

Approved 1/28/2016

**Fort Adams Foundation
Meeting Notes**

October 28, 2015

Members Present:

Janet Coit, Chair, Director of DEM

Larry Mouradjian, Associate Director for DEM Natural Resources Bureau, representing DEM Parks and Recreation

Lee Whitaker, representing Rhode Island Historic Preservation

Gregory Hall, President, Fort Adams Trust

Others Present:

Robert Paquette, Chief, DEM Parks & Recreation

John Faltus, Deputy Chief, DEM Parks & Recreation

Bruce Thompson, Assistant Regional Manager, DEM Parks & Recreation

Terri Bisson, DEM Bureau of Natural Resources (meeting notes)

Meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

Major Discussion Points, Agreements and Action Items:

1. Roll Call – See members present above.

2. Action and Discussion Items

a. Review and consider the hiring of an Executive Director for the Fort Adams Trust

Director Coit described the role the Foundation is now playing in the holistic oversight of the Fort and reminded members that the Foundation is obligated by the new Memorandum of Agreement between the Foundation and the Trust to review and approve the Trust's recommendations for hiring personnel. She further stated that the role of Executive Director (ED) is a key position, especially in light of all that is taking place at the Fort. She asked Mr. Hall to describe the hiring process and vetting of candidates.

Mr. Hall said the Trust put together a transition team soon after the former ED left. The transition team, led by Board Member Jody Sullivan, drafted a job description and posting which was distributed through numerous venues. The Trust received 82 applications. The team then drafted a scale to rank criteria and skill sets and chose to interview eight qualified applicants. Four of the eight had already assumed positions elsewhere and were no longer interested.

The interview team included the executive board of the trust (President Greg Hall, Vice President David Martland, Treasurer Edward F. Hayes, Jr., Secretary Melissa Hutchinson, At-Large Member Eric Offenbergl) and DEM/Parks Deputy Chief John Faltus.

After the initial round of interviews, it was apparent that two candidates stood out: a candidate from Newport with extensive fundraising experience; and, Joseph Dias, former Chief of DEM's Division of Planning & Development, who had a broad range of skills with extensive experience in capital development and construction/restoration projects, facility and event operations, and intimate knowledge of the Fort and working with state agencies. The interview committee recommended Mr. Dias for the position of ED. Mr. Hall stated that the Trust is also exploring the possibility of contracting for fundraising services.

Mr. Hall asked Mr. Faltus to weigh in on his overview of the process and recommendation. Mr. Faltus endorsed Mr. Hall's description of the careful hiring process and the recommendation of the Trust.

Mr. Whitaker stated that he knows the candidate well from work that he has done with DEM and is comfortable with the recommendation.

Mr. Mouradjian stated that Mr. Dias has extensive experience and intimate knowledge of DEM and wants to ensure that the Trust and the Department are clear on roles and responsibilities when Mr. Dias becomes an employee of the Trust. Chair Coit reiterated the need to define roles and responsibilities to ensure that all tenants are working cooperatively with DEM staff and that the Foundation carry out its oversight role. Mr. Hall assured members that the Trust will see that this takes place. Mr. Whitaker stated that the respective roles will be important as the Trust looks toward the development of its strategic plan.

Chair Coit asked Mr. Hall to discuss the contractual arrangement the Trust will offer. Mr. Hall stated that the contract is "at will", includes the job description and will have a tentative start date of 11/2.

Chair Coit stated that it is critical for the Board of the Trust to support the ED and to provide professional expertise and direction. She stated that she and DEM staff look forward working cooperatively with the ED, the Trust and the other tenants in in the Park. Everyone is vested in this being successful.

Mr. Mouradjian made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Fort Adams Trust's to hire Joseph Dias as the Executive Director. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitaker and passed unanimously.

3. Adjourn – Mr. Hall made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Mr. Whitaker and approved unanimously by members. The meeting adjourned at 2:35 p.m.