

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

VANDERBILT MUSEUM OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Minutes

The Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Oversight Committee Meeting was held at the William H. Rogers Legislative Building in Smithtown, New York, on Tuesday, July 14, 2009 at 1:30 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Terrence Pearsall, Chairman, Representing the Presiding Officer
Lance Reinheimer, Acting Chair, Representing the Budget Review Office
Barbara LoMoriello, Representing the Chair of the Parks Committee
Jill Moss, Representing the Budget Review Office
Neil Toomb, Executive Budget Office

MEMBERS NOT IN ATTENDANCE:

Legislator Vilorio-Fisher, Legislative District 5
Linda Bay, Representing the Minority Leader

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Lora Gellerstein, Aide to Legislator Cooper
George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Carol Hart, Executive Director, Vanderbilt Museum
Noel Gish, Vanderbilt Museum Trustee
Ron Beattie, Vanderbilt Museum Trustee
Gary Quinn, Suffolk County Information Technology
Joe Muncey, Budget Review Office.
All Other Interested Parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Gabrielle Skolom, Court Stenographer

[The meeting was called to order at 1:40 P.M.]

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. Let's get started. We're here today to discuss the Vanderbilt Oversight. I would like to start with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Salutation

Thank you. I believe everyone received a copy of the agenda. Does anyone need an agenda? The first order of business is RFP Updates, and we'll start with the cell tower, and Gary Quinn is also in the audience. Gary, if you can come up to the table and perhaps you can give us a brief update of where the Department of Information Technology is relating to the administration of cell towers.

MR. QUINN:

Just push down and hold it here?

MR. REINHEIMER:

You have to push the button and hold it.

MR. QUINN:

Okay. Yes, as far as an update on what's happening with the cell towers there, the two major carriers, Verizon and T-Mobile, have visited the site, have performed surveys of the location, have presented those locations, tested out for whether or not they would be viable or not, and they are. In addition to that, last Wednesday, I believe that Mr. Gish held a small forum at the museum whereby T-Mobile was present and answered questions of people in the neighborhood regarding how it would work, sitings, views, et cetera. I think, really at this point, after speaking with Mr. Gish on Friday, you know, we're probably pretty close to the point of then starting to follow on the process of moving forward with constructing the towers. I mean, there's some upfront work that needs to be completed, I believe. It's not just County reviews of an application. I think there's probably some other interested agencies and parties that probably would have to some type of input, but I think we're at that point. Would you like to add anything, Mr. Gish?

MR. GISH:

That is correct. We're just about at that stage of the game. We had the frequency test on the 8th, and that was actually the second frequency test. The first one failed miserably, which was an all-day effort, just getting the tower up and down, but the second one, we got up to about 120 feet. And then we took the majority of the time to go around and take pictures from where we could see the tower from Northport Harbor and all the way to Asharoken to see how it would impact communities -- the visibility of the tower at that stage of the game. We had the community meeting on the same day, July 8th, and met with concerned individuals. Legislator Cooper was there to orchestrate the meeting along with Pat Collins -- excuse me, Dan Collins, who was there from Pinnacle Telecommunication Group, who addressed the safety concerns; Tim {Fichem} from T-Mobile; Neil McDonald from WFC Architects who was with us when we did the frequency test, so that went well. We are just now in the stages of -- as you said, we'll probably have to do an historic review of the property because it is on register, and then I'll be touching bases with you on exactly the format we'll follow just to sign a contract.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Any questions? Neil, do you have any questions?

MR. TOOMB:

No.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Can you just summarize how the meeting went with the community; how receptive they were, how many cards were sent out, how many people attended the meeting?

MR. GISH:

I will defer to lovely Lora.

MS. GELLERSTEIN:

There were over --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Mic.

MS. GELLERSTEIN:

Oh, sorry. There were 4,000 cards sent out and we had about 30 people at the meeting signed up. We did receive also maybe, I think, 15 or 16 phone calls in our office, most of which were positive. There's maybe one or two negative people concerned about and not wanting the cell tower, but most people were positive.

MR. GISH:

We did receive a letter from the Fire Department in Centerport saying that would be good, that they were in favor of the cell tower at that stage of the game. Also, Peter Matherson who was the Deputy Mayor for Asharoken and the Police Commissioner of Asharoken came and were in favor of the tower for communications for the Asharoken community, so both of those were positive from key sources.

MR. REINHEIMER:

The next step, do you have any approvals that you need to get from an historical perspective using the museum? If the tower is 120 feet, does that have an impact as opposed to being 100 feet, and, you know, what is the next step, and who is going to be doing the RFP?

MR. GISH:

I'll be honest. I was working this step-by-step with Gary Ponzo. I was under the impression that T-Mobile at this stage of the game was the one that had the contract in place with the County, that would allow us to move quickly. Initially, we met with Verizon, but Verizon did not have a contract in place with the County to make it easy for us to expedite the process. So I went along with the recommendation to go along with T-Mobile at that stage of the game. We will have to proceed with an historic review from the site, but we did take pictures of where the tower could be seen at the museum. You could not see the tower from the mansion. You had to climb up onto the second floor of the Marine Museum in order to see the tower to make it visible. So I think from an historic point of view, there may be an issue. I can't speak for them, but I will tell you that 120 feet -- that seemed to be the height that we would need to get multiple carriers on the single pole tower that we were arranging for. If you drop down to 100 feet, you would probably -- are only going to get 280; I don't think anybody would buy on. So the aim here is to aim for the 120 height with any State review and then see where we can go forward.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Gary, do you know what the next step should be in how the museum should go about getting the approvals that they need prior to going to an RFP or prior to a contract as far as being parkland or historical site?

MR. QUINN:

There's a couple things that have to happen simultaneously, all right? The first thing we can do is we can take that agreement that the County currently has with the carriers and we can basically utilize that agreement for the Vanderbilt so the Vanderbilt can have an agreement with the carrier.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Now, there's a set rate for that, isn't there? There's a negotiated rate that's standardized, and my understanding is that the Vanderbilt was looking to get somewhat higher. If it's my recollection, I think the current rate is around \$17.50 per carrier per month.

MR. QUINN:

The current rate for -- the most -- maximum number of sites you can have are 16 or more under the umbrella, is \$17.50 per month semiannually -- well, \$17.50 per month semiannually, so it's 20-something thousand dollars per year per site for the County. But in this case here, this is a one-off site, so I was under the understanding that the Vanderbilt was going to -- we would assist the Vanderbilt, but the Vanderbilt would work with us to get an agreement with the carrier, so to take our agreement -- but we can take out our pricing schedule with them because for a single site or less than 10 locations, it's about \$2,800 as month in the County's existing pricing schedule. So the Vanderbilt has very unique piece of property. It's in high demand by a number of carriers due to the location up where it's at, and there is no service either in the residential land area as well as the -- also the water area where people would be boating in the same region. So I believe the Vanderbilt could have their own agreement with a negotiated price individually with that carrier.

So the rest of the contract of all the issues related to the T's and C's, but not the pricing schedule, would be similar that the County has because it will protect the Vanderbilt just like it protects the County, but the price for those particular towers would be unique between the Vanderbilt and the actual carriers themselves. So I am not recommending to use the County's pricing schedule because we're not going to -- the Vanderbilt is not going to build multiple towers in other parts of the County the way we are today on County facilities.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Neil, You have a question?

MR. TOOMB:

Yeah. My question would be with the -- regarding T-Mobile, I mean, I'm familiar with the initial County contract, one, because I helped write it, and I came up with discount pricing schedule for multiple sites. I believe the idea was, as Gary says, to use the current contract as a boilerplate but to make it a separate agreement, which we'd have to check, which I think would require an RFP. My concern would be -- or my question would be is that why wouldn't -- or has T-Mobile asked, couldn't they just add this onto the contract at the already discounted price and continue to make it another site? In other words, why would they pay more when -- if they came on the County contract, they probably wouldn't have to? I don't understand why they would do that.

MR. GISH:

Well, we removed -- I believe there was a resolution by Jon Cooper that passed the Legislature concerning -- we were removed from that pricing bracket to allow us to negotiate separate with T-Mobile or Verizon or any of the other carriers so that we might be able to maximize the income for that, and then there was a secondary ailment to that, which means that the money would be forwarded directly to the Vanderbilt for operating expenses. I believe those were the two parts of that resolution that were passed by the Legislature.

MR. TOOMB:

So you're going to be doing this under the resolution for the parkland as a parkland telecom site; is that correct?

MS. GELLERSTEIN:

I'm not sure.

MR. GISH:

No, I don't believe it's going to done under parkland.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yeah, that's my understanding also; that under the parkland, that, I guess, the trustees of the Parks Department would have some say in this, and in the Vanderbilt's case, they are not involved in the selection of the cell tower site or involved in the cell tower for the museum.

MR. TOOMB:

Okay. So there's three ways people can get cell towers from the County: Either through a general contract or through parkland or an individual site with the Vanderbilt. So, if that's the case, then I would question -- I would think they would have to do an RFP for it.

MR. REINHEIMER:

That's my question. Gary, what is your thought on this? It seems to me that we would have to go through a contract process and that an RFP would be the way to go.

MR. QUINN:

It definitely has to be a contract done between the Vanderbilt and a carrier or between -- not in the case of Suffolk County and the carrier, because we already have that contract in place. So it has to be done between the Vanderbilt and the particular carrier. The way I understand it is that we were to assist the Vanderbilt in getting through the whole process through either expertise or bringing the right people to bear to help them get it facilitated so that it works well. I don't really know the rules, whether or not you have to issue an RFP for this transaction or not.

MR. GISH:

I think the initial conversation that I had with Gary over the RFP was the fact that the County felt there were certain providers that did a better job in the construction and made less of a hassle for the County than others, and that we should attempt to go through the process that would be easier for that construction and then add on additional providers for that additional income. But I would work through the County on their recommendation for the construction -- for the group for construction. It was not -- I do not believe we were discussing an RFP on this construction. We had not gone to contract. Obviously, all of our negotiations at this time has been done prior to meeting with County representatives. Now, when I talked to Gary just the other day, to be very honest, we were sort of on hold. I know he was waiting for, I believe, Pat Connelly, if I have got the name right, to come onboard and get up to speed with the Vanderbilt at that stage of the game, and when that happens, we'll be able to work that out, I think.

MR. TOOMB:

I believe we're going to ask for George Nolan, for Counsel to give us an opinion on it.

MR. PEARSALL:

Yes, he is.

MR. GISH:

Good.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. Until George comes in, we'll go to the next item on the agenda: development support. I believe you have an RFP out for that.

MS. HART:

We have an RFP that Trustee Lynn Dwyer has drafted. I believe a number of people -- Lance, Jill, I think Terry -- have seen it, proofed it, basically gave some comments back. It will be presented at our Board Of Trustees meeting tomorrow for approval from our board, and then, at that time, we expect -- we hope it will go out, so it has not gone out yet.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. We'll distribute copies of the draft to the members of the Oversight Committee. That being

said, I guess next would be the Food Service Consultant, and you sent out the RFP; the RFP came back. You have some people that are interested. Give us a brief outline as to where you are in this process.

MS. HART:

We did get two new respondents to that RFP who submitted written proposals. We had a third respondent who had responded earlier in the year, and his proposal is still active. I have a fourth person for a company that's interested that has yet to be able to come out. So we have three viable proposals, and a fourth might be coming within the next week. We have not yet as -- met as a committee to evaluate these proposals as well as look at our current catering capabilities.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Any questions?

MR. BEATTIE:

Actually, there are another couple things that I think we should bring to your attention from the ones we did review preliminarily. Some of the -- actually, all of the submissions that are made, save one, I believe, have extremely onerous requirements that we really didn't expect, which would essentially turn the Vanderbilt into a catering facility. Let me run down a list of some of them. Just so you know, these are the ones that are coming in and what the requirements are for people who want to do a full service catering contract with the Vanderbilt. One of them requires -- actually, I'm going to run down the most onerous ones so you can see.

This is from one respondent, all the things this particular company wanted in order to get a contract there: The three front rooms at that Normandy Cottage for office space; complete use -- 100 % use of the garage, or we sometimes refer to it as the educational center. They want to put an additional tent in front of the marine museum. They want to put in portable restrooms that I believe are transportable, like a huge mobile home near the marine museum. They want to have -- I don't know if it's exclusive access, but they want to have access to the mansion courtyard for events. They want the dinosaur Butler building for storage, so we're going to have to find somewhere to put the dinosaurs. They want access to the Planetarium lobby and Rose Garden. And they require -- and this is not the only one that required this -- 50 to 60 events per year at the Vanderbilt.

So these were some of the things that we're starting to see, and we're not sure the neighbors are going to allow us to accommodate this. I sat, just by coincidence, and heard Carol field a phone call from one of the neighbors about some of the rumors that are going on, and if she ever saw some of the requirements that were in these responses, I think there would probably be a pretty big revolt. One of them, however -- and I guess the people on the Oversight Committee will hear me raise this question again and again, but one that did come up was that one was interested in the Seaplane Hangar as a facility, and that's a facility that could do 50 or 60 in it, and we could still complete our mission as a museum. But we still are looking for direction from this Oversight Committee as to stabilizing that building because we can't bring anybody in to look -- first of all, everybody knows that it's dangerous, the ramp and the one wall. We'd like to get some kind of direction as to the funds that were approved, the capital funds -- and not all of them; just enough to stabilize the building, first of all, for safety, and secondly, so that we can bring people to that facility and sell that as a concept for catering there.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. Since there's no questions concerning that, you'll be reviewing them at your meeting tomorrow, and I guess provide us with a summary as to what your findings are at the meeting.

MR. GISH:

I don't know whether we'll be doing that tomorrow at the Trustees' meeting. I have attempted to set up a committee to review the RFPs on the catering to do that inhouse first and then to bring that to the full board, and we're still waiting for two to come in. They have requested one due to, I think,

a personal matter and the other one dealing with a flood, but both of them have expressed interest in answering the RFP, and we'll take any recommendations. I'll wait on any of them to see if any of them are viable before the committee meets and reviews it, and that's where we are with that. But more than likely, it will not be discussed at the full board meeting tomorrow, except to say that the RFPs are in, the number we've received, and Ron will discuss the range of them. One on the low end, running a cafe for the students that will be coming in during the day and for us, doing some minor work there and then one to the range that Ron just described, which will be the Vanderbilt wedding and party center in Centerport.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Gary, as soon as we can get Counsel out here, we'll try to resolve -- go back to the cell tower so that you don't have to stay for the whole meeting. Next item on the agenda is the Business Plan and Operating Budget Request. I just want to make sure that all the members on the Oversight Committee received the copy of the business plan. Carol, do you want to give us an overview of the business plan and how that relates to your operating budget request?

MS. HART:

Sure. Would you like a copy? The business plan really outlines the strategies that the museum is committed to using, the recognition that the reliance on the investment income from our endowment is over and that the reliance on Suffolk County funding, supplementary funding, is also not something that's going to be continuing. So this business strategy is looking at ways -- suggested ways that the museum can increase our income and -- earned income and revenue, as well as outlining how we hope to increase donations and fundraising. One key element of this plan is a development department or committee. That's why the proposal for development support is so critical. We do recognize that over the last five years that as the costs of the museum have increased, we have decreased our cost by eliminating key staff positions. We are now at -- today at 11 full-time positions; five years ago, there were 26 to 29 positions. Unfortunately, most of those cuts were in the administrative overseeing positions, including memberships, special events, fundraising, development kinds; and I think in the short term, this helped with salaries, but in the long term, it's not making for a healthy institution. So the 2010 budget does include funding to fund this new outside professional. The updated 2009 projections also includes funding from mid-August on for an outside development professional. We do recognize it's going to take some time for the development work to kick in, but we do think we will be able to see some very short-term increases, certainly membership and some special events.

The other things that might not be so obvious is that we have taken measures to take back our security force with inhouse work force, so you'll see a slight shifting from outside professional moneys to the salary positions. So you might not see as much of the cuts we made in our part-time staff and full-time staff elsewhere because those security people are now included in there. And we think this is going to be a savings of about \$70,000 for the year. We are ramping up our education programs. There's a real push right now for our school programs, and even more, the children who would be coming for weekend summer programs. This is going to take some time to develop, and certainly, the economy has effected that area.

Another area that's really critical to our business plan is the publicity/public relations/marketing, and again, that is something that, due to certain key cuts, we haven't focused as much on marketing as we could have. And I think the recognition is that we have a wonderful jewel; we have a museum; we have a planetarium that people will come and continue to come at great numbers -- I won't say great numbers, but those numbers are holding steady and increasing. We have seen a drop-off in our school. If we look over the last five years, those numbers have come down, site use is coming down, but our public admission numbers for people who are walking in, tourists, visitors; certainly, they're holding. In fact, this summer, they seem to be increasing. So where the economy is certainly hurting in some areas, the staycation does seem to be working. Our numbers walking in the door are pretty good. I did outline just one or two cases for analysis that I think were very instructive. Last year, we added a 10:00 laser show on Friday and Saturday night, and in the summers, I added a Thursday night. The increase from those tickets, the numbers and the dollars

was really quite incredible for a very small increase in costs. I think it shows us that any efforts, as we talk about marketing, marketing efforts geared toward getting more bodies into those planetarium seats for education as well as planetarium shows has a huge return.

We've in the past month done some advertising, front-page ads on different area Pennysavers and Newsday, and we definitely are getting feedback from those kind of efforts to reach out to our audiences, working with -- and Ron has been working with marketing. We will be developing different campaigns, and certainly, this leads up -- and we'll be talking later about the new planetarium. And by the end of 2010, we are still on schedule to have a brand new upgraded planetarium, at which time, we do think almost every aspect of the way the museum functions is going to change. And what we're doing right now is trying to get our infrastructure in place to deal with success, to deal with big numbers, to be able to ticket. So these are all things that we have thought about in our 2010 budget. So we have budgeted more money for software, for ticketing hardware kinds of things, and I think we are very excited. We have a reenergized board who, again, recognizes that fundraising is just key right now. We faced closure. We faced a shutdown. We're not unusual in that, museums and non-profits, but with the help of the County, we have gotten through this year, and with the help of New York State, wherever those taxes are coming from, the County and State and tourists of Suffolk County, I think we now have a very good shot at meeting our goals for next year, and that we will have to go back to any other funding source.

MR. REINHEIMER:

I'm going to go back to the cell tower. George Nolan, Counsel to Legislature, is here. Our discussion concerns the next step with the cell tower. How we go -- enter into a contract, do we do an RFP? Once we get past the part related to the historic nature of the site and we get the approvals related necessary for that, assuming that those come through, what is the next step or what's the best way for the County to go for putting a cell tower on Vanderbilt property?

MR. NOLAN:

I believe the question has already been posed to me by someone -- it may have been you -- whether or not the Vanderbilt trustees have to necessarily comply with the County procedures on an RFP or can they do -- apply the practices they normally employ, and my opinion is they can employ the practices they normally employ with hiring a consultant. It's up to the trustees to do that. I believe the resolution we passed authorizing the cell tower at the Vanderbilt indicated that when a selection is made, that does come back to the Legislature. I believe that was in the resolution, and that would be the sign-off from the County.

MR. REINHEIMER:

I think the question is -- the first step is, how do you select -- does the Vanderbilt have the authority or ability to go to a particular provider and ask them to build a tower, or does that have to be by an RFP process?

MR. NOLAN:

I would have to look at the General Municipal Law in terms of the requirements for procuring consultant services and whether or not an RFP is required. My -- off the top of my head, I don't think it is required. I think they can use a different process to hire a consultant. It would probably be in their best interest to make it as competitive as possible and give different vendors a chance to have an opportunity to provide that service, but I don't think it has to be an RFP process.

MR. PEARSALL:

Noel, does that give you some guidance?

MR. GISH:

That was my understanding from the start, and I'm probably overstating my case, but I understood that we would be operating independently and coordinating a contract outside but that I would pass any contract past the County and the director of general communications and now the commissioner or Pat Donnelly when they come in so that their input and their review of our process would have

some oversight so that I would not be making a goofy error in that process. They would be able to come in and advise me on that process.

MR. REINHEIMER:

It's been pointed out to me that the MOU that the County entered into with the Vanderbilt, the Vanderbilt entered into with the County, requires Legislative approval of any leases or licenses for a cell tower, so you would have to come back to the Legislature --

MR. PEARSALL:

Yes.

MR. GISH:

Correct, and that is my understanding.

MR. REINHEIMER:

And you would be working with Information Technology -- Department of Information Technology and Gary Quinn on coordinating and going through the proper procedures?

MR. GISH:

Yes. Gary and I have already talked. We made contact last week, and that is our agreement that I would be running past him. He would be the point man as Gary was initially. I'm now going to defer to Mr. Quinn on all matters that I have concerning the cell tower, and the cell tower will be built with the review of the County and based on zoning and construction and all the things that have to be made.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Do you foresee any problems with the Town considering the height; if you go 120 feet, is that going to problems with the town?

MR. GISH:

I think the issue -- I think the County would override Huntington in this particular situation. I can be wrong. I'll defer to greater minds than mine, but I believe in this particular situation if it's an issue relating to safety, if we have that the letters from the fire department and the police department and Deputy Mayor of Asharoken saying that a cell tower at this stage of the game would aid in their safety. I believe there's a new, not a resolution, but there is a national mandate to try and improve 911 communication. In my research on this, I believe that almost 50% of 911 calls come from a cell phone. We now have, I believe, 84% of the young people in this nation, and I use that -- younger, from I believe 20 to 30, no longer have hard lines in their homes. They rely on cell phone communication as their main source of information. We're going to try and attempt to use that data to get the cell tower built to provide those emergency services that are necessary.

And also, at the Vanderbilt -- I have probably overstepped my case, but on that particular evening when we had the community meeting, we did have a gentleman that said he had Verizon communication, and those of you who were there, I took out my cell phone and said, "I have Verizon. Call my number," and I listed it and said, "Call me right here," and he wasn't able to get -- make communication. So that sort of proved the point because a week prior to that, we did have a young lady in a school group who did come down with an asthmatic attack, and the mother could not even reach the bus driver at the top of the hill or 911 and would not leave the child to get a hardline communication because we couldn't do it. So those types of things put us in a difficult situation, and I'm concerned more about that. I'm concerned about that. Yes, raising money for the museum is essential, but I can't get cell phone communication at that site, either. So I think that's one of the things we have to be concerned about, and I think we can move forward with that, if we have the safety issue as the primary element.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. Neil?

MR. TOOMB:

I do believe there has been legislation that has put pressure on all the providers to provide 911 coverage, actually, throughout everywhere, but especially because of an accident in upstate New York where someone couldn't get coverage and someone was on the side of the road. However, my question -- I think I would raise a concern of whether or not we would be able to override the Town. Since it's not a County contract, I'm not sure of whether we would be able to supercede the Town's authority, so I would suggest you to have to conversations with the Town and make it a safety issue that the Town acts on so that they are not trying to block it and we're not put in a spot where we've got to try to supercede them when it's not actually a County contract. It's kind of like -- I don't know how we would not use County procedures for RFPs, et cetera, but supercede their authority as far as the zoning of it.

MR. GISH:

I'll get in touch with Huntington, but my understanding would be that even though we're not following the County procedures as far as parkland, I need County approval for this to take place. If you said no, the Vanderbilt would not proceed with the cell tower. So in this particular situation, the governmental authority is still the County for me to proceed.

MR. TOOMB:

You need Legislative approval to install it and to go ahead with it, but the Legislature doesn't control the zoning of it if and the -- you know, if there's a problem with the Town or the zoning, unless I'm wrong.

MR. NOLAN:

That is a really complicated issue, whether or not a county facility is subject to town zoning. My research indicated in the past, it's a very complicated multistep test that indicates whether or not town zoning can apply to a county facility, so it is not a slam dunk either way. So I do agree; it would probably make sense to reach out to the town before moving.

MR. TOOMB:

It's much easier --

MR. GISH:

Okay. I will do that.

MR. TOOMB:

I would enforce with them on the safety issue, and certainly, if we need to get you support from the PD or from FRES or something to support that, we could do that.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Any more questions concerning the cell tower? Are we all clear on the next step then? And I guess we'll get updates as things materialize. Gary, I want to thank you for coming to the meeting today on such short notice and for being here and answering our questions. Thank you very much, and for working with the Vanderbilt and continuing the work that your department started with the Vanderbilt. Thank you.

I think we were on the business plan, and I'm not sure if you were finishing up or where you were in your business plan. I think it's important to know two important pieces of your business plan are the cell tower revenues, I think are in there and also the hotel/motel tax is also in there in addition to some distribution from the endowment, which we'll have to see how that does between now and the middle of next year. But those are three important components for you in order to get through your plan next year, in addition to site use and/or catering is part of your plan.

MS. HART:

Yes, certainly site use, but I will say, I did not assume any income from site use beyond what a good year was for us, which would have been last year. So, hopefully, we'll be able to do better one way or the other, but I tried to be conservative and not assume too much of anything.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Any questions on the Vanderbilt Museum's business plan or budget for 2010? Seeing none, we'll go to the next order of business, which is the status on the star projector and where you are in that project.

MS. HART:

Yes. I think you have received in the past --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Barbara has a question.

MS. LOMORIELLO:

I just have question. Was there a request or is there -- are you going to present this business plan to the Parks Committee?

MS. HART:

We did present it to the full Legislature, but I think I will -- so they all -- all members of the Parks Committee were given copies and was presented, but certainly we will be at the next Parks Committee meeting to further discuss if there's any questions.

MS. LOMORIELLO:

Okay. Thanks.

MS. HART:

Yes. I think back in April, as part of our MOU, we had submitted a timeline for the capital project of the planetarium projector. We gave you another copy in front of you. We are about four weeks behind, according to this timeline, because it took a little bit longer to get the contracts all signed than we had hoped. But the good news is, in talking to our consultants, the October 10 finish date still looks good, so they feel they can make up anything we're lacking. We did have a two-day meeting on July 7th and July 8th. We had representatives from the Suffolk County Department of Public Works, electrical engineers, two architects. We had three of our engineers, mechanical, electrical, from the head consultant engineering firm. We had our communications, science communications and planetarium expert was there as well, as well as some other architect and staff. We met for probably six hours, I guess, on Tuesday and another four or five hours on Wednesday going over different procedures. On Tuesday, we also had someone from Purchasing, County Purchasing, there to go through the procedures, and we can get more specific, if necessary, but discussing possible different bid alternates, the process of going through purchasing to expedite that. There's the scope of the work, which is again, we're replacing the existing GOTO Projector with state-of-the-art planetarium equipment, which will include a new video and sound system to allow for multiple format programs and presentations. The new equipment will include the main star projector, full dome video projection system, surround sound system, control console, cove lighting, automation system and show production equipment, as well as content and other things. There needs to -- the old equipment needs to be taken out. We investigated where are the dedicated server room with a new HVAC system to support to equipment's load would go. We looked at existing electrical service, other possible needs, so long discussions of lead time for equipment and the proposed work equipment installation schedule. That was our first tour facility, so that was our first meeting. Noel attended that as well. The consultant who is working on the RFP expects to get back to us fairly quickly and will be meeting with us again and hopefully things will move as quickly as possible. The RFP is being crafted very carefully to allow as competitive a bid as possible. While there might be some favorites among some of the employees, we recognize that all the equipment is wonderful and would be a huge upgrade for us. So we're going to be very careful to encourage competitive bids among the different companies.

Do you have anything to add?

MR. GISH:

The schedule that you have in front of you is a schedule that I'm aiming for for the October conclusion of that planetarium, and the aim for that is that we would -- the downtime would be during the summer when the school groups are not there and that we would -- obviously, the beginning of school is after Labor Day, but a lot of the tours don't start until October, so we would take advantage of school groups attending for that October, November, December time period in 2010, which would augment revenues considerably. That's very optimistic. And I believe we spoke with Kathleen -- I'm going to get this wrong -- Koppenhoefer who was there at the meeting. Am I close on that one?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes.

MR. GISH:

Good. And the aim was -- she also thought we were sort of optimistic on the aim. I explained to her the reasons for that, and we did have a little bit of a delay on the consultant contract being signed, but I will tell you that I e-mailed Neil Toomb concerning that, and that moved very, very quickly so -- before July, in meeting with the consultant in early July, that was a fast maneuver, and he is getting on that right away now. So we should be able to make up our little delay here and still meet that October deadline of opening the planetarium. We intend at that stage of the game to try and have a series of events for the remainder of 2010 that will highlight the opening. I think that will be a real plus, a real boon to revenue at that stage of the game. We'll be able to raise our rates for the planetarium considerably, and all of that should go a long way in bringing about that economic sustainability that we're hoping for.

MS. HART:

I also might add that we will be working on a marketing campaign to say goodbye to our wonderful GOTO projector, and I do definitely think we will see a big uptake in attendance in those last months. Many people on Long Island grew up with that big projector. In the 80's, I think they called it "George," so I think that will help attendance as well. Again, Kathleen, I guess, did caution us that from her experience, we were being, I guess, very optimistic, but I also told her the Vanderbilt is special, and we do have commitment from -- and I believe this is true -- we have a commitment from every level within the County to see this through, and I think we will be able to see quicker turnaround times than we might normally expect.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Any questions concerning the Planetarium Star Projector? Seeing none, we'll go on to the next agenda. I guess miscellaneous, various things: How the summer's been, how your special events that you've had this past -- you had a July 4th event, you had something this past weekend; you have a pretty full schedule on new activities that you haven't had before so if you can just overwhelm us with what the Vanderbilt is doing.

MS. HART:

Sure. We have made an effort to try some new activities, and I'm happy to report they have been very successful. The 4th of July festival weekend, the first time we've done something really organized on the 4th, was very successful. Our attendance numbers on that Saturday were twice what they were the Saturday the year before, which is really sort of a good day for us, but we had never been open in the evening and invited people for a fee to watch the fireworks. So we had a very good attendance so that 200 people that either stayed through the day or came back if you had purchased a ticket. We increased the fee for the day; it was the first time, I think, we've ever done that. With the general admission fee for the day, we had extra activities for them to enjoy, including hayrides down -- all around the ground. Noel was there all day. We got some wonderful volunteers,

and again, for me, one of the exciting things about it, we had a volunteer, Emily Gittleman, who really put it all together. We had vendors there. They paid a fee. All our costs upfront were covered by whatever sponsorships Emily was able to get. The raffles were all donated, and we were able to pull in a number of volunteers from Girl Scouts and families and from Craigslist. So it was the first attempt at a big kind of affair that wasn't totally dependent on staff. So for that, it was very successful, and again, people really had a great time and then, again, stayed through the evening.

We had additional shows as well. So it was very successful for that day. Sunday was good, not as good as we hoped. The weather was gorgeous both days, which actually I think hurt us, if you want to know the truth, a little bit. Vanderbilt is weird. Too good a weather, especially coming off a rainy couple weeks cannot be as good. But certainly, that Saturday and staying through the evening was a wonderful community opportunity for many people who hadn't been to the Vanderbilt before for whatever reason. The pull of the fireworks brought them out, so we reached new audiences, so that was wonderful. And then Sunday night, we had a tango night, and there, too, we reached a whole new audience. There are a lot of groups on Long Island, clubs, people who tango, again, who had never come to us who were coming from Manhattan and Queens, and we had over 160 paid admissions for that event, and they had a wonderful time, and the feedback I'm getting is they would like the schedule an additional event. So that was another again, not -- in the scheme of things, not a huge fundraiser, but it was a friendraiser and again will pull in new audiences and new people.

This first week of July has been good. Our walk-in today, you know -- our attendance is up. Again, weather might have something to do with this; we haven't had great beach days, so people are coming to us, but.

I also feel talking to people, our advertising on Long Island, I think, has helped and the fact that people are not going away. We are trying a much more aggressive children's program this summer than we ever have, The Wizard's Program, and while I will say I'm a little disappointed that we didn't get huge numbers, the third week we have, I think, 26 children enrolled and another 30 or 40 children enrolled for half-sessions, weekly half-sessions, and I do think August will pick up a little bit. So in talking to area camps, again, the economy is certainly impacting parents being able or comfortable sending their children out, but next week is a full week for us. It's the first time we're doing it and I think the word-of-mouth as we get out there and can publicize it more, we'll be able to build again with this new audience, so we are pretty happy with that.

We have a number of things coming up in August. We have a Depression Glass show and sale on August 9th, that last year we ran out of parking. We were parking on the street. So again, those kinds of shows are nice for us in that the organization -- and I'll include car shows in this -- we don't have to do much of the advertising because the groups pay for a lot of advertising, but we get the general admission that comes in. We get a little bit of fee, but it's mostly about the increased numbers coming in and Depression Glass shows and car shows including the MG car show in August and then we have a Jaguar and Corvette in September. Those are days where we run out of parking, so we know attendance is good on that.

We also are, in August, are having a concert, the Alex Torres concert. This will be the third year we're having that, and that grows every year. Last year, I think we had 180, 200 people coming in, and it's just a beautiful, beautiful night at the Vanderbilt Museum to listen to music and to dance. In addition, we're having a meteor shower party one night. That's not a night where we would make a lot of money, but we have people coming in and learning more about astronomy. We also will be having a gala -- a sponsored -- well, I'm not going to call it a gala but a fundraiser that the trustees will be sponsoring in September -- September 12th, and you'll hear a little bit more about that later. So it's been a busy summer, and I think the numbers are going to be good for us.

MR. GISH:

Just for the record, we did not shoot off any fireworks. That became a concern for the Huntington Fire Marshal who came in reading that we were going to watch the fireworks and we had no -- so for

the record, the Vanderbilt did not shoot off any fireworks. We actually just sat out on the hill and looked over to Asharoken, so we'd like to thank the community of Asharoken for shooting off the fireworks. We just watched them and we'd like to --

MS. HART:

That's important. We were sweating it a little bit. But it was a beautiful night, and we counted over 30 other shows from Connecticut because you can see the Connecticut shoreline. So they were little, but they were popping up. So again, it was a wonderful family night for people at the Vanderbilt Museum.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Barbara, you have a question?

MS. LOMORIELLO:

Yeah, I just want to say that this is a really nice newsletter. I really want to commend you on it, really nicely done. I guess my question is just with distribution. Where and how are you getting it out to people?

MS. HART:

For now, this has been mailed to our members and some of our lists; for example, people who have come to programs like we're trying to promote here, so we have some lists of people who aren't members and then we can --

MR. GISH:

I requested the list of the friends from Lora, so we hit our mailing list to try and get this out to people who are regularly coming. I dropped off copies with the Legislature last week just to let you know what we're doing, and I dropped them off in a number of spots that I thought they might be able to pick them up.

MS. LOMORIELLO:

If I could just add to your list, for the July 4th, I had dropped off your flyer at KinderCare, that nice place that's on 25A, and they were very happy to see it, so you could put some there. In addition, I think the YMCA in Huntington is actually a very good place to get people to come to your programs.

MS. HART:

Okay. Thank you. We do drop them off in probably the libraries of our area, public libraries. If anyone has suggest -- and actually, I will be updating, because now, the first page is out of date, I'm probably going to be updating this and getting it out, so if anybody else has any suggestions. This is one of the things that sort of fall in with not having a dedicated staff to do newsletters, but we all realize it's very important, and I know -- and Ron will talk a little more about that, but it's something we really feel strongly that we have a make a priority and these events and things are on our website as well.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Just two things on the agenda, Carol, that you didn't touch upon: the status of the audio tour, and how are you doing with site use this year because of bad publicity. You had a couple weddings cancel, but you also had some late entries. So in general, about how many site use dates do you have this year or have booked through this year?

MS. HART:

Just for comparison purposes, this year we have four wedding receptions booked -- six wedding receptions booked. Last year, we had 16 wedding receptions booked, so that's a huge loss. On the positive side, though, we have more wedding photos booked. We already have 45 booked and we only have 42 all last year, so that number will be going up. Of course, we don't make anywhere near the amount on wedding photos as we do on a reception, but that's where the changes are. We

have a number of other -- we're calling them just events; they're 14 events of different types -- some of them are corporate parties, rotary -- that bring in money. So although the number of weddings is definitely down, we have been trying to get anybody in there that we can. It looks like --

I think we're going to be about 30, if we keep up. I think we still probably end up about 30% lower this year in our site use income than next -- than last year. But the good news is we have booked three wedding receptions for 2010, so -- and we've had a lot of interest now, so certainly, we had a tough time in the fall and winter when people were not comfortable with the Vanderbilt Museum, but right now, we are getting a lot of interest, and I think we've overcome that hurdle of sustainability. Also -- and I don't -- the audio tour, we've had a little bit of a delay. We had hoped to open up last week. I still think we are on schedule to be open by the beginning of August with that.

MR. GISH:

We had our final conference call with the company from California at the end of June, Stephanie, Carol and myself, to work out the details of the audio tour, and we were looking at the possibility of making it a little more versatile, expandability so that when we get it, it's just not static. We could add something to the audio tour, and that would require just a little more of a delay in compromising with that, so the audio tour, I'm confident, we'll be ready and online within about a month.

MS. HART:

If you have a few more minutes, Ron, I know, has been working very hard with branding and marketing, and again, we know this is the key to sustainability, so Ron could just maybe speak very briefly on that.

MR. BEATTIE:

As you know, we've had a consultant that's come in free of charge to help us with our branding. This is the beginning of that, to standardizing our logo. It was incredible how many different logos we had and trying to standardize our message out there, as I have mentioned before to the Oversight Committee. So the new logo and standardization we're passing around the boards right now. We've also at the last meeting -- and remember, I have to speak to Carol about this later on -- we do have a high-end photographer who is also, free of charge, going to offer us his services. In fact, they're doing the first walkthrough on Thursday. Time is of the essence because the most important brochure we have to get out, and it's going to be our first brochure of the Vanderbilt under the new branding, there's the educational brochure. That's the most important brochure or document that we produce. They want to make sure that we have some of the best photos that they can include in those materials.

Some of the other materials that we're going to be doing, we mentioned the educational brochure. We're going to do an overall brochure. We're going to very much improve what we call the takeaways. When somebody comes to visit the Vanderbilt and they buy a ticket for either the mansion tour or the planetarium, we don't have very good materials that they take away with them, the site map, et cetera; so all this is going to be included. And also included on that is going to be a membership application because we've recognized that we also don't do a very good job of telling people what the value is of membership before they buy their ticket. So if we can make that case before they buy their tickets to get unlimited use for the year for their family, we're going to make sure that's in the materials they take away with them so they understand that.

Also corporate sponsorship brochure materials. We're developing group tour brochures -- these are all by priorities of our last committee meeting -- corporate event -- corporate slash event function brochure and new revenue generating website. Once we get all this content done, then we're going to move on to the revenue-generating website where we can get display ads there. We think we can actually make quite a bit of money on the website, if it's successful with -- with a content-based -- just so you know, we are doing other things more immediately. We have one of our trustees who has a relationship with the astronaut Michael Massimino, who is one of the key astronauts fixing the Hubble telescope. We're hoping that we can get a PR appearance from that astronaut when we do

our V-space installation. So he's working on -- they happened to be his principal in grade school, so he fixes the Hubble and he's called to the principal's office. And we're still doing the other fundraising initiatives such as the memorial bricks and benches, and we'll be implementing that this month.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Terry?

MR. PEARSALL:

Thank you. The March minutes of this committee reflected that you were doing a membership drive mailing. How did that turn out?

MR. BEATTIE:

Not as well as we expected. I believe we -- out of the 60 -- actually, closer to 90 that we mailed out, we've only gotten one or two responses.

MS. HART:

Well, I have to say we've about tripled that in the last day, so some of the trustees -- and this was trustee-driven, but it took a while to get things together, but I know just Gretchen has come through, and I think we got about three or four just in the last day. So sometimes I think things take a little longer to get going, but it is on its way.

MR. BEATTIE:

I should point out that actually just went out last month. So I think once we trustees have the time to do follow-up phone calls -- it's never as easy as just sending it out. You kind of have to cajole after that, so we're prepared to do that.

MR. PEARSALL:

I want to compliment you on those posters. That dinosaur is absolutely beautiful.

MR. BEATTIE:

Thank you.

MR. GISH:

I just want to let you know that Ron took the heat on that last one dealing with the membership drive, but we ran across a little glitchy problem. We were trying to send the letters out with a -- with the article from the New York Times which listed the Della Robbia on the back, and you can help us out to do that restoration, but we found out that there was conflict with the copyright, that we couldn't use the New York Times article on the back of the letter. So it was a little bit of a delay. It was a great idea by Ron, and we sort of got caught in the middle there, and he sort of rewrote the article, and now we're in the midst of getting it out. But I'm sure very shortly that the rest of the Board will respond with their 30 names that you know positively, absolutely are going to become members. And I'm running out of family members to be able to send my letters to, but my 90-year-old father said he may become a single member.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Barbara?

MS. LOMORIELLO:

I just want to ask about the membership. What does that entitle you to, or what is the draw of the membership?

MS. HART:

The membership is a wonderful value. You are not supporting the museum. You are getting, you know, free general admission for a year; you get free admission to all scheduled planetarium shows and evening laser shows, which would cost you \$10 a pop; free mansion tours; a 10% discount in

our gift shop; and most special events that the Vanderbilt runs, we will give a member discount of about 10%. So really, we do the math, we do some signs -- if you come twice with a family, you're getting a free -- -

MS. LOMORIELLO:

What's the cost of membership?

MS. HART:

The cost of a family membership is \$75. A family membership is two adult and four children and two adults in a household. You know, sometimes we have grandmother and daughter or whoever. It's just two adults and four children under 18.

MR. BEATTIE:

And some other variations on that price list.

MS. HART:

There are many variations on that, and we are good.

MS. LOMORIELLO:

Thank you.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Is there any new business? Is there anything else that the Vanderbilt representatives want to add?

MS. HART:

I just have a question. I would really like, and I don't know if BRO or someone -- I would like some help to really analyze our site use income because we are going to be comparing this to the outside caterer coming in. So I'm just wondering -- you know, I'm going to be doing some of the analysis myself if we were to stay inhouse -- you know, the expenses, the cost -- but possibly, people would be more comfortable if we also had someone from the Oversight Committee looking at it. So when we compare, does it make sense to go to an outside or could we do better inside; pros and cons -- do you think this is something that might be helpful, or will you take my numbers?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. I think the process I see for -- this is catering and site use --

MS. HART:

Uh-huh.

MR. REINHEIMER:

-- is that -- that's why I was asking Neil before about the process of reviewing the RFPs that came in and your selection. I think you need, and I think you hit it right on the head, using Working Committee, going through your own Working Committee, coming to some conclusions, analyzing it. Like Ron said, what is the impact on the museum; how does this impact the core mission; what are the downsides; what are the upsides? Somehow cull and present that information, bring it back to the Oversight Committee. I think it's a function of the Oversight Committee to look at it and decide among themselves what's the best way to get a review, and have the County Executive's Office and the Legislature and the members of the Oversight Committee take it and look at it so we get input from all aspects of the County government and to make the best selection; what's best for the Vanderbilt, what's best for the County and what's best for the residents of Suffolk County and the brides.

(LAUGHTER)

Any other business then? I'll call the meeting to adjourn. Thank you.

[The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 P.M.]

{ } - Denotes spelled phonetically