

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

and

ENERGY COMMITTEE

of the

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Economic Development and Energy Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Wednesday, May 2, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator Wayne Horsley - Chairman
Legislator Steve Stern - Vice-Chair
Legislator Thomas Cilmi
Legislator DuWayne Gregory
Legislator Lynne Nowick

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Joe Schroeder - Budget Review Office
Joe Muncey - Budget Review Office
Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Ben Zwirn - County Executive's Office
Carolyn Fahey - Economic Development
Paul Perillie - Aide to Legislator Gregory
JP DiMartino - Aide to Chairman Horsley
Eric Kopp - Assistant Deputy County Executive
Peter Fox Cohalan
Diana Cherryholmes
Dot Kerrigan - AME
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Donna Catalano - Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver - Legislative Aide

(THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:00 PM)

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. All righty. Welcome everybody and welcome to the May 2nd meeting of the Economic Development and Energy Committee. May we please all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

SALUTATION

May we all stand for a moment of silence for the men and women who protect our freedom both home and abroad.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

All right, all right. I have a fairly light agenda today. Although substantive in that we are going to be deliberating over our new County -- to propose new County Historian, Mr. Peter Fox Cohalan. Hi, Peter. Why don't you come on up, we'll do this -- we'll do this right away. How's that. Want to come sit?

Good afternoon, Mr. Cohalan. It's always a pleasure and it's --

MR. COHALAN:

Same here.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

-- an honor to have you in front of the Economic Development and Energy Committee. **(IR 1112, Appointing Peter Fox Cohalan to the position of County Historian for the County of Suffolk (Pres. Off.))**

MR. COHALAN:

I want to thank you very much for giving me the opportunity to be here.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Why don't we just -- you know, I think everyone's pretty familiar with your history, but maybe they don't know of your advocacy of being a historian and your interest in Suffolk County. Maybe you might want to just tell us a little bit about that.

MR. COHALAN:

Thank you very much, Legislator Horsley. You and I are both historians of a sort where you earned yours in courses, you're a Ph.D. and I have only been doing it as an amateur historian for the last 65 years basically.

I first became interested in local history through my father and my grandfather, both of whom were historians. My father actually wrote a book on the life of Arron Burr so he is a certified historian or was a certified historian; the third vice-president of the United States. Whereas I have acquired this interest and a zeal, particularly for local history over the course of my studies for the 65 years that I've been doing it, I'm 74 years of age now.

I got started on this because one of my family members was the first Catholic priest on Long Island back in 1839 and I was very interested in his career, of course, he wasn't in direct line, collateral line. But he was a Circuit Rider and then he was a cofounder of the first Catholic Church on Long Island, Saint Andrews Church in Sag Harbor back in 1845 and the second pastor. And through that I developed a great interest in all sorts of local history and particularly in the Sag Harbor area at that time and from that I've expended my knowledge over many years and gotten involved in all

sorts of interesting phases of our local Suffolk County history.

For instance, in the Sag Harbor area there have been a number of American -- blacks or African Americans who settled there back in the 19th century and became a leading and dominant force in the Sag Harbor area, which is not too well known but I have done some research on this and I think that's the kind of thing that should be explained even more for people's benefit. And if I am given the opportunity to volunteer for this position as County Historian I want to play up all the facts of diversity concerning our County's population, all the people who have contributed to the history of our population whether it be newly arrived people or people who have been here some time. All of us with the exception of the Shinnecock Indians and this -- the other tribes are immigrants and we all have a story to tell. And if given the opportunity in this volunteer position I want to be able to help tell those stories. And the statute that sets up the County Historian position, as most recently amended in the 1980's, states that the County Historian is to preserve and encourage the study of local history to preserve government records and to preserve nongovernment records that are held by libraries and local historical societies and also to encourage the study of those records and to encourage the public's awareness of what our history is.

And I'm always reminded of the words of George Santayana, the Harvard professor, who said "those who don't learn from the lessons of history are doomed -- those who don't learn from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them." I'm paraphrasing him. And one of my heroes, Patrick Henry, his speech in the Virginia convention in April of 1775, referred to fact that "we have no way of judging the future but by the past" and that is so true. That's his famous give me liberty or give me death speech. And we are shaped by what has come before us historically.

I had one of my grandchildren ask me recently how do you explain we have only seven days in the week? Thank you to the Phoenicians. How do you explain that we have the months of the year the way they're enumerated? Thank you to the Romans. Everything comes from something. And I just think it's so important that we, through this position that I hope to volunteer for, that we and I can explain to the people of Suffolk County the importance of where we came from. I had the privilege of being a close friend of Robert David Lion Gardiner. And Robert David Lion Gardiner encompassed in his -- himself an incredible knowledge of the history of this area going back to 1639 when his family arrived here. As a matter of fact I gave his eulogy when he died in Saint Lukes Church in East Hampton because of his friendship with my family over three generations. He knew more about local history and he told me more about local history than almost anyone. And I would like very much to -- in tribute to his memory continue the work he did in explaining where we come from and where we are right now even where we hope to be by bringing together all of these diverse schemes of the people who live here and setting up programs, going to the high schools, going to schools to talk about our history, talk about where we've come from, talk about the greatness of this area and the greatness of all the people, the diverse people who make up our County's population of approximately, what is it, 1.4 million today.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Well, thank you very much. You know and it's an honor to have somebody here that talks my other language, I don't speak that way here, but I think it's a great thing. And, you know, and it's certainly needed. The education of our past locally is -- because I'm constantly talking to my students, I teach at Farmingdale, and we're always talking -- I'm trying to tell them about Robert Moses and, you know, what they, you know, what he did and, you know, how your families came and I can tell you pretty much when your family came and how did you do that and it's just not something on their -- they're doing their routine that they ever entertained. So I think it's terrific, Peter, that you'd like to take on this challenge and we are honored.

MR. COHALAN:

Well, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I just wanted to, you know, we all have a copy of Peter's resume and we certainly admire the work that you've done in your past, your history, and I have -- but I wanted just to comment on another side of Peter Fox Cohalan that you don't often hear about, but I remember those days like Peter Fox Cohalan showing up to my nieces, I think it was confirmation, at my brother's house back in the 1970's and there's Peter Fox Cohalan with a proclamation. I mean, he is -- and when I was running for councilman and different positions like that, Peter always sent a note saying congratulations or try hard or this and that and it was really -- it was extraordinary the personal attention, the kindness that Peter shows to so many people and I just wanted to bring that out.

Now, since you are a local historian I have a question for you and I was -- I went through my collection of buttons last night and since you are the local historian, I've got a button here that says, and I thought you might want to explain this because it is of historical significance here, it says, "flush Klein in '79, add another gallon and flush Cohalan." Did you recall this?

*(*Laughter*)*

MR. COHALAN:

I recall the first of the two, not the second.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And what was the historical importance?

MR. COHALAN:

Well, that was the Southwest Sewer District as you recall --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I know it was, yeah.

MR. COHALAN:

-- and as you know very well. The Republican leader of the Town of Islip, Anthony Pace, at the time I said to him where did that -- where did that sign "Flush Kline in '79 come from"? He said, don't ask, you need deniability, so I never found out where it was from.

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Anyway, when I found this last night I laughed and I said I got to bring this in. And I hope you accept in the matter which it was presented.

MR. COHALAN:

The second button -- the second phase of the button came from Pat Halpin's campaign against me in 1983.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I suspected that was where that came -- "add another gallon and flush Cohalan."

MR. COHALAN:

Yeah, that was added by Pat.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

It's a little symmetry there. But anyway, I'm honored that you're here today, Peter.

MR. COHALAN:

Well, thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And I've been a fan for many, many years.

MR. COHALAN:

And I of yours also. And if I can just put things in perspective because I do enjoy my family's political history, my father's -- my great grandfather, Timothy Cohalan, was Republican leader of Orange County in 1881. Wanted to be a Catholic and to be a Republican was extremely odd. In 1904 my granduncle, Daniel Florence Cohalan, was the Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall. And his two brothers, my grandfather and another brother, Denis O'Leary Cohalan were all in the Supreme Court and they were very active in the Democratic party. And my father started life as a Democrat and is the only person we know of in the history of New York State who ran for two offices as a Democrat and lost supervisor of the Town of Islip and District Attorney of Suffolk County and then won them as Republican. The only one we can think of -- and then I'm a Republican also with some recalcitrant grandchildren who I think might becoming Democrats.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Well, I hail their independence.

MR. COHALAN:

Yeah, but if we go -- I love it.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And I just want to let you know that my, you know my brother --

MR. COHALAN:

Ed is a great guy.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

-- and he's probably more conservative than anybody.

MR. COHALAN:

He worked on my campaigns as a matter of fact. Ed did work on some of my campaigns and I really appreciate it and he's a good man.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

So I come from a family of Republicans but, you know, somewhere along the line we all got the calling.

MR. COHALAN:

I think it's great.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Me too.

MR. COHALAN:

I think it's great. I love the whole scene. And I don't think there's any higher calling for anyone than to be a public official and to dedicate yourself to the public and to the concerns of the public. I don't care what party a person's in. I admire all public officials, elected officials who've given so much over their careers to the benefit of the public and I refuse to let anybody smear a politician to

my face because I'll always call them on it.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

There you go. Well put. Lynne, I understand -- Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Your Honor, your enthusiasm even got me enthused and I failed my history regents as I recall. Wayne had said about the letters that you sent, as I recall, your dad used to send birthday cards to everybody, I worked in the court system, he used to always remember birthdays and send birthday cards all the time. It was -- and I guess the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

I wanted to ask you a question that you got me interested; how did the seven day week come about?

MR. COHALAN:

The Phoenicians were great sailors and they were the first recorded people to sail throughout the Mediterranean, maybe even to the west coast of Africa. And they needed to know how much they were going to make in all their travels both monetarily and meeting people and everything else so they set up what became the seven day week because of their interest in trade and commerce and their seafaring history. It's interesting.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah, it is and you know there's a course you could Google, but it sounds better coming from you, it's more interesting.

MR. COHALAN:

The calendar that we use, the Gregorian calendar based on Pope Gregory the 13th activities in 1582 and he set up the calendar, which is only one second off a year now. Pope Gregory inherited the Julian calendar of Julius Caesar and in the Julian calendar there were ten months originally and that's why September, October, November and December are actually in Latin the ninth, tenth, eleventh and -- I'm sorry, the seventh, eight, ninth and tenth month. And the -- English is the only language that uses the exact same words used by the Romans 2000 years ago to describe those months. And then Julius Caesar came along and added the months of January, the two-faced god looking forward and backward, and February basically when the land is dead. But all of our calendar names come from Latin. And September being seven, October means eight, November nine and, you know, think of Spanish, you know, siete, ocho, nueve, diez and French.

LEG. NOWICK:

Very, very interesting. By the way, the trip to Gardiners Island, I took that twice with my dear friend Joe {Adinito} and David Lion Gardiner was incredible with his knowledge and just like you said with what he talked about on his island it was -- and he was very colorful too, I might add.

MR. COHALAN:

Yes, he was. Yes, he was. {Jared Neosif}, a lawyer in Smithtown, is a wonderful person, close friend of mine. Known him for a hundred years. Are there any questions or anything?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

You know, you're right, you know, the seven day a week. Are there any further questions from anyone from the Legislature? Good. Steve? DuWayne? All right. With that being the case I'd be honored to make a motion to approve Peter Fox Cohalan to the position of County Historian, second by Legislator Stern. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **APPROVED (5-0)**.

Peter, you don't have to come to the meeting next Tuesday that's when this would be officially voted

on by the full Legislature but because you appeared here that would be our requirements that all you have to come to.

MR. COHALAN:

Well, thank you so much.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And it's good to see you.

MR. COHALAN:

It's a pleasure to see you too, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, thank you.

*(*Applause*)*

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Peter?

*(*Posing for a picture*)*

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All righty. All go back to take our seats. We have a second appointment today.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

IR 1386, I'd like to call up **(To appoint) Diana Cherryholmes as a member of the Suffolk County Citizens Advisory Board for the Arts (Spencer)** Hello, Diana, how are you?

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Oh, it's my pleasure.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Thank you for the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

How would you like to tell us a little bit about your story and why you should be on the Council for the Arts.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Well, grant arts and -- grant making for the arts is dear to my heart. It's what I've been doing for close to 20 years. First at the Missouri Arts Council and now at the Huntington Arts Council for the last 15 years. At the Huntington Arts Council we serve both Suffolk and Nassau County with three regrant programs; two through the New York State Council on the Arts; one through JP Morgan Chase and we'll be receiving another regrant opportunity for individual artists next year as well.

It's a great opportunity to be invited to join the cultural advisory board and I'm really glad to know that the membership is going to be expanding so that all Legislative members can appoint someone to that committee.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Well, that's terrific. Which -- oh, Dr. Spencer's.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Right.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Yes, I was just -- I just figured out which district you'd then be representing.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Correct.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's a wonderful district.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Are there any questions of Ms. Cherryholmes? No? You guys all good? Anything you'd like to add?

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Thank you very much for the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Well, we appreciate you being here as well. And we wish you luck and thank you very much for your service.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Thank you.

LEG. STERN:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Motion to approve by Legislator Stern, I'll second it. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved.

APPROVED (VOTE: 5-0) Thank you very much.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And you don't have to be at Tuesday's meeting. This would be just fine that you appeared today.

MS. CHERRYHOLMES:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you. All right.

The next two appointments I want to get Counsel involved with this, 1459 and 1460. This is appointing Joanne -- first of all, **1459, Appointing Joanne M. Minieri as a Director of the Suffolk County Economic Development Corporation (Co. Exec.)** If you recall Ms. Minieri was appointed Commissioner the last round. And she was here for that -- for that appointment as well as she was here for the Legislative meeting. And the Economic Development Corporation is a sister organization to the board that she was here for, which is the IDA. In other words, they have an IDA meeting and then they stop the IDA meeting and then they call the EDC in order as a followup.

So when they called me today and said, you know, she's not going to be able to attend, she's busy doing the people's business. I just wanted to get your feeling on it if we -- this committee be mindful just to move her along to the Legislative forum without having to coming back. I mean, she's already been here and the like. And also, yeah, as well as for Kevin Harvey as well. Kevin was here last time as you recall. He was appointed. He answered the questions and went through the rigors of the committee. You guys all right with that? Good?

LEG. NOWICK:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. All right. So what I'll do is I'll make a motion to approve Joanne Minieri as the director of the -- as a Director of the Suffolk County Economic Development Corporation, seconded by Legislator Stern. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **APPROVED (5-0)**

1460, Appointing Kevin M. Harvey as a Director of the Suffolk County Economic Development Corporation (Co. Exec.) Same motion, same second, same vote. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **APPROVED (5-0)**

And I think is that it? Okay. That being complete we are in recess, we are adjourned.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:28 P.M.

{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY