

Friends of the St Croix USVI National Parks

Board meeting

11 January 2018 called to order at 4:30 p.m. by Julie San Martin

Present	
Julie San Martin	Susan Wall
Sara Dykstra	George Pereira
Rick Starr	
Nina York	

Joined by Dan Ritter, Chief of NPS Facilities, and Randy Lavasseur, Caribbean Superintendent.

Agenda item: Introductions (Julie)

- Julie introduced the Board members to Randy and Dan, providing a brief description of the role of each person
- The Friends group projects were shared with Dan and Randy: acoustic array, *Roseway* funding, Jazz in the Park
 - Julie described the sponsorship idea for Jazz as demonstrated by Balter last month

Agenda item: update on Parks (Randy)

- Randy provided information and data to the group and will share a copy of his presentation with us

Highlights are as follows:

- Zandy is acting Superintendent until Isander is back and fills the role in early February; then the sitting Superintendent arrives from Harpers Ferry for 120 day detail
- in the meantime a search for a permanent Superintendent will occur; qualities desired: sense of community, accustomed to island life, personable; a panel will be assembled to choose the new Superintendent
- Budget: \$2.627 million – to stretch this amount, the plan is to offset omps dollars with soft dollars; categories that can see a reduction in order to save money: GSA vehicles, travel, training
- An inventory of the Park needs to occur; instead of using staff hours is this an area where the Friends can help?
- original plan for disbursement of funds:
 - personnel cost - \$1.5 million
 - fixed cost (power) - \$165,000
 - travel - \$75,000
 - vehicles (maintenance) - \$33,500
 - vessels (maintenance) - \$52,000
- in the past about 65% of the budget went to personnel costs, most Parks operate at about 85%, Randy wants to move our Park to this percentage; to do so he will create and hire more personnel at costs that we bring the Park to about 80%: seasonal Biotech, seasonal Ranger, maintenance worker, administrative assistant, interpretive Park Range
- this will increase the personnel budget to \$1.8 million while making cuts in other areas or offsetting with soft dollars

Agenda item:

Agenda item: Lecture series (Susan)

Has 5 lecturers tentatively identified; FEMA out of DWI in early February (?), building needs some work after they leave. Dan addressed how long the work would take – answer, we do not know, but once it begins, Dan will have a better feel for completion date. Decision was to not schedule a lecture for March (St Croix This Week), but if building is ready, schedule using PSA.

Agenda item: Communications update (Rick)

Discussion that our group is a good disseminator of NPS PSAs. We encourage NPS to create more PSAs, they are significant in continuing and improving community relations.

Agenda item: Jazz in the Park and Salt River reports (George)

Randy and Dan – ongoing evaluation of what to do with the visitor center, which is of no historic significance. Immediate goal is to make the site safe for visitors and accessible to the taxi vans from the cruise ships. Visitor figures for Salt River have not reached headquarters and need to rectify (Benito?); visitors have been in 10,000s not the thousands.

Agenda item: What's up with the Danes (Nina)

The Danes continue to visit St Croix. Nina was surprised and pleased by the recognition of the Virgin Island in the various Danish museums she visited this summer.

Julie, Membership – 24 active members + 7 pending renewals. Bank account is around \$1,000; we need closer to \$2,000 for event insurance.

Discussion – how can the Friends assist the NPS?

Susan had a copy of our 2017 work plan (attached to these minutes)

Gift shop, currently run by Eastern National, is a possible project for Friends?

Meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Secretary, Sara Dykstra