

Fort Adams Trust looks to the future of landmark property

Master plan expected to spell out direction historic fort head in the future

BY RAUBI MARIE PERILLI
news@newportthisweek.net

NEWPORT — The Alliance for a Livable Newport and members of the Fort Adams Trust came together Monday evening to discuss the future of one of Newport's most important historical treasures, Fort Adams. Trust Executive Director Eric Hertfelder and Secretary James E. Moore led the public forum which introduced the trust's new schematic master plan for the site.

The plan, which will be funded by a recently acquired \$250,000 grant from Preserve America, is a "plan of a plan" that will ultimately provide the trust with a conceptual map of Fort Adams' long-term future.

With the hiring of a multi-disciplinary consultant team comprised of designers and business planners alike, the trust will take a comprehensive look at the property's potential while establishing long term goals and strategies for sustainability. Because trust and

grants don't last forever, the trust must find a way to make Fort Adams support itself — both financially and structurally.

The team members, who are all highly experienced in historical preservation, include Robert Silman Associates, Structural Engineers; Ann Beha Architects; Carol R. Johnson Associates, Landscape Architect; Object/IDEA, Interpretive planner; and ConsultEcon, Inc., Business Planner.

The first step in their six-month plan is to bring in engineers who will conduct the first-ever comprehensive review of the standing structure of the fort. With that information, the trust will be able to determine if the restoration of the entire fort is possible and if so, how much it will cost.

Up until this point, the trust has been focused on restoring smaller sections of the fort one at a time. They have spent more than \$7 million restoring portions of the northern and eastern quadrants, rebuilding barracks and casements and installing utilities. But there is still a great deal of the fort that is unused. At the current time, only about eight acres — about 10



Fort Adams Trust executive director Eric Hertfelder holds up an aerial view of Fort Adams at Monday night's forum on the property's future.

percent of the property — are open to the public.

"When we have taken people on expanded tours throughout the entire fort they are stunned," said Mr. Hertfelder. "As a work of military architecture and engineering, it is without parallel in this county."

With the implementation of their new plan, the trust hopes to

open the entire 80 acres of the property to the public. The extra space would make way for new community events and activities. The team's business and interpretive planners are expected to develop new ways to use the space, which may include picnic areas, theater stages and music venues, which may also become sources of income for the property.

Because the trust is developing the site for the public, it has designed its plan to directly include the Newport community. Throughout each step of their restoration process the trust will hold multiple public workshops where community members are encouraged to participate in the decision-making.

"All of us will have to come together," said Moore. "And in the end if we do it right, we will be able to open up this special building."

The trust plans to have the first portion of its plan completed by the opening of the new season at Fort Adams, which starts on Memorial Day. The full video broadcast of Monday's forum is available on the ALN's website www.liveablenewport.net.