IRVINE NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

St. Timothy's School Stevenson, Maryland 21153 (301) 484-2413

MEMORANDUM

Ellie –
FYI –
Thank you
Bobby Johnson

DATE: October 3, 1986
FROM: Robert H. Johnson
TO: Board of Directors, INSC

RE: VERY IMPORTANT BOARD MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 5:00 p.m.

In light of a number of very important issues which have recently arisen and are discussed briefly below, I urge you to attend the Board meeting scheduled for Thursday, October 9 at 5:00 p.m. At that time, we will discuss the possibility of making serious commitments regarding Irvine, and I hope to achieve sufficient focus of intention to proceed with the execution of a lease with Baltimore City and a purchase option or a contract of sale for a parcel of land located on the west side of the northern end of Lake Roland.

As you are aware, the Long Range Planning Committee has been studying the Nature Centers alternative opportunities (with respect to location) for a number of months. Our foci have been on the Soldier's Delight Environmental Area in Owings Mills and on the property of Mrs. Edith Hooper located on Lake Roland. In order to bring you up to date and save time at the Board meeting, I offer the following discussion, which has been approved by Mac Plant (Chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee) and Dick Gibbs (who has been heavily involved in all of the following developments).

Mrs. Hooper's Property

Mrs. Edith Hooper is an elderly lady with whom we have been in dialogue regarding the purchase or gift of her house and approximately six acres of DR-1 zoned land at the end of Coppermine Terrace in the Bare Hills area. I believe that most of you have visited the site, and will forego a description of the house and its grounds, except to comment that both are magnificent. It is the perception of the Nature Center staff, a number of Board members, and an architect (David Wright with James R. Grieves and Associates) that the building in its current condition and configuration functions remarkably well as an administrative headquarters for the Nature Center, with support space for certain types of environmental programs. This is fortuitous, in that it is Mrs. Hooper's expressed desire that we not significantly alter the interior or exterior of the building, as it was designed by Marcel Brewer and has important architectural integrity and historical value for that reason.

Our hope that Mrs. Hooper will donate this property to us was optimistic. At this point in time, she has offered to sell us the property at a price of $300,000 (presumably in cash) which is estimated to be approximately one half to one third of the property's appraised value. It is very much to her advantage (and ours, as is discussed below) to have the entire transaction occur before December 31, 1986, when the new tax law comes into effect, which would seriously detract from the after-tax implications of her gift from her point of view. Her counsel in this matter is Mr. Stan Klinefelter, with Piper and Marbury.

It is clearly to our advantage to not have the property encumbered by an easements or other restrictions at the time of sale. It may be necessary for us to build additional structures on the property to accommodate increased needs for space relating to environmental programs and perhaps even retail activity. Mrs. Hooper is aware of this and, at the time of this writing, agrees.

A number of important details regarding the property are as yet unresolved, but hopefully additional insight will be available at the time of the board meeting. These include zoning issues (schools are allowed to be erected in an R-1 zone, and we are currently maintaining the posture that we are a "school" as far as zoning regulations are concerned), width of the access driveway (for fire equipment), whether interior space must be sprinklered, whether private water and sewer are adequate, whether additional restrooms will be needed, and other issues of this sort. In order to clarify these issues and to hopefully resolve them, we have engaged (on a retainer basis at less than full fee) the engineering firm of G.W. Stephens and Associates and Mr. John Howard (of Cook, Howard, Downes and Tracey), who we believe to have the most thorough knowledge of Baltimore County zoning regulations.

Our current conversations with Mrs. Hooper and her attorney are based upon the assumption that the sales transaction would take place in this calendar year, but that Mrs. Hooper would have the right to live in the house until her death or an earlier incapacitation which would require her to move elsewhere. This latter is a delicate issue, in that the intention of both parties appears to be synonymous, but the precise definition of incapacitation is difficult to arrive at. Hence, Mrs. Hooper would have a life estate in the property, while we would have ultimate ownership of the building and land.

At the Board meeting, I will be seeking a consensus of the Board and appropriate resolutions which authorize and empower myself (as President of the Board), or another designee of the Board, to enter into a binding purchase option or purchase contract on behalf of the Board. Up to this point in time, Mac Plant, Dick Gibbs, and I have been clear in our discussions with Mrs. Hooper and her attorney that we do not feel we have the authority to commit the Nature Center, but the time has come for the Board to enpower me (or another designee) with such authority. Hence, I urge you to attend the Board meeting.

Finally, with respect to Mrs. Hooper's property, it is clear that if we purchase this property (with Mrs. Hooper having a life estate) before the end of the calendar year, it will be extremely important for us to raise as much capital support as possible in a very short period of time. Just as it is to Mrs. Hooper's advantage to make her "quasi-gift" before December 31, it is equally important for us to approach our major individual donors before the end of the calendar year. To this end, certain members of the board have identified potential large donors and some of these have visited the property. Nonetheless, it will be absolutely essential that all Board members make a concerted effort to raise as much capital money as possible by the end of the year. This will be further discussed at the Board meeting.

Finally, we are attempting to estimate the carrying cost of the property under our ownership. It is our presumption that during Mrs. Hooper's life estate, she will continue to pay all expenses of the property, but upon our occupancy, we will be responsible for all maintenance and operating expenses. Dick Gibbs and Graham

Egerton have spent time developing a budget for the property, which I hope will be available at the time of the Board meeting.

Lake Roland - City of Baltimore

Robert E. Lee is a public park located totally within Baltimore County, but owned by Baltimore City as one of the original watershed parks. Hence, our conversations regarding a temporary (perhaps permanent) usage of the small house near the dam at the southern end of Lake Roland have involved the Director of Parks and Recreation (Chris Delaporte) and his staff, as well as the two leaders of the Friends of Robert E. Lee, which is a very active citizens group concerned with the maintenance and usage of Robert E. Lee.

My very recent letter to Chris Delaport, a copy of which is attached, briefly outlines the status of these conversations/negotiations, and the only things to add regarding this possibility are:

1. The Nature Center staff has assessed the pros and cons of a satellite location at the southern end of Robert E. Lee, and Fred Arnold's report is attached hereto. In general, the staff felt that the immediate environment was ecologically impoverished (because of very heavy passive recreational use), but that the area below the dam offered excellent interpretive possibilities and that the house could be relatively effectively used for environmental programs.

2. As my letter to Chris Delaporte indicates, we are currently thinking in terms of a consortium of environmental groups using the house by the dam as their headquarters and staging area. Irvine would be the tenant of record, however, and we would maintain control with respect to the degree of usage by these other organizations. I personally think that this is an excellent arrangement, in that it allows us to share responsibility for carrying costs of the house with other organizations, it exposes Irvine to a larger public, and it is an important political consideration from Chris Delaporte's point of view.

3. In our conversations with the City of Baltimore, the rental amount has been extremely modest. The City of Baltimore is also cognizant of our need to not make a long-term commitment, as our usage of the house may not ultimately be in our best long-term interest.

4. In terms of the politics involved, Mr. Delaporte will almost certainly end up in Annapolis with Mayor Schaefer, and I hope and trust that Cal Buikema will be his replacement. Both of these individuals are very environmentally aware and are favorably inclined to Irvine. However, as with Mrs. Hooper's property, it is imperative that we make an arrangement with the city of Baltimore during Mr. Delaporte's tenure as Director of Parks and Recreation. Hence, at the Board meeting, I will be seeking the same authority for myself (or another designee) in executing a lease with the City for the "dam house".

Soldier's Delight

Because the above opportunities have had an urgency associated with them, we have focused less on the Soldier's Delight Environmental Area. A number of concerns with respect to Soldier's Delight emerged early in the Long Range Planning Committee discussions, including accessibility, maintaining our current membership and birdseed clientele, difficulty in interpreting a highly specialized

and unique (but somewhat impoverished) ecosystem, and our concerns regarding the support which would be provided by the prospective residents of the New Town of Owings Mills.

However, we have not closed this door, and are still in conversation with the State Department of Natural Resources regarding Soldier's Delight. It should be clearly noted that under the Soldier's Delight scenario, the Nature Center would not own anything except the chairs and tables, and as such, would not have any equity in the arrangement. We would be tenants in a State-Built, State-Owned building located in a State-Owned, State-Managed environmental area.

Our focusing on the Lake Roland possibilities (with diminished attention to the Soldier's Delight opportunity) does not in any way imply that the Soldier's Delight area does not need interpretation. Largely, it is an admission, that at this point in time, the Nature Center is not able in terms of money or staff to do both. This does not preclude the possibility of our providing occasional interpretive programs at Soldier's Delight, nor does it preclude the possibility of our growing to the point where we could have an important permanent presence in both Lake Roland and Soldier's Delight.

St. Timothy's

Galen Brewster has been kept informed of all of the above developments. I believe it is fair to say that the School's posture continues to be that they regard us as an important educational resource for their students and staff, and that we have an important public relations value to the school, but that logistic problems (parking, vehicular traffic, etc.) as well as security concerns (Nature Center visitors on campus) will always be important concerns to the School. The School is well aware of our need to expand, and has done everything it can to accommodate us, but I think that the School feels it cannot give us significantly wider latitudes than are currently in effect.

With respect to Mrs. Dodge, she has been kept totally apprised of all of the above, and she is visiting the center on October 9, (before the Board meeting) when Dick Gibbs will take her to Mrs. Hooper's property for her input and impressions. Mrs. Dodge, as is her nature, is totally understanding of our situation and totally supportive of our efforts to solve our long-term space and program needs.

The above information provides you with the essential information regarding the Long Range Planning Committee's work over the last several months. Because of the urgencies of time, it is extremely important that you attend the board meeting on October 9, and I ask you to RSVP to the Nature Center at 484-2413. In the interim, if you have any questions, please contact Dick Gibbs (484-2413), myself (752-4285 at work, and 583-7510 at home), or Mac Plant (576-4766). Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Robert H. Johnson
President, Board of INSC

IRVINE NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

St. Timothy's School Stevenson, Maryland 21153 (301) 484-2413

October 3, 1986

Chris Delaporte
Director
Department of Recreation and Parks
2600 Madison Street
Baltimore, MD 21217

Dear Chris:

I want to thank you for arranging a meeting with yourself and Cal Buikema, Louise Hildreth and Jane Lawrence (of the Friends of Robert E. Lee), and Dick Gibbs, Mac Plant, and myself (representing the Irvine Natural Science Center).

As a result of that meeting, I am formally indicating the interest of Irvine Natural Science Center in leasing from the City of Baltimore the house near the dam at the southern end of Lake Roland formerly occupied by Dr. Mike Cranfield. Below, I have listed the parameters of the lease as a result of our discussion at the meeting:

1. The lessee would be Irvine Natural Science Center, a non-profit corporation with tax identification number 52-1231286.

2. The term of the lease would be one to three years, as we regard this as an exploratory relationship from our point of view. We will of course, consider a lease period of longer duration, if necessary, but would strongly prefer a short-term lease with a series of renewal options.

3. The lessee would be responsible for utilities (heat, water, electricity, and telephone) associated with the improvements and routine interior maintenance. The lessor would be responsible for maintenance of the exterior shell of the building (roof and painting), as well as grounds maintenance in the immediate vicinity of the building and throughout all of Robert E. Lee Park. In our conversations, you indicated that you currently perform grounds keeping duties in this portion of Robert E. Lee Park on a seven day per week basis, and we hope that this will continue.

4. It was clear in our discussions that Irvine's interest in this structure was two-fold, and I explain them here for the purpose of clarification. First, we have been in important discussions with other environmental organizations in the greater Baltimore area (Save Our Streams, the Chesapeake Audubon Society, etc.), many of whom do not have a home base and who would be interested in sharing this facility with us from an administrative and cost point of view. In other words, we anticipate that these other organizations would share office space, facilities for meetings (including evening meetings), and general administrative support space in the structure.

Secondly, we have an interest in establishing an alternative base of operation for providing programs in environmental education for children and adults of the

greater Baltimore area. We anticipate using the building as a staging area for environmental walks and other interpretive programs, including evening programs.

5. With respect to security, it would be our intention to continue to maintain the building's electronic intrusion system, as well as anticipating that the City of Baltimore and Baltimore County will provide at least current and hopefully increased levels of police visitation in the lower end of Robert E. Lee Park.

6. As indicated above, we anticipate using the house by the dam as a staging area for environmental programs. However, at the same time, we will maintain a presence at our current facility at St. Timothy's school and may in fact use the St. Timothy's facility as our primary base of operation. Nonetheless, we would like to, at the minimum and very quickly, provide some sort of "passive" interpretation of environmental and human history in the southern end of Robert E. Lee Park. We have discussed this with a few of the other conservation groups interested in this opportunity, and they have indicated an enthusiasm for the idea. More specifically, we anticipate producing and installing attractive signage elements which can be introduced into the lower end of Robert E. Lee Park and which will interpret both the environmental history and human history of the immediate area. We would need to fund-raise for this undertaking, as there are no funds in our current budget for this sort of expenditure.

7. With respect to modifications to and capital improvements to the building, we briefly indicated that it may be necessary to make some minor interior modifications to accommodate the anticipated administrative/office/public meeting use of the facility. We recognize that you would not want us to make any modifications which would preclude the building's use as a residence in the future, but I think it is clear that some minor modifications (and perhaps even the addition of a small greenhouse element to the west end of the building in the patio area) might be appropriate. In terms of funding for this, we hope that these modifications would be modest, and that perhaps the City could be of assistance.

8. With respect to staff, you indicated that you currently have a number of recreation leaders who do not have a specific facility assigned to them. Our presence in Robert E. Lee Park may provide an opportunity for you to more fully utilize this staff, while at the same time facilitating our usage of the park. However, I think that you and we are both clear that the primary usage of the lower end of the park should be for passive recreation (eg. fishing, jogging, picnicing), as opposed to active recreation (eg. baseball) and to that end we would hope that a recreation leader sensitive to environmental interpretation and more passive types of recreation might be located and provided additional training by us.

9. With respect to lease payments, we did not address any specific amount, but I think it was clear that both of us were thinking in terms of a very modest rent. I think that the public service and improvements to the Park which our presence and programs would provide are of value to the City and should be taken into consideration in arriving at an appropriate rent for the facility.

I hope that the above points accurately and fairly reflect the content of our discussions the other day. The Irvine Natural Science Center is extremely excited about the possibility of utilizing the house by the dam at the southern end of Robert E. Lee Park, and bringing a structured presence to the Park which will not impinge upon its current passive recreational use, but will increase the importance

of the park to area citizens as an interpretive area as well as a recreational facility. I will keep you informed of progress that we make in discussions with other environmental groups, and anticipate receiving sufficient authority from my board (at a meeting scheduled for October 9) to enter into a lease as has been outlined above.

If any of the above discussion is not reflective of our meeting, please give me a call. Because the city has experience in leasing some of these facilities to other organizations (including non-profit organizations), I suggest that it might be appropriate for you to propose a specific lease document for our consideration. My thinking here is that the City of Baltimore (and the Department of Parks and Recreation) have entered into leases before which address the variety of issues which we may not have discussed, and rather than our trying to "reinvent the wheel", it seems to make sense to use one of your pre-existing leases as a model. Again, if this suggestion is inappropriate, please contact me.

Again, thank you very much for your and Mr. Buikema's time and thought in our meeting the other day.

Sincerely yours,

Robert H. Johnson
President, Board of Directors

Irvine Natural Science Center

cc: Board, INSC
Louise Hildreth
Jane Lawrence

ROBERT E. LEE MEMORIAL PARK

PRO

* Nearby, easy to transfer existing clientele
* County & City help with security
* Old RR a good handicap trail
* Existing structures offer good future for physical plant
* Very good habitat diversity: serpentine, aquatic, woodland
* Service to Baltimore City children
* Strong funding appeal of urban children
* Real need for education
* Strong interest of city & local park support group
* Possible city money for part of building & operations
* Possiblity of RR trail system all the way to Greenspring Valley
* Fairly good location on public roads plus possibility by bus
* Historic land & natural resource use dimension
* Serpentine story to tell

CON

* So close, not an expanded member clentele
* High use park with associated problems
* RR limiting as trail complex
* Possible on-site split Hooper/ Robert E. Lee awkward
* Most of best habitat accessed best from Hooper property
* New skills and approaches needed for volunteers to learn
* Impending controversy over lake dredging
* Politics of city support in future
* Existing buildings may be energy expensive

ST. TIMOTHY'S SCHOOL

PRO

* Established identity
* Established clientele
* Help with security
* Existing trail system
* Co-operative relationship established
* Site easily accessed from Beltway, etc.
* Habitat diversity good
* Existing buildings support current level of operations well with minor modifications
* St. Timothy's offers much additional resources e.g. pool, HMAC, etc.
* Special significance for Mrs. Dodge
* Good site to show landowners what can be done

CON

* Exclusive image
* Limited access for public
* Security a hot issue
* Trails network limited
* Terrain not handicapped accessable
* Co-operation in state of flux, needs attention
* Proximate acreage small
* Limits on building space
* No public transportation access to speak of

SOLDIER'S DELIGHT

PRO

* Distant enough to draw new member base
* Natural area of regional significance which needs interpretation for preservation
* Strong state interest & support
* Possible state monies for building & maintainance support
* Assistance from state on security
* Local building boom will build large constituency, public to serve
* Enormous trail web possible for school visits
* Taps INSC into a Nature Center very likely to occur anyhow
* Adjacent to enormous undeveloped areas -- Liberty Res. & Patapsco, potential longer trails
* Possiblity for some public transportation access
* Historic land use & natural resource use dimension
* Serpentine story to tell
* New building could be energy efficient

CON

* Problem of transferring loyalty of old members
* Habitat diversity spread over large area
* Some future administration/political continuity problems possible
* Citizen group a potential headache
* History of site abuse -- trash, cycles, etc.
* Desert-like summer conditions for much of area
* Much training necessary for volunteers
* Area untypical of normal home owner's landscape issues
* Distance from other 2 possible sites may create logistics problems
* Not as fundable as site which will serve urban children

IRVINE NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

St. Timothy's School Stevenson, Maryland 21153 (301) 484-2413

APPRAISAL OF ROBERT E. LEE PARK

I was asked to analyze the pros and cons of the Irvine Center becoming a presence in the house in Robert E. Lee Park. In discussing the issue with Pat Cornman and Rob Mardiney, and in examining the house with Graham Egerton and Barbara Ross, the following points were brought forth:

PRO	CON
Public awareness increased	Abused habitat--little "natural" area
Local citizens' loyalty earned--funding potential	Intensively managed lawns, few native plants, etc.
More physical space--indoor and out	High recreational use suggests some conflict
Adds a human-disturbed habitat to interpret	Not very attractive entrance
Great potential to improve that habitat and teach about improvements	Staff demands heavy if in several locations
Demo possibilities of various landscaping, e.g. for birds, with native plants	Existing rooms fairly small for groups
Staff housing potential	Sales operation separate from other functions--a potential security problem
Intern housing potential	Security and safety (at dam and RR tracks) an issue
New public to reach	No seed storage space
Rest rooms, picnic facilities and parking for large groups already exists	Current house landscaping not appropriate
Recycling and clean-up programs	Money invested in changes by City connotes an obligation on our part to long term presence

PRO	CON
Costs minimal--building without rent	Children often already familiar with area, novelty factor minimal
Brownie points with city park and recreational personnel	
Close to current location	
Community service if exhibits available on high use weekends	

While examining the house itself, we determined the room sizes to be approximately:

13' x 11' =	kitchen
18' x 12' =	living room
11' x 12' =	dining room
11' x 13' =	2 bedrooms
10' x 10' =	bedroom
20' x 12' =	basement clubroom

The house is in generally good repair, needing mainly just repainting. Removal of the walls dividing kitchen, living, and dining rooms would make possible a fair sized exhibit area.

The house is not that close to good quality natural area and so would not contribute much to program which has been our major emphasis to date. Most natural areas of interest are across the railroad. It would add to our casual contact with a large public through exhibits, indoor and/or outdoor. If the city could provide most of the security and maintenance and perhaps other staff, Robert E. Lee might be a viable portion of the Center's presence in the Lake Roland area.

Fred C. Arnold