



**FORT VANCOUVER
National Trust**

January 10, 2013

Ms. Tracy Fortmann
Superintendent
Fort Vancouver National Historic Site
612 East Reserve Street
Vancouver, WA 98661

Dear Tracy,

We are responding to your January 11th deadline for the Trust to agree to work under NPS defined parameters as a condition precedent for further negotiations on your proposed new Cooperative Agreement (Agreement) between the Fort Vancouver National Trust (Trust) and the National Park Service (NPS) regarding the Trust's continued operation of the M.J. Murdock Aviation Center/Pearson Aviation Museum Complex (Museum). We are also taking into consideration discussions that members of the Trust's Executive Committee had with you, Chief Ranger Shine, and your legal counsel, Alexandra James on November 6th, as well as telephone conversations that Executive Committee member Steve Horenstein had with Ms. James on December 12th and 14th concerning your proposed draft of a new Agreement.

As you are aware, the Trust provided a response to this new Agreement draft that contained modifications to your proposed terms which the Trust believes would be necessary to enable us to maintain the sustainable operation of the Museum and the continued growth of our successful educational programming. It is not clear from our recent conversations what the NPS might or might not agree to as to changes to the draft Agreement that would work for the Trust. However, it is clear that the NPS feels it is bound by its regulations and cannot negotiate certain key provisions that we believe are necessary to enable the Trust to maintain a successful and financially sustainable operation. We remain puzzled as to why these regulations have not been an issue since the Museum Complex was established by the community in 1995.

It has become apparent to the Trust's Board of Trustees that the issue is much larger than the Cooperative Agreement. The Trust is an entrepreneurial, program oriented, community focused organization. The NPS is focused on its core mission with more attention to its rules of operation than it has been since the Trust began to operate the museum. The Trust cannot operate effectively as the manager of the Museum for the benefit of the broader community and comply with those rules. This is not a match. It will not work. Perhaps we should have realized this when we met with Pacific West Regional Director Lehnertz in San Francisco and saved us all some time and effort.

There is a current Agreement in place for the Museum between the NPS and the City of Vancouver (City) executed in December 1995. That Agreement remains in effect until 2025, with extensions thereafter, and the Trust has served as the City's designated agent to operate the Museum since the Trust and the City entered into a sub-agreement on February 2005. Terms of these agreements enable the Trust to financially sustain Museum operations and to maintain program growth. The Trust will continue to operate in accordance with these agreements, with permit requests submitted to the NPS for large events outside the Museum. The Trust is prepared to continue to serve in this capacity at least until the current Agreement's term is completed in 2025 or longer, unless earlier terminated by the NPS.

We have also discussed the fact that although the City has certain financial obligations in the current Agreement the Trust has agreed to accept these responsibilities, which will enable the City to remain in compliance with the Agreement's required financial contributions.

We look forward to maintaining the M.J. Murdock Aviation Center/Pearson Aviation Museum Complex as a vibrant resource for our community and an important education asset for as long as the Trust is able to maintain its currently sustainable operations and program development. This assumes that the current Agreement remains in place. We also look forward to a continued productive partnership on the Fort Vancouver National Site with the NPS and the City that will build on the work we have all done to make this a truly significant place for our community and the Nation.

Sincerely,


Ed Lynch
Co-Chair


Bing Sheldon
Co-Chair

Cc: Christine Lehnertz
Chip Jenkins
Alexandra James
Eric Holmes