



Minutes
Gateways Network Working Group Meeting
Chesapeake Bay Program Office
Joe Macknis Conference Room
February 12, 2003

Present: Lisa Gutierrez, Bob Carter, Ron Weiss, Derral Jones, Robert Pickett, Bob Campbell, Wilmer Henninger, Maria Vonderheid, Melanie Teems, Marci Ross, Skip Meehan, Elizabeth Hughes, Marian Huber, Jonathan Doherty, Catherine Mueller

The meeting began at 10:05 a.m.

Working Group members reviewed and approved the minutes of the December 11, 2002 teleconference meeting.

Review of the Pending Nominations:

Virginia Living Museum: (Tabled from December 2002 meeting) The members reviewed the revised evaluation and after discussion and comments by those members attending a recent site visit, agreed to designate the museum as a Gateway Site.

Riverbend Park: Working Group members considered the evaluation sheet and agreed the park merited designation as a Gateway site. During the discussion, it was noted the park was also part of the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail. Several members said that exploring how to address cross-marketing for the multiple identities was important, as it is for other regional initiatives or designations that intersect or overlap with portions of the Gateways Network (e.g. heritage areas).

Hidden Pond Nature Center Connector: Working Group members reviewed the evaluation materials. The concurred the nomination did not meet the minimum criteria for a Gateway connecting route, particularly as it does not connect or link with any other Gateways. Members did agree there may be potential for the larger Fairfax County “Cross County Trail” to qualify as a connecting route.

Wye Grist Mill: After reviewing the evaluation sheets and discussing interpretive opportunities available within the site, Working Group members agreed the mill is one of only a few places that can tell a particular Bay-related story. Members agreed to designate it as a Gateway site.

Hartge Nautical Museum: Working Group members reviewed the evaluation sheet and heard Jonathan Doherty and Elizabeth Hughes report on their recent visit to the museum. Members discussed several issues and concerns related to the nomination, but focused on the question of whether it is appropriate for a privately owned resource to be designated as a Gateway. In the case of the Hartge Maritime Museum, three factors were noted: (1) the museum, while a non-

profit, does not own the land, buildings or space that are the primary cultural resources and that provide the base for visitor services and experiences; (2) given that, it is not clear that the private entity is prepared to make the short and long-term commitments to put public access and other visitor services and Gateway needs ahead of its legitimate commercial priorities; and (3) finally, it is difficult to distinguish the “boundary” between the museum and the yacht yard, both in terms of what is the core resource, and as an average visitor. Working Group members felt strongly that factors 1 and 2 distinguished the site from other NGO owned properties where the entire organization and land base has a public, educational purpose. Members agreed these factors make it inappropriate to designate the museum as a Gateway site. Some members noted it was not inconceivable that clear long-term commitments by a private entity could eventually be worked out in the future, but that would require significant care and careful consideration by the Working Group.

FY03 Budget Update

Jonathan Doherty noted the budget for FY 03 has yet to be approved by Congress. The President’s FY 04 Budget Request is for \$798, 000, as it has been for several years. Once there is a budget figure we will need to discuss and revisit both new and recurring Network-wide priorities.

Grant Program Update

The grant program guidelines are now available on the Website. A printed version was distributed and is available in the CBPO. Consultations are underway to stimulate good applications. Two grant workshops scheduled – March 17 Newport News; March 21 Annapolis – focus is on improving/developing their specific application.

Two adjustments were made to changes we had considered:

- Special abbreviated process/application for specific types of small projects (wayside panels): After analyzing the issues further, we concluded that we probably were trying to solve a problem that either didn’t exist, or wasn’t as important as another one. Moreover, creation of an additional whole new application process appeared to confuse matters. We determined the fundamental problem was that proponents of many small projects tend to not have an adequate understanding of the process/steps or the budget/time for project success. We are addressing that through additional guidance, including an on-line worksheet for budgeting and time, and the workshops.
- Pure planning grants - Similarly, we recognized several problems with the pure planning grant concept, at least for this year: Applicants who need planning grants the most are the least likely to be knowledgeable of the needs/benefits or to have capacity for putting together the application. A new separate application and process would tend to add confusion for most Gateways. As we are already committed to providing interpretive planning technical assistance upon request, it is more advantageous and efficient for Gateways to make use of that rather than apply for a planning grant. Result: did not add new process; rather (1) added specific language to guidelines allowing interp planning and WT planning as part of larger project, and (2) are promoting interpretive planning technical assistance .

There will only be one grant round. (Deadline: May 2, 2003). Grant review should begin the beginning on the week of May 12 and conclude with final discussions at the June Working Group Meeting.

Small Group Consultation Meetings Update

Jonathan Doherty described topics being discussed with Gateways at ongoing small group consultation meetings. The meetings are being held either at one of the sites or via teleconference. Four have been completed four and three are scheduled for February.

Working Group members had comments on several topics:

- It would be helpful if there is an outdoor option for the standard Gateway panels, but that the exterior panels do not necessarily need to have a container for map/guides.
- Some felt the visitor testimonial concept had potential value for providing feedback to site managers, while others were less enthusiastic. It was also noted that collection of any survey data should be carefully planned and handled. It was also suggested that allowing sites the option for having information shown publicly or not might be useful. Jonathan said this concept is very much just exploratory at this point.

Chesapeake Bay Special Resource Study

An update on the status of Special Resource Study was presented. Alternatives were described and discussed. The timeline calls for release in early spring with workshops in April and a final report in summer. The staff is available to brief the Working Group agency heads during the upcoming months.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 12, 2003.

Bob Carter suggested encouraging members to participate in the May support organization workshop and to cancel the regular May meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.

Attachments

- Small Group Power Point Presentation
- SRS Power Point Presentation