

THE CITY OF NEW YORK  
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:** April 14, 2021

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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES NEW APPOINTMENTS TO TRUST FOR  
GOVERNORS ISLAND BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced the appointments of Donnel Baird, Alice Blank, Lisa Garcia, Grace Lee, Michael Oppenheimer and Matthew Washington to the Trust for Governors Island board of directors. With leadership in green tech, climate science, environmental justice, architecture, business, government and advocacy, the appointments announced today will bring years of experience to oversee the Trust’s activities in the planning, operations and ongoing development of Governors Island.

The Trust for Governors Island’s 17-member board provides strategic oversight, reviews and approves operating and capital budgets, authorizes leases on Governors Island, and approves significant contracts.

“The Trust for Governors Island does extraordinary work to maintain and improve an iconic open space in this city. These new expert voices will further that work and keep the island a vibrant, accessible, and enjoyable destination for generations of New Yorkers to come,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**.

“As Governors Island continues its work in creating a world-class climate hub, it’s so important that it has board leadership to help achieve this goal,” said **Deputy Mayor Vicki Been**. “Donnel, Lisa and Michael are leading voices in climate and environmental fields, and their expertise—along with the experience in architecture, advocacy and government that Alice, Grace and Matthew bring—will be critical to moving the Island towards its next, exciting phase.”

“These six new board members bring a deep bench of experience and we’re honored to have their leadership as we embark on an exciting moment for Governors Island,” said **Clare Newman, President and CEO of the Trust for Governors Island**. “With strong ties to the New York City community and vital expertise in civic, parks and environmental stewardship, we’re thrilled to partner with our board in realizing Governors Island’s potential as a recreational and cultural resource, and its growing use as a center for climate solutions.”

This month, Mayor de Blasio and the Trust announced Governors Island will reopen the public on May 1<sup>st</sup>, returning to its pre-pandemic season calendar. In addition to daily Manhattan ferry service, for the first time Governors Island ferries will serve two Brooklyn locations for weekend service at Pier 6 in Brooklyn Bridge Park and Atlantic Basin in Red Hook, allowing easy access to the Island for a wider range of Brooklyn residents. For more information, go to [www.govisland.org](http://www.govisland.org).

## **About today's appointments:**

### **Donnel Baird**

Donnel Baird is the founder of BlocPower, a clean tech startup based in New York City. BlocPower develops portfolios of clean energy retrofit opportunities in underserved communities, and connects those opportunities to investors seeking social, environmental, and financial returns. BlocPower creates jobs for qualified local low-income workers, energy savings for community institutions, reduces carbon emissions, and provides returns to investors. BlocPower is backed by Kapur Capital, Andreessen Horowitz, Eric and Wendy Schmidt, the American Family Institute for social and environmental impact, and Salesforce. Baird is a graduate of Duke University and Columbia Business School, where he was a recipient of the Board of Overseers Fellowship and a recipient of investment from the Lang Fund for Entrepreneurial Initiatives. He spent four years as a political and community organizer, and more than two years managing a national initiative to leverage American Reinvestment and Recovery Act energy efficiency investments in underserved communities. Baird lives in his native borough of Brooklyn with his wife and son.

### **Alice Blank**

Alice Blank is the principal of Alice Blank, Architect, an architectural and design studio carrying out innovative residential and commercial projects in the metropolitan region since 1995. Prior to establishing her firm, she worked as an architect and as an urban planner in Cairo, Egypt and in Neuchatel, Switzerland. Alice has taught architecture, landscape architecture and urban planning at Hunter College, the University of Pennsylvania, and the Catholic University of America, and led several international public design competitions including Ideas Afloat – a series of competitions and events that generate development strategies for the 42 islands comprising the archipelago of New York City. She is the Vice Chair of Manhattan Community Board 1 and the Chair of the Board's Environmental Protection Committee where she helps address critical land use issues in the City. Alice also serves as a Member of the Board of The City Club of New York and involved with preservation and environmental groups.

Alice Blank will serve on the Trust's Board of Directors as a representative of Manhattan Community Board 1.

### **Lisa Garcia**

Lisa Garcia is the Director of Fix, the climate solutions lab from Grist.org — a national nonprofit media organization dedicated to telling stories of climate solutions and a more just future. Garcia was brought on to help develop and run Fix, a new program that combines storytelling, events and network-building focused on climate justice. Fix identifies and lifts up a diverse array of leaders developing solutions to environmental and social-justice challenges and brings them together to break down silos, develop new collaborations, and accelerate solutions to climate change.

In 2009, Garcia joined the Obama administration to lead the Environmental Protection Agency's environmental-justice work, serving as both an associate administrator and advisor to EPA administrators, Lisa P. Jackson, and Gina McCarthy. Garcia helped create and implement Plan EJ 2014, a roadmap for weaving environmental justice into all of the EPA's work, and was the

principal drafter of President Obama's 2014 proclamation on Environmental Justice. She also led the federal Environmental Justice Interagency Workgroup, collaborating with other agencies across the U.S. government to address some of the country's most persistent environmental challenges.

Before joining Fix, Garcia was at the nonprofit public-interest law organization Earthjustice, where, as vice president, she led high-impact litigation work designed to protect communities and families from toxic pesticides, refinery and factory pollution, chemical dumping, and unsustainable industrial development. She also spearheaded an effort to build diverse partnerships and coalitions.

Garcia lives in Brooklyn along with her family and pet turtle, Ziggy.

### **Grace Lee**

Grace is a Lower Manhattan resident, a mother of three children, a small business owner and a community activist. She is the co-founder of Children First, a parent-led activist group fighting for the safe cleanup of a toxic site located in the South Street Seaport affecting thousands of children and residents in the district. Prior to Children First, she was the New York events director for Swing Left, a progressive political group that helped Democrats take back the House following the election of Donald Trump. She is also the co-founder of Nine Naturals, a toxin-free beauty line for pregnant and new moms. Prior to her political and community work, Grace was a Vice President and equity analyst covering the financial sector. Grace also serves on the Board of Trustees for the Battery Conservancy.

Grace Lee will serve on the Trust's Board of Directors as a representative of New York City Councilmember Margaret Chin.

### **Michael Oppenheimer**

Michael Oppenheimer is the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Geosciences and International Affairs in the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs (SPIA), the Department of Geosciences, and the High Meadows Environmental Institute at Princeton University. He is the Director of the Center for Policy Research on Energy and the Environment (C-PREE) at SPIA and Faculty Associate of the Atmospheric and Ocean Sciences Program and the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies.

Oppenheimer joined the Princeton faculty after more than two decades with The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF), a non-governmental, environmental organization, where he served as chief scientist and manager of the Climate and Air Program. He continues to serve as a science advisor to EDF.

Oppenheimer is a long-time participant in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) that won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007, most recently serving as a Coordinating Lead Author on IPCC's Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (2019) and as a Review Editor on the upcoming Sixth Assessment Report. Oppenheimer served previously as a member of several panels of the National Academy of Sciences as well as the National Academies' Board on Energy and Environmental Studies and the New York City Panel on

Climate Change, providing technical advice to the City. He is also a winner of the 2010 Heinz Award and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Oppenheimer is co-editor-in-chief of interdisciplinary scientific journal, Climatic Change.

Prior to his position at The Environmental Defense Fund, Dr. Oppenheimer served as Atomic and Molecular Astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics and Lecturer on Astronomy at Harvard University. He received an S.B. in chemistry from M.I.T., a Ph.D. in chemical physics from the University of Chicago and pursued post-doctoral research at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

**Matthew S. Washington**

Matthew S. Washington is a Deputy Manhattan Borough President where he oversees the distribution of over \$130 million in capital funding to enhance parks, theaters, hospitals, museums, affordable housing developments, community centers and public schools. Previously, Matthew served as Deputy Director of External Affairs at The Durst Organization where he managed public affairs for new development in Queens and other projects, including New York Water Taxi. He has also served in a diverse background in non-profit management as the Executive Director of Friends of the High School for Environmental Studies and as Deputy Director of Friends of Hudson River Park.

Matthew Washington will serve on the Trust's Board of Directors as a representative of Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer.

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