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An Open Letter to the Board of Directors

Dear Members of the Board,

I hope you all are well. Dismayed as I was to see the recent October 3 letter communicating the Board's decision to sell the Red Hook and Clinton Camps, I am heartened that the Board has announced a six month moratorium on their sale. This period will allow further clarification of the situation and hopefully allow the creation of alternatives. No one wants to lose the original CRS camp—its meaning and relation to decades of campers forms a visceral connection to both a place and a tradition. This also stands for our sister Camp at Clinton as the culmination and fruition of a powerful idea in another place. Planning for CRS's future has taken a colossal amount of love and commitment and I honor the work of this board and previous ones. Echoing Chris Varrone's Letter to the Board, nothing tells me that we don't have what it takes to find a solution with consensus and openness.

I am an architect living in San Francisco and I have worked in the public sector for a good part of my career. I can say that I am quite familiar the challenges that institutions face when facilities need repair and renovation—I would know just what a busted Willy needs. Having worked on school modernization projects for the public schools of San Francisco and Marin County, I am well aware of the perils of the deferred maintenance and "patch and pray" solutions. In reviewing the Boards' statement "The Vision: A Sustainable Future for Rising Sun" several questions arise which call for more clarification and due diligence. Since all four scenarios present facility expenses, a further examination of underlying assumptions would be in line. These questions would be typical for any architect when contemplating renovation of existing facilities. I am certain you can help in throwing light on them.

1. In "The Vision" point 5 states: "Cost for Capital expenditures are based on estimates for repairs, renovations and construction." Can the Board share this information of estimates? Is there a current report available that outlines a breakdown of work needed; in what facility and a rough order of magnitude of cost?

2. In all Scenarios, who provided information that led to the estimate of capital expenditures? Were third party (contractors, engineers, architects) assessments engaged? Can we contact them for discussion? Is the basis of this figure the 2007 Red Hook Renovation report?
3. On the basis of the noted “deferred maintenance” costs for both camps Scenario 2 & 3, has there been a strategy to address and triage the most costly repairs? What was the breakdown of these stated costs? If there is a breakdown, who prepared it?
4. Is there a schedule identifying deferred maintenance and repairs projected into the future with cash flow necessary?
5. Concerning a possible new camp location and facility, Scenario 1: What studies and estimates have been done concerning possible “start-up” expenses? (Rough order of magnitude).
6. If a current assessment by building professionals is lacking, several alumni and I would like to propose **a new assessment by a third party team** of building professionals, engineers, architects etc. A critical part of this team would be a general contractor to advise us on current cost and investigate key areas (e.g. Old House; Willy; Ki-Boan etc.) **Would the Board commit to this course of action to create an objective baseline for further decisions about CRS?**

Such a report would give us standard engineering assessment report on the state of the property. The report would need to have some sort of financial analysis by someone who is familiar with camp’s expenses. This part of the report would also consider a time-line for renovations; and possible phasing of projects to align with financials to make sure that the renovations do not eat in into operating costs. This analysis would allow us to weight the work e.g.:

- A items = code violation, safety issue, priority repairs
- B items = diminishing overall camper experience
- C items = "nice to have"—a wish list (Hot tubs!)

Finally, thank you for your time and effort in addressing these questions and clarifying the issues. I look forward to receiving their answers. I would be happy to play any part in helping this process along: reviewing the report, helping brainstorm ideas, or helping moderate a path forward. I think we can all engage in a consensus process that unleashes many ideas and alternatives both from the Board of Directors and Alumni toward an unswerving goal: the continued flourishing of CRS.

All the best,

Jay A. Manzo, '83-'84 Camper, Architect, AIA, LEED BD+C; Native Brooklynite; California transplant.