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February 5, 2013

Tracy Fortmann, Superintendent  
Fort Vancouver National Park Service  
612 E Reserve Street  
Vancouver, WA 98661

Tracy,

I took the opportunity under communications at last night's City Council meeting to brief the Council on where we stand relative to the Air Museum.

First, I must say, I was very surprised to see your letter to the Trust dated today that calls for them to immediately provide NPS with access to and stewardship of the museum. My operating understating of the termination by the park service was that they would have a full 180 days to transition operations and steward assets. Even a window of 45 days, as proffered in your letter, is insufficient and, frankly, unwarranted.

Further, there are at least 45 events that have been scheduled over the next six months, with community groups and members having made plans based on those arrangements. Such an aggressive transition to the NPS of the museum is likely to cause unnecessary disruption to these folks.

The agreement governing the operation of the museum is between the City of Vancouver and NPS, not NPS and the Trust. As such, it is my intent to assure that the Trust – as the City's subcontractor - has the full 180 days to transition out of the museum operations. To this end, I have asked the Trust to develop for my staff a calendar that identifies how this will be accomplished between now and the end of July (the full 180 days), including how all currently booked events and facility uses can be accommodated with minimal to no disruption to users. Once I have that calendar, my staff will be happy to sit down with you and review how the transition will occur.

Finally, the Council affirmed last night that continued community access to the facility that is substantially similar to what has been enjoyed in the past is of critical importance. To this end, my staff and I will be working to identify and pursue any and all avenues to assure this is the outcome, including working with our congressional delegation on legislative solutions.

I am disappointed to have to write this letter, but collaborative efforts on this matter to date have not borne fruit. If you have questions, Jan Bader will be back in the office next week and available for consult then.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Holmes  
City Manager

cc: City Council  
Elson Strahan