

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, November 14, 2012.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Presiding Officer Lindsay - 8th Legislative District
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Carolyn Fahey - Economic Development
Paul Perillie - Aide to Legislator Gregory
Laura Halloran - BRO Office
Neal Lewis - Molloy College Sustainability Institute
David Berg - Cameron Engineering
Rick Brand - Newsday
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Gabrielle Skolom - Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver - Legislative Aide

ED 11/14/12

(THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:10 PM)

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to the Economic Development and Energy Committee of November 14, 2012, and may we all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

SALUTATION

And may we all stand for a moment of silence particularly during this week of November 11th, Veteran's Day week, that we stand for a moment of silence for those men and women who protect our freedoms both home and abroad.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All righty. Again, welcome. Is the -- Commissioner's not here. Carolyn, do you have anything you want to bring to our attention?

MS. FAHEY:

Questions.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Excuse me?

MS. FAHEY:

Questions, if you have any.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Very good. We have a -- I've invited Neal Lewis who is the Molloy College Sustainability Institute, the representative and I guess Director; Director of. Neal, why don't you come on up, he'll be discussing the Climate Smart Communities bill that is before us. So it's not only a presentation on the bill itself, what it is is also we will be voting on this to pass it out of committee if we so choose. It is a bill that I have -- I have put in and I hope that you would do its -- give it its due consideration. Welcome, Neal.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you, Legislator Horsley, Mr. Chairman. So, yes, Neal Lewis, Executive Director of the Sustainability Institute at Molloy College. And with me also, we weren't sure if David was going be able to make it 'cause he was going to be going to another municipality for a meeting on the same topic.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

So we got both of you guys.

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah, we got both.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

This is a heavy hit.

MR. LEWIS:

So, David, could you introduce yourself?

MR. BERG:

Sure, it's David Berg, I'm with Cameron Engineering. We're working with the Sustainability Institute on Climate Smart Communities, providing the engineering side and planning. Glad to be here.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Ditto. Glad you're here.

MR. LEWIS:

So where to begin?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Yeah, where do we want to begin, Neal? Do you want to -- do you want to talk a bit of, first of all attached, I believe, to all the agendas of today is a copy of the Climate Smart bill for you to peruse as Neal and Dave are talking about it. And I thought maybe the best thing to do is to go over the Climate Smart Program, what its -- what the intentions are, the grant possibilities and the like. And I thought no better person than you guys to talk about it.

MR. LEWIS:

Okay. Well, thank you again, Mr. Chairman. The Climate Smart Communities is a project that was originated several years ago. There was a lot of interest in it and then it kind of was sort of, you know, moving along kind of slowly for a little while there and now it's been reinvigorated with the current governor and some of other initiatives that he's undertaken with the regional Economic Development Councils, for example, and with a project that's kind of a companion to this project called the Cleaner Greener Communities.

So this project has to in some part be seen in the context of those other initiatives but it also should be understood just for the sort historical accuracy that it predates those other projects because it was something that the DEC had initiated some years ago.

The idea is a voluntary one encouraging communities and communities in the Long Island context would mean counties, towns, villages, that communities can step forward and affirmatively pledge that, yes, we would like to be a Climate Smart Community and we would like to work with the State of New York to achieve certain goals under that program, which we're going talk about today.

So the first element is you do have to sort of affirmatively choose to be involved and that's part of the reason that you brought this resolution before the board. It's not something that everybody has to do so to speak.

So we're going to talk about why it makes sense, we believe, for Suffolk County to be very much a part of this program. In doing that, I can't help but go almost immediately to money. Let's face it, all the municipalities across the State --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

It's what grabbed my attention.

MR. LEWIS:

There you go. So in the spring of next year, and I have some materials we're going to pass out and we'll explain them in a moment, in the spring of next year there is going to be a process, and any dates that we mention here, by the way, we should assume there's a good possibility that there's going to be some pushing back on dates giving what happened with the super-storm. But I'll stick to the dates as we originally understood them. So originally the plan was for April of 2013 there would be a round of grant opportunities, which would be done each year for three years and each year would be \$30 million worth of grant opportunities for a total of 90 million. These would be competitive grants that would be awarded to ten different regions all across the State and it would

be part of the Cleaner Greener Communities Program of which Climate Smart Communities is sort of a sister program. So under Cleaner Greener what'll happen is they're going to be looking at a plan that's going to be developed for Cleaner Greener Communities and you're going to have to say that you're consistent with that plan with your proposals, but they're also going to say, "well, you know, this particular community also happens to be a Climate Smart Community" and so the understanding is that they're going to give some extra points because there's going to be a pointing, you know, a weighing method of figuring out how to evaluate these grant proposals and that you can get perhaps an extra weighing if you're also Climate Smart.

So I'm not promising that Suffolk County's going to win any grants, it's going to be a competitive process, but I am suggesting and proposing that perhaps Suffolk County be in a stronger position to compete for those grants by being a Climate Smart Community. So to some extent we can't help but start with the potential financial opportunities of winning some grants and that's part of what our motivations are here. I think that's fair to say.

And, you know, competition's a good thing. We've seen with the Regional Economic Development Councils that some good ideas have come forth and different regions, you know, either did well or didn't get as many awards and it was a competitive process and it engaged communities and we hope a similar thing will happen when the next round of grants go out that are not -- they're related to the regional economic development but it's a separate pot of money, \$90 million total, 30 million a year for three years. So that's the financial motivation component.

So then the question is, in order to become a Climate Smart Community you have to do some things. So one is, you have to take that affirmative action or a pledge or a resolution, each term is sort of interchangeable. And what you would be doing is saying that we shall take measures to demonstrate that we are, you know, a modern community recognizing the need to really have a aggressive program to work to combat climate change and also a component of this is to have measures in place to adapt our systems, our infrastructure and our systems to the reality of climate change. I've listened to the governor recently mentioning that as we look at the lessons from the recent super-storm he says things like "climate change is a reality and it's a reality that storms are becoming increasingly devastating and increasingly frequent." And I can tell you just as a LIPA trustee in three years we've had three major storms where you can often go years in between big storms.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

We've noticed.

MR. LEWIS:

Yes. So the idea would be one of the categories for potential funding would be what I call resilience, making our systems more resilient to storms. Some people refer to as hardening or adapting, whatever term we agree on that's one of the categories and I think just speaking from my own sort of supposition here, I think we all kind of assume that that category may get more intention now in light what just happened with the most recent storm.

So the -- you would adopt -- you would adopt a resolution saying that you want to be a Climate Smart Community. In doing so we would want you to immediately set up a task force, which I'm glad to see that that's in the resolution already. I hope would be whatever requirements you have for how to appoint people to a task force that it's done as quickly as possible because there is a tight timeframe for this project. So you would adopt it. Appoint the task force. Get the task force going. I do recall a task force that you had a while -- a couple years back when we looked at the issue of home audits and how to set a standard for home audits and, you know, maybe something like that where get a, you know, mix of people with different types of expertise in a room and let's hammer out the third element, which is a plan. And I think on the plan I'm going to ask David to say a few words. This is an area where the, I should have actually pointed out the role that is played by the engineering firm, but Cameron Engineering won the award for a grant award to help

assist with this project. And what that means is when it comes to the planning, and part of what you need to do is adopt a plan, which you would bring back to the Legislature so the plan would be something that everybody gets a final say on, but the task force would develop it is the idea.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Do you have to have the final -- do you have to finalize the plan prior to being eligible for grants?

MR. LEWIS:

As close as possible. If you're like within a matter of weeks and such then I think the issue of whether it's finalized we can kind of talk about because you're going to -- essentially what'll be happening is people will be writing grant proposals and they're going to want to say this is a Climate Smart Community, it's developed a plan and it's, you know, following through on that plan and if it has to qualify and say, "well, technically the plan isn't due to be voted on for a couple of weeks, well the grant proposal probably won't be read until after that date" so I don't want to say like there's this hard requirement, you must have the plan done by April first, for example, but we should be operating in our minds with a general ballpark as that being our goal to be done with the plan right around April so we're ready to be able to say we've checked off each of those boxes and we're now in a position to say let's try and bring some money home for good projects here on Long Island that are creative, that are innovative and that are desperately needed.

So in order to get there we have to develop a good Climate Action Plan and this is one of the things that the engineering firm will help with. So maybe David could speak to that a little bit.

MR. BERG:

And that's my cue. Let me just go back to the action plan for a moment. I think an important piece of any plan is a recognition of what the County's already done and certainly Suffolk County's done a lot towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and, you know, signing on for various renewable energy technologies, the parking lot being a notable example. So I think that goes into the plan and I think that as far as the State is concerned it's important that, you know, for the grants that there's progress. There's a history of commitment and there's a plan to do more of the same.

And one of the important pieces of this program are so called "anchor projects" so there's a special innovative new project that the County wants to pursue, that's going to get -- the State's going to pay a lot of attention to that. It can't just be well, we screwed some more florescent light bulbs in, no it's got to be something innovative but the County has a history of innovative projects so that's something that's important for the task force to focus on almost from day one is "what are we planning to do, is there something already on the boards that could qualify as an anchor project? If not, let's think hard about that in terms of greenhouse gas reductions."

But let me talk to a few of the ways that our team can assist the County and other municipalities. Let me step back and just say that the four regions in the State that are pursuing this, their first task was to develop a greenhouse gas inventory. On Long Island we were fortunate because the New York Institute of Technology was already engaged by the Rauch Foundation to develop a greenhouse gas inventory for the entire Island. And that project's going to be finished in early December and that will be broken down by towns and in some cases by village. So we're going to have a starting point, the base year is supposed to be 2010. It might be 2009. But that's an important tool that we're going to turn over to the County and to the other municipalities. Here's where we're starting from and, you know, it's a difficult thing to wrap your arms around, there's a lot of variables in figuring these numbers out. But at least for each of the different elements of the greenhouse gas emissions we can say, "Okay, here where we started and then we implemented these programs and, all right, we saw a reduction in whatever the component happens to be." So that's ongoing. That'll be delivered to the County within the next couple of months.

The other thing that we're doing for municipalities is, and this will be a little difficult for the County, but we're looking at obviously municipal facilities and operations in terms of energy efficiency, energy reduction, clearly the County has already embarked on that. But if there are other things where we can help, I mean, we can't do an audit of all, I don't know how many buildings the County has, it's hundreds I'm sure. But if there's something in particular, a critical building, a critical group of buildings that we can look at --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

We're already been doing this.

MR. BERG:

You're already doing it. If you need us to review reports --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Including this building.

MR. BERG:

Including this one.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

We've done the audit part.

MR. BERG:

Wonderful. I knew the County was --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

We didn't necessarily do all the fixing part.

MR. BERG:

Right. So, I mean, we can help review things.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

But Legislator Lindsay was the one that pushed for that.

MR. BERG:

That's a beautiful thing. So, again, that would go into this Climate Action Plan as the history. So we can look at that. We can assist with that. We can look at building and land use codes to see if there are ways to move that forward. I know Neal's group has done a lot with that over the last many years with his Clean Energy Task Force. But we can see if there are ways to move that forward.

I think that probably the most critical one in light of the events of the last few weeks is as Neal mentioned, climate adaptation and mitigation. We really need to think about our infrastructure and how vulnerable it is. I think that vulnerability assessments are something where we can help. We can map them. We can map the infrastructure. You already did the mapping. Your mapping department has all these things, but we can work with the task force and say, "okay, well clearly we've got infrastructure -- existing infrastructure that's vulnerable in the following ways. We can perhaps implement some mitigation for existing infrastructure but also let's look at planned infrastructure. I mean, everybody's talking about sewers, some in particular, you know, where we -- where we're thinking about sewerage does it make sense in some of the low lying areas to use certain technologies that are more vulnerable to flooding? Probably not.

So I think that's another important place we need to look and think towards the future of planning for infrastructure in different places. Look for, you know, do we have roads in the right places that'll be, you know, above sea level for our emergency vehicles. So there are a lot of things we

can look at. I think the storm, there's opportunity in disasters and I think that this program fits very nicely with what's happening. I mean, you look at the sea level predictions, the New York State Sea Level Rise Task Force will come out with their final numbers early next year. Their preliminary numbers show one to two foot rise by 2080, which seems like a long ways from now, I won't be here, thank God. But that's with -- that's assuming that we don't have rapid polar ice melt, but we have rapid polar ice melts and now the prediction is four to five foot sea level rise by 2080. And when you think about things like sewer plants and sewage collection systems which have a fifty year life expectancy, all of a sudden 2080 doesn't look that far off. So important that we are talking about this now and we're, I don't know who said that, we're here to help. Should I say that?

MR. LEWIS:

We are here to help.

MR. BERG:

We're here to help.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's the old Ronald Reagan joke, right?

MR. BERG:

I think so, yeah.

MR. LEWIS:

Just a factual thing. On the last point about the sea level rise, I think Andrew Manitt, by the way, is sitting next to me. Andrew Manitt also works with me at the Sustainability Institute and together the two of us co-teach a class at the college. And one of the things when we talk with students about sea level rise over a time period that's looking a century ahead or 50 years ahead it's very hard to see that as particularly significant. You say, "Well, what difference is one or two or three, maybe it is four to five rather than one to two feet. Is that a big deal, you know." And what we all have to take into account is the lesson one of the many lessons that we're going to hopefully learn from this storm is that if you look at Long Island we're much more vulnerable to storms surges than other places. So a couple of feet sea level rise may not sound like a lot, but when you combine that with increased frequency of more severe storms what you see are surges going into places on Long Island that we never experienced before. Let's face it. Long Island has tens of thousands of homes that never once got a drop of water in their basement before that were completely flooded a few weeks ago. So this is a new normal we're living in right now. And it's good that this project is going to look at some of this, but obviously this project is a small part of this overall issue. Really all of Long Island needs to be coming together and talking about significant investments in infrastructure that are desperately needed to protect our systems from storms. One of the few obvious things that's going to happen in terms of LIPA's systems is we have something -- it looks like we have ten substations out of the 40 that were destroyed during the storm that are all going to be raised up six feet as they're being rebuilt. To me, the obvious question is do we know that's enough? That's -- I'm told that's a foot and a half higher than where the storm was. We had a hearing in January where we were told -- we had a whole hearing on the issue of storm hardening and one of the questions was "well, are our substations, you know, raised up?" Well, for the most part, no, but when they're hardened they are. So that's where they meet. Oh, okay. So, well, what's the standard? Well, they had a three foot standard. So they go to Long Beach and they open up the substations after the storm and there's six inches of water that destroyed the equipment. So if it had been four feet or five feet it might of been enough.

So, you know, there's going to be a new standard for all of these infrastructure questions as a result of this storm, but I'm afraid this new standard may not be enough. How do we know that this was some, you know, once-in-a-hundred-years' event. How do we know we're not going to see these kinds of storms much more frequently not to mention the fact that a lot of the protection to our

shoreline has been greatly, you know, taken away. So we're more vulnerable. We may have a storm next week. I mean, so these are real questions about what it would take to set a standard and I'd like to see engineers coming down here. The engineers all got it wrong, by the way. The substations, those are recently rebuilt substations that got destroyed and they were set to higher standards. They were based on engineering predictions. If you read Joye Browns's column, I believe it was yesterday, talking about how nobody had a plan for what to do with major flooding on the South Shore. Well, it's time that we all start to get a plan for it because this may be a much more frequent occurrence. And there are things that government can do here. And we're hoping that this project will help to identify some of these things, but that's just one part of it.

The may efforts here are not about the resilience question, but it is obviously going to be given heightened focus now as a result of this and it is one of the components. So hopefully this will be an area that we'll get some progress with and get some good project ideas from.

But the other things I want to mention is we prepared a Compendium of Long Island Projects Programs and Policies advancing clean energy. And this picks up on David's point that part the reason we want to make sure Suffolk County is one of the Climate Smart Communities is that first of all, as a region we want to see Long Island bring home some of this grant money and get some good projects going on down here and so we want to put our best team on the court and Suffolk County is one of our best performers. So we need you guys on this team.

So if you look at this compendium that we passed around, that we compiles that hadn't been done up until now. It was a big effort and I already introduced Andrew Manitt who played a major role in compiling this and I should point out LIPA, back before the craziness of this storm devoted some staff that they had to help us compile this. You will see really an impressive array of initiatives; we've organized them into different categories. You got the plans and inventories going on. You have the associations that are designed to promote these efforts, one of which we coordinate called the Long Island Clean Energy Leadership Task Force, which Suffolk County has been an active participant in over the years. But also we have the efforts to change codes, which we mentioned and then you got basically efficiency, which can take the realm of U.S. government, have your own facilities. So government facilities need to be more efficient and you talked about Presiding Officer's initiative with getting audits done of government buildings and so that's good. We want to see more of that. But also there's things you can do to help encourage homeowners to be more efficient and then you got things like the Long Island Green Homes Program that some seven different towns are participating in, began in the Town of Babylon. Things like that. So there's things you can do to help motivate and encourage homeowners to do things and then similarly with solar and other renewables. There's things you can do with your own facilities, but then there's things that could be policies that could help motivate and encourage homeowners and individuals to do things.

So we really took a stab at compiling as much of that kind of information. In some respects you might see them as success stories. You may also view this as ideas, you know, feel free to steal your neighbor's ideas. So if a good idea was adopted by a neighboring municipality or such or one of the towns came up with something, maybe the town could do something that's a companion to that. So part of our reason of circulating this when we meet with elected officials is to help generate ideas and I know two weeks ago when we were talking in, I guess it was more than two weeks ago, in Southampton at the end of the meeting one of the councilman went up and introduced a bill based on one of the items that was in the compendium that deals with giving an incentive for hybrid cars at the beaches. So that was an incentive that doesn't really cost government anything except for the cost of a sign, but it's a way to help motivate people and encourage people to be more energy efficient with their vehicle choices, which after what we just went through with gas lines is something that maybe more people would be willing to take a closer look at right now.

But -- so we passed that around and, you know, for the most part what we're saying is we want to talk about the success stories and then work on a plan looking ahead and there's nothing radically

new in what it would be, it's -- we just need to do more of it and, you know, more aggressively; efficiency, renewables, planning, codes, upgrading codes, setting stricter codes and we're going to also hopefully come up with some original ideas that aren't on the table right now that haven't occurred to us yet. But they will come out of this process that we're asking you guys to be a part of.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Thank you very much. It's a -- good job on summarizing. Some of the quick thoughts I'd like to bring forth. I don't know 'cause just frankly from my own classes whenever I query them; "do you think that climate change is being affected by man?" And there's always, the last couple of years I've watched that -- it backslide where more and more kids or young people think that the reason could be climate change occurs because of its cyclical versus man. Now I don't know if there's any members of the Legislature who would side on that side. But I just wanted to point out that I think everyone agrees that there is climate warming going on and that this -- this is a -- it enables us to the possibility to get grants to protect Long Island from climate change issues and so, you know, I just wanted to let that be known that there could be other reasons why you could vote for this and have it make sense.

MR. LEWIS:

Well, I have an analogy, I think I'm stealing it from -- oh, I'm forgetting who I'm stealing it from, but the analogy is that for those who are questioning whether or not the science is strong enough to say that we should be concerned about human contributions to climate change, you know, I hope we can win them over with the argument that the analogy would be someone preparing for the Olympics and they work really hard and they, you know, go to bed early every night and they eat a careful diet and they exercise extensively and maybe they don't win gold. Maybe they make it to the Olympics and they don't win or maybe they just come really close and don't win. And most people would say though, you know, that's not a failure, that wasn't a waste of time and effort, you accomplished something great. You are a stronger and better person for it and we kind of see that in this context. If you do the things we're talking about, we're creating local jobs, we're reducing our reliance on foreign sources of fuel, we're reducing air pollution that comes from burning of fossil fuels. We're keeping money in the local economy because if you have someone do insulation in your attic, for example, you got to pay a local worker to do that and that's keeping money in our economy as opposed to spending more money on fossil fuel would send your money off to the Middle East or far off places. So each of these things are good things.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Right.

MR. LEWIS:

Even if it turns out that the climate change --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

You've taken my simple thought and you've expanded upon it and I like that. That's -- but you're right and I think we're right in that there's more to this for Suffolk County, Long Island than just making a decision on the reasons for climate change.

MR. LEWIS:

Right.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

It's happening.

MR. LEWIS:

Right.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And so thank you for that.

I got a couple questions. The Suffolk County -- the possibilities that -- would there be direct monies to Suffolk County? How do these grants work? You know, I mean, like say if we want to harden, to use our terminology, harden or resilience, is that the other -- the option there? See, I learn. The Bergen Point Sewer plant. We want to make sure that that does not flood.

MR. LEWIS:

That's a great question.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Is there monies for that type of project? Or, you know, what do you foresee? What kind of monies would go to Suffolk County, you know, the possibilities?

MR. BERG:

I think it's a little difficult to answer that yet because they haven't set the criteria. All of the grant programs would be through their regional economic development council. So again, they would weigh in on how best this money is distributed.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

So it hasn't been decided in other words.

MR. BERG:

It hasn't been decided. The anchor projects they did make a point of saying these needed to be innovative and less about and, you know, some may look at that and say well that's maintenance.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Uh-huh.

MR. BERG:

But, you know, so the short answer is I don't know.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I may push for it anyway. You're right.

MR. LEWIS:

That's the short answer. We're waiting on --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

So there's possibilities.

MR. LEWIS:

We're waiting on the criteria to be developed during the course of the next couple of months before that April date that I put out there and we'll know more as we get closer to it. But increasing the resilience of our sewage treatment plants is certainly a good idea I think. You see what's going on in Bay Park right now.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Right.

MR. BERG:

I would add that I --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

We came within this close of overflowing. The Bergen Point plant held and it was, you know, and we have a generator and all sorts of things, we've done all sorts of good stuff already, but it worked and it held. So, you know, we were blessed. Could have been a disaster.

MR. BERG:

I think the other thing with the climate adaptation and this mitigation planning is you're going to see money coming out of FEMA for hazard mitigation so though it may not come through this program what's done for this program would likely make you eligible for other opportunities and particularly FEMA because they already have Hazard Mitigation Program --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Oh, good. That's interesting.

MR. LEWIS:

-- and their sewage plant would qualify for that.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

So this one thing could lead to another.

MR. LEWIS:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Now, these grant monies could go to universities, private organizations, this is -- this is -- just kind of expand on that. Where would these grant -- who is eligible if Suffolk becomes a climate -- a climate County.

MR. LEWIS:

We think they're following the RADC guidelines at this point, which means that everybody could compete. So it could be a government competing directly. It could be an NGO competing. It could be an institution like a hospital or a school or even some private companies. But each one's going to be evaluated and, you know, if it's purely a private company that just wants to build something for the sake of profit, that's going to be a harder case to make. But if it's private company building something and they're doing it in coordination with a governmental entity and it has a component to it that fits into this category, well then that might be something that would play out. But at this point our understanding is that it's -- that anybody can compete.

MR. BERG:

Yeah, I would think so.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That anybody can compete. And the fact that Suffolk is now a Climate Smart Community makes them eligible.

MR. LEWIS:

Well, everyone's eligible.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

To be to --

MR. LEWIS:

But we're hoping that when it's weighed --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I see, right.

MR. LEWIS:

-- there's going to be points given for those that are in the Climate Smart communities and are making proposals that are consistent with the Climate Action Plan that that community adopted. So it's just meant to give an extra boost in the weighing of the grant proposals so there's greater chance that some of the grants from our area will win the competition for funding.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Because you're government is behind you.

MR. LEWIS:

Yes, and I'm sure there's going to be encouragement of coordinating and, you know, combining efforts so you could see a scenario where the town has said we really want to do this project and then the government -- the private entity says well, we'll build it and then maybe the NGO has a role, you know, so stuff where it's combining, where it's multiple governments coming together, those could all be benefits. But basically speaking it enhances all of us if we're in these programs to have a better shot and I think Suffolk County being a Climate Smart Community will hopefully help us bring home grant money to Suffolk County.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Right. Okay, good.

And the last thing I wanted to bring forward for consideration; the -- what is the -- will there be an approach to the regional planning post-Sandy. Is Sandy going to be part of this -- the thinking of how this program is going to be developed? Is that going to be a part of the thinking?

MR. LEWIS:

That seems logical.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Or part of the planning? It does to me too.

MR. LEWIS:

You know, what I kind of liked about coming here today is this is the first day where I'm doing something that's not related --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Not LIPA related.

MR. LEWIS:

Not LIPA related.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I can get into the hardening of your transmissions stations, which I thought you should be smacked for, but that's another issue. But go ahead.

MR. LEWIS:

So the point is that we had one phone call today on the Cleaner Greener Communities Coordination Committee so up until today that regular call has been, you know, put off because of the storm. So I think some of what you're asking here is stuff we just don't know yet.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. All righty. Are there any questions from my colleagues? Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to pose this question to you just -- and I'm not sure if you know it not, but just curious if you've heard of any discussions from the towns and villages about chaining there -- changing or, I guess State law, would be changing the building codes to kind of address this potential new normal. As you stated earlier I had spoken to a woman in South Amityville and Chichester in the Village of Amityville and she said her family has been in this home for over 130 years. They've never experienced a drop of water and their first floor was flooded out. So if this is the new norm, you know, there are homes as they're being reconstructed, you know, there should be building codes to kind of build in those safety measures to identify the change in the climate and weather -- future potential weather conditions.

MR. BERG:

I was at a meeting this morning and there was a representative from the U.S. Geological Service for the Long Island office and they have funding now to actually document where the flooding was on Long Island, where the surge, the height of the surge because they had meters out, the tidal surge, how far inland flood waters went throughout the Island. So I think that once that's documented, and of course this is one event, and do we plan the rest of our codes on one event? No, but certainly we want to consider this. And FEMA has recently revised their floodplain maps. It's quite likely they may revise them a second time based on this storm and based on, I think, their new maps already take into account climate change and sea level rise. But given the rapid change in the predictions for sea level rise those will probably be revised yet again.

So, I think -- and most of the building codes now are based on those FEMA maps so if you're in a particular flood zone as defined by FEMA then your required to build according to their -- what's in that code. So I would hope that we change that and address that. And what we do about existing buildings, which is most of Long Island, that's a much harder question.

MR. LEWIS:

My two cents would be, and I think we're all -- these are great questions we need to get answers to. For example, with homes that were flooded we really should be looking at not having electric running, you know, below like a five foot mark or so in the future. There should be, you know, the boxes for the fuses and whatnot should be not on the first floor, not in the basement particularly. There should be stuff done about sheetrock, that you don't use sheetrock for the basement or the first floor. There are some basic things we could do with codes that would make homes much more resilient to storms. And none of that's on the books right now.

And, you know, I want to point something out. I've been on the LIPA board for three years, before that I was on a thing called the Major Storm Review Panel a thing that nobody even knows exists, but anyway, we would meet once a year in July and watch LIPA do the drill for the hurricane. And so I sat through that for three years and I called the person who replaced me after I was on the board we got someone else to fill my position, and he confirmed for me for what I knew, which is never once in all those drills did anybody say, "excuse me, if there's significant flooding what do we do with those homes?" It was never -- never a plan. And every person I talk to, just speaking today with someone who was flooded, "I've been in the house for 35 years, never a drop of water and it wasn't just a small flood it was five feet into the, you know."

So this was something that was totally unplanned for and unfortunately I don't know exactly what the towns can do with their own codes because normally the town building code is a -- is essentially a carrying out of the State town building code. So it's done by the State and towns are not really permitted to set a stricter code on their own initiative. We had done some work, as it was mentioned earlier, on the area of building codes for energy efficiency purposes, where you can change the insulation and require air ceiling and all that. And that was -- our research showed that that was the one exception to State code where towns were allowed to do stricter codes.

So one easy thing maybe the Legislature could do is just say "if we can't come up with a better code quickly maybe we can at least authorize towns to be allowed to set stricter codes." And frankly I don't think it's that hard to think through some of the elements of what would go into those stricter codes. Let's just get all the electric out of where the line was that this storm went to is the most obvious thing. But I think you're asking a great question. Like I said, sitting through those storm briefs no one ever asked the question. What if these -- we had tens of thousands of homes that are flooded. What are we going to do about it? And as it turned out it was not clear who was supposed to take a look at the electric. You know, one of the amazing things during the storm, a few days after the storm there was this rumor that people were using the pretext of being a LIPA employee to get into peoples' houses. So everybody said, just a reminder LIPA never asks to get in your house. The electric company never comes in the house. They bring the electric to the house, you hire an electrician to deal with the rest of your house. Then all of a sudden we had to reverse that because there was no one else with the resources to be able to say we got to send people door to door and check every single house otherwise houses could go on fire. That plan should of existed. There should have been already, you know, people hired under contract. Just like when it comes to fuel for the LIPA workers, there was never a shortage of fuel because the plan did cover that. They got thousands of gallons of diesel fuel set aside by contract, that it existed and it was ready. But there was no plan of getting an army of people to do surveys. We had to call them surveys not inspections 'cause we didn't have enough certified electricians to do an inspection.

So these kinds of -- it just wasn't thought about. Well, it's time we start thinking about it. This is the new normal. Tens of thousands of homes on Long Island were flooded. And we had no plans for how to deal with that. We have no rules to say you can't rebuild the exact same house in the exact same spot with the exact same electrical system that you had before this storm. There's no rules against that right now and odds are it'll probably take a while before we could adopt such rules. So I think you're asking exactly the right question that needs to be asked in terms the code question here.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's interesting. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you very much. Thank you, Neal, for your presentation. Appreciate it. I have to be careful not to let my philosophical meanderings get in the way of common sense and I think that's what the Chairman sort of pointed out and maybe try to illicit a little bit from me.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

You're getting to know me pretty well, Tom.

LEG. CILMI:

And, you know, I think part of what -- part of what the gentleman from Cameron Engineering spoke about in terms of, you know, not having knee jerk reactions or planning our livings based on the events of one catastrophic storm, I think is also something that we should take to heart, with that said clearly, you know, it's unlikely that things happen once, you know, and we had Irene and now we had this storm and I think it's entirely plausible that we, you know, at some point in the future we'll have another storm of similar magnitude and I think it's prudent on all of your part to the plan for that and anticipate that. But I don't think we should ignore the role of the smart consumer. I mean, you know, if you don't like snow chances are you're not going to move to, you know, Aspen. So if you object to the idea of flooding and the possibility of a storm then chances are you probably don't want to have a home on the water. And I think it's interesting the -- it'll be interesting to see the results that this storm has on property values, on waterfront property values, and how does that change the complexion of, you know, our entire Long Island.

So, but with that said, I do have a couple of specific questions that I was a little confused about. Neal, you said that Cameron had won sort a --

MR. LEWIS:

A grant.

LEG. CILMI:

-- won some sort of a bid or something, contract.

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah.

LEG. CILMI:

Just explain to me because you said there's this grant money out there, Suffolk County plays a role in it, but the Sustainability Institute is involved. Who selected Cameron? Just explain that whole --

MR. LEWIS:

So there's two steps. One is to do what we're doing today, which is to get the word out and plan and explain that this program exists and work with municipalities to become part of the program and to adopt a plan that we talked about, the Climate Action Plan, all that. The separate run is referred to as phase two where there'll be grant opportunities that people will be competing to -- competing for. Cameron Engineering was awarded the grant by NYSERDA and there's actually five agencies listed on the paperwork because this is a sort of combined effort. DEC was originally LEED but NYSERDA, I think, is generally referred to as the LEED now, but either way. So it was a State grant and we're a team so we're getting some grant money also to work with municipalities to help the municipalities get into this program, be competitive and complete all the elements of it that we discussed in the meeting. We're kind of -- that's our role, sort of get yas out there and get it going. Then phase two is when we compete when everybody on Long Island and across the State has a chance to compete for grants under phase two and that will be completely different. So, I don't --

MR. BERG:

Let me just clarify. I think when Neal is talking about a grant we were awarded a contract with NYSERDA through a competitive process. That grants would come later and be administered --

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah, that's a good distinction. Yeah.

MR. BERG:

-- by NYSERDA. And we applied together for this RFP that was issued by NYSERDA.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So Cameron is acting through the Sustainability. I guess the marriage of the two --

MR. LEWIS:

Well, actually, we're working through them, actually.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

MR. BERG:

We're working for NYSERDA. Cameron Engineering was the prime on the contract and we're working -- we brought the Sustainability Institute in based on the years of work they've already done in this field and the outreach that they've had with the communities on Long Island.

LEG. CILMI:

So the marriage of the two of the private sector entity and the Sustainability Institute do you think then was a factor in terms of your receiving this contract?

MR. BERG:

I would like to think so. Either that or Neal's good looks, I'm not sure.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So, in other words, it happened prior to -- it was part of the contract proposal that the two of you --

MR. LEWIS:

Yeah.

MR. BERG:

Yes. Absolutely.

MR. LEWIS:

Right. We've been running the program Clean Energy Leadership Task for years.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

MR. LEWIS:

So our ability to outreach to government and encourage them to be part of these kinds of initiatives was perhaps established, but we don't have the kind of engineering capabilities that Cameron Engineering brings to the table so they were the prime and made the case that we'll run around and try and set up the meetings. I think for this meeting, for example, my name is listed, you know, that kind of thing. But once it gets down to the task force is sitting down and working on developing the plans, that's where Cameron is going really sort of play more of a lead role to point out priorities and bring some of their engineering expertise to bear.

LEG. CILMI:

In your opinion, either literally or figuratively, theoretically if not literally, is this bill that's sponsored by Legislators Horsley and Hahn a prerequisite for some of this grant funding that you're saying might be available?

MR. LEWIS:

No, we're not saying it's a requirement. It's not a prerequisite. We're just saying we -- and we don't know for sure cause they haven't finished a process of adapting the criteria, but our understanding from the various conference calls and such is that under consideration is the idea that this would be something that gives it extra points when a grant is being evaluated. If you can imagine it's going to be grants from all over the State and various different categories, so they're going to set up like a matrix, you get a point for, you know, extra coordination, multiple entities coming together. You get a point for how many jobs you create, you know, so there's going to be this way of weighing and evaluating the grants. And the talk is, but again it hasn't been finalized, but we can't wait until it's finalized cause that'll be kind of too late, but the talk is that those communities that are Climate Smart, and understand, some of the Climate Smart communities adopted the resolution years -- several years ago, most of them did several years ago, so, you know, most of them were already Climate Smart so it wasn't so much a motivation regarding the grant. But at this point I'm looking around Long Island and I'm looking at this compendium that we did and I'm saying one of our shining stars is the County of Suffolk and we really need them in this competition so we have a -- enhances our chances of bringing home funding. But it's absolutely not a prerequisite and we're really not sure exactly how it's going to be handled because it hasn't been adopted yet in terms of the criteria.

MR. BERG:

I would also add the money that's coming, \$90 million comes from the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative that's generating those funds.

MR. LEWIS:

That's right.

MR. BERG:

And the regional -- it's a -- what is it? Five states I believe, that have got together and it's basically a carbon trading group, a carbon tax basically on those -- all the utilities in those five states that generates that money. And so it really is directly connected to greenhouse gas emissions so I think that communities that have made a commitment to reduce greenhouse gases in the, at least in the medium and long-term will stand a better chance of being awarded that funding. But as Neal says, not a prerequisite, and again, we don't know what the criteria that NYSERDA are going to place on that grant program.

LEG. CILMI:

And the funding will be awarded to the County in this case or would it be awarded to the Sustainability Institute?

MR. LEWIS:

No, it won't be us. We won't be involved necessarily at all when they get to phase of that program. We don't know if they're going to award a contract to some entity to manage that program. More likely they're going to do it themselves. So it would be on an RFP for grant funding that came out of NYSERDA or perhaps out of DEC or both agencies and would just be out for all municipalities, private entities, non-profits, institutions presumably to respond to. So it wouldn't necessarily involve us. But one of the things that we're supposed to be doing now is to encourage municipalities, including the County, to sort of think out in the -- to the next three years to the fact that this money is available out there and that the communities that have taken more steps towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. And to your point before about, you know, climate change, not a climate change, it's still about energy efficiency and adaptation infrastructure. So it's, you know, the other point is really, I mean, it's important, but it's still a good --

LEG. CILMI:

The adaptive part is clear.

MR. LEWIS:

The adaptive part is clear.

LEG. CILMI:

The adaptive part is clear.

MR. LEWIS:

Correct.

LEG. CILMI:

So do you think it's in our best interest then we then should really, to be the most prepared for this -- for these grant applications, we then should probably partner with not only the Sustainability Institute, but probably Sustainable Long Island, Citizens Campaign, whatever -- whatever agencies are out there that -- that are, you know, working in this realm.

MR. BERG:

I think that's frequently true of a lot of grant programs. Most agencies want to see cooperation and coordination between the public sector, the private sector and the not-for-profit sector. That's always a good thing and particularly in programs like this where part of the initiative is to reach out to the community at large and certainly a lot of the entities that you mentioned are doing that successfully and would probably be good partners for the County.

LEG. CILMI:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Anyone else like to be heard? We're good? All right. Gentlemen, thank you very much. We appreciate you coming down, explaining this to us and we'll -- what we'll do is we'll take this right up as an introductory resolution.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

1950 - Adopting Climate Smart Community goals in the County of Suffolk. (Horsley) I'll make a motion to approve.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Second by Legislator Lindsay. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **APPROVED (VOTE: 6-0 - P.O. Lindsay included in the vote)** It moves from the committee now to full Legislature. Thank you very much.

MR. LEWIS:

Great. Thank you.

MR. BERG:

Thank you very much.

MR. LEWIS:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

There you go.

MR. LEWIS:

We have one other item that we gave -- that'll be handed out to you. But thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

And I appreciate you coming down, Neal, I know you guys are busy these days. See ya. Okay. **1953 - Improving oversight of the County's Tourism Promotion Program. (Pres. Off.)** Anything on the motion on the floor? Legislator Lindsay, this is your bill, apparently.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I see that.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Well, we'll --

P.O. LINDSAY:

I'll make a motion.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. There's a motion and I'll second the motion. Anything on the motion? Carolyn, are you guys all right with this? You are? Okay, good. All right. We have a motion to approve. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. It's been approved. **APPROVED (VOTE: 6-0 - P.O. Lindsay included in the vote)**

1994 - Accepting and appropriating a 100% reimbursed grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Emergency Solutions Grant program and authorizing the County Executive to execute agreements. (Co. Exec.) And to put on the consent calendar. Motion by Legislator Gregory, seconded by Legislator Cilmi. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **APPROVED (VOTE: 6-0 - P.O. Lindsay included in the vote)**

And that looks like our agenda. And, yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Oh, she left. Nevermind.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Who are you looking for; Carolyn?

LEG. CILMI:

No, not Carolyn.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Last one out of the room. We almost got you there. Okay. Very good. All right. The committee's adjourned.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 3:03 P.M.

{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY