



ONLINE-OFFSHORE

News from Governors Island
Regional Plan Association /
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This is a periodic newsletter by and for people who care about metropolitan New York and its "new" special space. The Governors Island Alliance is an association of more than 30 local, regional and national organizations dedicated to planning, conservation, historic preservation and the environment. To be deleted from the e-mailing list,

to submit letters for publication, or for questions, go to governorsisland@rpa.org. For more information about the Alliance, head to www.governorsislandalliance.org.

Headnote: In the copy that follows, GIPEC is the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation, the joint state and city agency that owns most of the Island. Their website is www.gipec.org. NPS refers to the National Park Service, which owns 22 acres that constitute the Governors Island National Monument (Fort Jay, Castle Williams and land between). Their website is: www.governorsislandnationalmonument.org. GIA is us.

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OPENING DAY

The Island opens up on Saturday, June 11. More of it will be open this year, more history and more grass. In addition to the paved esplanade on the western shore, a portion of the interior will be open to the public for the first time since the Island was returned to New York in 2003.

Summer Saturdays

Opening Day: June 11 - Family Festival
Through September 3, 2005

Weekday Historic District Tours

Sponsored by the National Park Service
Tuesdays through Fridays, 11 am and 1 pm
June 14 - September 2, 2005

Guided by National Park Service Rangers, the tours, which last 90 minutes, are free, but there is a fee for the ferry from the Battery Maritime Building (next to the Staten Island ferry). The historic district will also be open for self-guided tours. For more information on where to purchase ferry tickets, pricing and hours, visit www.govisland.com or www.nps.gov/gois or call 212.440.2202.

Opening Day will feature a Family Festival co-sponsored by GIPEC and Goldman Sachs.

GIPEC will be posting a calendar of summer events soon, so keep your eyes on their website www.govisland.com for an updated schedule of island events.

GIPEC's NEW MANAGEMENT

Jim Lima resigned as President of GIPEC in late April for reasons that have not been made public. Note that Kevin Rampe resigned a few weeks later as President of the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation, which is in charge of redeveloping Ground Zero. The two resignations are unrelated, but both reflect the fact that progress on both projects has been slow, frustrating to anyone who tried to satisfy all the contentious conflicting interests – political, commercial, financial, community, state and local, and the public at large. According to colleagues quoted in The New York Times, Lima said as much himself. No successor has been named yet for either man. GIPEC has designated an interim president from the staff of the Empire State Development Corporation, Paul Kelly, while it conducts a search for a permanent replacement. Governor Pataki has assigned his chief of staff, John Cahill, to take control of all aspects of the rebuilding effort at the World Trade Center site.

GIA's NEW BOARD

The Governors Island Alliance has created a board of directors to press the controlling authorities for adequate funding and appropriate uses for the Island. Chairman of the Board is Kenneth Fisher, former city councilman and principal at Wolf Block Schorr & Solis-Cohen.

The members are Kent Barwick, president, Municipal Art Society; Peg Breen, president, New York Landmarks Conservancy; Tonio Burgos, president, Tonio Burgos & Associates, Inc. / Nyprocoa, Inc.; Albert K. Butzel, president, Friends of Hudson River Park; Anthony Coles, partner, Patterson, Belknap, Webb and Tyler; Jay Cross, president of the New York Jets; Douglas Durst, president of the Durst Organization; Barbara J. Fife, co-director of the School of Public Affairs at Baruch College; Elizabeth B. Gilmore; Richard A. Kahan, president of the Urban Assembly; Edith Kean; Sean McDevitt, managing director of Alterity Partners; Joseph Porrovecchio, regional director of Shaw Environmental & Infrastructure, Inc.; Jay Schippers, The Housing Resource Foundation, Inc.; Tom Secunda, founder and head of development, Bloomberg LP; Gregory Thomas, director of the program for school preparedness and planning at the National Center for Disaster Preparedness; Rudy Washington, Rudy Washington Consultants (former Deputy Mayor for Community Development and Business Services); John H. Watts, chairman, Fischer Francis Trees & Watts; Carl Weisbrod, president, Downtown Alliance; Robert Yaro, president, Regional Plan Association. The executive director of the Governors Island Alliance is Rob Pirani, Director of Environmental Programs at the Regional Plan Association, which houses the Alliance staff, provides administrative services and acts as fiscal agent.

OUT IN THE HARBOR, STILL WAITING – Headline in The New York Times

GIPEC's recent "Request for Expressions of Interest" – its newest attempt to develop workable plans for the Island – has finally focused the attention of major newspapers to the fact that nothing has happened yet. The Times, Newsday and the Wall Street Journal have all run stories in recent weeks.

The Times story, a big spread on the front page of the Metro section on April 25, noted that it has been more than two years since New York regained control of the Island and "city and state officials have dusted off the suggestion box once again" – i.e., started another search for ideas. Deputy Mayor Daniel Doctoroff, vice chairman of GIPEC, told the reporters, "We are calling out to the world for one-of-a-kind ideas." Rob Pirani, GIA's executive director, was quoted as saying, "Time is marching on. More than 12 million square feet of historic spaces are intended to be preserved, but are rapidly deteriorating. It is imperative that a lot of empty buildings be filled with private tenants." Albert Butzel, president of the Friends of Hudson River Park and co-chair of the GIA Advisory Committee (formerly Steering Committee) added: "In many ways [the Island] seems to have fallen off the central

radar screen for both the city and the state. I don't see any really strong advocates within the government."

Newsday on May 9 noted that the deadline for expressions of interest has been extended to June 20. Meanwhile, GIPEC will host a three-hour tour for potential developers or partners on May 17. From those submissions, officials will create a master plan and solicit formal Requests for Proposals, which will lead to contracts to build or develop specific buildings or parts of the island. The Newsday article also reported that Senator Schumer has suggested trying to attract a major biotech or pharmaceutical facility. Deputy Mayor Doctoroff said he hopes that "the best minds in the world" will come up with a great vision. Rob Pirani, speaking of the potential development, said: "It would exemplify New York's return to the waterfront. By having a variety of tenants, it makes for a more exciting and interesting place."

The Wall Street Journal article, on March 30, quoted Secretary of State Randy Daniels, co-chairman of GIPEC, to the effect that the Island "has to be a place not only where a person can go and stay in a five-star facility, but also a place where a single mom and her two kids can hop on the ferry to play in the park and buy a hot dog." Citing the competition for official attention, the Journal noted that the Island's development "is part of a larger plan to redevelop New York's East River waterfront and New York Harbor." Other projects include the redevelopment of a two-mile stretch of lower Manhattan's East River waterfront, the construction of a 1.3-mile-long Brooklyn Bridge Park on the Brooklyn waterfront and the rezoning of a 75-block industrial strip that runs along the river in North Brooklyn.

The Island was the stage for "The Muster," a Public Art event on May 14. It was also on television the same week, on Channel 5's "A Current Affair" show May 12. Earlier the Italian edition of Vogue used the Island as a backdrop for male fashion photos. Bloomingdale's did the same for a fashion spread in Details magazine.

For another perspective on which parts of the National Park System get the most federal dollars, an article in Salt Lake City's Deseret Morning News last fall noted with apparent displeasure that the Gateway National Recreation Area spanning the New York-New Jersey waterfront had a budget of almost \$21 million last year, or more than the budget for the Grand Canyon. The only national parks with bigger federal funding were Yellowstone, Yosemite and Independence Hall, the article said. It observed that "while well used, few faraway people would cancel trips to Florida in favor of that New York beachfront."

The Island is also attracting the attention of television producers and fashionistas, as well as some heavyweights. The first two episodes of the current season of "Law and Order" were shot there. It was the stage for Channel 5's "A Current Affair" show on May 14. In April the Italian edition of Vogue spent a day on the Island shooting male fashion photos. Bloomingdale's did the same for a menswear spread in Details magazine. It was the stage for "The Muster," a Public Art event on May 14. Another large scale event was the Architectural League's Beaux Arts Ball, which brought 700 partiers. On a smaller scale, but with bigger clout, the World Economic Forum held a dinner for 150.

WE GET MAIL

It was great to read about your successful summer last year. I know how challenging all those activities are to do! As we say on Roosevelt Island.....mazel tov!

Judith Berdy

President, The Roosevelt Island Historical Society

My father established the Coast Guard Ordinance School on Governor's Island in the late 70's. We were stationed there from 1974 thru 1983. He may be able to provide some insight if a museum of wartime history is ever established or background information is needed for the ordinance located on the Island. Rebecca Winters rwintersfl@hotmail.com