

VANDERBILT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Vanderbilt Oversight Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Monday, September 10, 2012.

Members Present:

Terry Pearsall - Presiding Officer's Office
Robert Doering - Budget Review Office
Greg Moran - Chairman/Aide to Legislator Nowick
Mark Malizia - Aide to Legislator Spencer
Seth Weiss - Aide to Legislator Kennedy

Members Not Present:

Commissioner of Public Works or Representative
Director of County Executive Budget Office or Representative

Also In Attendance:

Lance Reinheimer - Interim Executive Director/Vanderbilt Museum
Ronald A. Beattie - President/Vanderbilt Museum Board of Trustees
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken and Transcribed By:

Gabrielle Skolom - Court Stenographer

*(*The meeting was called to order at 10:10 A.M.)*

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Good morning, everyone. We'll call this meeting of the Vanderbilt Museum Oversight Committee to order. Thank you all for being here.

I apologize if there was any confusion regarding the time this morning, but I do appreciate you all being here. Just to get started, I think the best way to do this is the way we handled it last time, that perhaps, Lance, you could just give us kind of an update as to the status of some of the projects and the things going on at the planetarium and museum, and then we can open it up to the Committee for some questions on the individual issues. So go ahead, Lance.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. Thank you very much, Greg; and also here is Ron Beattie, president of the board of trustees. I'd like to start by just giving an overview of what's gone on in the past year at the museum. We had a real exciting year. We had a great summer. Things are really looking very good. During this past year, we raised \$520,000. That's the good news. The bad news is that's not for operating. That's for special projects. I'll go over how we arrived at that number, but it's a tremendous accomplishment for the museum. We sold, as you know, many of you know, we sold the 1937 Chrysler Imperial. That was a custom car built for Walter P. Chrysler.

We sold that after a yearlong project to identify and get the best price for that and identify the proper purchaser, and that was sold to Howard Kroplick. He is a local person, and he's thrilled with the car. He took it up to Connecticut for a car show. It was featured up there as a barn find, and he's getting a lot of publicity for the car which helps the museum too. That was \$275,000. Those funds will be used for the maintenance and care of the collections. Those are funds that we've never had for the museum. As you know, the museum is a time capsule from the 1930s, and a lot of the artifacts need restoration, cleaning, and this money will be used for that on an ongoing basis.

We received recently, in March, a grant for \$100,000 to modernize the Stoll Wing. The family, from Judge Stoll, who was a trustee of the museum, came, visited the museum, and Linda Spear and her husband, the Roy M. Spear Foundation, donated \$100,000 for modernization of the Stoll Wing, and Linda Spear is the granddaughter of Judge Stoll. So it's an interesting connection there because the Stoll Wing was put on at the same time that the museum was built -- not the museum, excuse me, the planetarium. So here we are 40 years later modernizing the planetarium, and the family comes back and makes a major donation to the museum.

We also received a \$95,000 donation from William and Molly Rogers (ph) for the planetarium renovations. And so when we add up all that, that's around \$500,000. During the year, we also received a grant from Goldman Sachs to expand for our -- volunteer gardeners to expand -- the vegetable garden, \$1800 grant. Not a major grant but what's interesting is the volunteer gardeners expanded the vegetable garden to provide food to local food pantries, so we got some nice publicity there. We got -- one of the local papers had a picture of the gardeners, and it's just goodwill to do something like that and good publicity for the museum.

This past year, the Arena Players moved from Farmingdale and are now stationed in the museum in our Carriage House Theater, and they put on productions throughout the year, children's shows, plus theatrical productions, plus Shakespeare in the courtyard, and they generate about \$25,000 for the museum on an annual basis. So it's a nice match for the museum. It brings people there that normally may not be coming to the museum and to discover the museum. They also have a subscription of people subscribe for the seasons, and so it's been very successful.

The museum also entered into a two-year license agreement to lease Normandy Manor as a private residence. That saves the museum -- it generates \$66,000 a year in revenue and saves us \$4,000 in utility costs, so that's a \$70,000 a year benefit to the museum, and that license agreement is \$140,000 dollars. We also contracted with All True. That's a division of Black Box, a major ticketing company that does ticketing for major museums throughout the country, and that will provide us with the means to do online ticketing when the planetarium opens. That system is up and running. It started in June. We're not online yet, but this is a good beta testing time for us until the planetarium is up and running.

New events this year. We had a clambake, which netted about \$6,000 in revenue for the museum. We had several music festivals, real exciting. The last one -- the last one we had, which was yesterday, that was a Grateful Dead tribute band. We had over 1,500 deadheads at the museum. They enjoyed -- yesterday was just a perfect day. The weather was perfect. We generated about \$8,700 at that event, and it was nice to see that many people on the property and respectful for the property. They were just enjoying the grounds, and as they left, it's nice to see people with smiles on their face when they leave and say, "We've never been here before. We're coming back." So it's exciting to do things like that and to bring new people into the museum.

We also started a new program this year, Midsummer Night Dances. Every Thursday night through July and August, we had dance lessons in the tent. We had about 40 to 50 people there each night. That generated about \$2,000 for the season. Not a great deal of money, but it's \$2,000 that we wouldn't have, and it didn't conflict with any events that we had scheduled for the tent. Again, people discovered the museum. They came there for dancing, and lot of people hadn't been there before.

Ongoing events, like Alex Torres and Tango in the courtyard, between those two programs, we've generated about \$13,000 in revenue. We also have the holiday dinner and Valentine's dinner, and those two events generate about \$10,000 in revenue for the museum. We just received a grant last week from the greater Hudson Heritage Network for restoration of a 1670 Dutch painting that hangs in the memorial wing. The grant was for \$4,975. We're going to do a match to restore the frame, which I think is the reason why they gave us this grant to show that we're investing also in its restoration. The funds to restore the frame are coming from the proceeds from the car. We're in the process of getting prices for that. We had new contracts this year for the fire alarm system and for insurance, and we saved about \$25,000 annually with those new contracts. Recently retained a local P.R. firm to help us with promoting the planetarium when that opens.

Currently, we're working with a local foundation that's planning on funding the traveling classroom for high-risk schools or high-need schools. That will help us get that program started. We haven't started that program yet. We're waiting really to work out the details with this local grant foundation.

In the packet that I gave you are two dresses, and this was two weeks ago, the U.S. Army Women's Museum contacted us, and they are donating these two dresses that were worn by Consuelo Vanderbilt, sister of William K. Vanderbilt. The first dress, which is this one here, in 1922 was worth -- was \$12,000. It has a lot of gems, and the paperwork that I received also said that the front is plain but the back is low-cut and has a diamond brooch, and this dress, the back of the dress, was the talk of the town in Paris. Consuelo Vanderbilt wore this to the opera in Paris in 1922; and then there's also a second dress that she wore. So this happened two weeks ago, and it'll take about two to three months before they are actually given to the Vanderbilt. So that's pretty exciting because we have no personal clothes or anything like that that belongs to the family, and it will be nice to have some clothing to show the public how grand the Vanderbilts dressed.

I really left the most exciting for the last, is the planetarium. The technicians from Japan were here this past week, and they put on a presentation, I guess, The Best of the Planetarium, for Public Works and for a couple people in the museum. They had programs, trailers from programs, video programs, trailers for planetarium shows. They used the video in conjunction with a star projector and the surround sound. The surround sound is awesome. We have no carpeting and seats there, and it still was awesome. What you can do with this planetarium, the graphics and the video, you can have spaceships flying at you. You can visit planets. You can walk along -- you can discover Mars and go along the surface of Mars and fly there. You can fly back to Earth, and you can actually -- there's a way that you can actually see the planetarium as you fly back into Earth. People are going to be in awe when they leave this. This is going to be -- I kept saying this is going to be one of the finest planetariums in this country. I think we're going to be world class. The staff we have, Lorraine and Dave, are knowledgeable. They do live lectures. They are going to be designing programs. We will be a world-class facility here in Suffolk County, something to be really proud of.

And I have to thank Suffolk County for all the work that they did, Public Works, and they are taking a real personal pride and effort into making this a fine, outstanding planetarium. The funding that we received for the heating and air-conditioning system is well-spent. The high efficiency furnace is in. The air-conditioning is working. This is -- everything is going towards a finish the end of October, beginning of November. Carpeting is going in next week. We have an agreement with Home Depot. They are doing the install and removal of the old carpeting for free, and they provided us with carpeting at a reduced price. It's costing us \$24,000 to do the whole planetarium: that's the lobby, the theater, the classrooms, the store, so it's carpeting the whole facility. The chairs are scheduled to come in. They are in production. They will be coming in the end of October. Due to fire codes, the size of the chairs, we are losing some capacity there. We are going to end up with 164 chairs. That's a reduction from the 236. We have the ability to put an additional 20 folding chairs, so we've got a capacity of about 180. That's just the way it works with the dimensions of the planetarium. That's a seating diagram that works for visitors. It makes the most of the facility, and that's where we're headed with the seats.

I think that covers most of the major areas that I had for you and what we've done this past year. In the packet is a listing of media clips. These are just major ones. This isn't all that we've had this past year, but it shows we are getting publicity. If you received yesterday's Newsday, in the top 10 Things to Do this coming week, the museum is number seven with our car show, our all-British car show is this Sunday. We also were mentioned in recent publication by Triple A. They have a -- an article on Long Island and driving along Long Island, and on page 20 of that magazine, it mentions the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium, so we're getting as much publicity as we can considering we have really no funds for advertising. We are getting news recognition and major publications, Newsday, Triple A, and it's all positive publicity.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Thank you, Lance. Does anyone on the Committee have any questions before we go any further here? I have a few. Just first, regarding the last statements with regard to the planetarium. How does that loss of seats impact your revenue with the planetarium? It seems like a significant loss in the amount of seats that you're going to have due to fire code and changes. Initially, we talked about it. You didn't know how many seats you were, actually, at that time when I spoke with you, going to lose. Does this come as a big surprise?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yeah, we were a little surprised that it was that large of a difference. How it's going to impact the revenue, it impacts more how we work with schools. Our largest audiences are with schools. When you have 236 -- capacity for 236 and with folding chairs, it could go up to 250 people. It accommodated more classrooms. It accommodated, I think, four busloads of children. So now we

have to have smaller groups. The plus side is the way the seats are configured, it's a straighter -- it's not epi-concentric, and so you are able to load and unload the theater quickly. We are looking to purchase programs that are around 35 minutes long for the video planetarium programs that are educational for -- in conjunction with the school curriculum. So we can, rather than having two groups in a day, if it works out, we would have three school groups in a day. So it does impact the planetarium. I don't think it will have a major impact in the revenue as far as public programs. We anticipate a tremendous volume of people going through, but on an ongoing basis, I don't think you would've sold 236 seats, anyway, so it shouldn't have an adverse impact on the public programs. It does adversely impacts how we manage our school programs and how we accommodate schools.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. So that makes sense. It's really going to be on you as far as scheduling, trying to, maybe, juggle some of these school groups; maybe, as you say, having more in a day, less at a time, things of that nature.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes, either more during the day, or rather than having three days of school programs, if you have to go to four to accommodate the same number of children.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. Was there another issue -- I think we talked about it briefly, with regard to the way that the projector was installed and the way that the seating had to be done. Wasn't there the platform or something was slightly different than initially conceptualized?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, the Legislature appropriated, at our request, an additional \$250,000. Part of that was to make the pit for the star projector deeper so the star projector can go below the sight lines, and that was critical for being able to use the planetarium as a venue for other cultural events. You can use it for theater, you can use it for lectures. It gives us more flexibility, so that was critical. That didn't impact the seating because we had a pit there originally, so the diameter of the pit has not changed. You still have, for aisle ways, you need a wider aisle around that pit and that impacts seats.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

What I was referring to is I thought -- and perhaps my recollection is incorrect -- there was some equipment that initially was envisioned to be, perhaps, in the pit that now has to be outside the pit.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Right, that's the planet cages. That does extend outside the pit, and you're right. We didn't realize that when the planetarium was going through the design phase, but that doesn't -- no, that didn't impact the seats because in that area, directly in front of the pit, which is towards the front of the theater, we had no seats there originally with the 236. An interesting find last week when we were going through the programs, in our previous programs, we had a front of the museum and the way the programs were projected onto the dome, they were straighter towards the front. What we have now, the way the programs are developed, they are in the front, but they are higher up on the dome. So if you had seats past where we currently don't have seats in the front, we could pack more seats in there, but it wouldn't be a good experience for the visitors. It just doesn't work for them because the program would be almost behind them. So the way we have it configured now, we have a larger stage area, meaning an area where there are no seats in the front, but it's the best diagram for visitor experience. Unlike most places where you want to sit up-close -- baseball games, theater -- in the planetarium, your best seats are in the back. So the more seats we packed in the front, the experience is adversely impacted.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

That's good. That's really what I wanted to hear, was that even though this wasn't initially envisioned in this way, it was not going to negatively impact the experience or the amount of seats that we could have, so that's good news.

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. We spent a lot of time going back and forth with Public Works on making sure the diagram met code with the seat manufacturer who is doing the seating diagram. We even made a few changes so that the code required us to have positions for five wheelchairs. We changed the seating configuration slightly so we could accommodate two more wheelchairs. So we have accommodations -- we can put seven wheelchairs in there without having to make other accommodations for people with limited ability to move.

Another nice feature for the seats is we can remove about 30 seats, so you can expand -- and that's towards the front -- so you can expand the stage area, or if you had a large group of people that are wearing wheelchairs, we can accommodate, with prior knowledge, we can remove seats to accommodate more wheelchairs. So the theater is designed to maximize visitor experience and to maximize the planetarium to be used -- to be flexible for the facility to be used as a venue for other events.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. Good. Just for a moment, if you could speak about the lobby, one of my favorite topics that I've spoken with you a number of times. So you just mentioned about the carpet, the new carpeting throughout. Is there anything more we can discuss regarding the ceiling in the lobby?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes. We actually had -- I had discussions with Public Works last week on that. I'd like to also state that the lobby is being done by the museum. That's not part of the project. Our employees are doing the sheetrocking. Our employees removed the carpeting from the walls that was there, and they've started -- they probably sheetrocked about a third of it. I spoke to Public Works about the ceiling. No one is really happy with the state of the ceiling, and in a perfect world, it would be nice to be able to replace it, but replacing the ceiling is only one component. When you replace the ceiling, then we need to put ductwork in there. The current ceiling, the way it's configured, there's no ductwork in the lobby. Hot air is forced in that space between the ceiling tile and the roof of the planetarium, the flat roof, and air is forced down through slots that are in the tiles. It's an inefficient way to heat the place, but when it's built in 1970, energy costs were not a major component.

So to replace the ceiling requires installing ductwork, and then, once you're up there, then you should replace lighting, so the ceiling, anything above the ceiling, is turning into a major project. So there are no funds in the existing appropriations to do that, but talking to Public Works, there's a solution, short term, that will help in appearance. And they had somebody come in; they can finish the ceiling with a paint application that will make the ceiling uniform in color and clean it up, and assuming that we do finish the -- I shouldn't say finish; fix all the leaks in the flat roof, that should at least improve the appearance of the theater of the lobby, so that's the direction we're going on. Even Ron, the president of the board, I haven't even had a chance to talk to Ron about this. It happened so quickly. But we're doing our best. We're going to replace all the store cabinets that were single-pane glass. It was not tempered glass, so there was a danger. We're replacing those. We have funds for that. We're going to sheetrock the store, clean that up, and do a redesign on that, so that's all part of it. And also, the painting, I've got a designer working on the paint scheme for the planetarium lobby also. So it's progressing. There's a lot of work to be done between now and the end of October which is our target date.

And then, you know, one question leads to another. Last week, in the Parks Committee, there was a resolution to appropriate \$400,000.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

That was going to be my next question, so go ahead.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. In my notes, I have that's IR 1883, to appropriate \$400,000. Those are funds that are scheduled in the capital program already, and that is for general water intrusion projects, which could be roofs, gutters, walls. It's critical that this is appropriated, and I preface my remarks by saying I don't come before the Legislature and ask for funds unless it's necessary. I understand where we are, where the County is with the economy, and I know funds are tight. But to do a major renovation to the planetarium -- Public Works is still wrestling with fixing the leaks. They have had the roofer there. They have done some patching. They are working on the flashing. They are still assessing the roof. What I said in the Parks Committee is these funds that are scheduled in the current capital program, we have leaks in the Marine Museum Hall of Fishes, but this also gives us a contingency for the roof for the planetarium. When we get into the roof and the roofers are coming back and they are assessing the roof, we're even now discussing there might be a need to redo the dome part of the roof. But they are still in the assessing phase, so these funds are critical to protect the planetarium from water intrusion, so I hope that the Legislature will pass that this Thursday.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

That was kind of -- the reason I started with those questions was for the benefit of the Committee here and as well as for the record. We have discussed this in the past. I have articulated my concerns to you about the fact that I think we are going to have a fantastic state-of-the-art facility in this planetarium. But it doesn't do us any good if we have a leaky roof and if the lobby is dismal and we don't want to enter it. And I know the funds and the fiscal situation of the County is limited, so I know -- and I applaud the workers at the Vanderbilt for all the work that they have done in trying to get that lobby ready as well as DPW, but I know that there's huge issues with the ceiling and the lobby, and there could be further issues with the roof and the planetarium, so that's my concern.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes. And one area that I failed to mention, on the \$520,000 that we raised, we raised about \$50,000 in private donations towards the planetarium renovations. So coupled with William and Molly's donation of \$95,000, we are pretty on or close to \$150,000. That money is pretty much spoken for. The seats are somewhere around 50 to \$70,000. We contracted for \$70,000, but that was for 234 seats. Now that we are down to 164, I am getting new numbers from the manufacturer. The manufacturer waits until the seating diagram is approved before they go into production for two reasons: one, how many seats should they build; and when you look at the seating diagram, there's three different size chairs to accommodate the diagram, so they have to know what size chairs to manufacture. So I'm getting -- I'm hoping that for 164 chairs, based on the 234 for \$70,000, that the chairs will come in around \$50,000. Carpeting is \$25,000.

The first year for All True, which is the member management and ticketing system, is around 20 to \$25,000. We bought equipment, computers out of those funds for the ticketing system. We bought about 8 or 10 computers, and we bought them through TechSoup, so we paid probably around \$250 a computer, so we're very frugal with our funds. We're also manufacturing a donor wall to recognize the supporters for the planetarium, and this is an ongoing recognition wall, so that we will recognize the Spear family that donated the \$100,000 for the Stoll Wing. We'll recognize major contributors to the museum on this wall. It's ongoing. We're putting it in the planetarium

because there's no real other space that we could put such a large recognition wall in another part of the museum, so that's around \$15,000. The store cabinets, the drywall that we're using, all those will come out of the \$150,000 that the museum has raised for the planetarium.

So this is, aside from being a major investment by Suffolk County, it shows, you know, almost a public/private partnership. We're not private, but we're not for profit. We're assuming a significant portion of the cost to make the planetarium a showcase, and I really think that when this is done -- I shouldn't say think. I know that when this is done and you come and visit, this is going to be something that Suffolk County is going to be proud of, and it's a real exciting time for the museum. I think we're on the verge of really having a first-class facility.

With that being said, there are some downsides, you know, and part of it is the facades and the present state of the buildings. Again, with the major contribution that Suffolk County makes towards the museum and these times, it's hard to progress some of these projects. But I look at the bell tower that's crumbling, and it's sad because going through another winter, it's just going to get worse, and this is a really major facility. To have one of the Gold Coast mansions, the Vanderbilt house, we need to do our best to preserve it. But it's a balance between today's economics and what we can do, but we start working on the museum portion, the mansion coupled with the planetarium, we're going to have a real diamond showcase.

We need to also look at the -- stabilize the seaplane hangar and boathouse, so that that's there for future generations, especially the seaplane hangar. There's a concern that over the next several years, we might not be able to preserve that building. It needs to be stabilized, and I think from talking to Public Works, a lot of the approvals, environmental approvals that we need, because it's on the waterfront have expired, need to be renewed. So there's two problems there: appropriating the funds and to get the permits we need to do the work. But I'm pretty sure that going into next year with the planetarium and what the County has done for us that the museum is on its way to sustainability. I think we're on the verge of some real exciting times.

And then we need to take care of staff. The -- there's several people that have not had raises in 10 years, and we're paying people in the 10 and \$12 range. They're part-timers. We have about 60 part-timers and 10 full-timers, and these people are dedicated to the museum, and we need to recognize their dedication, so that's the next step too. But that's our problem, that's an operating budget problem, and I think we can work towards that next year too, so we've come a long way this past year.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Well, there certainly has been a lot going on this year, and I do appreciate it. Just two more quick things from me. I heard you mentioned about the -- Discover the Universe, the mobile planetarium, for lack of a better term, and that it's not being used right now. Is it that you are just looking for sponsorship, or how is that progressing?

MR. REINHEIMER:

With the planetarium renovations, we have Lorraine and Dave that are working full time with the technicians from Japan, with Public Works. They're reviewing programs to decide what program should be bought. They are actually cleaning out the planetarium of things that are obsolete, equipment, materials. To do the traveling classroom, we need staff. It's hard to hire people on a day-by-day basis to run that. So we need a plan, and I'm disappointed that we haven't gotten it started. But I also try to work in reality and prioritize projects, and with the planetarium and the with the demands of the staff on that and the administration, it's hard to go in two different directions. We will get it up and running, this foundation.

Although we haven't received any funds and it's still in the discussion phase of the grant, they are excited about this classroom because it can go out to high-needs schools. And what's nice or exciting about that is that you are able to bring it to children that don't have the family support, the economics to come to the planetarium, and to see shows and the school districts also, their inability to do field trips. So they would sponsor the traveling classroom for these high-needs schools and try to, at least start to level the playing field for these children, these students to give them, expose them to something and science, and to spark some interest whereby they wouldn't have gotten that experience. The challenge is you need educators. You need bilingual educators, and you need educators that can only -- that are bilingual, knowledgeable, and can drive a 37-foot RV. So the third one is --

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Quite a skillset (**Laughter**).

MR. REINHEIMER:

What's that?

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

I said it's quite a skillset.

MR. REINHEIMER:

That really is, so there's a challenge there. And then when you bring someone on, you can't say, "Well, we just want you to work one day a week." We have to integrate this with a full-time program so that these people are working on somewhat of a regular basis. I think, you know, there are educators out there. You know, there's a lot of teachers out there, but to find them to meet our needs, bilingual and can drive a van, a 37-foot RV, is a challenge, so that's why we haven't gotten it started. I just -- it's more than we can handle with the planetarium renovations.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Do you envision outside sponsorship funding that endeavor, or do you think that's going to come from your budget?

MR. REINHEIMER:

For the traveling classroom? Yeah, that's something that by the end of the fall, we should have this foundation. I think we'll come through. We've worked with -- I've talked to the President of the foundation several times. He's been out to visit the museum, and we've had some dialogue back and forth, so he's excited about it, but it's up to us to put the program together, make the presentation to the foundation so the Board sees the value in this asset.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Also, just quickly, at this point, you don't have anything scheduled with school districts, correct, whether it be for the traveling or for the planetarium?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Not for the traveling, no. For the planetarium, we are sending out our school brochure soon. We're saying the planetarium will be available in January. Right now, as of last week, the target date is November 1 for completion. You know, it also depends on the manufacturing the chairs and how things go, but Public Works is -- this is a project that has had no delays. If one contractor can't do something, they have another contractor come in and do an alternative part of the production -- of the renovations. So they have done a great job in scheduling the contractors, keeping them on time, and it's progressing really well.

I mean, when I spoke to them about the roofing and I asked them, "Well, When do you think that will be done?" they are looking at the end of October.

It's critical for this resolution, IR 1883, to be passed because that will provide us a contingency for the roof. From talking to Public Works, I have to say that I'm sure that there are funds that will be needed from that resolution for the roof.

MR. BEATTIE:

Also, with regard to the teachers, there's an -- I forgot what day we were planning on doing that, but we are doing a special day for teachers to bring them in, show them the new technology, sign up the students for January.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Thank you. That's kind of what I was getting at. We can approach this with the school districts at this point, and I think that's good news. I'm glad to hear you're already reaching out at this point. I lied. I have more.

MR. PEARSALL:

Go ahead.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Can you just give me a little update on the caterer and where we're at with that?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Sure. Right now, we're at the final stage of just working on the language, and as I was telling Ron this morning to bring him up-to-date on where we are, because my plan was to hope to have the Board consider this at this coming -- upcoming board meeting this -- next week. I don't see that happening. I'm working with our site-use person, and looking at the contract and making sure it's parallel or consistent with how we are running our catering, our weddings, and the language was not consistent with what we're doing. So I'm talking to our site-use person. I'm going to present that language to Thatched Cottage because the events are shorter than they run in the contract. In the contract, it had, like, five and a half to six hours or six and a half hours, actually. Our weddings run five and five and a half with a ceremony. Music, we had an agreement with the neighbors, I believe, with the tent that music would stop at 10:00. That's not usually the way the Thatched Cottage runs their business.

So I want to make sure the language reflects agreements we had with the neighbors and agrees with how we run things here. But when you're working on a long-term contract also to build in flexibility so that as we change how we do business, meaning you try to provide for the unforeseen -- you know, right now we have a tent, and all of you know where that's located; there are neighbors nearby. You know, if that tent turns into a permanent building where it's soundproof, then you don't have the problem with noise. I'm not saying that's going to happen; I'm not saying I agree with that; and I'm not making any value judgment on that. But what I am saying is the contract should reflect changes so that it's flexible enough for the future but also holds us to the present.

So each step just takes longer than you think. I thought we were there until I reviewed the contract with my site-use person, and she said that's not how we do things. Now, I have got to go back and say to Ralph, "This is how we do it. What do you say?" And then those changes have to be sent to the County Attorney to actually wrap that language into the contract. So we're really into a language situation. It's not really negotiating. To get the language so that we all agree with what we know, what we expect from each side of each party.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. That's what I was kind of looking for because I thought we were very close.

MR. REINHEIMER:

We are.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. And just for clarification purposes, the catering contract, does that include planetarium vending, or is that just for events at the museum?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No, it includes catering -- there's provisions in there for space in the planetarium and for the Carriage House. Those facilities would have to be approved by the Health Department. You would have to have health approval and environmental approval. Taking the Carriage House from its current use and changing that into a bistro snack bar is a major change, especially when we don't have sewers. We have cesspools. We are on a hill that flows into Northport Bay. To me, that's environmentally-sensitive land. I'm not an expert, but I would think it's -- that's going to be difficult to get even for the planetarium to put in a wet-use snack bar restaurant with grease traps or whatever they need may be difficult. There's provisions in the contract for those spaces, and that was the moving reason to get a caterer into the museum, from what I understand from previous discussions, so that we could have onsite food for visitors and to improve their experience. We're open in the off-season three or four days at most. There's not a lot of volume in January, February, March and December in the museum. So to have a person, whoever that is, come in as a snack bar, it's just not economically viable for a profit. So, you know, the thought was if you couple catering with the snack bar -- the snack bar is kind of a lost leader -- and the catering would cover that.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

I think that does make sense. So you don't envision when the planetarium opens, at that point, having any vending in there?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. No.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. Anyone else on the Committee have any other questions? Mr. Pearsall.

MR. PEARSALL:

Yes. Lance, you said we're pretty close to a contract on the catering. What is that, "pretty close;" 60 days, 90 days, 120 days, a year from now?

MR. REINHEIMER:

You know, my goal is to have it ready for this next board meeting of the Vanderbilt Board for the Board to review it. The Board members have asked for it. The President, you know, with talking to me, we feel that until the language is resolved, until you have a draft of what the language has -- done as a draft, to give it to the Board members doesn't -- it doesn't progress it. So I would like to have it for the October board meeting for them to consider it as a draft, and then they can start their discussion as it looks there. So my goal is to get it to October. I really, you know, I tried to -- my plan was to work on it this past week, and I just couldn't get to it.

MR. PEARSALL:

How many weddings did we have this year?

MR. REINHEIMER:

I'm glad you asked that. We had six weddings, or will have six by the end of the season. That's an interesting question, too, because we have six weddings scheduled for next year, and I was talking

to my site-use person yesterday about it. We think that things are changing locally in the economy. Things are looking a little better. We've had a lot of traffic, a lot of inquiries, and to book six weddings now for next year when we only had six for this year, things are looking better. So the short answer is six, and we hope to have a lot more next year. And that's without the catering contract. Those are site-use fees, and these people will be using their own caterer, so we are getting a lot of volume.

In the packet I gave you is our tent the way it looks today. Last year, we planted a garden in front of it. This year, the garden has matured. I just updated the picture on our website because someone told me, you know, the picture of the tent is from last year and it doesn't look very good. The garden really wasn't that mature. We put a new picture in, and about two weeks later, Carol, my site-use person said to me, you know, I'm getting a lot more inquiries. I don't know if it's that picture or what, but I'll take credit for that and say it's the picture. We think it's a combination of the economy and updating the website so that we've got a current picture on there.

MR. PEARSALL:

Second question. How much is it going to cost to restore that bell tower? Because we've been looking at that bell tower now probably five, six years.

MR. REINHEIMER:

That's an open-ended question, and I hate to say a lot, but that's about the best I can come to. Off the top of my head -- and I should know this -- I can't remember exactly what we have appropriated. You know, the Capital Project Program, as you know, the Legislature approves the appropriations, they are bonded, and then the County goes out and borrows the funds when the project starts progressing. I think we have a couple million dollars in facades that has been previously approved and bonded, so the question is cash availability for that particular project and to progress it. I know Public Works has talked about progressing the facades. I think maybe part of their problem, too, is staffing. You know, they can only do so much.

In the big picture in Suffolk County, even though to Ron and me, the Vanderbilt is the most important project in the County, I'm sure that there's bridges and other things that the County finds are higher priority, public safety and whatnot, so we understand that. So we have money to start the facades. We have money to make a reasonable progress in that area, and we really need to -- one of our board members said to me, you know, once this crumbles and turns to sand, it's lost forever. It's hard to replicate the detail of those facades. And they are; they're just turning to sand, so it is critical that we do it. I had a person yesterday who does facades and waterproofing. He was telling me, "Boy, I looked at this place. You've got a lot of work that needs to be done." We know that, and I'm concerned about this winter. We got off easy last year. We had very little freezing. It was a mild winter as far as the planetarium -- excuse me, the museum fared pretty well. But there's still areas where it's crumbling, and we're going to lose significant pieces of the museum in the near future. I've talked to Public Works about that. I have talked to Public Works about stabilizing the boathouse in the seaplane hangar. That's how I know that the permits, environmental permits have expired. So there's been discussions on it. They are aware of it, and I know they would like to go forward, but it hasn't happened yet. It hasn't started.

MR. BEATTIE:

I think you -- the difficulty in answering that question, as you probably know, is you get a number at a particular point in time and then you go through another freeze and thaw cycle, and so much more needs to get done. It's terrible that we have -- it's not scaffolding --

MR. PEARSALL:

Netting.

MR. BEATTIE:

It's netted -- netting. You know, and one of the most prominent features, it's -- when people come for weddings and they're in the tent and that's all they see. So the difficulty in answering that question is it continues to deteriorate as we talk about trying to get the money to fix it.

MR. PEARSALL:

But it's obvious in my mind that the bell tower is the next priority at the Vanderbilt for major expense now that the planetarium is done.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes. And, you know, because we're working on the planetarium doesn't mean we forgot about the facades. I've talked to Public Works. Paving, we're also discussing paving, and that's supposed to be happening this fall is redoing all the blacktop. The best I know from Public Works -- I spoke to them about two weeks ago -- they are still looking to do the paving, to do the parking lots, the upper/lower parking lots and all the blacktop. One of the problems we have is the road going down to the seaplane hangar needs -- potholes that were small have turned into craters, and if we have a significant amount of heavy rain going through the winter, there's parts of that road that will be unpassable, and that concerns me. Even though that's an empty building, we have to make sure we have public safety access to that building should fire, police, or anybody needing to get down there. Right now, the way the road exists, you can't get a full size car down to it. Those potholes are turning into craters, and they're undermining the road, and there's parts of that road which will cave in all the way across in the near future. I was surprised when I went down there about a month ago after heavy rain how bad that road washed out. So paving, that part of the job wasn't even included in the original specs for paving, but I went down there with Public Works, and they will try to include some patching for that road.

MR. PEARSALL:

The audio tours, how are they working out?

MR. REINHEIMER:

There's a question I'd rather not answer.

MR. PEARSALL:

I understand they are not working out.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yeah, they're not, and I find that somewhat embarrassing, and I've spoken to a Board member whose uncle funded that and put quite a bit of money in that and that's William Rogers, Bill Rogers. We've never used them, and now we don't even have them by the counter because we need to recharge them and to get them working again. They did a great job on developing that. The voice actors that did the tape, the script, the museum did a first class job on that. We haven't worked in how to use them. I think with the ticketing system and once we get that, the bugs worked out of that, we can start to try to work in the audio tour. And the audio tour, like everything else, I prioritize. It's in the back of my mind. It's been there since the day I walked into the museum, but I prioritize and do the things that we need to do to get through the day today and just haven't had the ability to go through that, work up a system, and get that in -- in use. It sounds like a simple thing to do, but we haven't used them.

MR. PEARSALL:

That's all I have.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Anyone else on the Committee have any questions? Seeing none --

MR. BEATTIE:

Can I --

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Go ahead.

MR. BEATTIE:

I just wanted to make a bit of a statement in terms of where the Board is at. First of all, one of the most significant things we have done in the past year and a half is recruiting Lance to be our interim director, and I think he's done a great job. He certainly should be commended for the great work he's done as he's shown here today. That's one thing that I think the Board has moved very forward on.

One of the other things is the appreciation of our staff. We're going to have our third annual staff appreciation -- staff and volunteer appreciation day that the board does when we sling burgers and feed the staff members who have been so tremendously loyal to this institution. And the third bit of thanks that I would like to give is certainly the support that we get from the County, and we really appreciate it. We know the position that you guys are in, and especially, you know, as we've been down this road -- actually, I'm sure Lance, to go ahead with the Grateful Dead theme, would agree what a long, strange trip it's been.

But the Board is very energized in terms of the planetarium opening, and we're doing our own housekeeping things. We have a new conflict of interest statement that the Board members are filling out. We have a new personnel Committee, so we're taking a look at -- before we get into the hiring of the new planetarium staff to have better personnel procedures in place, so that actually is going to be voted on at the next Board meeting. And we formed -- reformed Neighbor Relations Committee with the music issues and many other issues that are happening, we spent a lot of time trying to meet with our neighbors. We had a little picnic forum that we funded, and we actually got some donations during that little picnic that we had.

So these are the things that we're working on with the board. The donor wall is another thing that, actually, was done by Lance, and I think that's going to really help us to get donations to the Vanderbilt, so that's all I have. Oh, yeah. In terms of development, one of our Board members came up with a great letter, working with our PR person, to solicit donations from our friends, so we're working on letterhead now that has all that Board members on it so that each Board member can send it -- that out to a number of their friends to hopefully solicit more, and we'll have more information to go on the donor wall.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Great. Any more questions?

MR. PEARSALL:

No, but I have to congratulate both of you and the board and the staff because in the last, you said, 18 months, we have felt here at the Legislature a tremendous turnaround in what has been happening at the museum, and we look forward -- and I know the Presiding Officer does -- to the opening of the planetarium. I looked through that packet of PR that you gave me, and I was just amazed because there's things in there that I didn't know was happening. Maybe you could tell Patrick to Xerox and e-mail copies to all the Legislators because too often they look at it, the Vanderbilt, as a stepchild to all the other problems the county has, so...

MR. REINHEIMER:

We can e-mail that packet out to the whole Legislature, and that's just the best-of. We didn't include all the little things that we get publicity. Living history that we do between Memorial Day and Labor Day on the weekends, Living History tours, very popular this year. Newsday covered it

several times, and it wasn't unusual to have 100 people go through on a tour over a Sunday afternoon, which was just great numbers, so we just gave you the best-of. But we're really proud of the PR that we're getting, and Pat Keefe works the system nicely. He's got a good relationship with all the media people because when they ask him for something, he responds. We do everything we can to publicize this museum because it's something to be proud of. We really -- I mean, Suffolk County really will be proud of this institution when that planetarium opens. It's world class. It really is. You are going to have a world-class facility here in our backyard, and Suffolk County built it. That's pretty exciting.

MR. BEATTIE:

I appreciate your comments here, and Pat has done a great job, but I think what -- what Terry was getting at is that we should have -- because I get the e-mails all the time from Pat. That distribution list should include the County Legislature, and we'll definitely make sure that happens. Perception is reality.

MR. PEARSALL:

Absolutely.

MR. BEATTIE:

And the perception that we had before, I think the point you were making is I think we have done a lot of things to turn that ship around.

MR. PEARSALL:

And, Lance, while I'm glad we put you out at the Vanderbilt, we really should have put you out at Foley.

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

And on that note.

MR. REINHEIMER:

No comment on that. I'm thrilled to be at the museum, I really am. And thank you, but I have no desire to go to Foley.

MR. PEARSALL:

Yet.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Just one more question.

MR. WEISS:

Everything sounds great. I look forward to taking my family down to the planetarium. But I do actually have one question. What's the status of the cell towers?

MR. BEATTIE:

We've completed, not this past board meeting but the meeting before that our SEQRA -- am I pronouncing that right -- review process by meeting with -- there's significant community opposition to it. That being said, it's revenue that the Vanderbilt sorely needs. I don't think it's an eyesore. I don't think it's a health problem. But we have Board members that do, and the community opposition has been, as you might imagine, has been very, very vocal, so we're working -- at this next board meeting, I'm hoping we're going to be able to send that agreement. The Legislature has the final vote on it, so I'm hoping that we'll be able to send it to you guys for the final say on it.

MR. WEISS:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN MORAN:

Okay. If there's nothing else, thank you all for being here. Thank you, gentlemen. Appreciate the insight and update. Thank you very much.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m. *)*