REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

The Parsonage at Historic Richmond Town
74 Arthur Kill Road, Staten Island, NY 10306
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February 2019

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Contact:
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Introduction to Historic Richmond Town

Mission

The purpose of the Staten Island Historical Society, doing business as Historic Richmond Town, is to create opportunities for the public to explore the diversity of the American experience, especially that of Staten Island and its neighboring communities, from the colonial period to the present.

To accomplish this, the Society:

- Operates and interprets Historic Richmond Town, the largest and most complete historic village in the City of New York
- Conducts and promotes research based on the museum’s collection
- Collects and preserves the materials of everyday life including the artifacts, and
- Shares the collection and knowledge with the public through creative and engaging interpretative activities.

Context

Historic Richmond Town has become known as an event and program destination where visitors enjoy an experience that blends together education, history, food, entertainment, art, and culture. These experiences celebrate centuries of American life, connecting the past and present. The Richmond Town site is a life-size canvas on which all these experiences are painted.

Historic Richmond Town is not static, “frozen in time”, pointing to a particular year. It is evocative and reminiscent, not specific. It feels like a late 19th century to early 20th century small town. It’s America’s real-life historic town of yesteryear. The townscape is a pleasant and relaxed setting where guests are invited to stroll and discover memorable experiences.

Richmond Town was the commercial, mercantile and civic center of the Island for 250 years. History Driven and Future Focused: great events like the Richmond County Fair, New York City BBQ Cook-offs, Tavern Concerts, Halloween in Richmond Town, Old Home Day, Uncorked!, Makefest, and others create the busy town center where people gather, learn and have fun in a one-of-a-kind setting.
As we continue to grow, we are adding new experiences and opportunities for the Staten Island community.

- Family-oriented food service that fits the style of the town
- Park-like amenities that appeal to families and leisurely outdoor activities
- Amenities such as 200 spot parking lot for daily use and for busy days

Overview of the Facility

Historic Richmond Town runs ninety-five special event and program days each year in addition to daily school trips, group tours, onsite research spaces, volunteer and educational programs. Many of the events are site-wide. The staff maximizes the entire site for programming including building interiors, open space and the interior roads. The Historical Museum which contains seven galleries and rotating exhibitions. Visitors may also conduct a self-guided tour throughout the site with access to building’s historic interiors and working trades-people like the tin smith. Since we are a City park, we are an open to the neighbors who exercise, stroll and walk their dogs.

During special event days, the site attracts between 1,000 and 5,000 guests. The townscape features vendors and attractions. Larger events offer a complimentary shuttle that transports visitors from the nearby mall to the site. Uncorked! attracts foodies and wine connoisseurs, who can stroll the old town while sampling dishes from local restaurants. The NYC BBQ and Chili Cook-offs are internationally sanctioned with competitive cooks. These events are family-priced and offer a party atmosphere
that focus on children. The Richmond County Fair is the largest attended event. It offers the most activity for everyone. The event features multiple stages of music and entertainment, rides, demonstrations, contests and attractions. Candlelight Tours are produced during the holiday season and present scheduled tours through the landmark homes where guests can experience the holidays through the centuries. Tavern Concerts attract music lovers and families looking for a unique and intimate experience in our historic Tavern.

All of our events bring the Staten Island community together.

**Historic Richmond Town has three additional sites:**

- Decker Farm (c. 1810) - a 10.6 acre working farm that hosts events such as Pumpkin Picking in October
- Billiou-Stillwell-Perine House (c.1661-1662)- one of the oldest homes in the country
- Judge Jacob Tysen House (1834) – at the northeast entrance to Snug Harbor Cultural Center

*Scenes from Decker Farm*
Historic Context of the Subject Parcel

Built in 1855, The Parsonage is as significant for its architecture as it is for its association with the Reformed Dutch Church and its history. The building’s Gothic Revival design, which survives on the exterior with a good deal of integrity, should play an important role in the understanding of that architectural period in Staten Island; so many buildings of that period have disappeared that every building that survives should be precious.

From the date of its construction to 1875, it was occupied by ministers of the South Reformed Dutch Church. After 1875, it was occupied by a succession of private individuals until 1981 when it was used for the administrative offices of the Staten Island Historical Society and later by the Society’s Development office. In 1985, we restored the building to its late 19th Century exterior appearance. The building was converted into a restaurant, which operated from 1993 to 2008.

The building and the site were designated a landmark by the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1969.

The building is in public view, since as two sides of the large property face Clarke Avenue and Arthur Kill Road.

Reference

It is highly recommended that all interested parties review the following documents:

Parsonage Historic Structure Report
https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B18-Iw7DEM3HdWZHNTFKaXkwZG8&authuser=0

Parsonage Landmarks Preservation Commission Report

New York City Maps
http://maps.nyc.gov/doitt/nycitymap/
Goals for the Parsonage

The Parsonage is an iconic structure and presence for Historic Richmond Town. We are dedicated to identifying a sustainable, economically feasible, proposal for re-activating the Parsonage and surrounding property. Historic Richmond Town recognizes that a successful enterprise at this location may require accessory or ancillary services. These might include out-buildings, an extension, and the use of outdoor space adjacent to the main building. All of these considerations can be discussed as part of a comprehensive plan to support the long term success of the proposal.

The building and property are landmarked. However, historic records indicate that there have been modifications to the building and out buildings on the property, such that sympathetic alterations and/or enlargement of the building may be possible. The Parsonage had a very successful run as a commercial high-end restaurant, however, proposals need not be limited to eating/drinking establishments. All proposals consistent with our mission will be considered.
Historic Richmond Town is Open for Business

Interested parties will be invited to tour the building and grounds, and meet with the organization’s leadership and consultants to consider the merits of their proposal and begin a dialogue.

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March 2019
Response required by June 30, 2019.
Subject to extension.

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