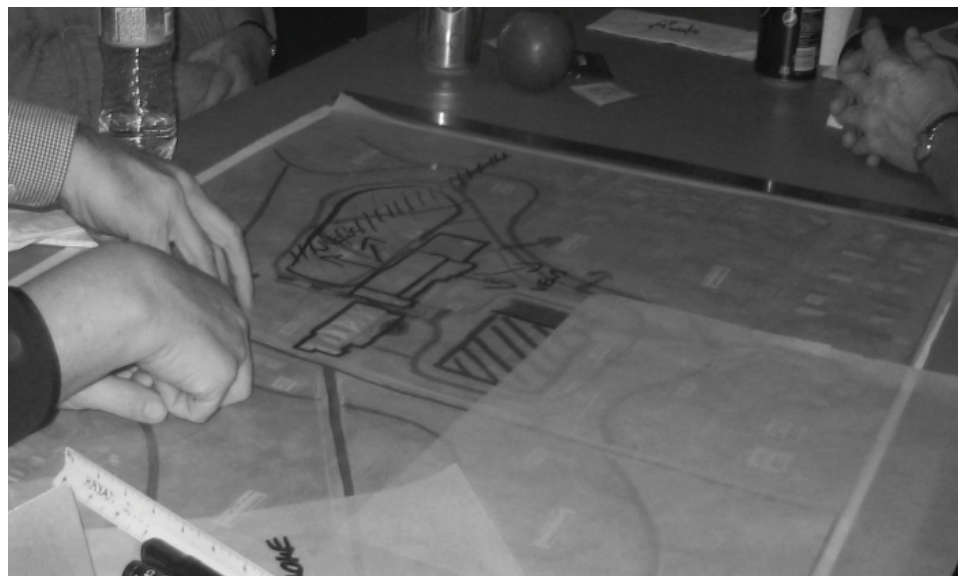




# Hackensack Water Works at Oradell Charrette & Public Meeting November 14, 2009

## Process & Outcomes



## Participants

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Chack, Joanne  
Gidez, Reed  
Grant, Hedy  
Kelly, Tom  
Moderator Edward Krafcik



Daniele, Diane Brown  
Dewar, Linda  
Korzeliuss, Linda  
Niffousi, Stu  
Perkins, Eric  
Torpie, Lynn  
Moderator Michael Saltarella



DeLucia, Tina  
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Sattely, Maris  
Moderator Bryan Obara



DelaCruz, Alyssa  
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Kobayashi, Itsaso  
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Moderator Tyson Triplett



## Support Team

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Moderator April Maly



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Ravit, Beth  
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## Thank You

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the New Milford Knights of Columbus for providing the meeting space and to the Borough of New Milford, the Borough of Oradell, and United Water Company for their kind support. This project of the Bergen County Department of Parks, Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs, is assisted by a grant from the Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund, a part of the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund. The event was possible because of the help of:



NEW JERSEY  
HISTORIC  
TRUST



Bergen County  
Open Space, Recreation, Farmland & Historic  
Preservation Trust Fund



County of Bergen  
Department of Parks  
Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs  
Division of Parks



THE WATER WORKS CONSERVANCY, INC.



## Leadership and Report

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Department of  
Landscape Architecture  
Rutgers, School of Environmental  
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Dr. Beth Ravit  
Department of  
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January 22, 2010

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## 1 Introduction

The Water Works Charrette took place November 14, 2009 at the New Milford Knights of Columbus Hall. This day was part of the ongoing planning and design process to determine appropriate, adaptive reuses for the Hackensack Water Works and Van Buskirk Island, located in Oradell, New Jersey (NJ). The County Executive, Dennis McNerney, expressed the commitment of the County to this project in his opening remarks and showed his appreciation for the collaborative engagement of local stakeholders and citizens. The objective for this Charrette was to integrate ideas and concerns of local citizens into the design process and to begin to build public support for a sustainable long term reuse solution(s). Usually a Charrette would take place over three to six days, but this Charrette was unusual as the main conflicts in public discussion were already known: the juxtapositions between historic preservation and environmental protection. In light of the fact that residents had over time informed themselves as to the site's conditions and had a personal relationship to the site, it was decided that the Charrette could be conducted in one day. The primary

purpose of the Water Works Charrette was to give residents who will be most affected by reuse of the site an opportunity to voice their hopes and concerns related to site preservation, planning, and possible reuse designs.

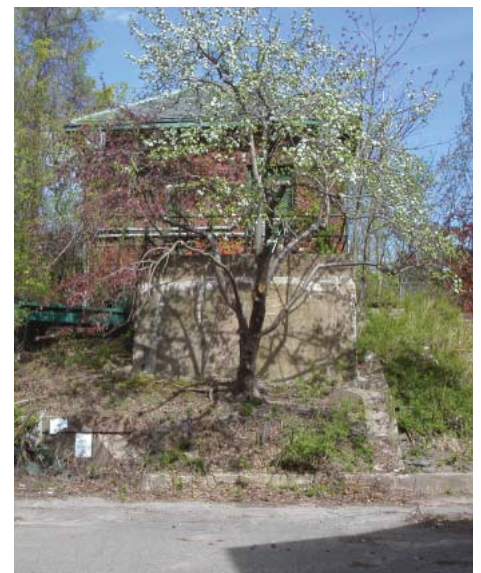
In order to accomplish the Charrette objectives, making site relevant information available to Charrette participants was critically important. This background information was supplied by Mark Thompson and Dr. Wolfram Hoefer at the beginning of the Charrette. Even with this background information, the Charrette participants had to cope with a rather complex situation.

Over the course of the Charrette day, six working groups, composed of the local participants, who, for the most part, had no previous professional experience in landscape architecture, historic architecture, or environmental design and planning, proposed adaptive reuses and design considerations for the Water Works site. The groups were supported by students from the Rutgers Landscape Architecture program who were assigned as moderators and drafting help.

Charrette:

*Design collaboration on impossible problems in an absurdly short time.*

The outcomes were presented to the general public at a meeting at the Oradell Town Hall.





## 2 Need for Outreach



The water treatment plant, owned and operated by the Hackensack Water Company, opened in the area then called New Milford in 1882. This facility and its supporting reservoirs were expanded a number of times, and this treatment facility operated continuously until 1990. The plant itself was expanded eight times on Van Buskirk Island, a land form located on the western shore of the Hackensack River, now located in the Borough of Oradell. In 1993 when a new water treatment facility opened in Haworth, NJ, the island and the treatment plant were given to Bergen County, along with a relatively small amount of money to preserve the historic structures. However, during the ensuing time period, there have been a number of different proposals for reuse of the site, and a consensus has not been achieved. Therefore, no adaptive reuse has occurred in the sixteen years since the County acquired the property. Only the most urgent measures necessary have been taken to protect the historic structures against rain and flood damage.

The Water Works complex is an exceptional example of American industrialization. It exemplifies the struggle the country went through in

the 19th and early 20th centuries to provide pure drinking water for the rapidly expanding population. For this reason the site has been included on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places. Within the local communities of Oradell and New Milford, as well as in Bergen County in general, there is strong public support for historic preservation and adaptive reuse of the building.

Conversely, this plant can also be viewed as an example of the rapid depletion of natural resources that have had an incredibly negative environmental impact on the Hackensack River and its watershed. Local environmental organizations lobbied for correcting this historic damage, and they proposed tearing down the newer structures, allowing the oldest structures to deteriorate, and allowing the island to naturally re-vegetate, resulting in the island return to a passive natural state in a highly urbanized Bergen County ecosystem. The positive ecological effects of the subsequent natural preservation would support the function and sustainability of Hackensack River wetlands. The conflict between these two antithetical positions has created a deadlock for development of, and public access

to, the Water Works site. This Charrette is the first step in reaching a consensus to end the deadlock that has resulted from the clash of divergent viewpoints. The ultimate goal of this project is to rehabilitate the site for use by the public.

In January 2007, Bergen County agreed to allow Rutgers University students to use the site for an academic landscape architecture design exercise. Rutgers was granted access to the site and allowed to tour of the historic buildings. This made it possible for the undergraduate program of landscape architecture (sophomore class of spring 2007) to address questions associated with reuse of the Water Works at Oradell NJ. Under the guidance of Dr. Wolfram Hoefer and Richard Bartolone, and in close cooperation with Dr. Beth Ravit (Dept. of Environmental Sciences), the class developed possible design solutions for future uses of this publicly owned parkland and the on-site historic structures.

The development and presentation of the students' designs opened up a communication process between major stakeholders (Bergen County, historical preservationists, and envi-

ronmentalists) where there had been a stalemate for over a decade. On behalf of the Rutgers Center for Urban Environmental Sustainability, Dr. Ravit organized a series of meetings with the local historical and environmental groups. After these meetings there was reason to assume that the work of the Rutgers landscape architecture students provided an opportunity to begin a dialogue, and potentially, reach a compromise among major stakeholders. As an outcome of these meetings, and in order to continue to move this project forward to the next stage, in 2008 Dr. Ravit funded the development of two versions (short- and long-term possibilities) of a comprehensive restoration plan. These designs integrated elements from the seven original student proposals, while exploring hydrological improvements with the Rutgers Water Extension Specialists.

The preliminary restoration concept addressed the environmental quality of the island in relation to possible reuses. The concept provided suggestions on aspects of architecture (adaptive, building reuse) and aspects of engineering (probable impact of the proposed redesign on surface water hydrology). The study demon-

strated that it is possible to develop appropriate adaptive reuse of the historic buildings that are sustainable, while maintaining the ecological quality of the site under conditions of environmental stress, including the potential for flooding events. A major outcome of this project was a common understanding among Bergen County and the various stakeholders that there is common ground for transforming the Water Works site into an exceptional public space.

After Rutgers provided this baseline, the County took the initiative. Bergen County Department of Parks applied for and was granted funding by the New Jersey Historic Trust to assist in the protection, stabilization and prevention of further deterioration of the historic structures. In addition to that, the Bergen County Trust Fund (Bergen County Historic Preservation Trust Fund, a part of the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund) is committing resources to the future adaptive reuse of the Van Buskirk Island. These funds are being used to develop a Preservation Plan (Mark B. Thompson Associates) that focuses on the historic significance, the structural integrity, and the rehabilita-

tion of the buildings, and a Cultural Landscape Study (Rutgers University) that details the cultural and ecological significance of Van Buskirk Island and the Hackensack Water Company. The development of these materials is integrated into the design process, providing a sustainable rehabilitation plan for the site, while taking into account both short term emergency building repairs and long term adaptive reuse solutions for Van Buskirk Island.

The sometimes controversial public discussions following the County's acquisition of the site illustrate how much the general public in Bergen County, and most of all the citizens of New Milford and Oradell, care about the site. It became very obvious that any approach for developing a sustainable long term solution would have to build upon public participation, followed by effective integration of public concerns and ideas into the design process. Further, the active participation of neighbors and other concerned citizens will support the long-term emergence of a community place, a location that is shaped by the people, which gains its identity through the active involvement of future users.

### 3. Preparation

The success of a Design Charrette depends on the collaboration of the participants. This general assessment is even more important with respect to the Water Works Charrette because of significantly divergent opinions among the public and major stakeholders. The preparation had to ensure that the atmosphere of the day was collaborative and productive, and that wide-spread public considerations were brought to the table. To achieve this broad input, local users (including teenagers and senior citizens) and individuals with specific interest in history and the environment were invited to participate.

With reference to the overall goal of fostering a productive communication process, it was important to include members of the historic and environmental communities as well as neighbors that might be immediately affected by any changes on the site.

The Mayors of New Milford and Oradell, the Water Works Conservancy, and the Hackensack Riverkeeper provided names on potential invitees. A requested attribute for

# THE FUTURE OF THE HACKENSACK WATERWORKS

## ON VAN BUSKIRK ISLAND IN ORADELL



»A New Life for Van Buskirk Island and the Hackensack Waterworks as a Unique Part of the Bergen County Parks System.«

- Options for the site's historical architecture
- Protection of the sensitive ecosystem of the Hackensack River riparian zone.
- Goals of local environmentalists and historical preservationists
- Sustainable concepts for upkeep and maintenance

### PRESENTATION OF DESIGNS

Presentation of results of a design charrette with local residents

### PANEL DISCUSSION

open for public participation and with experts from Rutgers, Mark B. Thompson Associates (Architects), the Water Works Conservancy and the Hackensack Riverkeeper

**November 14, 2009**  
**5pm to 7pm**  
**Oradell Borough Hall**  
**355 Kinderkamack Road**  
**Oradell, NJ 07649**



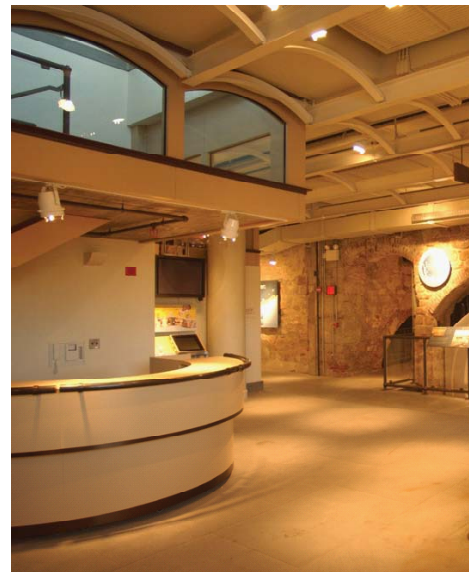
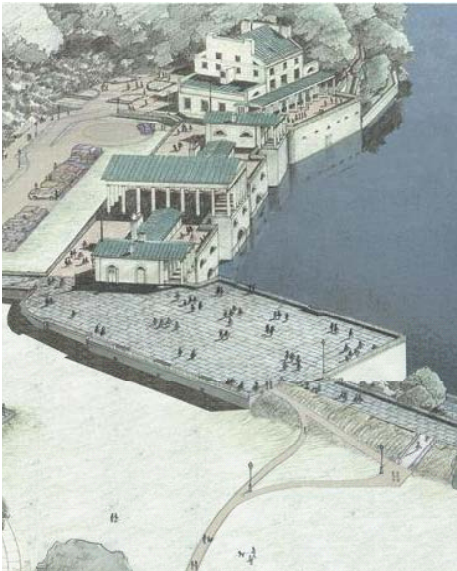
THE WATER WORKS CONSERVANCY, INC.



these participants was the ability to have an open and productive dialogue with others holding divergent viewpoints. Fifty individuals were contacted via mail, and thirty-two of these individuals were able to participate in the Charrette. Participants included four local teenagers who were interested in either the history of the site or the environment, and these students were placed in their own group.

The Charrette was able to be conducted in one day because these local residents already possessed interest and knowledge of the site and its impact on the surrounding community.





Example Fairmount Water Works at Philadelphia. Design Mark B. Thompson Associates, Photos Mark B. Thompson



Example Landscape Park Duisburg Nord, Germany Design Peter Latz & Partner, Photos Wolfram Hoefer

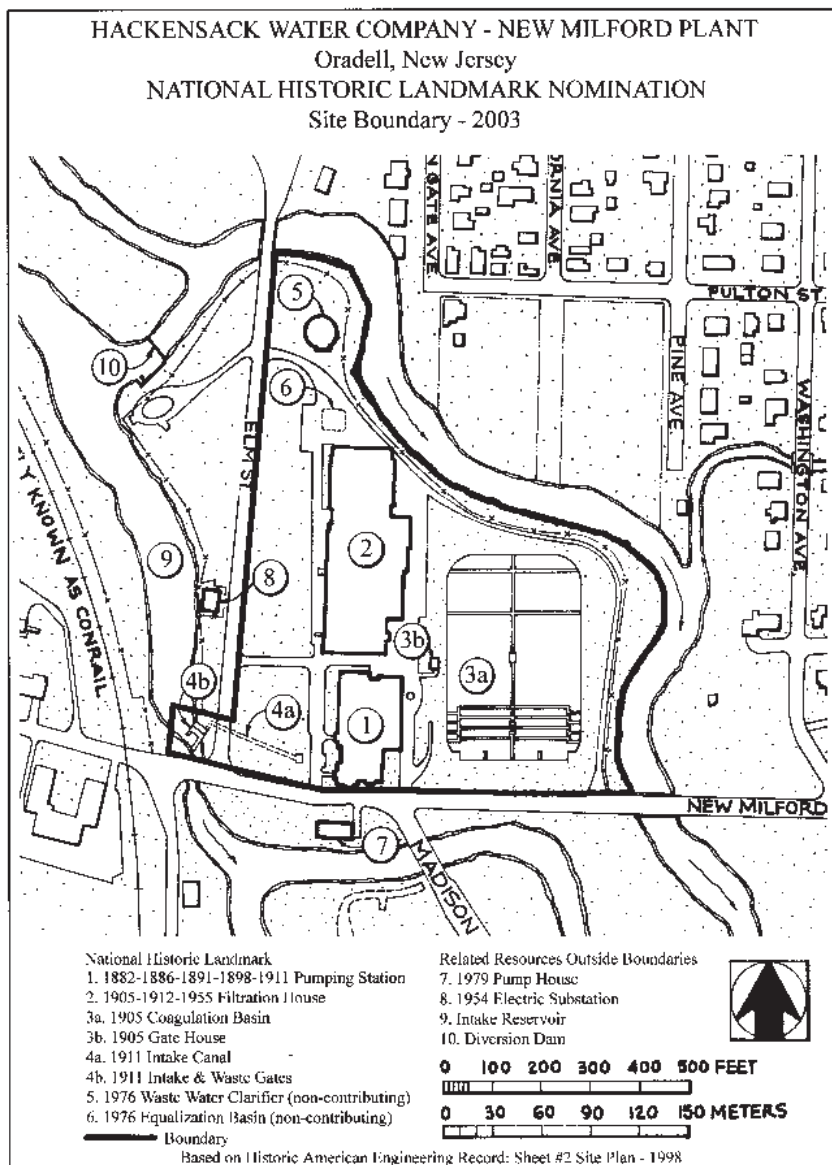


## 4 The Day

### 4.1 Overview and Context

The introduction into the site included a short historical overview and a general summary of the main aspects of historical and environmental preservation within the larger context of post-industrial landscapes in New Jersey.

Examples of successful adaptive re-uses, such as the Fairmount Water Works at Philadelphia (Design: Mark B. Thompson Associates) and the Landscape Park Duisburg Nord in Germany (Design: Peter Latz + Partner) were presented.



Overview of the Hackensack Water Works as documented in the Historical National Landmark Nomination.

- 8:30 Coffee
- 9:00 Overview  
History of the site  
First findings of site inventory and analysis
- 10:15 Water Works Tour  
United Water describing historic functions  
Riverkeeper describing environmental context
- 12:00 Lunch Break
- 1:00 Design Session:  
Each of the six participant groups has one Rutgers student assigned to support graphic expression
- 5:00 Public Town Hall Meeting  
Presentation of Charrette outcomes and open discussion with stakeholders

Moderator:  
Beth Ravit,  
Rutgers University

Panel:  
Ray Dressler,  
Bergen County Dep. of Parks;  
Captain Bill Sheehan,  
Hackensack Riverkeeper;  
Phil Salerno,  
Water Works Conservancy;  
Wolfram Hoefer,  
Rutgers University  
Mark Thompson,  
Mark Thompson Associates;  
Claire Donato,  
Mark Thompson Associates

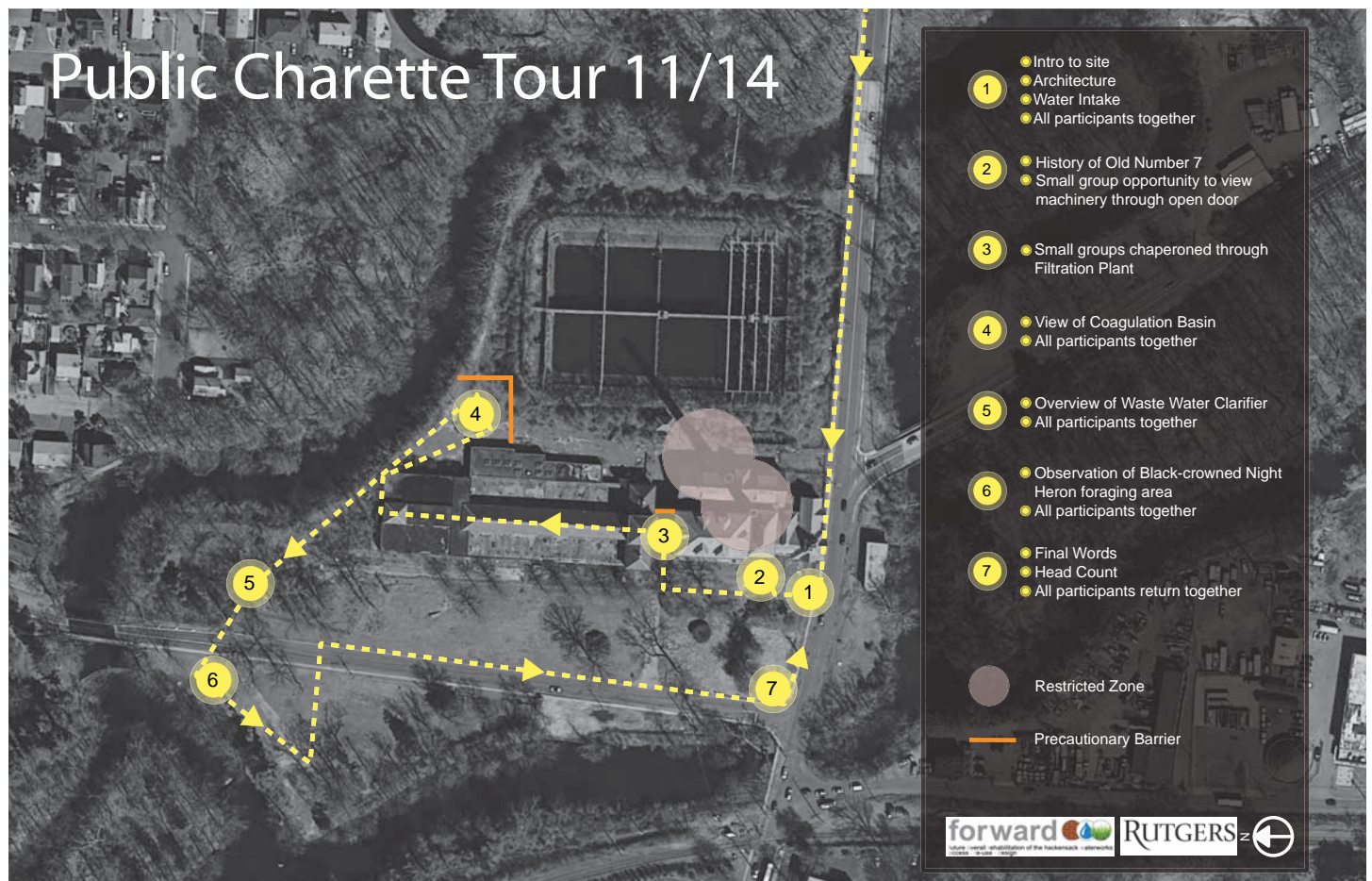
## 4.2 Walking Tour

Because of hazardous conditions on some portions of the Water Works site, preparation and execution of the walking tour was done in close cooperation with Bergen

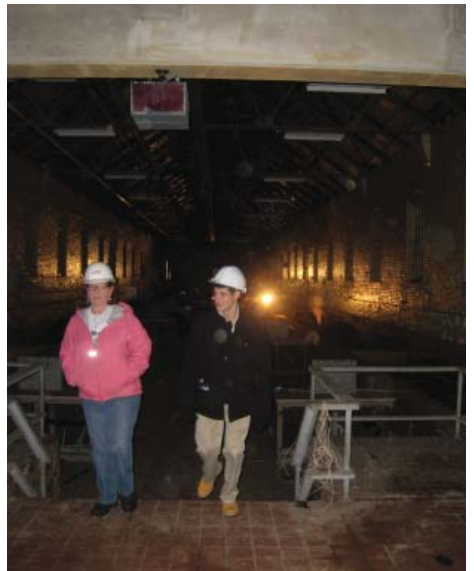
County and Bergen Risk, the County's risk management agent. It was agreed by all of the project partners that it was very important and highly beneficial for the



Charrette participants to gain first hand experiences of the buildings and the existing conditions in the Water Works and on Van Buskirk Island.









### 4.3 Group Design

The invited local citizens were divided into six groups, each labeled with a color: purple, red, yellow, blue, green, and pink. Each group was assigned a work table and boards for presenting drawings and notes.

Due to the fact that the invited participants had no previous professional experience in landscape architecture, architecture or environmental design and planning, each group had a Rutgers landscape architecture student assigned as a moderator. This ensured that no participant would hesitate expressing his or her ideas because of limited drawing experience.

The moderators initiated and encouraged group discussions using questions such as:

- What is your personal experience with the site?
- Are there any examples you can think of/been to that might have relevance?
- What are the most important aspects of the site?
- What is missing?

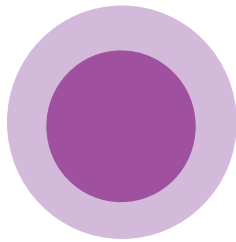
Moderators led groups in positive discussions, encouraging all ideas as valid. The Rutgers students were able to support a productive and comfortable working atmosphere. Throughout the session experts on history of the Water Works, its architectural and environmental conditions were available to answer questions.

Towards the end of the four-hour design session the moderators composed the boards for their group, with lists of site concerns and potentials and a plan on tracing

paper, as well as diagrams and additional other ideas important to group members. One participant of each group presented the material during the Charrette wrap-up session. The following pages summarize the main outcomes as documented by each group moderator.







**Purple Group**  
**Moderator Edward Krafcik**

**Concerns**

- X** Flooding
- X** Increased vehicular traffic
- X** Walkable access/ Connectivity
- X** Proximity to existing residential areas
- X** Safety

**Potentials**

- X** Cultural center
- X** Concerts
- X** Restaurant/snack bar
- X** Theater
- X** Gallery
- X** Education
- X** Connection architecture and landscape
- X** Master gardening
- X** Dog park(s)
- X** Passive recreation
- X** Ecological preservation
- X** Artificial ponds

Throughout the site visit, the members of the Purple Group were very excited to finally be able to experience the Water Works buildings. Many people said that they had spent years either driving or walking by the buildings, but never had the chance to actually go inside or even up close to the structures. One of the most noteworthy moments of the site visit was when the group was together inside the filtration building and everyone unanimously agreed that the building could be adaptively reused. This mutual agreement carried over to the Charrette and it became the starting point for the conversation about the changes that could take place within and around the Water Works.

The filtration plant started the conversation about how the site could be reused. Some people thought it would be a beautiful art gallery, an environmental education center, a restaurant or even a day care center. The conversation then expanded to take into account the rest of the buildings on the site and what potential uses could be employed. The most popular and interesting uses discussed by the group for the structures as a whole were: a cultural center, a concert hall and

theater, a large museum that would walk the user through the history of the plant and potentially the changing landscape over time, the home to restaurants and cafes, a night club, an aquarium, a distillery or brewery, an artist colony or just a park with revitalized beautiful buildings that could be enjoyed passively.

Another element that was intriguing to the group was the coagulation basin. Some people believed it could be very interesting if the basin became partially filled with soil and could be utilized by people. It could possibly become a sculpture park, a large public green, a labyrinth of sorts that could offer semi-private spaces within the public realm and could be home for recreational activities. Ultimately, if the basin was partially or entirely filled it could serve as interesting space for both passive and active recreation as well as art, sculpture, community garden space and possibly a large, sculpted earthwork meadow.

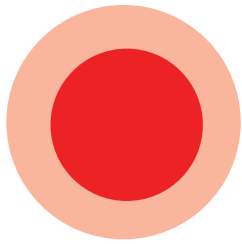
While there was much praise for the notion of adaptive reuse, there was also a rather emotional desire to keep environmentally sensitive areas secure and as protected as possible.

One group member was especially passionate about protecting the northern portion of the island where the river divides. She said that because of all the rare wildlife in the area it would not be right to expose the area to increased pedestrian use. The group decided that it would be best to bring people into the area with a small path system that could carefully wind its way into the area but in a low impact format. The group proposed that this path system could connect to a larger system that could bring people around the perimeter of the site and connect to the larger greenway and Bergen County park system. It would be a very interesting loop because of the potential for a unique sequence of experiences that could be offered, both by the structures and the river.

Along with all of the positive ideas, there were also many concerns that arose throughout the Charrette discussions. The biggest concern was that of flooding. The group was nervous about actually seeing anything significant done on the site because they weren't convinced that the negative effects of flooding could be avoided. They were also concerned with access in the form of increased car traffic and







**Red Group**  
**Moderator Bryan Obara**

**Concerns**

- X** Flooding
- X** Prevent debris build-up on fences after flooding
- X** Preservation
- X** Integrity of historic structures
- X** Parkland/open space
- X** Recreation

**Potentials**

- X** Museum
- X** Energy sustainability/solar panels
- X** Parking
- X** Master gardening/urban agriculture
- X** Farmer's market
- X** More trees

The ability to actually see and experience the buildings of the Hackensack Water Works left everyone in awe and with a newfound appreciation for the history of the site. One of the key discussions was the use and maintenance of the buildings. A general consensus was arrived at despite the following objection.

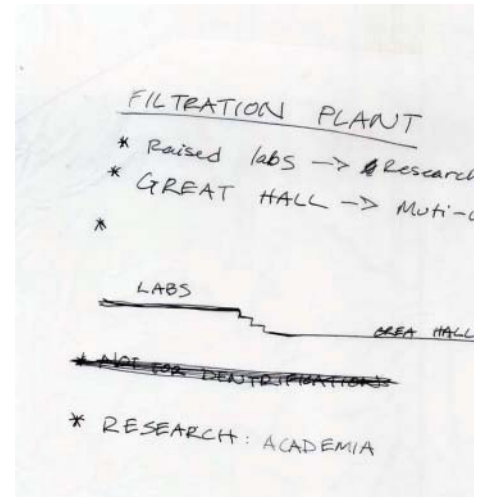
An environmentalist and Audubon member who lives in adjacent River Edge and canoes the upper Hackensack, extensively expressed the difficulties and energy expense of maintaining a building within a floodplain. In the end, it was agreed that the structures offer tremendous cultural significance and retrofitting them would offer opportunities greater than the potential maintenance expense. Retrofitting the buildings would preserve much of their historical and structural material while adapting them for new uses. The pump house could serve as a cultural museum for the Water Works, and could be experienced through a catwalk to avoid flooding problems, while at the same time maintaining the pump house as a historical artifact. The filtration plant could be used many ways including as an

environmental science laboratory, research center and for a communal gallery space. The site holds tremendous environmental significance for research as the mixing of fresh and saline waters present complex ecological interactions. Research and experimentation could potentially attract research/education funding, adding to the vitality of the site. The gallery has great potential as a community asset. Left open space it would be a dynamic space, changing with each community event. Retrofitting the buildings with new uses while maintaining the initial character is essential.

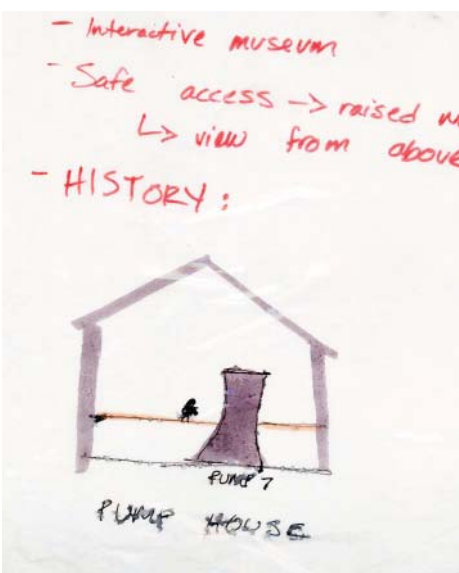
The current landscape features have potential for new forms of use, while the rest of the site remains as open space. The desire throughout the group was for minimal physical disturbance of the site, but through envisioning new uses for current site infrastructure. For example, the coagulation basin was seen as being cut into for an amphitheater, opening itself to the Water Works building. Elm Street would close its connection as a roadway, but serve as the access to parking for the Water Works. The space between the

proposed parking and the buildings could be developed as a fruit tree allee surrounded by a permeable hardscape. This entrance to the building would represent the new fertility of the landscape of a once industrious site. The hardscape may serve as a gathering space before entering the building, or provide a place for community events such as a farmer's market. Various active recreational amenities were suggested within the coagulation basin. The current infrastructure could be transformed into a hockey rink, skate park or ice rink in the winter. An additional economic income was suggested through retrofitting the smokestacks with cellular towers. This would maintain their appearance, but serve an economic role at the same time. An experienced kayaker suggested using the primary waterway on the other side of New Milford Avenue for boating, using the existing small building as a boathouse. This part of the site, along with all other features, would be part of the managed open space and connected with an intertwining nature pathway. The remaining land would remain as vegetated open space but maintained by removing

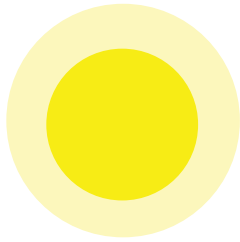




invasive species and planting native species. A consensus was reached on pathway's use being primarily for pedestrians. This would avoid the use of heavily structured hardscape surfaces. The pathway would not directly connect to the surrounding neighborhood, but promote the opportunity to experience the waterway and interconnect the various on-site features. As a group, our intention was to retrofit the current infrastructure for activities that will serve the community while preserving the significant historical and ecological elements.







**Yellow Group**  
**Moderator Tyson Triplett**

The Yellow Group was the “youth group” asked to participate in the Charrette, and this was certainly one of the most exciting discussions. Once being introduced to the site and issues at hand, the participants’ unbridled imaginations began to work on creative solutions that were beyond expectations. Their ability to grapple with issues from a different perspective offered fun and exciting ways to think about the re-use of the Water Works site.

The pressing questions of environmental and wildlife concerns was their first issue. Walking trails, native plant ID tags, and capitalizing on the current wildlife foraging areas were their main ideas. Using the coagulation basin as a bio-pollution mitigation system for the river water was one option that seemed to generate interest in all of the students. The structure of the coagulation basin led to discussion about new, more recreational uses such as a pool or skating rink. The relationship of a user’s age and use was also discussed by the students. To benefit a wide variety of users, ideas like a daycare, museum, café, bar/restaurant, exercise facility, movie

night, and bocce ball court were all considered. What was most interesting was the way the students viewed these uses happening simultaneously; a use for the day, evening, and night. The possibilities seemed endless.

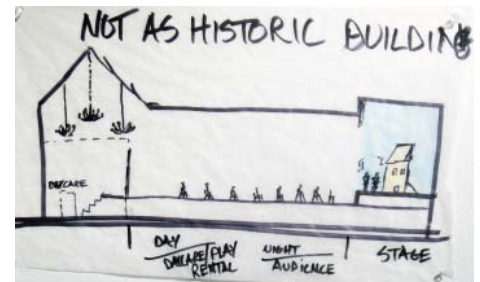
The buildings offered many possibilities, from a museum highlighting the history of the Water Works and the role it played in the development of New Jersey and the New York suburbs, to a farmers market and artist’s studios. The excitement of the variety of possibilities excited their creativity. Their perspective provided an interesting view on the building from the 1950’s. They viewed all of the buildings as important; the newest building played just as important a role as the oldest. What they had keyed into was the conversation that all of the buildings are linked together and have a story to tell. By the time they are of the age of some of the oldest members of the public Charrette, who seem to be the most vocal on tearing down this last addition, the 1950’s building will be almost as old as the 1880’s building is today. There was almost a sense of disappointment that someone

**Concerns**

- X** Flooding
- X** Limit impervious surfaces
- X** Increased vehicular traffic
- X** Safety
- X** Integrity of historic structures
- X** Balance: environment, history, people

**Potentials**

- X** Cultural center
- X** Concerts
- X** Restaurant/snack bar
- X** Theater
- X** Education
- X** Urban Agriculture
- X** Separate use in basin
- X** Children playground
- X** Biking/skate board
- X** Teenager hang-out
- X** Party
- X** Gathering
- X** Camping
- X** Passive recreation
- X** Birding
- X** ID plants
- X** Canoe
- X** Drainage: underground retention

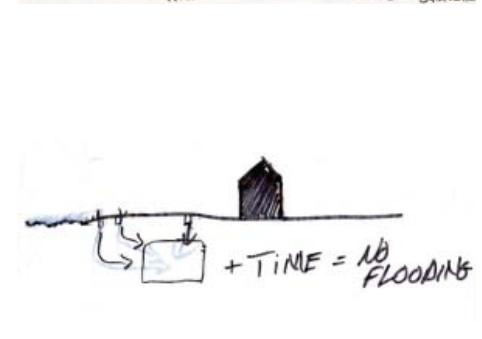
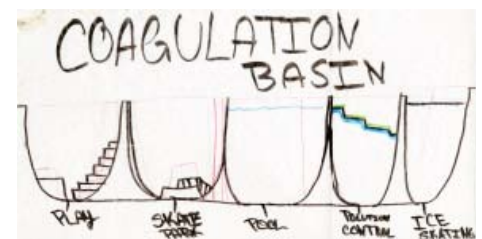
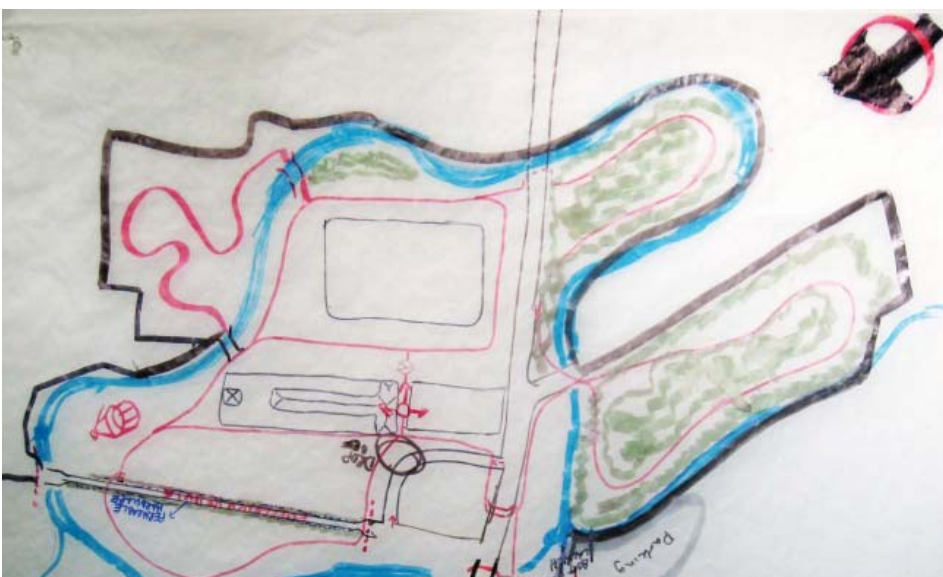
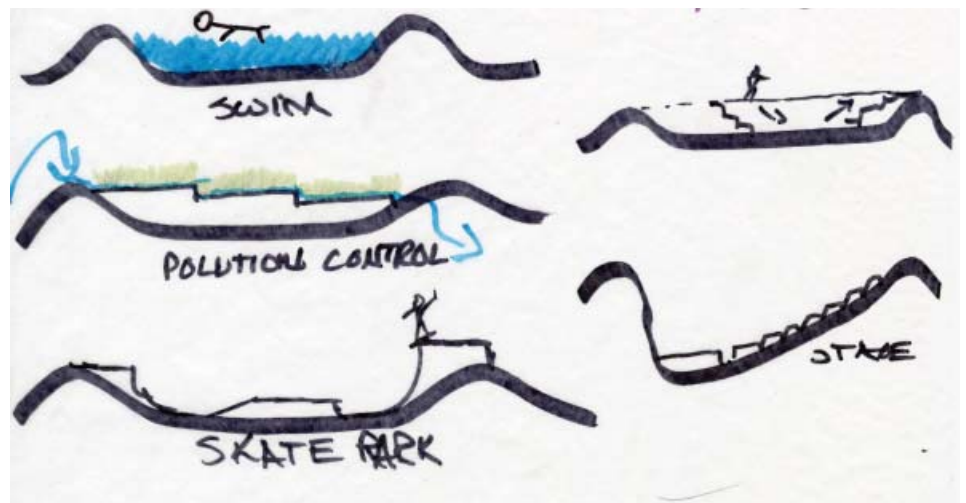


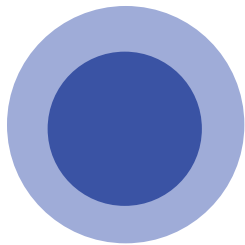
wanted to take that away from them. As they planned what the layout of the park might look like, the issue of Elm Street was discussed. They instigated a conversation on their own about whether or not the road should be closed, what the impact would be and what could *they* do. Their “Elm Street Revolution” was the simple and effective solution of narrowing the road, making it one-way and more pedestrian friendly. They also discussed the introduction of rain gardens as areas of visual appeal. This lessened the potential threat of car and pedestrian interac-



tion in an area where they anticipated more walking activity, while providing an environmental tool to use and educate.

What the student participants provided were ideas and enthusiasm that created a positive vision for the future reuse of the Water Works. Their free thinking and fun ideas generated a dynamic vision for the site. Their ability to adapt, compromise with each other, and to say "Yes," suggests a bright future for the Water Works and Bergen County's young and active residents.





**Blue Group**  
Moderator April Maly

#### Concerns

- X** Flooding
- X** Limit impervious surfaces
- X** Increased vehicular traffic
- X** Parking
- X** ADA accessibility
- X** Vandalism
- X** No active recreation
- X** Avoid additional lighting

#### Potentials

- X** Historical education
- X** Master gardening
- X** Separate use in basin
- X** Exercise route
- X** Passive recreation
- X** Birding
- X** Canoe
- X** Greenway system
- X** Ecological preservation
- X** Resource water
- X** TV/Film
- X** Demolish 1955 building

The Blue Group brought to the Charrette many conflicting opinions. Opposing views on many subjects provided valuable insights into the future of the Water Works site. In the group were members who came from very different backgrounds with different values. Once we got past the initial disagreements, we were able to have educated and constructive design discussions, where the conflicting values of the members added richness and diversity to the ideas presented on the boards.

The first topic discussed was building preservation. The group members had strong opinions related to the work needed to rebuild the structures and the longterm maintenance that would be required to keep them functional. Since the site is located in a floodplain, and in the past damage occurred in times of excess rainfall, this issue was controversial. Two members said that they would not mind at all if all structures were taken down because the threat of extensive damage in the future would be too high. Why rebuild if it is not sustainable to do so? Why put so much

money into the buildings if they are located on a site where extensive flood damage is inevitable? Only one member said they would want all structures to be preserved. The remaining members agreed that they would want just the pump house to be preserved because it is the most historically significant. After a heated debate, all members realized that they had to come to a group conclusion, which was surprisingly easy. Since flooding is such a huge risk, they would want to restore only the pump house to its original character to provide an educational center. The filtration plant would be used for adaptive reuse. The group saw great character in the structure and they were inspired to harness its character and convert it into a dance hall. This would provide a source of income for the site by renting it out for large events. The group also agreed that there was no use for the 1950's building because it had the least historical significance and its removal would reduce the amount of impervious surface, reducing the threat of harmful flooding. The group was inspired by the coagulation basin and envisioned a few adaptive reuses

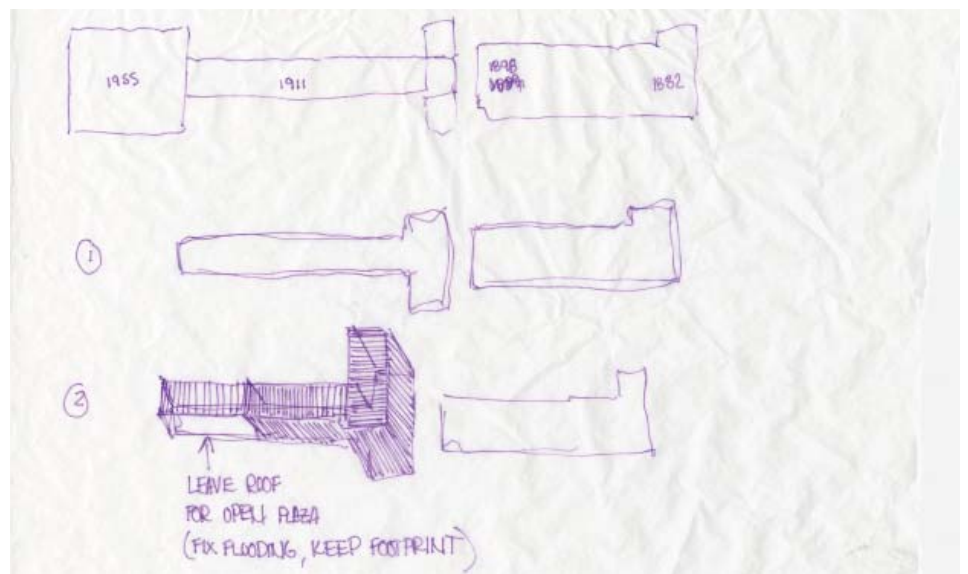
designed for the structure. The first idea was a fish hatchery. We talked about the possible supply that could be produced in the structure, and its positive role in adding to the fish population in Bergen County. The group also explored the opportunity for an extensive sunken walking garden within the basin.

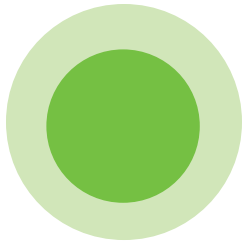
Traffic was another cause for concern amongst all members of the group. They expressed concern about an increase in traffic into and around the site. Most of their concerns were driven by the desire to keep their communities free of a potential massive increase in local traffic. Other comments were driven by the potential damage that could be caused by an increase in the impervious surfaces that would be needed to support heightened vehicular traffic. They made it clear that we would need to carefully think about the placement of new parking structures and not make a large impact on existing communities, wildlife, or flooding. The group didn't have a solution to the location of a new parking and transportation system.





Even though we had such a diverse group in which priorities varied, environmental impacts were a concern of all members. The group agreed on a system of pathways through preserved land, but far enough away from the water's edge as to protect sensitive habitat. Also, all new structures and surfaces would need careful thought so as not to disturb existing habitat or increase storm water runoff. The group agreed that only passive recreation should be the focus for the future designed uses. Walking paths and education should be the main uses for the Water Works site.





**Green Group**  
**Moderator Benjamin Heller**

#### Concerns

- X** Flooding
- X** Parking
- X** Walkable access/ Connectivity
- X** Preservation

#### Potentials

- X** Museum
- X** Preservation center
- X** Separate use in basin
- X** Close Elm Street, pedestrian bridge only
- X** Recreational wetlands
- X** Filtration plant converted into "Water Court"
- X** Demolish 1955 Building

The morning visit to the Water Works site excited and informed the Green Group's discussion throughout the day. Each member of the group was able to contribute something different which made for an interesting conversation. The group's first move was to take out the road in front of the Water Works buildings (Elm Street). Each member of the group thought that this road was a waste and didn't really serve much of a purpose. Aside from the road, the next major concern was the surrounding wetlands. The group thought that it was best to preserve as much of the wetlands as possible, while also allowing people to view its beauty. To do this they proposed a walkway that would follow the river with minimal disturbance of the wetlands. They thought that it would be best to have the walkway made of pervious material such as a boardwalk or a grate, which would allow plants to grow through.

The group then decided to portion off the rest of the site and consider each portion individually. The first area was the coagulation basin, which the group proposed turning into a basin park. The group de-

cided to open up much of the basin but keep its overall historic amenities. By opening up "doorways" into the basin the group thought that this would help with flooding in the area, and allow for water storage. This "basin park" would be used for concerts, farmers markets, carnivals and other recreational activities.

The next portion that group considered contains the two largest buildings. The first building, with pump number 7, was to be turned into a museum, but not just a typical museum, one that would allow for flooding. To do this the group thought of using walkways on multiple floors which wouldn't be damaged if they were covered in water (much like the walkway proposed in the wetlands). The next portion of the building was to be turned into an indoor/outdoor park. The group thought of a system along the sides of the building which could allow for water to flow through it as some sort of a park-like feature, and also allow for plantings along the sides as well. This would be more of a plaza space, where movable chairs could be placed and people could go for resting/relaxing. The last main feature of the building

was to have partially opened roofs. To do this, the group proposed that some of the roof turn into glass, while other sections be left open to create the indoor/outdoor feel.

Overall, the group's concerns can be broken down into a few categories:

- preserve the wetlands but allow for people to see them
- use the buildings and keep their historic character
- convert the basin into a usable park which would allow for flooding
- demolish Elm Street
- use off-site parking





BASIN PARK

- OPEN PARTS OF EX- TO ALLOW PUBLIC A FLOOR LEVEL
- PRESERVE HISTORIC
- ALLOW FOR FLOODING

BIG IDEAS


- CONVERT BASIN TO PARK
- CLOSE OFF ELM STREET MAKE BRIDGE PED ONLY
- MUSEUM → BUILDING 1
- PRESERVE/CREATE RECREATIONAL WETLANDS
- FILTRATION PLANT TO BE CONVERTED TO "WATER COURT" PARK/HALL

IDEAS

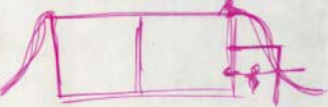
- HELP FLOODING
- CLOSE OFF ELM STREET TO PED. TRAFFIC ONLY

THE BASIN =

- TEAR IT DOWN?
- OPEN IT UP?
- GARDEN
- MUSIC
- RECREATION
- CREATE A "SPONGE" EFFECT BY OPENING IT UP TOWARD RIVER



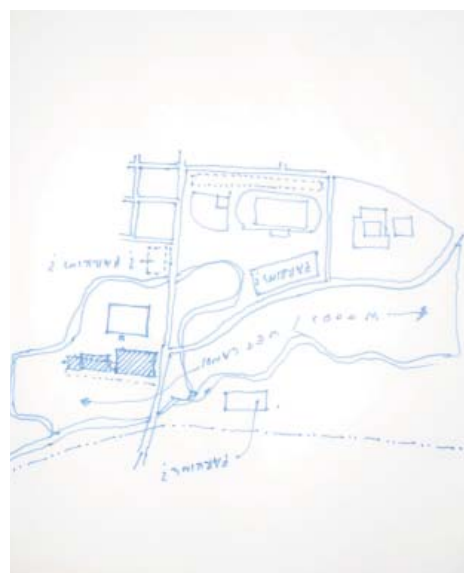
- PRESERVE HISTORICAL INTEGRITY BUT OPEN UP PARTS OF THE WALLS FOR WATER



- SEASONAL USE - SUMMER EVENTS TAKE PLACE (SEASONAL)
- THINGS HAPPEN IN THIS SPACE
  - CONCERTS
  - ICE SKATING DURING WINTER
  - CELEBRATIONS
  - FAIRS

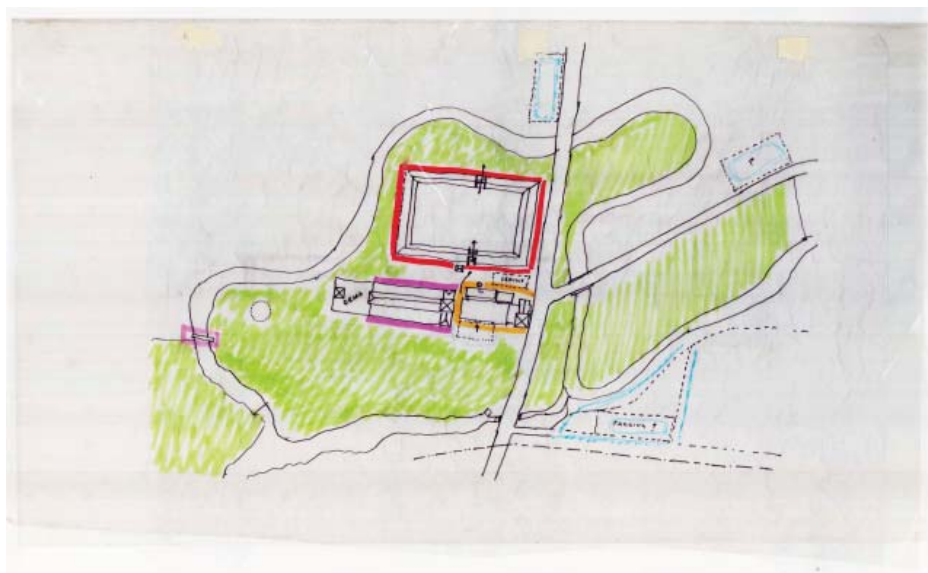
PARKING - MAJOR CONCERN

- ELIMINATE ELM STREET TO CUT DOWN ON CAR TRAFFIC TO THE SITE

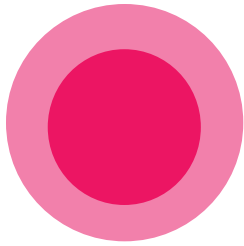


WETLANDS / WILDLIFE

- PASSIVE WALKWAYS
- USE GRATE/BARBOARD TO ALLOW FOR PLANTS TO GROW THROUGH AND TO PRESERVE THE WETLANDS
- WILDLIFE OBSERVATION







**Pink Group**  
**Moderator Michael Saltarella**

#### Concerns

- X** Increased vehicular traffic
- X** Parking
- X** Walkable access/ Connectivity
- X** Gathering space in basin

#### Potentials

- X** Cultural center
- X** Community center
- X** Restaurant/snack bar
- X** Theater
- X** Museum
- X** Education
- X** Close Elm Street, pedestrian bridge only

The morning visit to the site brought with it many expectations and surprises for everyone in the Pink Group. No one from the group had ever seen the inside of the building, even though they passed it every day. Once the group had their first glimpse of the filtration building and equipment, no one wanted to ever let this building go. Everyone seemed to immediately envision what this site could be. It became clear that they all wanted it to be something useable. The newer structures constructed in the 1950's also had the same effect on the group members, but it came as more of a surprised reaction. They knew that the original buildings should be special, but when they saw the newer building you could tell they were taken aback. All the enthusiasm transferred into the afternoon discussions, and this shows in the ideas and views that were expressed in the Charrette.

One thing was clear as the Charrette started - everyone wanted the building to be reborn, and they wanted it to be something special for their community. No one wanted any of the buildings to be torn down, instead they wanted every square foot

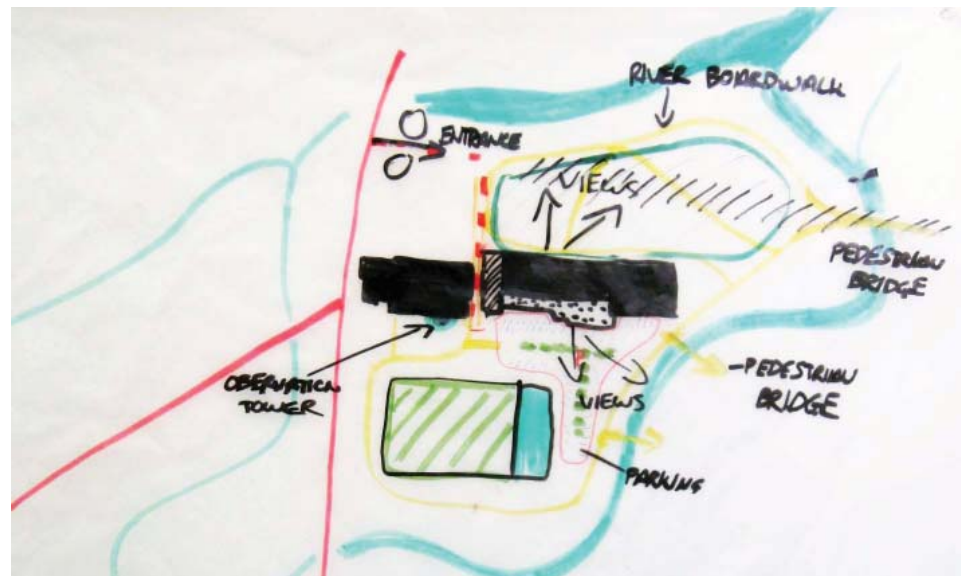
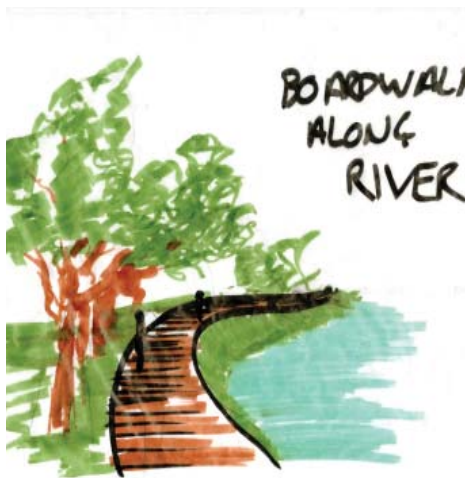
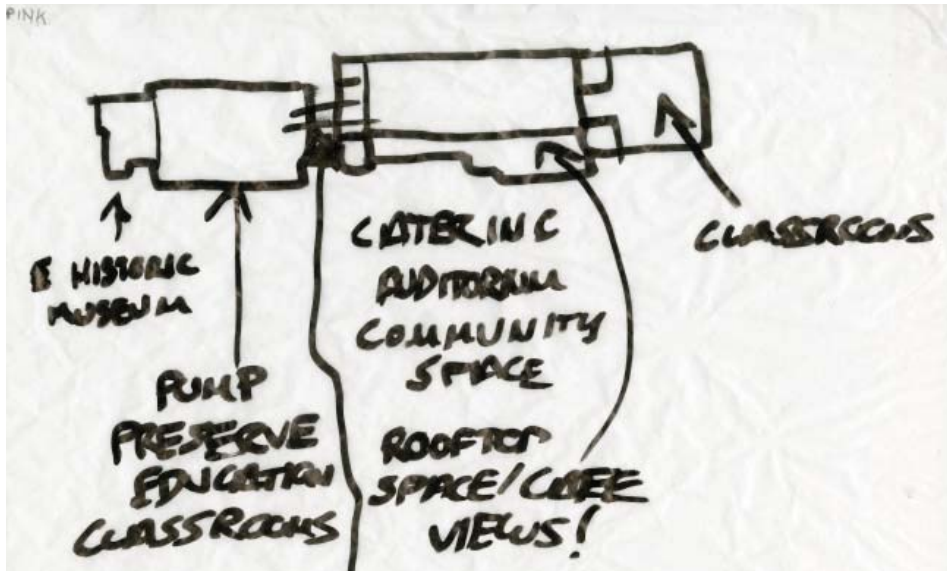
to be used for some purpose. Ideas ranged from museum, community center, education, recreation, entertainment, restaurants, and welcome center. The pump house, with pump number 7, was seen as the structure to house a museum or educational center. The newer building was seen as a building that might be adapted to many public purposes such as a theater, banquet hall, rooftop restaurant, and a community space.

As far as the concerns of the site, group members were most concerned with parking, and the traffic it might create. They proposed the closing of Elm Street to eliminate noise, and preserve beauty in the front of the buildings. They also proposed placing the parking along the back on the existing pavement next to the coagulation basin. Everyone agreed that a sense of arrival was an important issue, and that the site needed signage and an entry point to let you know this place is important.

Design ideas varied, and the Pink Group had very ambitious and imaginative ideas. For instance an observation tower on top of the

smokestack was proposed, with an elevator to the top to overlook the entire site. A nature walk boardwalk along the river was proposed to connect people with the wildlife and natural beauty of the site. It was suggested that the coagulation basin be cut in half with a sculpture garden/ gathering space on one side, and a walled off shallow pond on the other to connect people with water.

Every member of the Pink Group showed involvement and passion in what they were saying. They wanted their ideas to be heard, and they believed that this could become a reality. The Charrette boosted community involvement and built the foundations for a positive community relationship. The ideas expressed by the participants are of extreme importance. They are the ones we are designing this space for, and in the end their views are what really counts.



SEDIMENT TANK  
SCULPTURE GARDEN /  
GATHERING SPACE / AQUATIC  
DISPLAY





#### 4.4 Town Hall Meeting Summary

**Moderator:**  
Beth Ravit,  
Rutgers University

**Panel:**  
Ray Dressler,  
Bergen County Department of Parks;  
Captain Bill Sheehan,  
Hackensack Riverkeeper;  
Phil Salerno,  
Water Works Conservancy;  
Wolfram Hoefer,  
Rutgers University  
Mark B. Thompson,  
Mark B. Thompson Associates;  
Claire Donato,  
Mark B. Thompson Associates

The final event of the day was the public meeting at the Oradell Town Hall. It started with a summary of the outcomes of the Charrette and statements by the panel members

#### **Question: What's the next step?**

Answer: One is to consolidate all the information that has been shared with us by the variety of people who were here today. Then we have to look into governing models and the process of ongoing public engagement. The architects are looking into the conditions of the building, discovering also unfortunate surprises like the bad conditions of the chimneys. We will incorporate the outcome of today's Charrette into the site concept development. We will discuss concepts publicly and hopefully by next summer we will be ready for implementation. We are putting together documentation to protect and stabilize the areas of the buildings that are most vulnerable, and are developing ideas on possible reuses and we will examine these uses as they relate to the conditions and the integrity of the buildings. All these steps take money to get done and

we have funding to cover this phase. The County, through the Bergen County Trust Fund, has set aside almost 1.1 million dollars to stabilize and secure the property. There are some paths already on the site, and we would like to use them, take the fencing down, and let people in. The Bergen County Trust Fund Public Advisory Committee is now in the position of recommending to the Freeholders to commit sizable amounts of money from the Bergen County Trust Fund, which was put in place to serve the County's historic preservation needs. In addition, we need the private sector to get involved as well. For reaching out to corporations, funds, grants, and private donors we need public support. The New Jersey Historic Trust has awarded the project a \$750,000 grant from the Garden State Historic Preservation Trust Fund. Developing and supporting a long term process is going to be the key situation. The ongoing process determines the investigation by small steps, learning as we go. Our investigation will support fundraising and the implementation will rely on the availability of funds. It will be a long term process.

#### **Question: Could you describe the structure of the decision making group as you move through all the ideas? Is that a commission; is it independent of the political body in power at Hackensack in a given time?**

Answer: The County is looking into setting up a commission type organization (501(C)3) with stakeholders from the Hackensack Riverkeeper, the County, the towns of Oradell and New Milford, and the Water Works Conservancy. The governing structure is critical for the management of the project and for fundraising. Creating a 501(C)3 organization will maximize the use of all resources available.

#### **Question: You are talking about getting the walks in before getting starting the rest of the project. Is there going to be impact on the environment with that?**

Answer: Bergen County Parks is implementing sustainable walkways throughout the County. In this case the aspects of historic preservation must be considered as required by the State Historic Preservation Office

(SHPO). The Water Works site provides the opportunity to showcase examples of best practice using pervious surfaces and sustainable stormwater management techniques. Rutgers brings expertise in Environmental Engineering to the table. Any solution will incorporate sustainability and historic preservation and will be developed in close cooperation with responsible State agencies.

**Question: I have seen the building deteriorate over the years and I consider restoring power a pressing issue. Since they took the substation out, there is no power anymore to run the sump pumps that keep the building from flooding, additionally the four security lights around the building are gone, is this a concern?**

Answer: The County is working with PSE&G to bring back electric power. In addition to new security lighting at least one camera will be installed on each side of the building. Tapes will be monitored to increase security and will give and will give local and County Law Enforcement the tools to reduce vandalism.

**Question: In addition to security lighting, I am concerned about the stability of the buildings from around the bricks of the old pump house.**

Answer: We realize how important that is to reactivate that system. That's why the county has been working with PSE&G to get electric service back as soon as possible. United Waters is also helping, based on their experience on the site, with what size pumps need to be installed. When the water is pumped out we have to make sure that it is not contaminated and that it gets disposed of properly. This means it is not as simple as hooking up electricity, turning on the pump and getting rid of the water. There are consequences and we have to do it right. Every step of the way, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) is involved and the County is involved.

**Question: First, have you done any evaluation of what it would take to sustain the building so that it is not a huge liability for the community or for the county. Number two, you mentioned that there will be tons of money needed over the**

**next years. Do we have a figure, is there a business plan? Do we know approximately what it is going to take financially from the tax payers and from private contributions in order to actually use the building? And the third question I have has just come up: In my mind there is a tremendous liability to opening it up to the public right now, especially with the young people. They are so curious to keep their place to sit and have little social gatherings. How do we handle that liability problem if we are going to move the fence closer to the buildings and give the public more access?**

Answer: Given the vandalism that is there, given the danger that there is no security right now, that people could fall into the coagulation basin, they could get lost in the back on the river, and police would have no access or way to get there. The plans being discussed today are a way to begin to remedy that. New security cameras, additional lighting, and improved fencing will make the site a much safer place for the use of our community. As far as the financial commitment, our hired professionals are evaluating the building conditions and will determine the necessary steps for stabilization.



Any additional access to the site will only be granted if we can be sure that people are safe.

**Question: Will fundraising begin prior to the completion of an assessment of the buildings? Why don't we evaluate first what can be done and what can be saved, prior to applying for more grants or doing additional fundraising?**

Answer: This site is a tremendous asset but it will take a considerable amount of time to understand which parts are assets and which parts need to be rehabilitated. We must also address the question of how can the site be used? What is the best use(s) for the buildings? These answers will also inform the business model. These buildings were built between 1882 and 1955, and we see them as an assemblage of many buildings on the site. We are studying each one, looking at structural systems, the roofs, the windows, the walls, the masonry, the mortar and the historic elements. What original elements still have this wonderful detail that can be preserved and brought back to life wherever possible?

The landscape architecture team is looking at the condition of the island itself. Our concern is the possible impact of human use on the habitat and preservation of the riparian zone. We want to make sure that we use the existing resources in a very responsible and sustainable way so that the island is preserved for future generations. A comprehensive review of environmental aspects and financial considerations will determine design and reuse recommendations, which will be developed through integration of public input and in close cooperation with responsible State agencies.

**Question: I understood from a tour many, many years ago, that one of the significant items in the buildings is the mechanical equipment, the pumps that are nationally significant. Is that part of your item in the architectural bid of the buildings to include the mechanical equipment or is that a subtopic that has not even been addressed or thought of yet?**

Answer: The pumps are as significant as the buildings and the landscape. Similar to the assessment

of the buildings, the machinery will be assessed and a determination made of how the equipment fits into potential reuse options. As with the buildings, there will be a ranking of significance of the machinery.

**Question: Are you are going to complete a historic structures report and triage, and are you using an "Ellis Island Model" where they opened a gallery and a exhibit space and then they are slowly expanding to other spaces. Would you say that would apply to how you foresee this happening?**

Answer: We don't know how we can make the facilities really accessible until they pass all the tests that they will have to, environmentally and in terms of being just secure, having some heat possibly, having the total envelope secure – there are many steps. We anticipate exactly what you are talking about, but that is a bit of a luxury right now, anticipating specific uses in specific places until we get the rest of it done. A historic structure report was prepared some years ago, and our current work is building on that. An assessment and a protection and stabilization plan is

now being done to make sure that the building and the envelopes are secure. The purpose of the preservation plan is to evaluate potential future uses in relation to building conditions.

**Question: Many ideas were presented today, including closing Elm Street. Will there be coordination with the County Engineer as to future plans for that bridge whether it will be repaired, allow traffic, closing the street, leaving the street open? Can you just touch on that?**

Answer: There is coordination already. The County is responsible for and in the process of rehabilitating the Elm Street Bridge in accordance with the State Historic Preservation's guidance. However, in as much as Elm Street is a municipal street in Oradell, it is solely up to the Borough of Oradell whether the bridge should; (a) be limited to pedestrians and cyclists; (b) limited to pedestrians, cyclists and emergency vehicles (via bollards); or (c) open to all traffic. As was said earlier this afternoon, the mayor and council of both Oradell and New Milford are in favor of vehicle traffic on the Elm Street bridge, while

some of the residents are not. That discussion has to happen with the mayors, councils and local residents.

**Question: Although the County green chain link fencing is effective, it is not terribly attractive. I wonder if the county has any plans to put back that beautiful wrought iron sluice gate fencing that was taken down about 18 months ago?**

Answer: Some of the fencing is still inside the building and we will consider its repair as part of the long term plan in coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

**Question: This meeting was not announced to the citizens of Oradell. I hope that communication will be improved in the future. The second thing is, I am not sure if this group should be discussing the Elm Street Bridge. Even though it is a County owned bridge, it is in Oradell, and it is not on a connecting road between two County roads. I think that only the people who live in the east side of town should have input in that. I am not sure if that should be discussed as part of the Water Works plans.**

Answer: We are very sorry to hear that communication did not work as effectively as we anticipated, and we will broaden communication for future meetings. Regarding Elm Street, everyone who looks at the site feels that they have to address the issue of Elm Street one way or another, because it is there. Elm Street has a strong impact on the park because this road cuts through the potential park. That is why this is an issue for the future uses. It is not only about the bridge, it is about how this park functions.

**Question: My question is to historical preservation. In terms of priority, which structures on the site would be the most important in your mind? Which ones would be sacred at this point?**

Answer: It is too early to say. We want to keep an open mind and really understand the structures as they exist now and also look back and understand each of their individual significance relative to each other, to the site, to the landscape, and to future uses. The fascinating thing is that there is an ensemble of buildings. We will find various buildings



will be more appropriate for one use than another. The buildings share the same architectural language though the style might not have been prevalent at the time of construction. The same brick was kept, the same terracotta. So there is uniformity to the whole thing, even when looking at the first building in 1882 and the last building in 1955, that same pyramid roof was used. So even though the modernist was working hard to get away from all of the rest, he said, you know, maybe I can sing from that same hymnal for a while.

**Question: Who deals with SHPO? Do the professionals deal with them, or does the County deal with them?**

Answer: Bergen County will deal with SHPO through the Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs. Further the County has professionals that know what's acceptable to them. There is a good working relationship with the state.

**Question: It sounds like you [the County] are in contact with the State. Do you give directions to the professionals?**

Answer: At each level the project team of professionals has an excellent rapport with the involved State agencies. And it helps that from the State's perspective, this is an important site and that State officials involved are very supportive. It will be interesting to see how it shapes up because we won't be in full control of that process. We will be the advocates in this case for the facilities. We are grateful that New Jersey has a State Government that is so supportive of preservation. They have been part of this project almost from the beginning. In fact they had a lot to do with Rutgers involvement. We are also so fortunate because not only does our State government support historic preservation, but the State citizens do. They just did last week by voting yes on public question #1 which was to continue funding for the New Jersey Historic Trust. This is where we have gotten the first \$750,000. We are incredibly fortunate to have this kind of support at the State level. We are in phase one, we have funding for phase one, there will be more we hope and expect. And we thank Bill Sheehan for saying that in his position on the Bergen County Trust Fund Public Advisory

Committee he would be supportive of the Water Works project.

**Question: I am also an environmental educator and I do want to applaud everybody for today. I just thought it was amazing. When we do get things shored up we can start getting people onto the property. When will people be able to get on the site in a safe, controlled way, and really see what's out there? I would love to do a guided tour, like bird watching on a first Saturday morning of the month. I am not so much for the buildings – that is not where my head is at. But certainly for the preservation of that property, the animals, the plants, there is a lot going on there. Every season of the year there is something going on there. I think that it would be a nice thing to get people out there, start connecting with that property, and keep it safe. Could you just give us an idea generally of when that will be? I mean, in actual spring of 2010, not to the fall of 2010.**

Answer: The security fencing will be addressed some time in February, March. We expect that the stabiliza-

tion of the chimney will be done by the end of the summer. If it's not, then we will change the fencing design around a bit to keep people away from the danger zone. We have plans now for the temporary fencing and we hope to get that out to bid within the next month. By the time bids come back, it's about a month's process. Then installation depending on how frozen the ground is. If the chimneys are secured, then we can open up probably early spring of next year.

**Closing:**

We would like to thank everybody for coming out tonight. There will be a Rutgers web site that anybody can access. We have e-mails from the participants today, so that's the beginning of an e-mail list. If there are people here who would like their names added to that e-mail list, please see us before you leave. We thank you for your support and your input today. There is one person we haven't recognized tonight, and we need to. We started the day and Dennis McNerney stopped by to kick this off. For those of you who have followed the Water Works story for the last fifteen

or sixteen years, you know there has been contention along the way. The County Executive first allowed Rutgers students to go on the Water Works site, because that permission came through the Parks Department and Dennis McNerney approved it, and he then supported this process moving on forward. We have to recognize the County Executive [applause] because he is stepping out a little bit in a process that politically, it takes courage to do that. We thank him very much and the people who work for the County [applause].



## 5. Conclusion

The Water Works Charrette from November 14, 2009 was a major step in the ongoing planning and design process to determine appropriate adaptive reuse(s) for the Hackensack Water Works and Van Buskirk Island, located in Oradell, New Jersey (NJ). Residents who will be most affected by reuse of the site took the opportunity to express

their hopes and concerns related to its preservation, planning, and possible reuse designs.







The starting point for this Charrette was unusual because the main conflicts in public discussions were already known: the juxtapositions between historic preservation and environmental protection. The

organizers made an effort to have people from both camps within one group. That made some discussions very lively and provided the opportunity to discover unexpected compromises.

Interestingly the analysis of the group discussions, documented concerns and potentials as well as the creative design proposals showed some consistency. Obviously the local residents had observed frequent flooding because that problem was an issue in almost any group. And all groups saw the need for a design that would withstand a flood and for implementations that would reduce future flooding, such as the introduction of pervious surfaces and flood zones.

Personal experiences also shaped the interpretation of the site. For some residents it was very sad to observe the degradation of the buildings in the past and they had a strong interest in bringing activity back to the site. Others were most impressed by the experience of nature they are able to enjoy on the site and wanted to provide this opportunity to more people through local walks and connections with the neighborhood. The issues of parking

						Concerns
●	●	●	●	●	●	
X	X	X	X	X		Flooding
	X					Prevent debris build-up on fences after flooding
		X	X			Limit impervious surfaces
X		X	X		X	Increased vehicular traffic
			X	X	X	Parking
X				X	X	Walkable access/ Connectivity
X						Proximity to existing residential areas
			X			ADA accessibility
X		X	X			Safety
			X			Vandalism
	X			X		Preservation
	X	X				Integrity of historic structures
	X					Parkland/open space
	X					Recreation
			X			No active recreation
			X			Avoid additional lighting
		X				Balance: environment, history, people
					X	Gathering space in basin

						Potentials
X		X			X	Cultural center
					X	Community center
X		X				Concerts
X		X			X	Restaurant/snack bar
X		X			X	Theater
X						Gallery
	X			X	X	Museum
				X		Preservation center
X		X	X		X	Education
			X			Historical education
X						Connection between architecture and landscape
	X					Energy sustainability/solar panels
	X					Parking
X	X	X	X			Master gardening/urban agriculture
	X					Farmer's market
		X	X	X		Separate use in basin
		X				Children playground
		X				Biking/skate board
			X			Exercise route
		X				Teenager hang-out
		X				Party
		X				Gathering
X						Dog park(s)
		X				Camping
X		X	X			Passive recreation/trails/hiking
		X	X			Birding
		X				ID plants
		X	X			Canoe
				X	X	Close Elm Street, pedestrian bridge only
			X			Connection to greenway system / main street
X			X			Ecological preservation
X						Artificial ponds
				X		Recreational wetlands
	X					More trees
				X		Filtration plant converted into "Water Court"
			X	X		Demolish 1955 building
		X				Drainage: underground retention
			X			Resource water
			X			TV/Film

and a potential increase in traffic were another big theme over the day, and Elm Street became a topic. It became obvious that any solution for the street, such as repair and reopening of the bridge, would have a strong impact on the future park. The most impressive outcome of the day was an overall public consensus on the historic and environmental importance of the Water Works site. The main aspects at the evening public discussion were:

What are the next steps?  
How can people gain access?  
Which organizational structure will ensure the future success of the design and implementation process?

The results of this Charrette and Public Meeting are a further encouragement for County Executive McNerney and the County administration to continue the commitment to the goal of developing the Water Works into an outstanding asset of New Jersey. The outcome of the day will guide any future design development on adaptive reuse of the buildings and Van Buskirk Island and the obviously strong interest of citizens in long term sustainable solutions will encourage all stakeholders to continue the cooperative process.

## Appendix

### Transcript of Public Discussion with Panel

#### Question: Paul Young, Oradell

Could you describe the structure of the decision making group as you move through all the ideas? Is that a commission; is it independent of the political body in power at Hackensack in a given time?

**Ray Dressler:** We will look into setting up a commission type organization, maybe a 501(C)3, with stakeholders from the Riverkeeper, the County, the towns of Oradell and New Milford, and the Water Works Conservancy. That way we will have voices from all major parties in that group.

**Phil Salerno:** That is a great first question, because the governing structure is so critical, not only for the oversight of that project, how it gets managed and moves forward, but also in terms of fundraising. There are things that the County can raise money for that the Riverkeeper organization or the Water Works Conservancy can't. There are things that a 501(C)3 organization could do that the County can't. At the same time, why should Bill be asked to sacrifice one of his primary funding sources to move this project forward or the

same on the Water Works side? Creating a 501(C)3 organization will maximize the use of all available resources.

#### Question: Paul Young, Oradell

What's the next step?

**Phil Salerno:** I think there are multiple tracks. One is to consolidate the information that has been shared by the variety of people who were here today. The other part is the response to your first question which is to begin to look into governing models and how we can move that issue forward. To me these would be two of the key areas and then—Wolfram can explain it better—the process of ongoing public engagement.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** Right now Mark and Claire are looking at the condition of the buildings, and also discovering unfortunate surprises like the bad condition of the smoke stacks. There are things with the building that need to be fixed right now. We are planning on addressing immediate stabilization needs early next year. At that time we will also incorporate the outcomes of today's Charrette together with the professional work that is being done. And then develop a first reuse concept that has a base in reality. I am sure that then we will have a lot of questions, because we will be going from the step of tracing paper into the real designs. In the way that we are throwing out many possible ideas—and you need fifteen sites to fit them all—into real planning. Early next year we will show design ideas to the public, and hopefully next summer we will already have moved some steps forward. Maybe the architects can talk about the building.

**Claire Donato:** One of our first steps is to begin to understand the conditions of the buildings. There are areas in the building that are very vulnerable to ongoing degradation. In a very short term we are putting together a plan to protect and stabilize the areas of the buildings that are most vulnerable. In the meantime Rutgers and we, as a collaborative team, develop ideas together with you the community on possible uses, developing adaptive reuse plans and we will examine those as they relate to the conditions and the integrity of the buildings.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** One major thing that Ray is pushing for, and we are working hard on, is that we look into providing immediate access for the public. Now that we have learned about the safety issues, we are investigating how we can have major access to the property, making it available for uses like walking your dog. The reason for that is we need your eyes on it. At the moment there is some vandalism going on. The very next step that you will see is that we try to move a fence so that people can get safely in the back of the buildings. Safe access will make it possible for more people to go there for a walk and reduce the opportunities for wrong doers.

**Phil Salerno:** All these steps take money to get done and we can cover this phase. Ray, can you share with the people what the County is doing on that point?

**Ray Dressler:** Let me address what Wolfram was speaking about. The County, through the Open Space, Recreation, Farmland and Historic Preservation Trust Fund, has set aside almost 1.1 million dollars to stabilize and secure the property. We



have come up with a plan regarding fencing. As you know the entire area is fenced at the present time. We are looking into reducing some of that fencing, bringing it closer to the building, as Wolfram said, and opening up the site. The six plans that we had today, everybody recommended walking paths. And there are some paths already on the site. So we would like to use those, rework the fencing, and let people in. Have them almost self-police the area from vandals and destruction. And show people what is going on there; have people buy into the project. That is really phase one, and stabilizing the buildings so they don't deteriorate any further. That is the most important thing at this point. As far as additional funding goes, I am going to ask Bill to speak to that.

**Bill Sheehan:** I have been serving on the Bergen County Trust Fund Public Advisory Committee, and was a founding member of that committee. One of the proudest things that we have been able to do with that committee has been to assist the County in the past couple of three to four years in the building of a world class park in Teaneck and Ridgely Park; the long planned Overpeck Park. We committed about 3 million dollars of Open Space funding each year to make sure that park would be a world class park. That park is about ready to be open to the public, which means that the Trust Fund will now be able to focus our attention on Van Buskirk Island. Before, there were times when some proposals had been made to the Trust Fund that were probably a little premature. We didn't have consensus in the community. We didn't have any ideas where that money would go to or what kind of things would be done with it. The Trust Fund stepped

back from these projects. Now I think, with the consensus that we are building within the community and with the broad support that we are receiving from the community, I don't think the Trust Fund Committee would have any problem recommending to the Freeholders that we commit sizable chunks of money from the Open Space, Recreation, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund. That fund was put in place to also serve the County historic preservation needs. This is a project right here that does both. It is open space and it is historic preservation. As a member of the committee I would like to commit my personal vote to moving this project forward in the future, if and when the proposals come in.

**Ray Dressler:** In addition to that, we need the private sector to get involved as well. We can't foot the bill on the taxpayers' back constantly. We have people that every day in their lives they donate money to funds for good use. We need your help, your support in going out, getting those funds. This is going to be a multi-year project. We are going to need a lot of money from a lot of sources on a daily bases from corporations, funds, grants, and private donors. The more people we get involved, the easier it is going to be. We need to reach out, bring those funds and those people in.

**Phil Salerno:** Clearly, Bill's commitment is critical to the Open Space Fund and Ray is right in having a diversified funding strategy. One of the other grants that have been achieved through the efforts of Janet Strom and Carol Messer from the County office is an additional 750,000 dollars that came from the New Jersey Historic Trust. Right now,

before we have done anything except moving into this planning process, we are in the position where we have about a million dollars to at least start the planning and to begin the stabilization of the buildings.

**Mark Thompson:** Let me offer a slightly different point of view that complements what these gentlemen have said. Process, and moving the rock up the road, is going to be the key situation. You have capital driven projects and you have process intensive projects. And this is not a capital driven project. And what we find when we have a process driven project is that we have a much finer lying down of plans. We get to investigate by small steps. And what that does for a site like this, it really lets us learn as we go. And that means that we are going to be more effective when funds do come up to use those funds properly in the right place rather than investigation by capital investment here and there. I think it is in some respects unfortunate that we have to wait. But in many respects, given the tender nature of the landscape and the very tentative hold that we have on some of the physical fabric, it is going to temper the process. And I think that means it is going to be a much better process in the long run. It will be the long run - that is the problem.

**Question: Lorraine Bogert (Charrette Participant)**

You are talking about putting the walks in before getting started with the rest of the project. Is there going to be input on that? I think that every group that was at the meeting today mentioned gravel. Mr. Dressler came back with concrete that is supposed to be porous and also stone or pavement block. I haven't heard that the porous pavement is such a good

idea under the circumstances where it gets wet all that time. It doesn't do everything that it does at this point.

**Ray Dressler:** When I addressed that this afternoon I didn't mean to be specific to this project. What I said was that we create many path systems throughout Bergen County. We are designing them every day, and we are looking into different alternatives to macadam. We have heard everybody's concerns, and they were obvious today. As I said earlier, whatever we present to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), they will come back. It will be our proposal, it will be their plan. So if we say we want concrete, they are going to come back and say no – it is not correct for the site. We are going to go to them and say we want pavers; they are going to come back and say no. It is going to be their plan eventually. They are not going to let anything go on here, because it is all under their control. They are not going to let anything go on that is improper or not right for the site.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** And let me add to that we are of course in very close cooperation with SHPO. For me as a landscape architect it is absolutely clear that doing a path system at the Water Works site in a flood plain has to be the best practice example of pervious pavers or surfaces and has to be the best practice of sustainable storm water management in every way, which also includes how do we deal with the storm water that comes of the roof. How do we deal with possible storm water that comes from Elm Street? One of the groups addressed it today. It showed the "Elm Street revolution" a rain garden along Elm Street. And we are also in the lucky situation that with the Department that Beth works in,

Environmental Sciences, we have a whole team of experts on hydrology that is just two doors away. We can ask Chris Obropta who was already involved in this project. The Rutgers commitment is of course that we take the whole range of ecologists, other scientists and engineers that Rutgers has and address specific questions to them. Because we have an interest in developing the site as an environmental example that says that if the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences is involved, we want to make sure that this is a highly sustainable example. We are looking into all options of pavers, gravel and so on. For example looking at gravel in a flood plain it gets washed away with the next flood.

If you use pavers that have gaps between them you will have to make sure that you can clean them up after the flood, making sure that water can still percolate into the ground. Each of these solutions has different drawbacks. We have a range of colleagues that we are going to address these issues. And of course there is the next question, what type of walkway surface you have next to an historic building that is this significant. And the first line of defense on this one are these colleagues who are totally aware what this is about. We will have a close cooperation on these questions making sure that SHPO is not going to say: "oh no, you can't do that." This is most likely not going to happen.

**Phil Salerno:** Does everybody know what SHPO is? It is the State Historic Preservation Office in Trenton.

**Questions: Mr. Zink, Oradell**

I have seen the building deteriorate over the years and there is a couple of things for me, I see as pressing issues and I was wondering if the

County has been approached at all about restoring power. Since they took the substation out, there is no power anymore to run the sump pumps that keep the building from flooding. Not only flooding but seepage due to the fact that there is water all around it. Also there used to be four security lights around it. I see there has been one activated again, the rest of them are not there. That of course would help the vandalism situation. Plus the vandals have damaged the flood doors, they twisted them. They could be put back at least to keep any water and people out, to a certain extent. I wonder if the County has been approached at all in addressing these issues.

**Ray Dressler:** "D" - all of the above, We are waiting for PSE&G to put in two temporary permitted systems, as far as the electric goes to two buildings. Presently they are designed as 200 amp systems, just so our architects can get in there and work and have permanent lighting. I was surprised it was not done by today. We had hoped it would be done by today. Hopefully by next week those two services will be installed. Along with the security of the new chain link fence that will go around closer to the buildings, we have designed that in cooperation with the Bergen County Police Department. They looked at the plan and were okay with it. In addition to that there will be security lighting on the buildings and we are also installing at least one camera on each side of the building. There will be security; there will be a tape of record if something does happen. It will be a monitored system but obviously you can't monitor 24 hours a day. So we will have a running tape. We will have the light; we will have the new fencing.

**Question: Mr. Zink, Oradell**

Lights are important, there used to be three of four of them facing the building and they were all off for a long period of time. I happened to go that way every day, I work in New York, and I come home around 1 o'clock in the morning so I see what goes on. A lot of time the lights have been flickering and then they finally completely went off and I noticed that there is a lot more damage occurring. Plus, on the old pump house, a lot of the mortar is coming out from around those bricks and I am afraid the wall may be in danger, too. That should be looked into as well.

**Ray Dressler:** As far as the lighting goes, I agree with you 100% that it was not maintained for many years. That was a decision that was made quite a few years ago, and it was a money decision keeping the buildings lit and the electric there. As far as the mortar goes, I guess Claire is the best to speak to that.

**Claire Donato:** I can also speak to the pumps. We realize how important it is to reactivate that system. That's partly why the County has been working with PSE&G to get electric service back as soon as possible. United Water is also helping, based on their experience on the site, with what size pumps and what needs to be done to maintain and reactivate them.

**Question: Mr Zink,Oradell:**

Yeah, I know when Art Commings was actually still with the County, he was maintaining the sumps and he had taken me on a nice little tour of it. And he was very diligent about keeping those pumps running and when they took the power out, because, they obviously they had 440

in there at one point in time. But when they shut that down that I had a regular 120 line attached to the building. When they took the substation out, they took all the power out. I was complaining about that for a long period of time. Plus during the summer time you have a mosquito population and that's not good for the borough either.

**Ray Dressler:** Things aren't as easy as they appear to be. I had this conversation with Jack O'Hara (United Water) earlier today. Jack, who has been in there to do water sampling and those tests are coming back fairly soon. One of the problems is that it may come back with some oil in it. Did we introduce Jack O'Hara? Jack was born and raised in this building, I guess you can say. When we had this conversation earlier today he said that a lot of the lower floors constantly were covered with oil. Because the machines were oiled, and oil dripped, and he said that it actually stuck to the floor at times. If we go to pump that water out, we have to make sure that it is not contaminated. If it is, it gets disposed of properly. So it is not as simple as hooking up electric, turning on the pump and getting rid of the water. There are consequences and we have to do it right. Every step of the way, the DEP is involved, the County is involved. We will make sure that what gets done there is done properly.

**Question: Sonja Hanlon**

I started out thinking I had one question, but then I made it a two part question and then a third one has came up in my mind. This is pretty much for Thompson Associates. First part of my question is have you done any evaluation of what it would take to sustain the building that it

is not a huge liability for the community or for the County. Number two, you mentioned that there will be tons of money needed over the next years. Do we have a figure, is there a business plan? Do we know approximately what it is going to take financially from the taxpayers and from private contributions in order to actually use the building? And the third question I have has just come up: In my mind there is a tremendous liability to opening it up to the public right now, especially with the young people. They are so curious to keep their place to sit and have little social gatherings. How do we handle that liability problem if we are going to move the fence closer to the buildings and give the public more access?

**Phil Salerno:** As you do I live in Oradell. I say as an Oradell resident, I think we have been incredibly negligent to let that site go unattended for so long. Given the vandalism that is there, given the danger that there is no security right now, that people could fall into the coagulation basin, they could get lost in the back on the river, and police would have no access or way to get there. I think the plans that you are hearing to day are a way to begin to remedy that. I am more concerned what could happen to the site unattended versus what could potentially happen if. Because they are not going to move the fences closer and not address those immediate hazards that could take place. People aren't going to be able to access anywhere near the smoke stacks. But I think, and what Mr. Dressler has already said in terms of the cameras, the security, the additional lighting, the power, is going to make it a much safer place for the use of our community. Because they will know that there are lights on, they



will know that there are people are watching. Hopefully we will begin as residents to access some of the pathways that are there that don't put you immediately next to the building.

**Ray Dressler:** As far as the financial commitment, that is why we have the staff going through the buildings, doing the evaluations, to find out what is right with it, what is wrong with it. What can be saved, what can't be saved. These are professionals that we have hired. It is a world class team that is going in there, doing these evaluations. Until that is done, we won't have a dollar figure. That won't come for a while. But to give you an example, we have already done the evaluations of the two smoke stacks. And they came out worse than we imagined. We have to stabilize them as soon as possible. Access will not be granted to certain areas until that stabilization is done. The County is not moving forward until the plan is right. Until we are sure that things are safe. I can't tell you how many meetings we already had out there and one meeting in particular was just about today with our insurance carrier, Bergen Risk. The County is self insured. We did a tour of exactly what we did today with the insurance people to make sure that there were no hazards in the way that everything was taken care of, that areas that needed to be cordoned off were cordoned off. Multiple meeting with insurance people on site, every step of the way, making sure that people are safe.

**Question: Sonja Hanlon**

Will fundraising begin prior to the completion of an assessment of the buildings? Do we try to evaluate first, what can be done, what can be saved, prior to applying for more grants or doing additional fundraising?

**Ray Dressler:** I would not imagine the fundraising would start until after the evaluation. But if you would like to be on that committee, give me your name and we will get you right there.

**Question: Sonja Hanlon:**

Which committee? The fundraising? No thank you.

**Mark Thompson:** I think you are asking exactly the right questions. Of course these are the questions that everyone has in his or her mind. This is a tremendous asset but it will take a considerable amount of time to understand which parts are assets and which parts need to be brought back to snuff. Claire can speak to that. But once that is done, we will know how much it takes to bring certain components up and we will triage and find out which ones have to be done first to use our limited resources usefully. And then, once we do that we will marry that with basically the things we were talking about throughout today: How can the site be used? What is the best use for the building? And speaking to your business model, we will really see what the costs are to save the buildings and what the uses to consider. And we will put those together and then develop that plan and see how long it will take and the nature of the funding for that. Let Claire speak, because her crew had been working quite diligently on determining, what is the state of the roof, what is the state of the fenestration, of the security and door systems, of the brick walls.

**Claire Donato:** To go along with the fence and security issues; making sure that the perimeters of the buildings are all secure and not easily accessed goes along with the fencing plan before any public access

would be brought back to the site. I think it is a little too early to speak individually to each of the buildings, but just to say that we are studying each component. These buildings were built between 1882 and 1955, and we see them as an assemblage of many buildings on the site. So we are studying each one, looking at its structural system, the framing of the roof, the walls, the masonry, the mortar, the roofing systems, how intact they are, the drainage and also looking at the historic elements, the windows, the fenestration, the doors. What original elements still have this wonderful detail that we would like to preserve and bring back to life wherever possible? It is a very comprehensive look at the condition of the buildings which in very short order we will be able to put together as a comprehensive view of them.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** And I would like to add that in the same way we are looking at the condition of the island itself. There is a lot of talk about the buildings right now, but I am taking the environmental part here. For me as a landscape architect and for our part of the team it is very important to look how much use can the site itself take? How do we make sure that we preserve the riparian zone to its necessary extent? How many people do we want to have walk around? We want to make sure that we use the existing resources in a very responsible and sustainable way and that future generations have an island of this kind that they can go to. And for that we are also discussing future uses. A major point of the whole day today is finding out what are the possible future uses. When we have them we can start thinking about: how do we achieve them? And then we can start adding up the dollar by defining the actions necessary.

Then we can look back into the uses and probably say that this particular use is probably too fancy for us right now. My point is that we are at the beginning of the process and pretty far down the road we will know the dollar numbers, we don't know them yet for the final result. Because as I mentioned this morning when we were in this larger group, we do not know solution: there is no definite plan yet. And I want to make it very clear at this meeting, there is no solution. We don't know at this point and even the County—at least to my knowledge. Nobody has a final solution for the usage of the building and the site. We have all these bullet points of what we would like to see, but this is based on the assessment of Mark and Claire and the assessment of my team, making sure what is possible on the site and then we go into the discussion of the possible uses and then we can figure out what this may cost.

**Phil Salerno:** But could you address how this could be done in separate stages? It doesn't look like pick whatever number you want doesn't mean you have to find that number now.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** That is an important point. When we were talking about the fence we were talking about it in a somewhat negative way, about security and safety and hazards. But the fence is a good thing. Separating people from objects is sometimes smart, because, there is the other side of the fence where you can actually walk. Basically the building will be fenced in and we will make the process step by step that we will make the island more accessible. Of course we landscape architects are always jealous what numbers those people [Mark and

Claire] are dealing with, because architecture is so much more expensive than putting a path down. My point is that we will be developing the access of the island step by step. And we are also in the process of communicating with the regulatory authorities. Of course, if you want to have a pathway on the island you have to talk to NJDEP. We hope that very soon we have safe access and then go to further elements and add to the park. Those elements that will bring the classiness and the excitement to the park, we will add them as we go along and as we find the funding for them.

**Question: Joe Polyniak, Oradell**

I hate to add anything more to your price tag there. But I keep hearing the words historical preservation and then the named buildings. As I understood it from a tour many, many years ago, one of the significant items in the buildings is the mechanical equipment, the pumps that are nationally limited. I think there are six in the country or something like that. Is that part of your item in the architectural bid of the buildings to include the mechanical equipment or is that a subtopic that has not even been addressed or thought of yet?

**Claire Donato:** Certainly, they are as significant as the buildings and as the landscape. Similar to the assessment of the buildings, the assessment of the machinery comes and how that fits in potential reuse and how the buildings might be accessible to the public and in what way. And certainly as with the buildings there will be a ranking of significance of that machinery. In areas where it is identified that bringing an active use into the building might be an important goal if the significance of

the machinery there is something that could be considered. That kind of ranking, just as we look into the buildings, would come into play.

**Mark Thompson:** We are probably not talking about putting the machinery back into use as it was, but put it in a state of preservation so it is no longer degrading as it has degraded. So it is a little bit different. We are developing the building and its total envelope to protect the machinery. When we have that envelope around it, a useful strategy of conversation of the machinery for at least an exhibit program is in place. But to protect the machinery right now we need to understand in gross terms but to protect that before we do the envelope is probably secondary.

**Question: Maggie Harrer, Oradell**

I applaud all of you and all of you who participated today. I read all the plans, I think it is incredible and I think that it is an amazing first step. I think you have reached out in a way that is terrific. I am sorry that it is a Saturday and Hurricane Ida is here and it is 5 to 7 and there aren't 250 people here from town, getting to hear it. But lovely, we are videotaping it so people can see it. So, you are going to complete a historic structures report and triage that is what I am hearing you say, I am just confirming and that's my one question. My second question is: You are using sort of an Ellis Island model where they opened a gallery and an exhibit space and then they are slowly expanding to other spaces. Would you say that would apply to how you foresee this happening?

**Mark Thompson:** Let me speak to the second question and then Claire can to the first. The excitement about the facilities and the machinery, as

you were saying, is so extraordinary that we all want to jump in as quickly as we can. And we want to be able to anticipate the conclusion of what we are just starting with respect to research and participatory inputs that the community is giving. That is a way of backing in into the answer: No, we don't yet know what we will be doing, but that's what we are doing. We are looking to get there. We don't know that we can make the facilities really accessible until they pass all the tests that they will have to; environmentally and in terms of being just secure, having some heat possibly, having the total envelope secure – there are many steps. We anticipate exactly what you are talking about, but that is a bit of a luxury right now, anticipating specific uses in specific places until we get the rest of it done. This is first step. We are looking very carefully at those things that will be the most vulnerable, and that is why Wolfram has spoken earlier to the issues of the stacks. They look the most vulnerable. We brought lifts that got us all the way up there, did high definition photography and engineering, and we found that that is going to be a priority. That is really what we will do. We are working through all those things. And then, as the communications among the members of the community become more widespread, we will probably jump to program and how we will pursue in terms of inhabiting the buildings.

**Claire Donato:** It is a technical point on the terminology. A historic structure report was prepared some years ago. Our current work is building on that. We are currently doing an assessment and a protection and stabilization plan to make sure that the building and the envelopes are secure and shedding water and not

degrading the structure. And a preservation plan which means, taking that understanding of the condition and the integrity of the building and looking at it against potential uses and seeing how that fit works. That is the purpose of the preservation plan.

**Question: Charrette Participant**

So many ideas presented today, including closing Elm Street. I am not in favor, I am not against. Ray, I will address this question to you, I know you touched on it back at the Knights of Columbus. Will there be coordination with the County Engineering—sometimes departments operate in silos—to their future plans for that bridge whether it will be repaired, allow traffic, closing the street, leaving the street open? Can you just touch on that?

**Ray Dressler:** I know there is coordination already. And as I said earlier this afternoon, the mayor and council of both Oradell and New Milford are in favor of vehicle traffic there. I know some of the residents are not. I think that needs to be on the table to the mayors and councils. That discussion has to happen. But I don't know how far the engineering department is along with any plans for that bridge, I can certainly find out and get back to you.

**Question: Bob McConnell, Oradell**

I would like to get back to fencing. Although your county green chain link fencing is effective, it is not terribly attractive. And I wonder if the county has any plans to put back that beautiful wrought iron sluice gate fencing that was taken down about 18 months ago?

**Ray Dressler:** I had originally suggested, when we started to put fencing up that we put a black aluminum,

ten foot high with a spike on top of it. If you are familiar with that it is a very nice ornamental fence. The last time I walked the site with SHPO they were against any permanent fencing around the building. That discussion has not been finalized, but when we were out there the last time they said that their vision for that site is not to fence in that building when it is completed.

**Question: Bob McConnell, Oradell**

I was talking about the sluice gate fencing that is across Elm Street.

**Ray Dressler:** I believe that some of the fencing is still inside the building. Again, we can certainly throw that in the table, but SHPO will make that decision. I thought that some type of ornamental fencing would be outstanding there, that's my opinion.

**Question: Sonja Hanlon**

Two things: One is I think that it would be very important to get as many people in the communities on board with this as possible. I think it is a very interesting meeting tonight and I am glad that I came. Unfortunately this meeting was not announced to the citizens of Oradell. Most people have no idea that this is taking place. And being that the property is largely in Oradell and being that the meeting is being held in Oradell, to not have announced it to the citizens of Oradell is a great loss. So I hope that this will be something that will be addressed in the future. The second thing is I am not sure, correct me if I am wrong, if this group should be discussing the Elm Street Bridge. Even it is a County owned bridge, it is in Oradell, and it is not on a connecting road between two County roads. And I think that only the people who live in the east side of town should have input in that. I



am not sure if that should be discussed as part of the Water Works plans.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** Let me answer both questions. Question one is your concern about how the public was informed. I am very sorry that it did not work in the way we anticipated. We hoped that information would have gotten out better via the internet. We are very happy to get your input for the next meeting that will come early next year, and that we use communication channels that are more used by the people in Oradell and New Milford. Like the newspaper if that works better. To your second question I have a very different position on that than you. I believe that Elm Street has a strong impact on the park. Because from my point of view, as being part of the landscape architecture development of the future park, this road is directly in the middle of the park. It cuts through. That is why this is an issue for the future uses. And that is not only about the bridge, it is about how this the park works. And as the responsible designer for the park, we will certainly give our opinion. If the decision makers follow that, to how they weigh that that is their thing. But we will give an opinion on how the Elm Street has an impact in the park in itself. I really appreciate that this issue is on the table right now. Of course the emergency exit is important, but actually some people in the neighborhood like it if there is not that much traffic, for the park it is an important aspect, but it has to be looked at on the larger traffic picture. I am glad it is out there and we will keep on looking into that while we develop possible options and keep it to the public discussion.

**Bill Sheehan:** I wanted to add to what Wolfram just said. I know for a fact that there were signs placed in both at the town halls, at my office, and at the Water Works Conservancy building over here on Kinderkamack Road in the center of Oradell, announcing that there was a meeting taking place. If there was no follow through, making an official public notice, one of the reasons that might be is because this is really an ad hoc committee. If we were vested by the County with the authority to make decisions we would have to use sunshine law and we would have to do public notice through the newspapers. But technically this is a coming together of people trying to come not a conclusion, but to start looking for the solutions. One of the problems that occurred over the years that in the past everybody has brought their personal prejudices to the table, dug their heels in and not wanting to give an inch to anybody. What we need to do is to come to this with an open mind. We need to come to this with an open heart and we need to say that we are going to do the right thing for the community. If the right thing is keeping the Elm Street Bridge open or not open that is something that will come out in this process. In the meantime, what we need to do is, we need to focus the attention to the committee here and all the folks that helped us today, and the energy that we got here. We have got momentum for the first time in fifteen years. Let's not do anything to impede that momentum. I want to see the day when I can stand there with the County Executive, Ray here, and with Phil here, and say: We did something good for the town. And that's why I am here. With that in mind, let's keep an open mind.

**Question: Sonja Hanlon**

My mind is extremely open. But open to me means open, not selectively choosing people who come to these public meetings. Open means open. And certainly with 8,000 people in this town, I can't tell you that there are more than maybe a dozen who would stop at town hall and look and see if they are going to miss a meeting. Or go into the Water Works Conservancy; am I missing a meeting? Really, communication is communication. Try to keep it open and I think you will get a whole lot more support.

**Ray Dressler:** Like we said already, you hit on a good point. This is the first step. Let's start the discussion, let's keep it going, move it forward, get more people involved. We will get more dialogue. This isn't the end, this is the beginning.

**Phil Salerno:** And to your other question regarding Elm Street. At no point there was a mandate to include or not include Elm Street in the design. And I have seen Wolfram do this in two different occasions. He has looked at them and said, here is the site, how would you use it. And it has been very interesting because it has come from each of the different groups, as they have addressed that issue. They said: You know what, there is this street running right through the park. What do we do with it? And it has ranged from leave it open as it was, to close it, dig up the pavement and make it all an open meadow. And it just depends on the individual group of people and as Wolfram said, nothing has been decided as to what is going to happen with any part of the site, but it has been very interesting—and now I have probably seen about sixty different people look at that space.

They all feel they have to address the issue of Elm Street one way or another, because it is there.

**Question: Michael Cavanah**

I grew up in this area my whole life. I know it is there, but I can't really know specifically every building on the site. My question is to historical preservation: It might be too early to ask this question, but in terms of priority, which structures on the site would be the most important in your mind? Which ones would be sacred at this point?

**Claire Donato:** I think it is too early to say. We want to keep an open mind and really understand them as they exist now and also look back and understand each of their individual significance relative to each other, to the site, to the landscape and to today. What uses make sense to bring back to the site. For my perspective it is too early to say.

**Mark Thompson:** I would say the fascinating thing is that there is an ensemble of buildings. We will find various buildings will be more useful for one use then another. I love the way the original building led to more, even though it was not in style as style has changed. The same brick was kept, the same terracotta. So there is uniformity to the whole thing. Even looking at the first building in 1882 and the last building in 1955, that same pyramided roof was used. So even though the modernist was working hard to get away from all of the rest, he said, you know, maybe I can sing from that same hymnal for a while. I think the whole thing is very exciting and the location across the site. As we use it, as we enter it from one way or another, as we see the stacks, I think it will be very exciting to answer the question that

you have, but there will be a lot more activities between now and then that will inform us.

**Question: Donna Alonso, Oradell:**

I have a question in terms of SHPO. Beth started speaking about all the work that has been done previously has been pro bono, but from this point on there are going to be expenses incurred. You have money for historic preservation; you have money for open space. Does SHPO have the right to, after we spend all this time and money designing, can they come back and say, no, we don't want this. Who deals with SHPO? Do the professionals deal with them, or does the County deal with them?

**Ray Dressler:** My office will deal with them through cultural affairs. Carol Messer is actually sitting in the back and she is moaning right now, I can see her face. SHPO is an agency just like the DEP. We have professionals that are in the business, we know what's acceptable to them on regular bases, as compared to what is not acceptable. With DEP we do pathway design every day. The professionals know, I can't do this because if I do that I am going to bring it down there and they will throw it back at us and say it is rejected. We talk to the people at the State, they have already been up to the site, we have taken walks around. What about this, what do you think about that? And they say, let's stick with this, not with that—it is really a working relationship between the County and the State to make sure the project goes ahead smoothly, as fast as possible. Without multiple revisions that would be a waste of time. Those conversations happen a lot on the site and on the phone. If there is something that we need to redesign, there is a good working relationship with the state.

**Question: Donna Alonso, Oradell:**

It sounds like you are in contact with the State, do you give directions to the professionals.

**Wolfram Hoefer:** Both of us are in contact with the state. At each level, as professionals of course we have a working relationship necessary with State agencies. Over the past three years, dealing with the Water Works, the great thing is: It is really good to work with the supportive administration on the State level, because they really care. From the State perspective, this is an important site. From the State perspective that is something that State historic preservation and environmental preservation, both of them really care about it. And that is why I like their critical point of view, they bring also a very professional knowledge to the table. It is not only about applying regulations, it is about directing this project in a good way and being supportive.

**Mark Thompson:** I think the first point of contact will be very interesting, as we now know about the stacks. Because the stacks are in a sense, ornamental. I heard today in the process that they are very emotional for people in the neighborhood and the community. They have some identity, just if they were a church tower or like the Piazza del Vecchio or some of the great architectural pieces. They are going to have to be repaired. Is funding from the State going to be forthcoming? Is SHPO going to say it must happen when the Governor says maybe? This is a process and we will all be advocates. It will be interesting to see how it shapes up because we won't be in full control of that process. We will be the advocates in this case for the facilities.

**Audience Comment: Carol Messer, Director, Bergen County Division of Cultural and Historic Affairs**

I wanted to say how grateful we should be in New Jersey to have a State Government that is so supportive of preservation. They have been part of this project almost from the beginning. In fact they had a lot to do with Rutgers involvement. We are also so fortunate because not only does our State government support historic preservation, but the State citizens do and just did last week by voting yes on public question #1 which was to continue funding for the New Jersey Open Space & Historic Trust, which is where we have got the 750,000 dollars. We actually worked through the Historic Trust, they interface with us with SHPO. Ray often works directly with the DEP and SHPO himself on the parks issues. We basically go through the NJ Historic Trust and we work very intimately with them. They were invited tonight and they were very sorry that they were not able to be here, some of them were actually out of town. We are incredibly fortunate to have this kind of support at the State level. And thank you Bill for saying that you still will be supportive from the Open Space Trust Fund because we need to know that. We are in phase one, we have funding for phase one, there will be more we hope and expect. Yes, there is structure there and now that the State trust is going to continue, even in a time like this, we feel and we have been encouraged to hope that we can always go back to them. Yes, the answer is very positive.

**Question: Joanne Chack, Environmental Commission, Oradell**

I am also an environmental educator and I do want to applaud everybody for today. I just thought it was amazing. But when we do get things shored up we can start getting people

onto the property, I would love to do a guided tour, like bird watch on a first Saturday morning of the month. Get people out there in a very safe, controlled way, and really see what's out there. I know a lot of the things that are naturally out there. I am not so much for the buildings that is not where my head is at. But certainly for the preservation of that property, the animals, the plants, there is a lot going on there. Every season of the year there is something going on there. I could point that out, I would be happy to do that. I think that would be a really safe and nice way to get people on that property, once it is safe enough to get out there. As soon as this is safe, Bill or somebody let me know. Get it in the papers and we will just meet. If it is 6 in the morning on Saturday, we will take them out for an hour or two. Just go out and see what's there. I think that it would be a nice thing to get people out there, start connecting with that property, and keep it safe.

**Question: Frank Bouzo, Bergen County resident**

Could you just give us an idea generally of when that will be? I mean, in actual spring of 2010, not to the fall of 2010.

**Ray Dressler:** The security fencing will probably go up some time in February, March. We hope that the stabilization of the smoke stack will be done. If that's not, then we will change the fencing design around a little bit to keep people away from the danger zone. We have plan now for the temporary fencing and we hope to get that out to bit within the next month, bits come back; it's about a month's process. Then installation depending on how frozen the ground is. If the smoke stack is secured, than we can open up probably early of spring next year.

**Beth Ravit, Rutgers University:**

Again, we would like to thank everybody for coming out tonight. If you would like to come up to talk to anybody individually, we will be here for a few minutes. This information of what happened today and the next parts of the process will be made public. There will be a Rutgers web site that anybody can access. The participants today, I have their e-mails, so that's the beginning of an e-mail list. If there are people here, who would like their names added to that e-mail list, please come see me before you leave. I will take your email and you will become part of that communication link. We thank you for your support and your input today.

**Phil Salerno:** As the only person at the table who lives in Oradell, I want to thank you all for coming. Thank the people who participated today, it was a relay great dialogue. And we have a world class design team.

**Beth Ravit:** There is one person we haven't recognized tonight, and I think we need to. We started the day and Dennis McNerney stopped by to kick this off. For those of you who have followed this progress for the last fifteen or sixteen years, there has been contention along the way. For the County Executive to first allow Rutgers students to go on this site, because that came through the Parks Department and Dennis McNerney approved it, and then to support this process going on forward. I have to recognize the County Executive [applause] because he is stepping out quite a bit in a process that politically, it to courage to do that. I thank him very much and the people who work for the County [applause].