

ONLINE-OFFSHORE: News from the Governors Island Alliance
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A periodic newsletter by and for people who care about metropolitan New York and its “new” (300-year-old+) special space. The Governors Island Alliance is an association of 30-plus local, regional and national organizations dedicated to planning, conservation, historic preservation and the environment. To be deleted from the e-mailing list, to ask questions, or to submit letters for publication go to governorsisland@rpa.org

Glossary: GIPEC is the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corporation, the state-and-city agency that owns most of the Island: www.gipec.org. NPS is the National Park Service, parent of the Governors Island National Monument (Fort Jay, Castle Williams and land between: www.governorsislandnationalmonument.org. GIA is us.

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GIPEC Public Meeting on October 19

GIPEC has scheduled its second public meeting for Wednesday, October 19. The first was in 2003, out on the Island. This one is in Manhattan in the Great Hall of the Fashion Institute of Technology on 27th Street between 7th and 8th Avenues. Time: 5-8 p.m.

Given the infrequency of these meetings, we urge all of you to attend, to become better informed yourself and to better inform GIPEC. The Alliance is pressing two points:

- Planning for parks and public spaces on the Island should start now. This should get underway *before* – not after – GIPEC negotiates deals for Island development. If these decisions are put off any longer it will only delay the promise that the public the Island have full access to this special public domain.
- Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg owe the public a commitment to full funding to build the parks, repair historic buildings, expand ferry service and attend to old and new Island infrastructure. Full funding means \$200 million.

If you can’t attend and want your views to be heard, send them in by:

e-mail: comments-gipec@empire.state.ny.us

mail: GIPEC, 10 South St., Battery Maritime Bldg. Slip 7, New York, N.Y. 10004

Concepts for the Island’s Future

At the open meeting on October 19 GIPEC will present four conceptual plans, each accenting a different program of uses and each one different in the density of activity. They illustrate the range of options, drawn from the responses to GIPEC’s earlier call for

non-committal expressions of interest (RFEI). At a City Hall presentation for members of the Alliance, cost estimates ranged from \$212 million for “minimum build” to \$368 million for “full build.” The minimum provides for wide open space on the southern, non-historic half of the island. The option involving maximum development is “Innovation Island,” largely research laboratories and related facilities. The other two concepts are the “Iconic” and “Destination” Island, with programs revolving around entertainment and a unique design with a beach at the south end. Based on these concepts GIPEC will soon issue an RFP (Request for Proposals) asking potential developers to submit formal plans.

GIPEC Board Meetings

Deputy Mayor Dan Doctoroff, now chairman of GIPEC, presided at a meeting of the board for the first time on July 27, noting that “it has been a long time since we met” and promising to be “a very active chairman.” He indicated that he would focus city attention on the Island. “The city will commit whatever resources are needed to get this thing done right,” he said. He also said the board would meet more frequently, and it has. Discussion at the meeting included a suggestion from two members that permanent housing be strongly considered, although they would be outside the restrictions in the deed to the Island. James Gill, influential chairman of the Battery Park City Authority, stated his “total opposition.” (The Alliance is also opposed.)

Preliminary Proposals

GIPEC’s earlier request for ideas drew 90 proposals. Of these, 16 related to education, 10 to the arts, 4 to the environment, 6 involved “hospitality” (hotels, restaurants) and 6 dealt with the Battery Maritime Building, where the ferry docks at the foot of Manhattan. Ten addressed the whole island or unique ideas, such as a TV tower and an Indy race track, and 30 only stated the proposer’s qualifications without presenting specific ideas.

Candidates’ Views

Over the summer, the Governors Island Alliance invited all the candidates for Mayor and Manhattan Borough President for meetings with Alliance members for informational discussions about the Island and its future. Here are some highlights:

Scott Stringer, the Democratic candidate for Manhattan Borough President, suggested that he would be come a leader in ensuring parks and public access to the Island. . In an interview with the G.I.A. he said he would line up corporate sponsors for Island ballfields, freeing up Manhattan fields for Manhattanites.

Congressman Anthony Weiner iterated his concern that the Island be well connected via ferry to all parts of the City, including links to the other National Parks sites. He also suggested that the Island needs enough development to ensure that people visited in all seasons.

Fernando Ferrer’s senior policy advisor also expressed support for the Island’s redevelopment and pledged that the former Bronx Borough President would make it a priority.

