

**September 26, 2018 Meeting
Medal of Honor Museum Status
Town of Mount Pleasant
100 Ann Edwards Lane
Mount Pleasant, SC 29464
1:30 p.m.**

Attendees:

**Will Haynie, Mayor - Town of Mount Pleasant
General James Livingston, Medal of Honor Recipient
Susan Marlowe, Senator Leatherman's Designee - Senate Finance Committee
Tommy McQueeney, Chairman – Medal of Honor Bowl
Joseph Daniels, Chief Executive Officer – National Medal of Honor Museum
Alex Rhue, Chief of Staff – National Medal of Honor Museum
Dennis Irvine, Project Director – National Medal of Honor Museum**

Mayor Haynie opened the meeting by stating that the Town's desire to have the Medal of Honor Museum has never wavered, and he invited Mr. Daniels and his staff to give an update on where things stand currently.

Mr. Daniels said there were several factors that brought them together to consider relocating the museum. He spoke to Medal of Honor Recipients in Annapolis while at the Medal of Honor Convention, including the newer board members. There is a direct correlation between the number of visitors and the size of the impact. He said Mount Pleasant is beautiful, but there is a conflict in the maximum number of total visitors and the market. A study projected 280 to 350K visitors annually for the Medal of Honor Museum at Patriots Point. Mr. Daniels said he and the newer board members came in believing Mount Pleasant was where the museum was going to be built. While at the convention, he was able to spend some one-on-one time with some of the Recipients and there was a combination of apathy and wariness of the project because there had been no progress in six years. He questioned why it was taking so long, but the bigger question asked is why the museum was to be built in Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Daniels said there have been a lot of emotions stirred up recently, but they are not considering moving the museum because of the debate on the architecture. He stated he was surprised that when the Patriots Point Development Authority met on Friday, September 21, they did not sign off on the contract, however the Museum Board met on Thursday, September 20 and authorized Staff to produce a report on whether or not to pursue a national search to relocate. Mr. Daniels said the number one reason they decided to evaluate relocation is to create a museum that impacts as many Americans as possible, and in doing so, the nation as well.

Mr. Daniels said in mid-October, the Board will vote on if it is worth undertaking a national, targeted search which would involve multiple cities. If they decide to search for another location, they would hope to make the decision by next year. He said there would be criteria which would include such things as population, market size, cultural mindset, land availability, location, and military affiliation. He said Mount Pleasant would be invited to participate if there is a desire to do so. Mr. Daniels said the goal is to find a place that gives them the best chance to reach as many people as possible.

In reference to a question about the current contract, Mr. Daniels said the contract is between PPDA, the Medal of Honor Foundation and the Medal of Honor Society. He said they would never bluff about leaving at this point, and would not have gone public with their potential decision to look at other locations if they did not think they could unwind the legal obligations.

Mayor Haynie asked about the \$5M. Mr. Daniels said they cannot keep it, so they have that money segregated. He said if Mount Pleasant wants to be considered, there will be some criteria that will not be met such as the market, but positive aspects such as the cultural mindset being perfect. If for instance Charleston is chosen as the new location, the state may say they can keep the \$5M.

Ms. Marlowe asked who Mr. Daniels has spoken to at the State Regulatory Commission, and Mr. Daniels said they would make sure state officials are aware of it.

Ms. Marlow asked to whom he had or would be speaking. Mr. Daniels said their Lobbyist had been speaking to state officials such as Joe Wilson. The desire is to bring a museum that would have a huge economic impact and the state officials will not be surprised as they have been frustrated by the outcome of six years of work and no results.

General Livingston said the project has met with a headwind. Part of that is due to recent actions. He asked what Mr. Daniels thought people would conclude, stating most of this has been emotionally driven and there has been a lack of information, even to Council. He said the whole idea of the recent actions has been to stir up emotions and the Mayor should have been approached. He said this can be unwound with a different format. There have been Board issues for a long time, and this headwind has been self-created.

Mr. Daniels said that is not what has been done. He noted as an example the tourist population of the New Orleans museum is 2M, compared to a maximum of 350K if the museum is located in Mount Pleasant.

General Livingston said 80% of the people that go to New Orleans go to visit Bourbon Street and it is not the same patriotic atmosphere. He is not aware of the Society leadership supporting a move. If you talk to anyone and give it this spin, if that is all the information they have, they certain will react to that information and support it.

Mr. Daniels said after six years of failure, one logical answer is to try somewhere else.

General Livingston said he does not know what is creating this notion of failure. The Town is putting up \$1M for the road, and the museum is being given a prime piece of real estate, which if a true rental rate were charged would put the museum down another \$10M. He said there has been drama surrounding this project for a number of years but he was the one that came up with this idea and worked hard to push it through. He has never heard of anyone in the community say they do not want this museum. General Livingston said it was bothersome to him that this popped up so suddenly and Mr. Daniels should have manned-up and discussed this with the Mayor.

Mr. Daniels said Mayor Haynie and Ms. Marlow should have had the decency to say they would not be voting in favor.

General Livingston said the PPDA was given a 147 page document and did not have a chance to look at it before they voted which is why it was voted down.

Mr. Daniels said they voted no because of the design.

General Livingston said their responsibility is to look at the engineering piece of the document and could have voted in favor had they been given more time. He said the question now is how we can push through the negative. This community has been good to the Medal of Honor. The convention was held here a few years ago and the attendees loved it – the Town was welcoming and patriotic.

Mr. Daniels said again there has been no progress in six years.

General Livingston told Mr. Daniels not to fault this community or the state. Mr. Daniels said there are many factors, but the desire is to have the greatest impact on the greatest number of people. Mr. Daniels said last Thursday the Board directed staff to produce a report on whether or not to engage in a national search and present it mid-October. If the Board authorizes the search, it will be about the ability to reach the most people. Mr. Daniels said when he went to the convention, the new Board members asked if there is a place where millions, not thousands could be reached.

General Livingston asked how many of the new Board members had ever been to Mount Pleasant and Mr. Daniels responded he did not think any of them had ever visited. They want the team to confirm that there are other potential locations that want the museum.

General Livingston said we should have been told before this went in the newspaper. He stated the community and state have been falsely blamed for the actions of a poor board.

Mayor Haynie said he did not make any comments on this because he did not want to say anything that would hurt. This is unfolding as if Mount Pleasant doesn't like the architect and so the museum must go elsewhere.

Mr. Daniels said there is a Council Member that is constantly putting monumental, scary pictures of other designs by Mr. Safdie which has created genuine animosity. It is frustrating because Mr. Safdie is a human being and is trying to do the right thing. Mr. Daniels said he inherited the architect and design which were chosen by someone else. He understands that maybe the architecture would fit better elsewhere. If the museum leaves, it would be unethical for them to go out in a negative sense.

Mayor Haynie said this town has had many recent accolades, including being awarded the All-America City Award and being listed in Money Magazine as one of The Best Places to Live in 2018.

Mr. Daniels said the Town is doing a great job dealing with development and growth with the exploding population. He feels that the museum is getting caught up in the history and fears of big structures.

Mayor Haynie asked if there was a set meeting for the Board to decide on whether or not to proceed with a location search.

Ms. Rhue stated it would probably be the week of Columbus Day and Mr. Daniels said possibly October 9.

General Livingston asked what would be communicated to the Society about this. He stated the steering committee's job is to look at the contents and not the design, and they recognize the museum design may not fit.

Mr. Daniels said he understands, and when he sat out on Shem Creek early in the evening and saw all the shrimp boats lined up, it is beautiful. It is not unreasonable to think a hypermodern structure would not fit.

Mayor Haynie said the Town has had the same argument about other things such as digital billboards. (Mr. McQueeney entered at 2:09 p.m.)

Mr. Daniels said the museum is not wrong for wanting a national building, and the Town is not wrong for wanting it to fit with local architecture. He stated if the search is approved, they will not disparage the Town.

Mayor Haynie asked Mr. Daniels to confirm that he did not intend to push the plans to the Planning Commission and Mr. Daniels responded that was correct.

Mayor Haynie asked Mr. Daniels if he planned to take that design to other possible locations and Mr. Daniels said the modern design might fit with other potential locations such as Washington, DC.

Mr. McQueeney asked if it was possible to have a re-bidding where we might come back and say that we want the museum and will construct the building.

Mr. Daniels said the Town deserves to be on the short list if they desire, but there will be criteria.

General Livingston questioned if the number of people expecting to tour the museum annually was truly the reason for the search and Mr. Daniels said even though the timing seems odd, the Board did meet the Thursday before the PPDA Board. If they raise the \$120M, they need to impact the most Americans and thus the country, as possible.

General Livingston asked when they would present this to the Medal of Honor Society Board.

Mr. Daniels said they would figure that out and the Recipients want it done. They will take the lead from the steering committee. He has been able to establish relationships with some of these Recipients. They would like to find a city that could make this museum happen on a large scale.

Mr. McQueeney said he thought the fundraising part was workable, even with the compressed timeframe. Raising \$120M does not sound like much when you look at partners such as Boeing, but to try and do it through private donations \$100 at a time is a scary thought.

Mr. Daniels said the biggest hurdle is the market size. 350K visitors as opposed to 2M is a large gap. That is where the new board members are - the number of visitors affects the overall impact.

General Livingston asked for the names of some of the cities.

Mr. Daniels said it would be based on market size, for instance places like Washington, DC, Dallas, Atlanta, New York. He said there are many ways the Town of Mount Pleasant is perfect, but it is not a 15-20M visitor market, it is much smaller.

Ms. Marlowe asked if the Board moved toward searching for other locations, at what point would the contractual obligations start to be unwound.

Mr. Daniels said the only obligations were with the PPDA and the Medal of Honor Society. Ms. Marlowe said the state is also involved.

Mr. Daniels stated that is through PPDA. If the society and the Medal of Honor Foundation decide amicably this is not the place and return the money with interest, he does not think the state would say the museum could not be built.

General Livingston asked about the money given by the smaller donors. Mr. Daniels said they are having their attorneys look at that and believe that most of the money was likely given to be used no matter where the museum was built.

Ms. Marlowe asked for the timeline and if Mr. Daniels would talk to the Senators. She stated everyone on PPDA is a designee by a state official.

Mr. Daniels said he has let the Chairman of PPDA know. Ms. Marlow asked if he would not speak to the state officials. Mr. Daniels said he would speak through PPDA.

Ms. Marlow said the \$5M was not given to the museum by the PPDA. She asked how he intended to unwind this situation as there are many parts to this contract.

Mr. Daniels said he was certain the state would take a check, and there are not really many parts to the contract. The museum potentially leaving is not about disparaging the Town or the state, it is about the mission. It is sad because the community has been great. The museum has a fiduciary responsibility to find a place with maximum tourism exposure.

Ms. Marlowe said she is not here as a PPDA Board member, but as Senator Leatherman's designee, and he is the one asking these questions.

Mr. Daniels said there has been six years of no progress, and now he is getting calls when the decision to look elsewhere is being contemplated. He said he believes when the Board meets, they will authorize a targeted search.

Mr. McQueeney asked if an RFQ would be released. Mr. Daniels said it was likely, but not nearly as burdensome.

Mr. McQueeney said in the RFQ you could state that you are looking for a 120K square foot building. He said some communities will want to build, and others will need the museum to raise money to build it. He said he thought it would be beneficial for us to bid on this and construct the building.

Mr. Daniels said it would be hard to say to everyone that we are going to take a fresh look at this and allow for other ideas. Mount Pleasant has a lot to offer with location and military mindset, which are strong points.

Mayor Haynie asked if Mr. Daniels wanted to put out a statement about this meeting. Mr. Daniels said this is complicated. In both cases, people are supportive of positions and have

gotten aggressive. He suggested waiting 12 hours and then deciding on a statement. He is in one hundred percent agreement that if this does not work out, there is no reason to be divisive about it.

Mr. McQueeney said a positive communication needs to be released that all are working for the best possible solution.

General Livingston reiterated that the reason for the national search must be clear that there is no fault with the community or state, and it is about market size.

Mayor Haynie said if we get put on the defensive, then all the mis-steps will be cited and that will not be good.

Mr. Daniels stated there have been those on the Board that have made some questionable decisions. He said something should be released tomorrow.

General Livingston said it is critical the announcement include the reason for the meeting. No finger pointing, and it must be positive. There will be some strong questions that need to be answered and he is disappointed not to be able to help with a new option.

Mayor Haynie said there needs to be cohesion with the message.

Mr. Daniels said this was never about having the museum, but about how it fits in the community. He stated this was a good meeting.

General Livingston said the reason the museum is moving will automatically discount Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Daniels said that is only one part of the criteria.

Mr. McQueeney said it will have to be initiated by the Medal of Honor Society to go forward. It may be that Mount Pleasant will be willing to construct a building and Dallas will not.

Mayor Haynie thanked everyone for attending.