



GREENPOINT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

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Community Advisory Panel (CAP) Meeting Thursday, January 22, 2015

Note: The following is a summary of the Greenpoint Community Advisory Panel (CAP) meeting held on 1/22/2015. 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 Foundation (NFWF), described the primary goals of the meeting, which included: 1) announcing Laura Truettner's departure as State Outreach Consultant to the GCEF and recognizing her contributions to the program; 2) updating the CAP about the GCEF Community Preferencing process and results; 3) updating the CAP on the GCEF community outreach; 4) updating the CAP on the GCEF grant administration; and 5) discussing the GCEF grant process and community outreach for 2015.

Notes, Updates, and Other Business:

- The CAP approved the meeting notes from 7/23/14 and 9/17/14.

Recognizing Laura Truettner's Contribution to GCEF:

- Amanda Bassow informed the CAP that Laura Truettner, Outreach Consultant for the State, will be stepping down from her position.
- Peter Washburn, New York State Office of the Attorney General, thanked Laura Truettner for her work on the GCEF. He stated that Laura Truettner's guidance of the GCEF from its inception in 2011 has been instrumental to the program's success.
- Laura Truettner thanked the CAP in particular for its hard work in the GCEF process.
- Peter Washburn announced that Laura Treciokas, who formerly served as the General Administrator's Community Liaison for the GCEF, has agreed to replace Laura Truettner as the State's Outreach Consultant.

General GCEF Program Update:

- **Community Preferencing Events.** Amanda Bassow summarized the results of the GCEF Large & Legacy Grant Community Preferencing Events, held at two locations in Greenpoint on November 20, 2014 and November 22, 2014. Thirteen of





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the highest scoring Large and Legacy Grant projects were presented to Greenpoint residents for preferencing. Greenpoint residents were invited to choose between at least two and up to six projects that they would support to receive GCEF funding. A total of 526 ballots were cast. The results of preferencing were forwarded to the State which decided to fund projects that received votes in 40% or greater of the ballots cast. A total of six projects were awarded \$11 million by GCEF. This funding will be combined with \$23.8 million in matching contributions from the recipients, bringing the total investment to nearly \$35 million. Descriptions of the winning projects are available for view on the GCEF website.

- **GCEF Small Grant Walking Tour.** Amanda Bassow also described the GCEF Small Grants Walking Tour, on November 21, 2014, in which NFWF, NBDC (North Brooklyn Development Corporation), and the State visited all but one of the Small Grant projects in Greenpoint. The purpose of the walking tour was to meet with grantees and discuss progress updates on their projects. Filip Stabrowski is planning to organize similar events (with Small, Large and Legacy Grants) in the future.
- **CAP discussion of GCEF Preferencing Events.** CAP members were in general agreement that the community preferencing process operated smoothly and effectively. One CAP member expressed a desire that one or two more projects could have been funded. Another CAP member asked about the difference in votes between the funded project receiving the least number of votes and the unfunded project receiving the most number of votes. Amanda Bassow referred CAP members to the GCEF website for a breakdown of the number of votes received by each project. Peter Washburn explained that there was a clear and logical break in voting between the funded and unfunded projects. In addition, he noted that drawing the funding “line” at 40 percent ensures substantial funding would be available for the next – and final – GCEF grant round.

GCEF Outreach Update:

- Filip Stabrowski summarized the outreach efforts leading up to the Large and Legacy Grant Community Preferencing Events. He referred CAP members to the GCEF preferencing “By the Numbers” document available on the GCEF website, which quantifies the individual outreach efforts. Filip also referred CAP members to the GCEF map on the GCEF website which shows the distribution of preferencing “votes” cast based on place of residence in Greenpoint and demonstrates wide participation from across the Greenpoint community. Finally, he thanked the CAP for its help in conducting outreach for the preferencing events, through cross-dissemination of emails, social media, meeting announcements, and word of mouth.

GCEF Administrative Update:



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- **Large and Legacy Grant debriefing process.** Lynn Dwyer, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, informed the CAP that she has completed all but one debriefing call with Large & Legacy Grant applicants not selected to receive GCEF funding. Feedback received from applicants for GCEF consideration moving forward included: 1) extending the community preferencing process to increase the amount of time between announcement of projects to be preferenced and voting and integrating an on-site forum to allow applicants to present their projects to the public; 2) providing more information about the extent to which community preferencing and the Independent Review Committee scores and comments are weighed in the final decision-making process by the State. It was suggested that a combined community preferencing/IRC score be used to determine grant winners, as opposed to using the community preferencing score alone; 3) asking the community to fund one project in each major environmental category from the GCEF Request for Proposals, rather than funding projects from any category; 4) considering whether the preferencing process was more advantageous for smaller, local groups with local capacity and relationships, or larger, outside groups with sophisticated outreach capability.
- **GCEF Grant contracting.** Lynn Dwyer explained that NFWF is currently in the process of conducting legal, financial, and quality control/assurance review for the awarded Large & Legacy projects. NFWF is inquiring about project budgets, work plans, and timelines, and has distributed handbooks and conducted a webinar on grant administration for recipients. Along with NBDC, NFWF also intends to organize a Large & Legacy Grant Celebration and Networking Event (similar to the Small Grant Celebration and Networking Event held in May 2014), which would enable Large & Legacy Grant recipients to meet each other, learn about other funded projects, and explore opportunities to collaborate and/or share resources.. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for projects to engage with interested members of the Greenpoint community.

GCEF 2015 Grant Process and Community Outreach:

- **“Straw Proposal” for 2015 GCEF Grant Process.** Amanda Bassow presented various options for CAP consideration associated with the upcoming GCEF 2015 grant round. These options address major aspects of the grant process, including: size of grants, amount to be dedicated to the small, large and/or legacy grants, the need for conducting a pre-proposal round, form of technical review, applicant eligibility, and number of applications allowed per organization. She explained the options presented in the straw proposal were not mutually exclusive but could be combined in various ways. Amanda noted that in addition to the constraint imposed by the remaining available funding, there was a time consideration relevant to the design of the final funding round. The State’s contract with the General Administrator is scheduled to end in 2017. If GCEF-funded projects are on-



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going at that time, the contract likely would need to be modified to provide additional funding to the General Administrator to oversee project completion. Therefore, the greater the number and size of the projects funded in the final round, the greater the amount of funding that may need to be reserved to address the contingency of extending the General Administrator services after the current contract's end-date. Amanda Bassow noted that the first round of GCEF funding took 12 months, but suggested options for shortening the process included elimination of the pre-proposal round.

- **CAP discussion and feedback.** CAP members discussed whether or not a cap should be set on individual potential grant awards in the next round of funding. One CAP member expressed concern that setting a cap may prevent the funding from being exhausted in the final round. Another CAP member argued for a cap as a way to preserve some funding for smaller, local groups to use as “seed money”, from which further sources of funding could be found after the GCEF program ends (an absence of a cap would allow the potential for a single project to consume all of the available grant funding). Lynn Dwyer suggested that a benefit of a cap would be to encourage applicants to break large proposals (which may be unsuccessful due to their size and multiple elements) into smaller, focused component proposals that would be potentially more attractive funding candidates. Peter Washburn asked whether setting a cap on grant award would be a “philosophical” shift in the GCEF, which had designed the first round to be open to project proposals up to the full amount of available funding. CAP members continued to discuss the idea of a cap on grants. A cap of \$600,000 for Large Grants was suggested. CAP members also discussed the question of whether to include a Legacy Grant category in the final round given the smaller pool of funding available.
- **Small Grant set aside and size discussion.** Amanda Bassow asked the CAP whether GCEF should consider setting aside a certain amount of funding for Small Grants. She also opined that NFWF believed that raising the size of Small Grants was warranted and asked whether grants up to \$100,000 should be offered. Some CAP members supported this proposal, while one CAP member expressed concern that increasing the cap on the amount for small grants would be unfair to first round GCEF applicants. Another CAP member suggested that altering the process is part of the “lessons learned” from the first round and is, in fact, the prerogative of the GCEF. There was an initial discussion of an appropriate “set-aside” for Small Grants, with amounts between \$1 to \$2 million discussed.
- **Pre-proposal discussion.** Discussion then turned to whether there is a need to have a pre-proposal stage in the Large and Legacy Grant processes. Amanda Bassow suggested that eliminating the pre-proposal step would enable the GCEF to run the Small, Large and Legacy Grant process in parallel. The advantage is that this would allow for more flexibility and time-savings in the overall process; the disadvantage is that it would eliminate an opportunity to “weed out” weak projects



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as well as to assist project applicants – particularly new applicants – who would benefit from GCEF’s support prior to finalizing their application. The latter could be perceived as creating a process is less inclusive than in the first round. One CAP member suggested that the pre-proposal may not be necessary in the program’s second iteration because both the community and applicants are more familiar with the GCEF, and the GCEF may now choose to focus on flexibility and speed instead. Amanda suggested that eliminating the pre-proposal may actually be more fair and inclusive, as it will allow all applicants to have their full proposals evaluated (rather than using the pre-proposal process to screen proposals). She further pointed out that elimination of the pre-proposal would be coupled with an extension of the application period – thus, extending the period over which the General Administrator could offer proposal development support to prospective applicants.

- **Polling the CAP on pre-proposals and Large Grant caps.** Amanda Bassow polled the CAP on whether it would like to eliminate the pre-proposal. Out of a total of 11 CAP members present, 6 members supported eliminating the pre-proposal. The CAP was then polled on whether or not to cap Large Grants. 1 CAP member supported no cap, while 7 supported a Large Grant cap of \$600,000.
- **Spring 2015 GCEF Community Meeting.** Amanda Bassow suggested that the community meeting combine the release of the 2015 GCEF RFP with a networking opportunity for community members. There was general support among the CAP of this suggestion.
- **Remaining questions from straw proposal.** Amanda Bassow asked for CAP input on whether: 1) there should be a limit on the number of grant applications an applicant could submit; 2) past grantees and applicants should be eligible to apply for GCEF funding in the next round; and 3) New York City agencies should be eligible to apply for GCEF funding. The CAP expressed agreement that no limit on number of applications each applicant can submit, and that past grantees and applicants should be eligible to participate in the next round. There was no agreement on whether New York City agencies should be eligible. NFWF suggested that the question of City agency eligibility be discussed further at a later time. One CAP member reminded the group that the issue of NYC agencies had been discussed previously at length by the CAP and ultimately resolved in favor of permitting them to apply.

Closing Business – Future CAP Meetings: Filip Stabrowski proposed that the date for the next CAP meeting be Thursday, March 5, 2015.

Participants in 9/17/2014 CAP meeting:

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| Christine Holowacz | Newtown Creek Monitoring Committee (NMC) |
| Dewey Thompson | Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks and Planning (GWAPP) |



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| Heidi Shea Springer | Greenpoint Gardens |
| Ingrid Bromberg Kennedy | McGolrick Park Neighborhood Alliance |
| Leah Archibald | EWVIDCO |
| Joanna Micek | Greenpoint resident |
| Philip Musegaas | Riverkeeper |
| Katie Denny | Greenpoint Waterfront Association for Parks and Planning (GWAPP) |
| Ryan Kuonen | Brooklyn Community Board 1 |
| Michael Heimbinder | Newtown Creek Alliance |
| Mike Schade | McGolrick Park Neighborhood Alliance |
| Ann Carroll | Greenpoint Resident |
| Emily Mijatovic | Assemblyman Joseph Lentol's Office |
| Stephen Levin* | New York City Councilmember |
| Lisa Bloodgood | Office of New York City Councilmember Stephen Levin |
| Tamara Slogoska | State Senator Martin Dilan's Office |
| Joe Haas | OAG |
| Peter Washburn | OAG |
| Michelle Moore | New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) |
| Karen Mintzer | New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) |
| Amanda Bassow | General Administrator (GA)/NFWF |
| Lynn Dwyer | GA/NFWF |
| Margaret Kostecki | GA/NBDC |
| Rich Mazur | GA/ NBDC |
| Filip Stabrowski | GA/NBDC |
| Laura Treciokas | State Outreach Consultant |
| Laura Truettner | State Outreach Consultant, ESE |

*denotes participants attended meeting by telephone conference