



**GREENPOINT
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Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting Wednesday, March 19, 2014

Note: The following is a summary of the Greenpoint Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting held on 3/19/2014. The notes represent an ongoing dialogue with the CAP related to the development and implementation of the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF).

Introduction, Purpose, and Meeting Goals: Amanda Bassow, National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF), described the primary goals of the meeting, which included discussion about: 1) Lessons learned from the Small Grant Process; 2) the Large and Legacy Grant Process; 3) the Fall 2014 Community Event.

Notes, Updates, and Other Business:

- The CAP approved the summary notes from the 11/20/13 CAP Meeting.
- Filip Stabrowski, North Brooklyn Development Corporation (NBDC), introduced the new members of the CAP Subcommittee for the Large and Legacy Grant Full Proposal Request for Proposals (RFP): Tamara Gubernat, Fernando Villafuerte, and Ann Carroll. They will join Manuel Zuniga, Joanna Micek, and Ryan Kuonen in providing input to and review of the Large and Legacy Grant Full Proposal RFP. Fernando Villafuerte and Ann Carroll have also agreed to join the CAP.
- Lynn Dwyer, NFWF, announced that the Request for Proposals for the Newtown Creek Environmental Benefits Program (EBP) will be released in April or May, 2014.
- Michelle Moore, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), announced that DEC will host an update meeting for the Newtown Creek EBP process. She also reported that the Hudson River Foundation (HRF) will release a second RFP sometime in April/May so as not to interfere with the GCEF process. The HRF grants will be smaller than the GCEF Large/Legacy grants.
- Laura Treciokas, NBDC, reported on the meeting between GCEF (including Laura Treciokas, Lynn Dwyer, and Peter Washburn), the Open Space Alliance (Ed Janoff, OSA), and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYCDPR, Mary Salig) about the GCEF process. In response to a concern about whether OSA was in effect “pre-screening” proposals, Ed Janoff (OSA) explained that OSA was unable to support four projects that sought a partnership: 1) McGolrick Park capital project – because the McGolrick Park upgrade is not currently a priority for NYCDPR and it would be difficult to frame the upgrade as an environmental benefit; 2) new turf for the McCarren Park Soccer Field – because the cost (\$6 million) was difficult to justify; 3) Waterfront Park Sculpture – because internal Park approval protocols for art projects meant there was not enough time to get approval to prepare the proposal; and 4) the



Dobbin Street Tree Pit proposal – because NYCDPR was planning on submitting a larger tree planting proposal, which Janoff had suggested the Dobbin Street proposers join. Janoff was grateful to the GCEF for making the Open Space Alliance aware of groups and projects within the community, and has made it a priority to work with the McGolrick Park Alliance in the future.

- Laura Treciokas informed the CAP about the announcement of Small Grant Awards in the *Greenpoint Gazette*.

Debrief: Small Grant Process: Peter Washburn, NY Office of the Attorney General (OAG), Amanda Bassow, Lynn Dwyer, and Laura Treciokas discussed the announcement of the Small Grant Awards, next steps in the Small Grant contracting process, and a small “celebration” event for the Small Grant awardees in May 2014.

Amanda Bassow described the Small Grant proposal evaluation process conducted by NFWF and NBDC. Small Grant applicants that did not initially meet the minimum threshold were allowed to provide supplemental information; almost all applicants ultimately met minimum threshold requirements and so their proposals went through the full evaluation and scoring process. Small Grant applications were evaluated and scored by a review team consisting of NFWF, NBDC, and OAG, with Laura Truettner, Enviro-Sciences Engineering (ESE), serving as an outside observer. The review process was thorough and consensus on individual applicants was reached in person by the review team.

Based on the outcome of this process, NFWF made recommendations on Small Grant funding to OAG and DEC (the State). The State further vetted the proposals before making final decisions on project funding. Of a total of 46 Small Grant proposals, the State selected 18 projects for Small Grant funding.

The State announced its Small Grant Awards through a press release on March 6, 2014. In the release, the State committed to second round on Small Grant awards in early 2015. Grant awardees, as well as those applicants not selected for funding, were notified prior to the public announcement. Members of the CAP were also briefed on the awards before the announcement. Individual de-briefings for those not awarded Small Grants are currently in progress and are intended to help them prepare for the next round of Small Grant funding.

Lynn Dwyer announced that the contracting period for Small Grants has begun, questions and requests for clarifications have been sent to grantees, and grantees will soon receive a handbook describing reporting procedures. Grantees will also be able to participate in a webinar to learn about the reporting requirements. Amanda Bassow said that grantees may request advance funding to address discrete upfront or immediate needs, although generally they will be reimbursed upon submission of invoices.

Laura Treciokas announced plans to organize a small celebration event for Small Grant awardees, to be scheduled in the second or third week of May. The purpose is to allow grantees to meet each other, exchange contact information, and encourage collaboration.

This event will be opened to the public to enable community members to learn more about the grants and/or to participate in the programs themselves.

Debrief: Lessons Learned? The CAP was asked to provide feedback on the lessons learned about the Small Grant award process.

- One CAP member said that she saw a lot of comments online expressing displeasure with the information provided to the community about the Small Grant proposals. Though she did not share this opinion, she said some people felt that there was not enough information about the organizations awarded funding.
- Another CAP member related comments he had heard about how certain projects – such as those related to citizen science, independent monitoring, or Exxon’s expressed commitments – were not getting funded. He suggested that the GCEF clarify what Exxon’s obligations are regarding environmental remediation in Greenpoint. With regard to the citizen science and independent monitoring proposals, Amanda Bassow said that the need for rigorous compliance with the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) had not been anticipated, and that specific guidance in this respect will be provided in guidance to Large and Legacy Grant applicants. Peter Washburn added that “science projects” per se are not consistent with the GCEF; such projects must be associated with an environmental benefit. He said that the GCEF will have to be more proactive about ensuring that applicants fully understand the quality control measures required.
- Another CAP member said that she was not pleased with how Small Grant applicants were allowed to withhold information on their application from the public, and asked whether this will be addressed moving forward. Peter Washburn acknowledged this point, but said that the GCEF felt that it could not require that this information be made public after the fact. Assumed consent for GCEF to provide summary project information to the public will be incorporated into all subsequent RFPs and grant application guidance.
- A CAP member was pleased with how quickly the GCEF responded to questions from the public, but felt that there could have been more information (emails and reminders) provided about the applicant workshops.
- Another CAP member said that the GCEF should make more efforts to clarify the separation between the CAP and the decision-making process, so that the public did not get the false impression that members of the CAP were involved in reviewing or have undue influence over grant applications. Laura Treciokas suggested that this could be stated in a FAQ as well.
- Other CAP members felt that the GCEF process has gone smoothly thus far, particularly the level of community awareness about the GCEF. A CAP member added that no grant program could ever be perfect, but she is extremely pleased with the GCEF process thus far and the GCEF could serve as a positive model for other environmental benefit programs. Peter Washburn asked whether more should be done to inform the community about the projects receiving GCEF funding. A CAP member suggested that a map of funded projects could provide useful information and inspire project proposals in the future. He asked whether the GCEF could collaborate with the Hudson River Foundation in producing such a map. Another CAP member asked whether there was a history of prior environmental benefit projects in Greenpoint. Michelle Moore

responded that such information was only available through press releases, and that creating a comprehensive history of how environmental benefit programs have changed over time would be time-consuming.

- Laura Treciokas asked that CAP members review the “lessons learned” document (distributed at the meeting) on their own.
- Amanda Bassow mentioned the results of the electronic survey of applicants, to which 30 applicants responded. She asked that the CAP review the survey results on its own.

Large and Legacy Grant Process: Amanda Bassow and Lynn Dwyer gave an update on the Large and Legacy Grant process. Amanda Bassow said that Large and Legacy Grant pre-proposals were reviewed by the same team (from the NFWF, NBDC, and OAG) that evaluated and scored the Small Grants. Based on the outcome of this process, NFWF has made recommendations on invitations for full proposal application. The State is currently considering these recommendations, including reviewing the scores and comments from the reviewers, and anticipates approving a list of invitees soon.

NFWF intends to issue invitations for Large and Legacy Grant full proposals in April 2014. At the same time, NFWF is working with a CAP subcommittee to fine-tune the grant guidance for full proposals. The application timeline will be adjusted to ensure that applicants have enough time to write their proposals. NFWF indicated that the Large and Legacy Grant process is currently running approximately two weeks behind schedule. The Independent Review Committee (IRC), the group comprised of neutral subject-matter experts who will review Large and Legacy Grant full proposals, will be assembled according to the types of projects invited for full proposals, with a part of the IRC reviewing all applications, and another part of the IRC focusing on specific kinds of grants. Lynn Dwyer said that a request for technical assistance has been issued, and applicants that are invited to submit full proposals will be offered technical assistance.

Peter Washburn explained that one of the reasons for creating the CAP subcommittee was to help ensure that the guidance provided to applicants for Large and Legacy Grants offered in-depth information about the criteria that would be used to evaluate the proposals, so that applicants have a clear sense of what they have to demonstrate in their applications and the community understands the basis upon which proposal application will be evaluated. Lynn Dwyer stressed the importance of the project narratives in the grant applications. There was discussion between Laura Truettner and Amanda Bassow over whether the members of the IRC could be made public with a preliminary conclusion that, in order to further protect the integrity of the process, the names of IRC members would not be made public but affiliations would be.

CAP discussion and feedback: Concerns were expressed over whether publicizing the members of the IRC might create an opportunity for lobbying, and whether it was useful or possible to release the information after the IRC evaluation was complete. There was also discussion about providing information about the Large and Legacy Grant applicants invited to submit full proposals. There is the possibility, however, that not every applicant invited to submit a full proposal will ultimately do so; moreover, the full proposals that are submitted may differ significantly from the pre-proposals. One CAP member suggested

that the GCEF inform the community about the number of applicants invited to submit full proposals (out of the total number of applicants), rather than remain silent.

Community Input on Large and Legacy Grant Proposals: Laura Truettner discussed the State’s commitment to gathering community input on the Large and Legacy Grant projects deemed by the IRC to have a high likelihood of success. Peter Washburn stressed the importance of this input for the following reasons: 1) the community should be able to provide input; 2) it is possible that the IRC will recommend more projects than the available funding allows, necessitating a further selection process; 3) it is possible that the GCEF will want to fund less than the available funding allows – to leave funding for a subsequent round. Laura Truettner added that some projects proposed by New York City agencies may not be deemed acceptable by the Greenpoint community.

Laura Truettner then outlined a potential process for gathering such community input. She suggested a community event preceded by an extensive “campaign” to share information on Large and Legacy Grant proposals with the Greenpoint community. This could include a “project expo” (including poster-boards for each project) in the Greenpoint Public Library and/or other publicly accessible locations. The community input event could be a community-wide open house and a community voting process.

Laura Truettner distributed a table describing five community potential decision-making options, along with their pros and cons, for the CAP to review. She emphasized that the handout was intended to initiate thinking on a process for gathering community input on the Large and Legacy Grant proposals; the GCEF, with the CAP’s assistance, will have to continue to think about the process options as well as related details (location, voting period, eligibility/identification).

CAP discussion and feedback:

- A CAP member asked whether voting will be used to express community preferences, and related the difficulties she has encountered with participatory budgeting in the past, when access to campaign materials and resources (including time) determined the success of certain projects. Another CAP member agreed, and added that the community voting process could be very costly and would ultimately have to be taken from GCEF programmatic funds. She also asked how the voters would be verified as Greenpoint residents. She recommended a comment period instead of a voting process.
- Soliciting public comments on the proposals, as an alternative to voting, was discussed, as was having community input expressed qualitatively, rather than quantitatively. Peter Washburn expressed concern with the difficulties of processing, assessing, and weighing comments – thus questioned the ultimate value of such comments to the community and the State.
- The possibility of a public forum instead of a voting process was raised.
- Laura Truettner mentioned the possibility of a ranking process, and/or the inclusion of a one-sentence description to justify the authenticity of each vote. A CAP member suggested that allowing community members to indicate their support for multiple projects would allow for more consensus building.
- Amanda Bassow asked whether uniquely numbered ballots could be mailed directly to residents of Greenpoint.

- A CAP member expressed her desire that members of the Greenpoint business community be included in the input process. The CAP also discussed the possibility of having multiple community meetings – with a first meeting determining the criteria for evaluation, and a second meeting for evaluating projects based on these criteria. Some CAP members expressed concern with the idea of having multiple community meetings, as it would be too onerous on the community.
- The CAP also discussed the timing and location of voting- was it better to have the vote take place at the poster session in one location or better to have multiple voting stations at different locations in Greenpoint.

Closing Business – Future CAP Meetings: The next CAP meeting was proposed for Wednesday, May 7, 2014.

Participants in 3/19/2014 CAP meeting:

Christine Holowacz	Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee (NMC)
Dewey Thompson	Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks and Planning (GWAPP) and North Brooklyn Boat Club (NBBC)
Heidi Shea Springer	Greenpoint Gardens
Laura Hofmann	Barge Park Pals
Phillip Musegaas	Riverkeeper
Leah Archibald*	EWVIDCO
Manuel Zuniga	47 Java Garden Collective
Ryan Kuonen	Brooklyn Community Board 1
Fernando Villafuerte	Greenpoint resident
Venetia Lannon	DEC
Peter Washburn	OAG
Michelle Moore	DEC
Amanda Bassow	General Administrator (GA)/NFWF
Lynn Dwyer	GA/NFWF
Bob Polin	GA/NFWF
Rich Mazur	GA/ NBDC
Laura Treciokas	GA/NBDC
Filip Stabrowski	GA/NBDC
Laura Truettner	State Outreach Consultant, ESE

*denotes participants attended meeting by telephone conference