we charge them has to require a minimum of our auditing. If they're using a room, they have to pay for the room. Because whether they have four students or 40 students in it, the room still has to be heated. They are using a facility that we aren't able to use for any other purpose. It's like you're going in there, they're using the room. It's not like we're feeding them or anything like that. There is no reduction in what it costs us. It's still March. I feel we have to approach them.

DR. PECORALE:

When does their camp start up?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

The summer camp begins when school lets out. That's their big camp.

DR. PECORALE:

Did they have programs here during the week that school is closed?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, they did.

DR. PECORALE:

And they took in revenue. And we got no part of that revenue.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That's right.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We were negotiating. In addition to use of the space for one of their programs they asked permission to go into the marine museum for a half hour. So we should have a fee for them per child.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I'm reluctant to speak to them because I'm the one who fostered this relationship originally. The spirit of it was, quite frankly, education is education. But they were doing research, and having them do research on the campus was a wonderful way of augmenting our education. Then, yes, we spoke of them doing programs. The board should go ahead, because I'm a little bit – I feel a little bit awkward only because –

DR. ROGERS:

How long ago was this when you first –

DR. GITTELMAN:

It was seven years ago.

DR. ROGERS:

You've done your job for seven years. The museum has financial problems. We have to support the museum. That's our responsibility. We don't have to support them. If they have a form of bringing in revenue, they certainly should make a contribution to us. That's what I don't understand.

DR. PECORALE:

Somewhere along the line Cornell has got some sort of a financial arrangement with these people.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

So somewhere along the line there has got to be a budget for their operation. The first thing I would ask to see is their budget. That will tell us how many people they have had. That will tell us something about their revenue stream. That should tell us something about how many people they have hired. That information cannot be confidential. You're talking about a public institution.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

I have great issues with them – another institution making money on our property.

DR. PECORALE:

That's right. I want to see their books.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We actually could be running the same programs as they are running.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think that's an important issue, if we are running the programs they could run. And, frankly, we ran many of the programs they are running. If we were to augment our programming, I think our books would look better. That's our job. I think if we replace education with education, I have no problem. I just want to make sure that we're replacing education with education. Do you understand what I'm saying?

MR. D'ORAZIO:

How does Carol feel about this? She's probably more in touch with the staff and what we could probably do here.

DR. PECORALE:

Carol, question. Do you feel uncomfortable dealing with them on this?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I don't feel uncomfortable with it if I know what the intent of the board is. I'm not an independent agent.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

What's your feeling as far as us running our own programs?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I have to agree with Steve. We did run programs very similar to what they're running now ten years ago. I must say, right now we probably wouldn't be able to ratchet it up this summer, but we did it before. For whatever reason over the past five years certain areas of our programming have not been as –

DR. GITTELMAN:

I feel like we can replace their programming and that we ought to be replacing their programming on our facilities. Since this is on the record, they're going to read this and are going to hear me saying it. It's in the minutes. What I think my issue is is that we get a fair revenue share for this year and that we make an institutional target to upgrade our programming to replace theirs on our facilities for next year. And that it's not something that I think you can fairly throw Carol into for this summer, but they should be sharing revenue this summer.

MR. DELUISE:

I suggest that Carol talk to them and say, "You've been given a proposal that is a fair proposal but we agreed around the board, and if you don't accept that proposal and show us that you have the insurance, there's no place for you here." I'm missing something, unless I don't understand.

DR. GITTELMAN:

So that is a motion to –

DR. PECORALE:

Before we turn it into a motion, I almost feel that we should try to some degree to remove Carol from that communication because they're going to need somebody that they can go back to and talk to. I almost feel that somebody from the board should make it very clear to them that their proposal is

unacceptable and that here are the kinds of things that we expect in our contract coming forward. It's far beyond what we expect to get because obviously they're saying no. They are saying no because they don't want to hear anything from their board of Carol or from anybody connected with this organization that says they have to pay. This is negotiation time. Clearly, it is to say to them that in no uncertain terms that the past practices are not going to continue, and here are the parameters of some of the areas that we expect – are they doing birthday parties?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

They have done birthday parties.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

They are doing everything that they need to do on their own, but you've got to look at the long term. Do we want to go through all these negotiations if in reality we're asking them at some particular point in time to vacate?

DR. PECORALE:

They are not going to say they want to give you anything until they know that the possibilities are that they may have to find another place.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

The reality is that's probably what's going to happen.

DR. ROGERS:

They have to know that unless they conform to what our requirements are, that they have to find another location.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

Then the decision right now is, are we in the future going to ask them to vacate or are we going to negotiate a contract?

DR. ROGERS:

What advantages do we have with them being here? The fact that it helps in educational programs? I can see that, but I can't see it from a revenue point of view. If they're earning revenue and we're footing the bill, that doesn't make sense. Either they conform or they make constitutions to the running of this institution because they're using it, or they need to find another location.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

With a negotiated contract, it's long term. If we're not negotiating a contract, then we're going to give them a target date to vacate.

DR. PECORALE:

They're going to want a five-year contract.

DR. GITTELMAN:

The original contract was cancelled by either party with I think 60 days notice. They never had a five-year contract, and they would not get one now.

DR. PECORALE:

I would say to offer them something that is totally unacceptable to them and see what they come back with.

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

How about offering them a fair contract?

MR. DELUISE:

We offered a very fair contract.

DR. PECORALE:

And they said no.

MR. DELUISE:

And I really believe we have offered a very fair contract. They have certain responsibilities. They have a right to look at that contract and turn it on and say yes, we're signing or we won't. I suggest that Carol, as our Acting Director who is doing a great job, say, "Are you going to sign the contract? Are you going to agree with it or not?" If they don't agree with it, then they shouldn't be there. A \$40 site fee for a room where we could be using for other things is not outrageous at all. There should be some revenue coming in. We need to know if they have insurance. We have a responsibility. Those are things that I think you really need to look at.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

So I'll make a motion. Let's move to have Carol reiterate the contract in writing and get a signed copy back.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We have no contract.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We'll make them an offer. We tell them the terms.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

For a limited basis on the use of that. That was just one thing, the one aspect. They came back – you know, maybe they lowballed us and we might end up saying to them –

DR. GITTELMAN:

But the problem is that there is a bigger picture. It certainly bespeaks them to come to us with an offer very quickly.

MR. DELUISE:

They can't operate without a contract.

DR. GITTELMAN:

They can't operate without a contract.

MR. DELUISE:

But we cannot accept them being here with a contract.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, but –

DR. ROGERS:

Not without paying a fee.

DR. PECORALE:

And a safe harmless clause for insurance. I really think that that's an absolute.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, so will you take charge of negotiating that contract with that?

DR. PECORALE:

I don't have any problem with it, but I'm telling you right now, that I would ask them for more than what you're asking for, Carol. Because I think what you offered them is very fair. They are negotiating that that's the top.

DR. GITTELMAN:

That really is the bottom.

DR. PECORALE:

I think it's the bottom, too. That's why I say, we have to take a good, hard look at all of the activities that they're into and put some sort of number on each one of those things.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Let's examine what they have and come up with some reasonable contract.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

But almost two months is going to go by before we even –

DR. GITTELMAN:

As far as I'm concerned, the Director has the authority –

DR. ROGERS:

I will go on record as saying that if they do not contribute a fair share of the expenses, then they should get a new location.

DR. GITTELMAN:

But there has to be some timing element in there.

DR. ROGERS:

I'm not saying tomorrow. But let them know that unless they make a contribution, a fair contribution, that we can't support them.

DR. PECORALE:

Carol, can I just ask you something? They now have the boathouse. They have the use of various rooms and facilities on site without paying anything other than when they take the kids into the planetarium.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes.

DR. PECORALE:

They also have complete access to all of the things that we have. Do they ever go into the dinosaur exhibit?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I'm not aware of them going into the dinosaur exhibit, but they go into the marine –

DR. PECORALE:

They walk around the grounds. Their camp has a bus that comes in and brings the kids in and parks up at the lot.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think the parents are driving them.

DR. PECORALE:

Have we provided anything other than electricity and telephone service to them? We give them the boathouse.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We had been providing the heat, but now they are paying for that. As of September, they are paying utility costs.

DR. GITTELMAN:

There is a tremendous amount of overhead that they are simply not contributing to.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

All their mail goes through our receptionist. It's delivered there. We're sort of a hub. Just to give you a feel, one of the reasons I thought just knowing when they reserve a room would be easier because I didn't want to have to get into how many kids and bookkeeping. But I said just to give me some ballpark figure, what would 10 percent be. For example, during the break they did a pirate program. They ran two sessions for two days and she said 10 percent of those four classes would be \$71.

DR. ROGERS:

You have set up a competitor to the museum. The museum has enough problems trying to cover their expenses. We actually have a competitor on our own property earning some revenue and is refusing, at this point, to pay their expenses.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I would prefer to look at them as an asset on our property that should share in some of the pain.

DR. ROGERS:

That would be all right if they would contribute to the expenses.

DR. GITTELMAN:

I think that they did participate in a positive way through programming but they do have to participate in a revenue stream, and we have to establish that. Yes, they are a competitor. They are competing with our programs. They are trying to survive, and they are doing a job. We're trying to survive and we're doing a good job at it. Unfortunately, now we have to ask them to contribute to our

survival, which they should have been doing all along. You can't always look back and punish yourself. You have to look forward.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I think we expected to do more partnering. I still hope there is certainly an opportunity to partner. We just haven't really developed that aspect.

DR. GITTELMAN:

For example, they receive grants. I know that the spirit of our discussions with them was that we were supposed to get a typical or some form of grant share when they receive grants. I don't know if it's in the original contract, but I just know that that was the spirit of what we discussed in the beginning. I don't think we have ever received a share of their grants. I know that they have gotten grants. They have been getting free overhead and not paying the overhead share of what they should have paid. Perhaps if they had done that we wouldn't be having these discussions.

DR. ROGERS:

We all agree on what is happening. What are we going to do about it?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Tony has agreed to discuss with them – Carol is authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the museum. She also can make decisions on behalf of the museum. I would be glad to work with Tony and Carol on this.

DR. ROGERS:

Has the contract been written?

DR. GITTELMAN:

There is no contract that's been written. I don't think we will have a contract that we can offer them other than a fee agreement and something to cover liability.

DR. ROGERS:

I think we should write a contract and submit it to the board and let the board take a look at it. If they refuse to accept it, that's it.

MR. DELUISE:

In the meantime, Carol should talk to them about our agreement and get it going immediately.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I deal with Matt Sclafani on site, but we also deal with someone above him, Tom.

DR. PECORALE:

Is it possible for you to set up a meeting with Tom in the next few days?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I could try. They are anxious to have a contract.

DR. PECORALE:

Is it possible for you to set up that meeting and contact me, Steve and whoever else wants to be there?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, first thing tomorrow morning I'll make calls, assuming that everyone is around for this holiday period. I'll try to get everyone together and just hammer it out. To be fair, again, we haven't really pressed them or asked them –

DR. PECORALE:

Yes, we need to hammer it out and see where the lines are.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

An agreement of this magnitude should be reviewed by the board.

DR. PECORALE:

That has to come back to the board.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, I'm not going to argue with that. We need to schedule a meeting for a month from now.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I will call and try to get people together, if we could get some board representation and get a meeting with them.

DR. PECORALE:

See if you can get a meeting with this gentleman within the next two or three days. I know Easter is a bad time, but I'll even be here on Monday.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Okay, I'll check their availability and we'll try to get something set up.

MR. DELUISE:

You could send us an email and let us know.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

They are anxious to get an agreement in place.

DR. PECORALE:

And they have had an insurance policy.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Well, I don't think Carol is in a position to comment. We have to confirm that. It was in the other contract. I presume that they do. That's a presumption.

DR. PECORALE:

I'll just say to you that at the very minimum you want a \$2 million umbrella. At the very minimum. We really should be asking for a \$5 million umbrella.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Then we should ask for the \$5 million. So we need a fee agreement, hold harmless and a –

DR. PECORALE:

And a copy of the insurance policy that has us listed and the terms. I really would like Carol to be the one that they go back to with their proposal. I'd like them to hear some discussion that they wouldn't want to hear. I think that they have to hear that they have not held up their share of the bargain, that very definitely, they have made money by being located here, and that we would like to continue this relationship but this relationship has got to be continued on a fair basis – a fair share basis. Frankly, I think \$40 as an offering is very, very fair. I think you should have told them we want \$150 and then let them scream bloody murder and say, well then what are you willing to give. Now they told you they are not willing to give a dime.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Okay, we have a plan. Development Committee.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

We'll make this short. We have some major events that we are looking at. The first one is on Friday, September 19, the "Night at El Morocco." We're going to do it a little differently. We'll try to cut our expenses significantly so we could have more revenue. We're going to have the Lou Piccardi Orchestra in the main tent and we will have a band playing in the courtyard for the cocktail hour. We're going to in-house marketing this year. I think Carol has a great grasp on that. We should be saving a lot of money on that.

The second event is going to be Alex Torres Orchestra. It's an orchestra, right?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

Yes, it's a 13 piece Latin band.

MR. D'ORAZIO:

They played last year. That will be August 1. We're going to target all different types of people for that.

October 5, the Vanderbilt has its antique car show. Carol is excited about that. That's the 100th anniversary that started Motor Parkway. We're going to look for many local sponsors. We'll put little signs out on the grass by the cars, maybe have some music and stuff at the event. We're going to try something different with local sponsorships to try gain some revenue on that.

We're moving along with these three major events. Of course, we still have some smaller events also. That's it for now.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're off to a good start. Michael, Finance Committee.

MR. DELUISE:

The Treasurer's Report is in your packet. I think thanks to this solid, realistic budget that we put together we're in good shape. I'd like to give it over to Carol, but first I would like to say that again when we're looking at finances, and this interest that we have seen with some of the events that we're doing, including the new telescope and people coming in for the planetarium, I would like to suggest that we look at sometime in the near future a way to re-look at ticketing

as people come in. As more people come in, it gets out of hand – as Todd mentioned before – that this was like Macy's during the holidays. There are a lot of people in the lobby trying to get through by the ticket booth. There are ways to look at ticketing that could make things a lot better for us in counting tickets and looking at our finances. Carol, I would suggest that we look at that. But you might want to explain how good January was compared to last year and how we're doing in February.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

I'm very excited about the start we've had this year. We did work with a realistic budget this year. Our January numbers ended up far better than we had projected for this year. February, as well, we look to be very much ahead of where we anticipated being. We are off to a good start. Looking back, one of the things that I've been having a lot of fun with is the excel programs.

The Budget Review Office is very helpful in emailing me all our budget information in different formats, so it's easier for me to compare. They will look back over the last three or four years to get a better sense of how January might go. This January we just really did well. We were lucky to have a large grant during that period of time from the Bank of America, which helped. But even factoring that unusual source of revenue, we still did well. We were lucky with weather, but we're off to a really positive start. For the first time in ages the payables are in hand. Of course, this could change next week, but as of today we have a lot of reason to think that the sacrifices we've made in staff budget cuts and in cutting wherever we can and economizing is going to pay off. I think we're doing pretty well. We're really keeping a tight rein on expenses and taking a good look at the month-to-month expenses and revenues and trying to be more reactive to changes and not have to wait until the end of the year to see what we can do.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Thank you. Dan is not here for the Audit Committee.

DR. PECORALE:

When do we have to adopt it?

DR. GITTELMAN:

This is the 2006 audit. We are certainly ahead of where we were on 2005, but I think we should be sure to adopt this soon.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

There is a draft ready for 2006.

DR. PECORALE:

I haven't seen it.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

It hasn't come out of the Audit Committee yet. There is a draft. The hard work is done. The Audit Committee is looking at presentation issues.

DR. GITTELMAN:

My hands are tied. I can't participate in the Audit Committee and neither can the Treasurer.

DR. PECORALE:

Who is on the Audit Committee?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Dan and Matt, and neither one of them are here. We will wait until the next meeting. I can't do anything. I'm not allowed by statute. It will have to wait.

Carol, did you want to do your report now?

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We were really excited about the new telescope. We'll talk more about that later. But before I forget, the funding for the projector has been fully funded. We're very excited. It required Steve coming in and making his presentation to the Parks Committee and the full Legislature. I thank Steve again for helping with these kinds of efforts. We did receive the full appropriations. It was a long day at the Legislature. We are now good to go. I have a meeting with DPW out in Yaphank with the Deputy Commissioner, as well as Purchasing. So now we really have to think about how to go about acquiring the equipment that we need and making sure that we have everything in place in the dome and in the building itself to receive the equipment. So we met on site with the electrical engineer from the County. He has been given specs and we're looking at different scenarios depending on what the ultimate purchase is to see how it will all fit in. We are moving forward. We're very excited about our new star projector, video equipment and sound system. It will revolutionize our planetarium hopefully in about a year.

Again, there have been a lot of meetings in the last couple of months. I've met with the Budget and Management team going over our capital projects. We have a number of different capital projects ongoing. I'm meeting DPW every other week. There is a lot of paper work to put in for the upcoming capital budget program. Everyone from the County Executive's Office to DPW to Purchasing and the Budget Review Office has been really helpful in getting me up to speed.

This President's Week has been extremely successful. We had our lunar eclipse day with sold out shows. That indicated what life could be like here a year from now. It certainly showed our strengths, as well as the areas we need to improve on, ticketing being one of them and just the physical layout of the place. In a way, it was a really nice sort of run through as far as what to expect on a weekly basis next year. Again staff did an incredible job, many of the people Gretchen mentioned, as well as our gift shop staff. Beverly was here 12 hours one day. We were here from very early morning until almost midnight on our lunar eclipse night. It was a wonderful thing. We should really thank Senator Carl Marcellino for helping us with that acquisition. It's going to make a big difference in what we're able to offer the public in the future, as we were that night when we paired off our eclipse planetarium show with the viewing at the telescope. We sold out two eclipse shows. We turned many people away. We had a wonderful group here and because of the hard work with the staff in managing the 238 people in waiting outside, others coming in waiting to see the telescope, everyone was very happy and very pleasant. It was a very good experience for everyone.

In addition, at six o'clock that night we had a sold out "Story Time" program. This is another wonderful success story. Dave and Lorraine put a lot of heart and soul into it. The three programs we have had so far have sold out every time. We're looking to do a program for very young children. It's a surprise that there have been a lot of nights with parents and 18 month olds and very young children. But they are looking for some places to go. There aren't many places to go in the evening if you've got a young child. If they work all day and they can't get to a playground, this is a wonderful place to come and visit. The children enjoy it, as well as the parents.

Adding to laser shows, Friday and Saturday nights have also been a positive step for us. We are basically doubling or getting two and a half times what we had been getting each of those nights. We also added a four o'clock Sunday. Right now the seven o'clock Saturday is not that well attended, but we'll probably let that go another month before we make a decision on that. We're trying new times to see where we have the most people coming. The Beatles night is really turning out great. That's really very exciting to see.

Another thing that we have been working on lately is the BOLIS competition. That's the Best of Long Island Students Ad Council Campaign. We were the focus of the contest this year. We have had many college and high school students come through the Vanderbilt the last month or two. I went out to about four or five different universities telling them what we're all about. I've been working with some of the students to see things through their eyes. They were so excited to be here. Many of them hadn't been here since they were quite young. I can't wait to see what they have come up with. They are working on seven different marketing pieces for us. We will be able to work with some of them. I know Michael is on that board.

MR. DELUISE:

I can guarantee that students are going to do first rate absolute terrific work. We'll have a lot to choose from.

MS. GHIORSI-HART:

We have been focusing really on public programming scheduling right now. We're really trying to be strategic in targeting new audiences and seeing what works. That's our thrust for the next six months and expanding on what we do well. We'd like to hit new audiences. In the planetarium is where we get the most traffic and where we have the most potential for income coming in. That's what I've been focusing on. We're trying to get our summer programs up and running.

Site use is going well. We have a wedding booked every weekend from the middle of May to the middle of October, with the exception of maybe one day in August.

There is a little bit of bad news with the bridge. It is causing some sleepless nights for our site use people. Fifteen minutes after we closed that weekend is when we became aware of this issue. Immediately DPW responded. Of course, the safety of our visitors and our staff is what is most important, so we are hopefully being very overly cautious and completely shutting down passageway under and over, and we will find out in the next few days if they can lift a little bit of those restrictions, but it's going to be probably months before they get in there and chip away and do what they need to do to really fully assess the

structure. There is a chance that we might be looking at a new bridge, in which case life will get complicated. But we're not going to worry about that too much yet.

The biggest problem for us is that we have no handicap access to the mansion – the courtyard right now. That will impact our weddings and our bus tours. We're going to have to deal with that as the situation develops. It's sort of where we're at.

DR. GITTELMAN:

It's always a challenge. I would be disingenuous if I allowed some of Carol's comments to stand. I think Carol did the lion's share of the work when it came to the capital projects. She attended meetings like a veteran, and I'm very proud of the progress that she has made. I think it takes a long time to learn some of these skills, and she's a very fine student.

I think there are symptoms here of good things. For one, we have a balance sheet that's balanced. It's a realistic budget. I have confidence that Carol can develop programming. Therefore, I feel that we should be pushing to develop programming and maybe Cornell has programs that we should be doing. I have confidence that Carol can lead the crowd to that objective. I think those are good things. I think that Cornell has proven to us that there is programming to be had, and we should do it. It's good to know there is somebody here who is looking at the issue and willing to tackle it.

When you look at the statements that you were handed, I think that Carol is giving us a clearer financial picture than we ever got before.

I also know that she has been working with DPW on our capital projects in a way that we have never done before. This is a regularly scheduled meeting. I have attended one of those meetings. I believe they are every other week. She has a report right here. It's actually entitled, "Conference Number 10." I just want to bring it to your attention; it's entitled, "Conference Number 10." These are meeting minutes from Friday, March 14, 2008 with DPW. How could she have had so many meetings in such a short career here? I think she deserves a lot of credit. When you look at these minutes, and I think these minutes were prepared by DPW, you will find every one of our capital projects has been discussed. I really believe that each trustee should receive a copy.

What I'm pointing to is all good stuff. I think she's making wonderful progress. I wouldn't say that we should be aggressive on programming if I didn't believe she could do it because I see what she does.

That's really all I have to say. I think that we are going to have a good year. We started it off with a new projector followed by appropriations approaching \$2.9 million for – I mean, a new telescope and now a new projector. We're going to open up the room with the whale-shark in it. That's all in one year. That's 2008, plus we're going to celebrate Mr. Vanderbilt's building of the Motor Parkway. That's great stuff. That's one heck of a year. You don't get better than that. When you open up that marine museum – what are we calling it now, the habitat? Yes, the habitat. I've been there only 150 times. When we open the habitat, it's going to be a stunner. It's going to set you back. It's going to

be incredible. The public is going to love it. The public has paid for it. They deserve to love it. It's just good stuff.

I think we have a great year coming. I would like to see us get off to a good start. We may have a rocky problem with the bridge, so it's good balanced by bad. I hope the County will work with us. I believe that the capital appropriations we get come from Legislators and the County Executive who believe in the institution and value what we do here. It's not from Carol and Steve. It's from them. We have to always remember that. I believe that they will help us with the bridge. We'll get past this stuff. That's all I have to say.

No old business, to my knowledge. Do we want to have a business meeting in four weeks from now, the third Wednesday? I don't have my calendar so I can't confirm what the date is.

DR. PECORALE:

You want to have an executive session tonight?

DR. GITTELMAN:

I don't think we need one.

DR. PECORALE:

You don't think we need one, okay. So you want to look at April's date?

MS. OLDRIN-MONES:

April 16.

DR. PECORALE:

It's a Wednesday.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Can we circulate this? We're missing a number of Trustees tonight. I'd like to bring them into the picture. Can we do this after this meeting instead of doing it tonight? Would that be all right?

DR. PECORALE:

So what we're doing is authorizing you to notify us as to whether or not a special meeting shall be held.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes, please. Is there any new business? Old business? Can I have a motion to adjourn?

MR. DELUISE:

Motion.

DR. PECORALE:

Second.

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're so adjourned. **(Vote: 6/0/0/9 Absent: Mr. Olivieri, Mr. Swinson, Ms. Figalora, Mr. LeBow, Ms. Gicas & Mr. Macchione. Three vacant positions.)**

(Dr. Gittelman adjourned the meeting at 9:10 P.M.)