

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HIGHER EDUCATION & ENERGY COMMITTEE
LABOR, HOUSING & CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE**

OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

VERBATIM MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committee and the Labor, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on May 17, 2011 to discuss the matter of the Capital Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Jon Cooper, Chairman of Labor, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. Steven H. Stern, Vice Chair of Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committee
Leg. Thomas Cilmi, member of Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committee and member of Labor, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. Ricardo Montano, member of Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committee and member of Labor, Housing & Consumer Protection Committee
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, member of Economic Development, Higher Education & Energy Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. William J. Lindsay, Presiding Officer
Leg. DuWayne Gregory, Fifteenth Legislative District
Leg. Thomas Muratore, Fourth Legislative District
Leg. Kate M. Browning, Third Legislative District
Leg. Edward P. Romaine, First Legislative District
Vito A. Minei, Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SC
Vicky Fleming, Director 4-H Youth Development/Farm Director
Emerson Hasbrouck, Director of Marine Program
Christopher Colahan, Director Peconic Dunes, 4-H Camp
Eric A. Kopp, County Executive's Office
Tom Vaughn, Aide to County Executive
Brendan Chamberlain, Aide to County Executive
George Gatta, Executive Vice President, Suffolk County Community College
Nathaniel Raffloer, Student Government President, Suffolk County Community College
Yves Michelle, Commissioner of Economic Development and Workforce Housing
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Lynne C. Nowick
Chris DeLuca, Aide to Leg. Cilmi
Lora Gellerstein, Aide to Leg. Cooper
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano
Rick Brand, Newsday

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:05 PM

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Good afternoon everyone. I would like to welcome you all to the Capital Budget joint public hearing for the Labor, Affordable Housing and Consumer Protection Committee and the Economic Development, Energy and Education Committee. Legislator Horsley, Chair of EEE is on his way and will be here shortly. Legislator Gregory, if you can lead us in Pledge, please.

SALUTATION

Thank you very much. Shortly we'll be having a presentation by Cornell Cooperative Extension. But first we have a couple of speakers who have signed up. First up is George Gatta. Good afternoon, George.

PUBLIC PORTION

MR. GATTA:

Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to address the joint committees. I've got several documents that I'd like to provide you with today that will help explain the College's Capital Budget request. But first let me thank the committee -- the joint committees and the entire Legislature for their ongoing and continued support of the College both through its Operating Budget and our Capital Projects. And we've made some great progress over the past few years with your support.

The first document I'd like to review with you is a summary of the College's current budget requests. The first three projects that you you'll see there, Learning Resource Center at the Grant Campus, the Health and Fitness Facility at the Eastern Campus and renovations to the Sagtikos Building at Grant were all discontinued in the proposed Capital Plan and Budget that was forwarded to you by the County Executive.

To begin with, the Learning Resource Center at Grant, of particular note in addition to the tremendous need for the facility and the fact that we've been cited numerous times by the Middle States Commission for our lack of adequate library and learning resource center space, enrollment there has grown 71% between 2000 and the current year. We've grown to approximately 9600 students at the Grant Campus.

In addition to that the design funding for the facility was appropriated in 2010. And we are currently through the programming phase and we've received qualifications from a goodly number of architects and engineers who will be making proposals for the design of the building very shortly. We've received those packages just this past week. We have the state commitment for the project 15.4 million. And if the project is discontinued, we would -- going forward forfeit, lose that 15.4 million in state aid.

The second project, the Health and Fitness Facility at Eastern, again, is discontinued. Also of note, enrollment on that campus has grown 76% since 2000. Currently we're up to about 3900 students. There are no athletic facilities there. We've had to make-do with outdoor athletic exercises, hiking; but no organized -- there's no athletics, there's no phys ed in an indoor space. We also have state funding in place for that; 8.375 million matching state dollars.

The third is the renovations to the Sagtikos Building at Grant. Those renovations will be needed as we proceed with the construction of the Learning Resource Center; again, the design funding's already been put forward for the Learning Resource Center. But as we vacate that space in Sagtikos to move into the Learning Resource Center, we will need to renovate that space. It will provide additional space for student services, for counseling, for testing, for advising, for all the

support functions that are needed and are understaffed -- not understaffed -- we have lack of space on that campus in that area. Again, we have state funding in place for that, a little over \$3 million.

So those three projects, if not continued in the Capital Program, we would risk losing state funds.

I'm also pleased to note that the Budget Review Office has agreed with the College's request in their report which we received last week, and we thank them for their analysis and recommendation on that.

The fourth project on the list is a situation that's developed at the Ammerman Campus. Again, over the past six or seven years as enrollment there has grown, not by 71% but slightly less to approximately 26,000 -- excuse me -- approximately 15,000 students, slightly under that 14,900 students last fall, we only have 3700 parking spaces. We've looked at a number of alternatives to provide additional parking. We looked at a parking structure. The cost for a structure would be prohibitive. Also we looked at some traffic safety studies and parking lot infrastructure analysis that was done a year ago by a consulting firm. And we believe we can reconfigure existing parking. We can provide somewhere between five and 600 additional parking spaces at a cost between construction and design of about 3.2 million.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Excuse me, George. Where do the students park right now with that dramatic shortfall?

MR. GATTA:

They're parking all over the place. We're as lenient as we can be in terms of parking up on curbs, on grassy areas. But we've had to enforce fire lanes, handicapped parking infractions. And it's just been -- it's been very, very challenging. We've received communication from some of your offices. We've also received communications through the Executive Office, constituent complaints about the parking. We've taken measures to spread out our schedule. Traditionally there were not a lot of classes taught on Fridays. We've moved classes to Fridays. We've moved classes to later in the afternoon, which was not a popular time, but to spread out the schedule to make the most of the parking that we have.

So without inclusion of this project in the budget going forward, we would not be able to seek and hopefully secure state funds. We currently don't have state funds for this because this is the first time it's being proposed. We're asking that it be included in the program and be included in the sequence that we've asked for, design in '12, construction in '13.

LEG. MONTANO:

May I ask a question just on that, George? Would the inclusion of this in the Capital Budget be contingent upon receiving state funds or state matching funds?

MR. GATTA:

Yes, yes. But we wouldn't move forward in asking for an appropriating resolution for design funds next year unless --

LEG. MONTANO:

Until you had the money.

MR. GATTA:

-- we had the state match in hand.

LEG. MONTANO:

Thank you.

MR. GATTA:

The next project, which is infrastructure college-wide, the Legislature has supported this in the past.

The current Capital Budget and Program had \$10.3 million in it starting this year and continuing through '12 and '13. We were successful in this year's state budget in securing a 50 percent match for this year's funding. The Executive proposes spreading the project out over a number of years with no funding in 2012; and then lower amounts of 2.75 -- 2.575 in '13 and '14 and putting 5.15 million in subsequent years.

BRO in their analysis has provided a significant amount of information which was derived from a capital infrastructure needs renewal project that was put together by State University of New York, by SUNY, using outside consultants, looking at every facility, every public space, hard scape, landscaping, lighting, conditions of roofing, internal, etcetera. And that study which is embedded -- the highlights of that, which are embedded in the BRO report, show that we currently have that level of need. So we're asking that -- those funds be restored to the original requested level.

The next project, the renovation of Kreiling Hall, we've taken a look at our current schedule. Kreiling Hall will need to be renovated as we move our laboratories and other classroom space out of Kreiling into the new science building as that is constructed. A science building is in design. That design is nearing completion. But given the amount of time we'll need to build and construct, we do concur with the Executive's recommendation and the BRO's recommendation, that would be to delay the construction funding from '12 into 2013.

So overall we're very pleased to see that a number of projects in the BRO report we're in complete agreement with their recommendation. The delay on Kreiling is certainly realistic. We have no concern about that. But we'd like to see the infrastructure college-wide restored to its original schedule and adding the parking and renovation so that we can have the ability to go out and secure state funds.

In addition to all of the benefits listed on that chart to the College both in terms of academic and student support, we've looked at the economic impact of our capital projects on our county regional economy and we're handing out now a copy of that economic impact. When we looked at the projects that are before you now, and we look at the US Commerce Department's econometric model for Long Island, the input/output model, we see that the County's investment will result in over \$175 million in direct and secondary economic impact on our region. Sixteen new jobs are created throughout the local economy with each million of investment for the design and construction. And there are additional secondary impacts beyond the direct construction. And that covers every industry that exists in the County.

If we look at job growth, in addition to the direct job increases and construction, professional technical services and equipment and furnishers supplies of 691 jobs, if we add the secondary impacts of additional 681 jobs, we're looking at these projects having an impact of over -- close to 1400 jobs in the regional economy. And, again, an impact -- total economic impact on the regional economy upwards of \$175 million. And that results from the County's investment of about \$42 million in these projects.

So from an academic, from a student affairs perspective and from an economic impact, putting people back to work, we would ask your support for our capital projects going forward.

Lastly, I have a copy of President McKay's statement, which I believe was forwarded to all of you electronically. If you didn't see it, we'll pass out a copy now so you can have it for the records. But the President touches each of the projects in more detail thanks to the Legislature for its support and ask for your support going forward.

With that, I'd be happy to answer any questions you have regarding the Capital Program.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

George, you had mentioned early on that you were cited -- the College was cited by Middle States

because of the lack of the Learning Resource Center at Grant. What are the practical ramifications of that?

MR. GATTA:

It's a -- what it's been in the past is a strong recommendation from Middle States that this is an area where we are not meeting national standards. It's guidance to the College. I would not sit here and suggest that it would jeopardize accreditation because our staff has done a masterful job in using a space that's probably -- and we have some folks here from the Grant Campus, but I would venture to say it's probably less than a quarter of the size that it actually needs to be.

Enrollment, again, has grown to almost 10,000 students on that campus. And we're in a facility that is just grossly undersized, not just in terms of the availability of a traditional library and the periodicals and volumes that it needs to contain, but study rooms, work group rooms, because many things now are done by teams and assignments are handed out by groups. In terms of the advances in technology, the number of computer labs that would be adequate, an individual work station for students who, for whatever reason, need to have access to all that technology on campus both individually and collectively.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thank you. Any other questions? Okay, George, thank you very much for the most informative presentation.

MR. GATTA:

Thank you to the committee.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Next speaker is Nathaniel Raffloer, also representing the Community College.

MR. RAFFLOER:

Hello. My name is Nathaniel Raffloer. I'm a Student Government President Elect at Suffolk County Community College Eastern Campus. I'd like to start out by thanking the Legislature and Vice President Gatta for his words and your advocacy. And I'd also like to thank the Legislature for helping us move forward in building the Montaukett Building, renovating the Peconic Building and the design budget approval that we've had in the past trying to work towards this building, the Health and Wellness Center at the Eastern Campus.

Why I'm here today is to speak to you specifically about that. The Eastern Campus really needs this Health and Wellness Center. And I speak on behalf of all the students that we absolutely need it. It's not something that we're just requesting to have recreation sports or to raise, you know, sports and activities for non-necessary events.

There's approximately 3,900 students at our campus now. But we're projecting that there's going to be over 4,000. Currently we're only offering about 30 physical education classes. And all of those students that attend the college are required to take two classes before they leave the school. Seventeen of the classes are outdoors. And weather has a great impact on the classes that they take, specifically basket ball. I spoke with Denny {Tieszen} who is the Recreation Sports Coordinator. And he's also a teacher for a basketball class. And his class was held back a month because of ice on the courts. And he said that students were removed from the physical aspect of the sport of basketball. I find that as a problem, not just for, you know, the sports aspect of our students and our student body, but as an American problem. 68% of our country of adults are either overweight or obese. And that's from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention.

Other than the aspect of being outside, a lot of other of our classes require students to drive. As a community college there's a pretty strong presence of students who don't drive. They take the bus and transportation such as that. And they're prevented from taking a lot of these classes. I believe it's -- yeah, there's -- there's about 14 classes that are not able to get to just by going to

this campus. They fill up very quickly.

Other than that, there's a sanitation problem that we have. There's no showers. So students that do take PE during the day have to go to their other classes, you know, all sweaty. It's not a very pleasant way to continue going, especially ones that have classes early in the morning. Aside from that, that's about it, I think. Thank you. Any questions?

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thank you very much, Nathaniel.

All right. Is there anyone else that would like to sign up to address this public hearing? There being none, we can move on now to a presentation by Vito Minei. Good afternoon, Vito.

SLIDESHOW PRESENTATION

MR. MINEI:

Thank you, Legislator Cooper and members of the committee -- the joint committee and staff. My name is Vito Minei. I'm Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension, Suffolk County. And I'm joined today by three of my colleagues. To my immediate right is Chris Colahan. Chris is the Director of our Peconic Dunes, our 4-H Camp in Peconic in the Town of Southold. Next to Chris is Emerson Hasbrouck. He's Director of our Marine Program. Next to Emerson is Vicky Fleming, who is our Director of 4-H Youth Development and our Farm Director as well.

We're here to talk about three Capital Programs. We gave out a package of information. In there is our association brochure, which gives you an overview of our mission and our programs at Cooperative Extension. In the right-hand pocket are three packages that relate to these three Capital Programs. I'll be pretty much following the narrative in the two-page summary in the left-hand pocket.

We come to you today in full recognition of the economic dire straits that Suffolk County's in. We know of it firsthand. Already we've received a directive from the County Executive with regard to our 2012 budget -- Operating Budget. And he's completely eliminated two of our programs, 4-H as well as Family Health and Wellness.

Also, I've been informed to expect another 5% cut for contract agencies exacerbating our current situation. It was something that really kind of ambushed us. We were allocated \$309,000 of a cut to our 2011 Operating Budget as a portion of that \$20 million disallowance of Medicaid. And we were rather surprised by that. But since we don't yet have a contract, we were responsible to provide a \$309,000 cut. I'd ask you to please look into that. I know you have the other priorities of the clinics, but please look into the involvement of Cornell and that cut.

But I wanted to get into the Capital Program. So with that as a backdrop, we're going to talk about three programs and three of our sites. We have sites all over Suffolk County. The first one I'm going to discuss is at the County Farm in Yaphank, Capital Project 1796. The second project I'm going to discuss is Capital Project 7050 related to our dining hall at Peconic Dunes Camp. And the last one I'm going to discuss relates to a building at the Suffolk County Marine Environmental Learning Center at Cedar Beach in Southold.

A lot of you took the tour this summer. We had several tours for Legislators. And I want to thank you all for joining us. You saw the great facilities. You saw the great programs that our staff headed by Vicky Fleming have out there at the County Farm. But we ended each tour purposefully back at the office of the Visitors' Center. And quite honestly, the problem is that they're 1960's era mobile homes. I understood they were taken in the '70's to help flood victims in Pennsylvania and then returned to Suffolk County. That's where our staff entertains the public and also they work out

of it. They're in extremely poor condition. Again, many of you know that firsthand. And the replacement is not only critical but is long overdue.

Our proposal is for a new two-story barn-like structure. In conference with DPW earlier this year, they recommended that we be the sponsors of the first totally green building in Suffolk County. And we're looking to move the offices from the central portion of the Farm up towards Yaphank Avenue to improve visibility and accessibility.

This is an aerial view (indicating), again, the County Farm. It's truly a gem. I mean we have a working farm at exit 67 of the Expressway. And thousands of visitors come every year. Again, just -- we had Baby Animal Day on Saturday and there was well over 600 people on the day before Mother's Day to visit with Vicky and the staff at the Farm. It's about 275 acres. A lot of it is preserved farmland, but again the buildings are in the central portion of that.

This again is some shots (indicating) -- we didn't embellish these. These are not photo-shopped. This is what these offices look like. The ceilings are typically caving in. The floors are heaving up. It's not a very welcoming site for a Visitors' Center. I was going to kid with my friend Wayne Horsley; he referred to it as a dump. He says he's a man of few words. But it's concisely characterized as the current situation. And actually this has been the condition for many years.

We're asking to replace that with this two-story barn-like structure. It would be, again, the County's showcase in energy and environmental conservation. It would be super insulated, have solar panels. Also a vegetative roof, geo-thermal heating, all the things that go into a very highly efficient building. And it also -- it would have the multiple purposes of offices, classrooms as well as a Visitors' Center.

The capital funds we requested was about 85,000 new for planning -- I'm sorry, 35,000 existing. So we want to embark on \$120,000 of planning and design. And DPW estimates that this state of the art building would cost about \$1.2 million. I note that we received the Budget Review Office evaluation. And they completely agreed with the need to replace these buildings. They recommend that we replace portables with portables.

There's a couple of issues that I would take with that. One, we've had an estimate from DPW that the portables would cost about half a million dollars. Logistically even if you removed one at a time, you'd be displacing staff for several months that have to be relocated elsewhere. Also, it wouldn't have the multiple uses that we intend. If you've been to the site, you know not only are the offices deplorable, but the staff are teaching 4-H classes out of converted chicken houses. And this new building would also contain multiple classrooms and exhibit rooms for the visitors to come to. And when we remove these existing buildings, we could expand the nature explore classroom and also relocate some of the animals closer to the Visitors' Center.

In recognition of the current economy, I don't want to debate the merits of replacing portables with mobile homes or going with this new state of the art building. I would just ask the Legislature to please let us go through the planning phase; to approve the planning money and we'll come back in a year or so with a very detailed plan and evaluation of the alternatives. And, therefore, we could move forward from that point. Hopefully the economy will start turning around and hopefully you will see the merits of really having this kind of a facility at the County Farm as we try to expand our programs.

I just want to quickly note before I move onto the other programs that we have Capital Program monies and we've been using that in a very cost effective way. We've totally replaced the permanent fencing admittedly with the assistance of the inmates at the jail. We've also been working with DPW to refinish the roads, replace the roofs that are problematic, floors in the hog house. And also we're geared up to do what's referred to as rotational grazing; get the cattle out of their penned up environment, get them out on grass and move them around the facility now that we have the perimeter fenced in.

So we're are working with the current capital funding. We're looking forward to many more years of Cooperative Extension providing 4-H classes and also entertaining the public and educating them at this working farm. I don't know if, Jon, you want me to take questions on this project?

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Yes. Just, Vito, just before you move on to the next project, are there any state matching funds available for this that you're aware of?

MR. MINEI:

There's no state matching funds now. We got some state DOT funds for the partial restoration of that historic hay barn. By virtue of its proximity to the LIE, it qualified for State Department of Transportation funds. But there's no matching state funds that I'm aware of to help us with replacement of the buildings.

MS. FLEMING:

(Shaking head no)

MR. MINEI:

There may be grants -- NYSERTA grants going down the line. That would be something we would investigate during the planning phases for, you know, replacing these buildings. But no upfront state funding.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thanks, Vito.

LEG. MONTANO:

Vito, how are you?

MR. MINEI:

Hi, Rick.

LEG. MONTANO:

I just want to be clear. 1796, is this a new program or is this a modification of existing --

MR. MINEI:

It's a modification. It's an increase. We've had 1796 for several years. That was a quarter of a million dollars I was referring to that we're drawing down for the other projects.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. So what did the old 1796 have in projections for 2012? What's the -- just very quickly, just the modification so I get this.

MR. MINEI:

It was a list of those projects I just rattled off. The roadways, replacing the fences, replacing the roofs, replacing the floor in the hog house, replacing a floor in the butchering area in the slaughterhouse.

LEG. MONTANO:

And the dollar amount of that was?

MR. MINEI:

It was close to a quarter of a million dollars, but we're doing a little bit better with the funds. Benny wants to add something.

LEG. MONTANO:

Yeah, go ahead.

MR. PERNICE:

I was just going to say that the Capital Program currently does not include funding for any adopted 2011 to 2013; however, there's appropriation balance that they're doing the things that Vito described, the rotational grazing, the epoxy in the meat processing plant. So they are spending some of their appropriation balance. But the Adopted Capital Program that's currently in place does not include funding for this project.

LEG. MONTANO:

And the appropriation balance comes from where?

MR. PERNICE:

Previously appropriated monies. But this is a general project.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay.

MR. PERNICE:

It's called Improvements to the County Farm. So they undertake all sorts of things from this project.

LEG. MONTANO:

And how much was that appropriation? Was that the half million you were talking about?

MS. FLEMING:

I think we roughly have 265,000 left.

MR. PERNICE:

Yes, approximately.

MS. FLEMING:

And we did ask in 2009 for the 500,000 for replacement of the trailers toward the Visitors' Center. We've just modified that in this proposal.

LEG. MONTANO:

All right. Just so I'm clear, then, 265 you have left over from the other appropriation. And you're asking for an additional how much for planning money? 85,000 on top of the 265?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, yes. 265 is spoken for.

LEG. MONTANO:

That's committed.

MR. MINEI:

But that has \$35,000 in planning.

MS. FLEMING:

We didn't use the 35,000 for the planning. It was for a beef lot project that we are currently completing. We didn't need the planning money. So we're hoping to move that planning money towards the offices.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

And typically DPW uses as a rule of thumb ten percent for planning and design. And for a \$1.2 million building we're looking for \$120,000 total. So we're asking for 85,000 new; you're right.

LEG. MONTANO:

Right. And the 1.2 million for 2013, does that exist in the old Capital Project?

MR. MINEI:

No, no.

LEG. MONTANO:

Or is that completely new?

MR. MINEI:

What I'm saying is in essence, I would hold that in abeyance, not get into a debate with BRO on which way to go, replace with modules or replace with this barn-like structure, wait for us to do this detailed plan, come back to you and then move forward.

LEG. MONTANO:

All right. So you're not asking for inclusion of the 1.2 million in the Capital Project at this time?

MR. MINEI:

Not at this point. Not at this point.

LEG. MONTANO:

You simply want the 85 for planning.

MR. MINEI:

Yes, that's correct. Thank you.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. I got it.

MR. MINEI:

Move on?

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Please.

MR. MINEI:

Okay. We've moved out to Peconic Dunes Parks where we have Peconic Dunes 4-H Camp. That's an ongoing Capital Program 7050 that has about \$656,000, I believe, remaining in prior appropriations, as the term goes. We're asking to replace the dining hall and kitchen. That building is over seven years old. A 2001 devaluation by Parks and DPW recommended, you know, concluded it was in extremely poor condition, recommended that it be replaced. We're asking to replace it with a new building that would be LEED certified, that's Leadership and Energy Environment Design, and we would try our level best to manage the cost in a number of ways.

First, we'll have the campers on-site in two shifts. Number two, we would have a smaller building insulated and heated so it could be used year-round by the community. And that is for all the programs. And then the outside deck would be screened.

This is an aerial photograph of Peconic Dunes (indicating). If you haven't been there. In that central portion there, those dark lines are the roadways around the 60-acre site. To the right-hand

side of that graphic is the large pond that the children use. And then to the upper-left side is the Long Island Sound. And one of the features of this park is the easy access through the dunes to the Long Island Sound. And the dining hall is on a high elevation in the central part of the campus.

These are some of the photos of that dining hall. And, again, you can see that the repairs that are done are literally Band-Aids on this project. It really is long overdue for replacement as the 2001 Parks Report said. We've been asked why don't we just shore up the building for a while and try to move on. Estimates from DPW of just trying to improve the underpinnings, the foundation, are upwards of a quarter of a million dollars. So trying to replace that foundation with 250,000, when everybody's in agreement that the building itself is not worth saving, we want to move on.

So, again, basically we've asked for \$150,000 in planning and design funds, but we're willing to cover the cost of that with our fees that are charged at Peconic Dunes. It's a fee based contract we have there. We do provide some funds for the fees for modest capital improvements and maintenance on your ten to \$20,000. And what I'm asking for is to hold in abeyance the construction cost of \$1.5 million.

The BRO evaluation is pretty much right on the mark. And actually it sort of elevated our frustration. We're caught in the classical catch 22. We at Cooperative Extension want a long-term commitment to provide the camp services there, but we don't want to do it without improving the facilities. The County doesn't want us improving the facilities until we have a long term contract. So we agree with that evaluation by BRO.

We're currently trying to execute a contract with the Parks Department under a five-year waiver; but the only way to get a long-term commitment is to get a request for proposals, an RFP out. And, therefore, we would hope for a 20-year commitment. And, again, all I'm asking for at this stage would be for the approval to go ahead and have Cooperative Extension pay for the plan while we go through the execution of the current contract and hopefully Parks does release an RFP that we would respond to.

Any questions?

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

No. Why don't you go on, Vito?

MR. MINEI:

Okay. Thank you.

The last project we're out at the Suffolk County Marine Environmental Learning Center. It's down at the tip of Great Hog Neck at Cedar Beach County Park. 2006 under county capital funds the Wildlife building of classrooms and offices was constructed. But unfortunately the material was not finished. And neither was the infrastructure. There's no heat or hot water to the building. And the building's currently used only for equipment storage. So what we're asking is for the additional money to finish the building, construct the classrooms and the offices and the bathrooms and also put in the infrastructure.

This is an aerial (indicating). In the lower center of that graphic is the building I'm talking about. And this is the building; the County expended \$250,000 in 2006 to construct it. But you can see the interior's not finished. I believe in the middle in the upper portion of the graphic is where the bathrooms are supposed to be. And then there's classrooms in other facilities to be built in there. But it's only been used since its construction for storage because there's no heat or other infrastructure in the building. We're asking for essentially \$175,000 to finish the building.

Originally there was \$100,000 for the infrastructure that DPW estimated five, six years ago. But since that hasn't been done and in conferring with DPW earlier this year, they said that the actual cost would be more like 175,000: 25,000 for planning, 150,000 to finish the building. So that's

really the choice. I mean leave it as a storage building or finish it off for multiple purposes that we could use out there at the Marine Learning Center.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Vito, what was the original intent when the building was constructed? Was it for storage space? Was the intent to have it used as offices?

MR. MINEI:

The titling in the Capital Program says Wildlife Rescue Building and classrooms and offices. There was a lot of support in the early 2000's from Miller Environmental and other groups that said there's no facility like this, certainly in eastern Suffolk. So they were supporting the idea of Wildlife Rescue, whether there'd be an oil spill off of Long Island or other wildlife rescue that would have to be done in this building. But we wanted to use it for multiple purposes; classroom and for offices. The BRO evaluation is, you know, considering the current economic climate to forego the completion of the building needed for storage. And we would ask to move on from that point.

There is a need for classrooms. Indeed we do have other classrooms there, but we're looking to expand programs. We're looking to try to move some of our staff out of our Riverhead main offices to be housed out at the Marine Environmental Learning Center. And there are other uses for that building other than storeroom.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thank you, Vito. Any questions? All right. Chris, Emerson or Vicky, did you want to add to this or you're there just to answer questions?

MS. FLEMING:

Just to answer questions.

MR. MINEI:

Then I'll just summarize then.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Please.

MR. MINEI:

Again, with the farm we're asking for \$120,000 of planning money: 85,000 new, we're using 35,000 existing for the Peconic Dunes Camp. We're asking just for permission to go ahead. We want to contract with the Parks Department. We're willing to undertake the cost of \$150,000 for a plan there and hopefully to promote the preparation use of an RFP. And then we're asking again for your support to finish this building at \$175,000. Thank you very much and thanks for your support.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

Thank you. Thanks everybody.

Would anyone else in the auditorium like to address this joint committee? There being none, I make a motion to close this meeting. Is there a second?

LEG. NOWICK:

Second.

CHAIRMAN COOPER:

All in favor? Opposed? This meeting's closed. Thank you very much.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:47 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**