



*Friends of the Norwalk Museums, Inc.*  
P. O. Box 2085 · Norwalk, CT 06852

June 27, 2007

To The Norwalk Historical Commission:

The City of Norwalk maintains the Norwalk Museum (the “Museum”) for the benefit of its citizens. That museum consists of a collection (the “Collection”) and a leasehold of space for the exhibition and storage of the Collection. Aside from commitments made to the Lockwood Family upon acceptance of the original gift comprising the Collection, the City has had to pay nothing additional for 34 years of staffing, fundraising, daily operation and Collection acquisitions at the Museum.

Since our formation as a tax-exempt not-for-profit corporation in April of 1973 (seven months before the Museum opened and two years before the Norwalk Historical Commission was created), and the subsequent Common Council approval of our affiliation with and fundraising for the Museum, the Friends have played a central and ongoing role in the Museum’s existence. From the initial concept and its implementation, to the renovation of and relocation to the former City Hall, the Friends have funded, staffed and programmed the daily operations of the Museum. Working transparently with the City and providing well over \$500,000.00 and tens of thousands of volunteer hours the Friends have received no City money and have never charged admission to the public.

In an effort to provide for the stabilization and future growth of the Museum, we propose that the existing successful working relationship between the Friends and the City be formalized. The not-for-profit groups formed to support and operate the Lockwood Mathews Mansion Museum and the Mill Hill Historical Complex have their respective agreements, so too should the Friends at the Museum.

The following page sets forth the essential elements we believe should be contained in such an agreement. The responsibilities listed would be nothing new for the Friends but a continuation of our activities on behalf of the Museum for over three decades.

The Board of Directors

## **Proposal for a Norwalk Museum Operating Agreement**

As the City's Museum lease prohibits subletting, the understanding would be in the form of an operating agreement codifying what is already in place.

1. The City shall continue to house the Collection and to pay for the current leasehold.
2. The Friends shall be responsible for and shall continue to perform all operations necessary, related and usual in the operation of a museum, including but not limited to: fundraising, staffing, volunteers, opening and closing, emergency response, programming, inventory and care of the Collection, mounting exhibitions, developing and maintaining the Norwalk Historical Reference Library, applying for grants, publishing, promotion, training and supervision of volunteers and interns, web site content and maintenance, and hosting events for other not for profit corporations and community groups at the Museum.
3. The Friends shall continue to notify and obtain authorization from the Norwalk Historical Commission concerning accession, de-accession or loan of any Collection materials.
4. The Friends shall continue to maintain liability insurance coverage for their members and volunteers, and for functions hosted by the Friends at the Museum. This shall not be construed as a requirement to insure items in the Collection, for which the City is self-insured.