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July 30, 2020

Town Council
Town of Palm Beach
Post Office Box 2029
Palm Beach, FL 33480

Dear Mayor Coniglio, Council President Zeidman, and Town Council Members:

The first schoolhouse in Dade County was a one-room frame vernacular structure built near Bradley Park in 1886. In 1901, the County abandoned the schoolhouse and it became a toolshed on the John S. Phipps property. During an extension of North Lake Way in 1960, the schoolhouse was relocated to Phipps Ocean Park. The building sat vacant and unused until 1990 when the Preservation Foundation of Palm Beach signed a 99-year-lease with the Town to operate a living history program at the schoolhouse. Over 4,000 students from Palm Beach, Martin, and Broward counties participate in the program each year to experience a school day as it was in 1886.

Through the operation and maintenance of the schoolhouse over the last 30 years, the Preservation Foundation is keenly aware of the conditions at Phipps Ocean Park and its great potential to be more town-serving. The space is currently underutilized and its appearance unrepresentative of Palm Beach. There is a myriad of opportunities to enhance the park to better depict the whole cultural landscape and provide education around those features. Undoubtedly, investment in Phipps Ocean Park will improve the quality of life for residents of the town. One only need to refer to the great success of the nearby Par 3 project to understand the transformative nature of reinvestment in recreational areas.

The Preservation Foundation has been in conversations with Deputy Town Manager Jay Boodheshwar regarding a phased master plan for Phipps Ocean Park, which the Foundation would like to underwrite. In keeping with our efforts to provide education on the necessity of increasing the number of native plants on the island, we are proposing a 100% native landscape designed by the renowned landscape architect Raymond Jungles. This master plan would be developed in concert with Town staff and include community engagement sessions. The Foundation would donate the survey and master plan, estimated to cost \$140,000, and commit to fundraising for the completion of Phase 1. Timelines for future phases would be determined at a later date.

We request the opportunity to present this town-serving project to the Town Council for feedback and seek approval to work with Town staff to develop a phased master plan for Phipps Ocean Park.

Sincerely,

Amanda H. Skier
Executive Director