

**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, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Wednesday, June 12, 2013.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Legislator Wayne Horsley - Chairman/Deputy Presiding Officer  
Legislator Lou D'Amaro - Vice-Chair  
Legislator Thomas Cilmi  
Legislator Kara Hahn  
Legislator Stern

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature  
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature  
Michael Pitcher - Aide to P.O. Lindsay  
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern  
Claire Mangelli - Aide to D.P.O. Horsley  
Justin Littell - Aide to Legislator D'Amaro  
Sharen Wagner - Budget Review Office  
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick  
Renee Ortiz - Assistant Deputy Clerk  
Mark Lesko - Executive Director, Accelerate Long Island  
Carolyn Fahey - Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator  
Rick Brand - Newsday  
All other interested parties

**MINUTES TAKEN AND TRANSCRIBED BY:**

Gabrielle Skolom - Court Stenographer

*(\*The meeting was called to order at 1:36 p.m. \*)*

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Welcome to the Economic Development and Energy Committee meeting. May we please all stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

*(\*Salutation\*)*

All righty. Welcome, everybody, to the Economic Development and Energy Committee meeting. As I stated before, it's an honor to present our presenter today Mark Lesko, who is the director of Accelerate Long Island, and many of you've known him through the years, former supervisor, prosecutor, New York State Economic Development Council for Long Island, and the list goes on and on and on.

Mark, you want to come on up and give us your presentation on Accelerate Long Island. Mark is a good and dear friend. I appreciate you being here, and I'm sorry that we made you wait a little bit, but, hey, Parks is interesting so you gotta...

**MR. LESKO:**

I was just having flashbacks.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

I can appreciate that.

**MR. LESKO:**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for having me, and I appreciate the opportunity. It's an honor to be before the committee, and hopefully we'll be able to give the committee a real quick update on what we're doing with Accelerate Long Island, and obviously if you have questions or comments.

We are a startup ourselves, so we are very much a work in progress. I want to underscore that. We've come a long way in the nine months since I started with Accelerate, but we're certainly open to suggestions, so I would love to hear them if you have any. I think we're loading up the PowerPoint as we speak, but I kind of start all this by saying -- and we've set the bar pretty high at Accelerate Long Island. I, for reasons that should be obvious, because I left a great job at Brookhaven to start this venture, I firmly believe that this is the key to our economic future on Long Island. I think while, you know, recruitment efforts are important in terms of trying to recruit existing large companies to come to Long Island, I think the past few decades have shown us that those type of efforts, frankly, rarely bear fruit and that we need to tend our own garden and grow our companies, and we have the talent, we have all of the elements in place to do that, whether it be capital available on Long Island or nearby New York City, entrepreneurs who are motivated and talented, and research ideas or just basic ideas for startup companies that are in abundance. We are recently determined that we are working with or are connected to at least 100 technology-based startups here on Long Island. We'll get into the breakdown of those numbers, but that's a very important number. That's an exciting number. It's exciting because it allows us, obviously, because of percentages, to give you an analysis or snapshot in terms of the industries that those companies are in, but it also is a pretty impressive number just generally. So when we talk to our counterparts in New York City, and we all know about New York City and how vibrant that ecosystem is, the number, hundreds, does stand out. We get -- it does generate kind of a wow factor because I don't think anybody quite realizes that we have that number of startups. And most of those startups are very high quality, and a lot of them are funded which is exciting. So I think we're all teed up here. I guess I hit the next button. Okay. So, Mr. Chairman, if you wouldn't mind, maybe I can go through my PowerPoint.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

The show is yours.

**MR. LESKO:**

So the region receives approximately \$1.2 billion in annual research funding at our five major institutions: Brookhaven Lab, Cold Spring Harbor, Hofstra, North Shore LIJ Health System, and Stony Brook; and honestly, I think three, and to a certain extent, four of those -- North Shore LIJ being the fourth -- of those institutions are present in whole or in part in Suffolk County. And that's quite a bit of research funding available for those institutions, and one of the fundamental premises that we work under at Accelerate is that what we haven't done regionally is translate that research funding into commercial entities that are job creators for the region. Now, that's not the sole purpose for those research dollars, obviously. A lot of that funding goes to basic research that are solving the world's problems, and not every research project will result in a company, but many, many will and many should, and Accelerate was formed in part to help assist that process.

Just for your purposes, just to break that \$1.2 billion number down, BNL received \$691 million in annual research dollars; Cold Spring, 81 million; Hofstra, 9 million; North Shore LIJ, 280 million. A large amount of that goes to their Feinstein Institute; and then Stony Brook University, \$211 million.

So Accelerate Long Island is a unique collaboration, and we are truly unique. We have now pretty significant connections to sister organizations throughout the country. I visit many of them, and all have commented that we are a truly unique collaboration that kind of puts us at the forefront of a new brand of organization that's emerging nationally. And the core partners are, as I mentioned, our major academic and research organizations as well as our business community. And we have two fundamental goals; one is to help commercialize research, as I mentioned, and the other is to do something that sounds a bit amorphous but is incredibly important to create the framework for successful startups, and that's to help create an entrepreneurial ecosystem, and that ecosystem is really the secret sauce that exists out in Silicon Valley and up in Boston, and New York City has made great strides in developing an ecosystem in New York City, and that's really what other regions of the country are trying to develop.

And then, really boiling it down, that's the community entrepreneurs, funders, mentors, industry types, and researchers who generally know each other, have an ability to interact, and come up with great ideas that will end up resulting in great companies.

Our other board members include the Long Island association. Kevin Law, who is the CEO and president of the LIA, is the chairman of the board of Accelerate Long Island; Canrock Ventures, CA Technologies; Ernst and Young; Farrell Fritz Lawfirm; Jove Equity Partners; and the Rauch Foundation. Those organizations are all represented on our board.

So to accomplish our two main goals, we've developed creating an entrepreneurial ecosystem. We've developed three programs in the nine months I've been at Accelerate. The first is something we're calling "Accelerate Assist," and that's really a mentorship program. We'll get into the details in a second. The second is something we're calling "Accelerate Ecosystem," and that's, again, that kind of amorphous ecosystem building effort that involves putting people together in creative environments so that they can hopefully collaborate and create companies. And then the third program is something we're calling "Accelerate Funding," and we, along with our private partners, the Long Island Emerging Technology Fund, about a year ago or so, created by all accounts, the first two seed funds dedicated to funding technology based startup companies, maybe in the history of Long Island. And so we've been busy at work generating deal flow for those seed funds, hearing pitches from companies -- we'll get into the details in a minute -- and we're really on the cusp of being able to announce some investments that are super, super exciting. So that's more on that --

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

You're not going to do it here today with us?

**MR. LESKO:**

No, I'm not. I'm going to tease you.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Ah, come on.

**MR. LESKO:**

We're not quite ready yet. So we'll start with the funding. As I mentioned, we had a \$500,000 grant from the Regional Economic Development Council first round of grants from the State that provided the funding for the Accelerate Long Island seed fund. We're actually technically a grant fund, so we administer those state grant funds, and we have to have a private matching partner and that is the new Long Island Emerging Technologies Fund. They have \$750,000 to invest. Three partners created that fund, including Marc Fasciano from Canrock Ventures and David Calone, who is also chair of the planning commission, as you know, and his day job is CEO of Jove Equities, so those two guys have really stepped up to the plate and been wonderful partners.

I spend a lot of my time in New York City talking to funding sources, so that ranges from seed-stage investors all the way up to big-time venture capital firms. We have great relationships with the local Long Island Angel Network; also with the New York Angels, which is a very active angel network in the city; Golden Seeds, which is a, I think the third or fourth largest angel network in the country, but they are focused primarily, I think, exclusively on women-run businesses; as well as a lot of big-name venture firms, and the reception has been across the board very, very positive. They're excited about what we're doing on Long Island. They're particularly excited at taking a look at some of the hundred companies that we're involved, and I think we're really at the point in the next upcoming months here of being able to showcase some of our superstar companies to those, I'll call them, "bigfoot investors" in New York City. And that was one of the other ultimate aims of Accelerate Long Island is to start to kind of unlock some of that capital that's in New York City and have it flow east as opposed to Silicon Valley or north to Boston.

Accelerate Assist. So this is a program that kind of replicates a lot of some of the programs that exist and are successful nationwide. Mentorship is a big piece of the equation here, so you get these young, exciting start-up entrepreneurs who have never started a business in their life so they need help. They need money, and we talked about that previously, but they also need folks that run businesses to help them understand how to put a business together, how to run it, and so that's what we do. We do it for free. So we -- you have to be admitted into the program. Right now, we have more than a dozen companies that are involved at certain various stages in Accelerate Assist. We were very lucky. We were able to recruit three amazing entrepreneurs and residents -- that's another term of art in this space -- who work with the startups. We start with a brainstorming session, and we put them on three-to-six month plans where they have to, you know, meet certain milestones. The lead entrepreneur and resident, I should tell you about specifically. His name is Kevin Hesselberg. So Kevin was, up until December, the CEO of a company called OpenLink Financial, which not many people know about but is the second largest software company on Long Island. He took that company from about seven million, I think, in revenues to almost \$400 million in revenues, and then it was ultimately acquired in December, so Kevin's a super, super guy who lives in Kings Park; great member of the community and has devoted his time to helping us put this program together, so he's been great.

We also have a professional services component, so many of these companies -- one of the first things they have to do is protect their intellectual property. In other words, file patent applications, and that's costly, and so we've been able to build a network of law firms on Long Island who are

willing to give deep discounts for that type of service from filing provisional patent applications, and that's a huge benefit to technology-based startups because, number one, they have no idea how to do that, and number two, if they don't protect their IP and somebody else files identical patent application, then they're basically -- their company's dead, so that's a company killer if they don't handle that appropriately.

And the third component of Accelerate Assist is a real active internship program. My assistant director, Stacey Sikes, who is here today -- I should give a shout-out to one of my other staff -- former staff members, I should, Debbie Tinnerello. Debbie's wonderful. But Stacey, among all the other things that we're doing, really spearheads the internship program. We have interns that range from undergrads all the way to post-docs, to post-PhD researchers, and we've slotted them with probably about 20 different companies throughout the Island and they're having a great time, and they add quite a bit of value to the companies. Free labor, supersmart kids, super motivated, and we think out of that we're actually going to see some entrepreneurs down the road.

Ecosystem; so what is an ecosystem? You know, think of rainforest; think of coral reefs; you know, think of a bunch of different entities living and coexisting together and feeding off of each other and growing into this big fertile thing. I know that doesn't really sound real, but it is real, and it's incredibly important for these entrepreneurs because, think about it: These entrepreneurs do things that are really hard, right, so they have to start up a company so they have to be competitive; they have to identify a market, pain in the market, a product, sell the product, get people to pay them for the product, and get funded so that they can meet their payroll and develop the product before -- you know, until they hit their break-even point and then they no longer need investment. All that's super tough. They have to be smart enough to develop the intellectual property because these are all technology-based companies, and, you know, they had to do this alone, and they have to do this where they are basically making nothing, so they're living on, like, peanuts on Long Island. That's a lot to handle. And so what they need is a community of similar-minded folks that are involved in the same endeavor so that they can kind of feel like they're not alone, and they can have peers and they can have mentors, and they can have collaborators and maybe even cofounders of companies.

So we've developed a series of events that we've kind of somewhat branded that help bring these entrepreneurs together in a meaningful way. The first we're calling "Idea Camp." It's modelled after kind of a phenomenon in New York City that's happened recently called "bar camps" to run conferences, and, basically, one thing to realize about these entrepreneurs is that they're very creative, but they're very network focused, so they're not hierarchal; they don't take orders well, and so -- but they collaborate very well. So if you mash them together in idea camp, which we do -- in the last one, I think we had about 60 of these entrepreneurs together, they come up with what they want to talk about, and the group just starts talking. In the last one, they spent an hour talking about sales and marketing techniques, and it was -- you know, frankly, a lot of it went over my head, but it was great for them, and I think they got a lot out of it. And that group number is growing every time we have these idea camps.

A key ingredient in idea camp is beer. I don't know if I should say that here, but it seems like that's a key ingredient for entrepreneurs just generally. They like to work really hard, and they like to party really hard, and if you can kind of bring that together under one roof, it's really magical.

The next time of event we have is something called the Bio CEO dinners; Ernst and Young sponsors these. So we bring 15 to 20 or so talented biotech CEOs together with a very seasoned CEO of a pharmaceutical company or a biotech company, and they just pepper them with questions. So the first one we did was with Colin Goddard, who is the former CEO of OSI Pharmaceutical, who now has a startup himself at the incubator at Stony Brook. Colin is amazing and spent over three hours with 20 superstar biotech CEOs, imparting wisdom, answering questions, that type of thing. That's just

hugely valuable.

The last series of events that we hold right now are -- CohnReznick actually sponsored this one. It's a post-doc, post-PhD social event where we do a little bit of a presentation. That is a community that has a tremendous amount of potential, particularly in Suffolk County. There are hundreds of post-docs that are at all of our research institutions, and because the funding for research has dried up, it's had an effect on tenure track positions. There are less of them in academia, so these post-docs now are looking at other job options, and one of the primary things that they're looking at is starting up companies. We're working startup companies and these guys and women have figured out two things that are critical to being part of a successful startup: One, they're, like, supersmart, obviously; but secondly, they've learned how to survive on \$30,000 a year, which is typically what they make as a post-doc. So they've figured out how to pay for a car and pay their rent and eat; you know, they don't have a mortgage so they are portable, and you can plug them into a startup, and they can actually survive. So we're seeing a lot of talented people come out of that pool of folks, and we think that that's going to be a real driver in terms of startup activity on Long Island in the future.

Last little thing I'll mention here, we entered into a strategic alliance with the Long Island Forum For Technology and LISTNet, two wonderful organizers who have very, very large networks, LIFFT, primarily in manufacturing, LISTNet in software, and they have been great partners cosponsoring events and that type of thing, and so they've been helping us build the ecosystem.

I do want to share this with you. Brad Feld -- you probably have never heard of him -- he is a very successful serial entrepreneur out of Boulder, Colorado who is one of the gurus in this very quickly emerging kind of startup ecosystem building methodology creation. There's a lot of big thinkers in this field that have thought long and hard about how do you create these type of ecosystems like the one in Silicon Valley. And he's come up with something he calls the "Boulder Thesis." It's four principals. I think it's actually instructive for folks interested in economic development. It's certainly has been something that I found to be impactful in terms of how I run Accelerate.

One, first and foremost, entrepreneurs must lead this effort. It has to be led by entrepreneurs. Government, non-profits, like Accelerate Long Island, funders, academic organizations, they can assist, they can facilitate, they can be what are called "feeders" in terms of helping feed the ecosystem, but the leaders are the folks out in front who are actually putting themselves on the line and starting up companies. And, actually, those that have been successful that have made a lot of money at this are the ones that are really, really the leaders of these ecosystems. They've been there, they've done that, they've walked the walk, they know how to talk the talk, and they are just perfect mentors for, you know, the young entrepreneurs in the community.

Second, the leaders must have a long-term commitment. This takes a real, real long time, all right. So particularly, think of it this way. You know, we have two seed funds, and we are now racing, I mean moving at an incredibly fast pace to try to deploy the capital that we have available. But it takes a while because you have to listen to the pitches and make the right decision, and of that group of companies you are interested, conduct due diligence, and, you know, do a lot of the rigorous financial analysis that you all are very familiar with doing at the governmental level, but it just takes a lot of time, and people have to understand. Then creating a successful startup takes a long time; it doesn't happen in a year or two. To really get traction, you're talking about a three-to-five to sometimes ten-year time horizon, so we've just got to be patient.

Third, you have to be inclusive, so you can't be exclusive, so anybody who wants to be part of the ecosystem, you need to welcome them with open arms. Not everybody is going to be an active participant in the long-term, but you have to be willing to open up the ecosystem to everybody.

And fourth, you have to have activities to keep these entrepreneurs engaged because, otherwise, they are in their garages or their basement writing software or doing whatever they're doing in their silos, and it vitally important to have these activities, and that's one of the things that we do at Accelerate. We're very mindful of that. We are always having something every couple of weeks to keep these folks engaged.

Moving very quickly, I think I mentioned we've connected with 100 startups. I keep a whiteboard in my office. I list them all, so I see them as my babies. Hopefully that whiteboard will be too small very soon, so we'll have to have a bigger one. And just -- this is probably of some interest to you -- the breakdown in terms of the first hundred that we've touched, about half, 47 percent, are in the IT space; that's not surprising. It's the space where it's probably, quote, unquote easiest to develop a startup company, about a quarter in life sciences, biotech medical devices. We have a huge potential on Long Island in terms of biotech. The timelines there and the capital requirements are much different than any other sector because timelines -- because of the FDA approval process, it just takes a long time to get a new drug approved, and the capital costs associated with that are pretty extensive, so you're talking multiple millions of dollars to get a company fully funded.

Energy clean tech, 17 percent. I'll give a shout-out to one of our good partners, the Clean Energy Business Incubator Program at the Advanced Energy Center at Stony Brook, right up north of us. David Hamilton there runs a great virtual incubator, and most of the successful startup energy companies are being serviced out of that program. Health care IT is about 10 percent. And then we have a very exciting kind of new sector. It's not necessarily new, but it's one that we're newly identifying. I've been working with, among others, Senator LaValle on this and much more on this later. But there's kind of an agribio-food-tech sector, and I think those of us, particularly in Suffolk County, that are interested in startups and interested in economic development should engage and take a look at that sector, and it really ranges everywhere from kind of hardcore agribio research that's being conducted at Stony Brook, BNL, and Cold Spring Harbor, anything from genetically-modified tomatoes to some other kind of genomic-based research to microbreweries to vineyards to shellfish restoration efforts to the farm-to-table movement in organic farms. There's a great incubator out in Calverton now that Stony Brook runs, and we've been engaged with them through Senator LaValle. More on this later. I think we're going to have some activity over the next six months on this.

But we think there's a tremendous opportunity. People have to, I think, realize that there's a technology to this, and they are startups, and they're successful. You just got to look at the wine industry to see that. You really do have a vibrant cluster, and many of those vineyards are startups, and there's new ones emerging every year, and there really is a science to winemaking, as well know, and we all love wine. There's an alcohol theme here; I probably shouldn't overemphasize that.

The challenges and opportunities, it's kind of interesting because there's some similarities on the lists. The challenges, a lack of local venture capital, that's something that we work on on a daily basis, so there's kind of two pieces to that. One is to try to steer some of the capital that exists, particularly investors in New York City and have them look eastward to Long Island. The other -- I think the more important area in terms of available capital are local high-net worth families and individuals who typically don't invest their money on Long Island but they live here, and there's a lot of wealth on Long Island and a lot of folks that are investing that wealth, but they oftentimes don't do it in Long Island-based startup companies, and a lot of that is because they just don't know they exist. So part of what we try to do is promote the fact that we do have some good investment opportunities locally, and when you kind of open their eyes and lay this out for them, the high-net worth folks, a lot of them are very interested in, actually, investing locally.

High cost of living, we all know about that. That really does impact the ability to scale up a startup. So you have your entrepreneur, they get funded; now they have to go higher 10 or 15 software engineers. The high cost of living on Long Island just generally does impact their ability to attract a workforce.

Lack of exciting environment for entrepreneurs. As I mentioned, the entrepreneurial class, those young, you know, software company workers, they work really hard and they play really hard, and that is one of the areas that we've seen. It does -- like I said, it comes up quite a bit when companies are expanding and trying to attract, you know, the 20- and 30-somethings. Invariably, they ask, Where are the restaurants, where are the bars, where am I going to go at night, that type of thing. We have seen -- I should kind of footnote that. We have seen a little spike in exciting activity in Huntington in the Village, there's kind of a collection of about a half dozen really super exciting startups there lead by a company called Work Market, and I believe Work Market was one of the first companies to receive boost benefits through the IDA, and Jeff Leventhal there is one of the most, you know, well known and exciting entrepreneurs in the country, frankly. So there's a little cluster forming in Huntington; keep your eye on that, and you could see some real job growth in Huntington in the upcoming months and years.

Relationship with New York City, always a bit of a tension for Long Island. We see it as an opportunity, so an opportunity in terms of accessing workforce, accessing capital, accessing ideas, and for companies that are expanding in New York City -- remember, they have about 4,000 startups there -- some of those companies are experiencing, you know, exponential growth. The real estate costs we are actually competitive when you compare us to New York City in price per square foot. So when those companies go from, like, 50 employees to, like, 500, Long Island is pretty nicely positioned to attract that company to move out as long as you're close enough to New York City where you can kind of reverse commute. And so we're actually seeing a little bit of interest in that area, where companies, they just can't afford the New York City real estate values, they are thinking about coming to places like Mineola, Hicksville, even as far east as Farmingdale, that type of Route 110 corridor.

Opportunities. Mentioned the research capabilities; they're amazing. Right now, we have this unique collaboration among our research institutions. Really, you don't see that anywhere really in the country. And we're starting to create some buzz. We got a great article recently, and there's a whole kind of new technology-focused media out there. A lot of it's online, so there's -- one of the leading outlets is called Exconomy (ph), and they did a big profile of Long Island and the startup scene on Long Island, which was pretty cool. And like I mentioned, we see the relationship with New York City as an opportunity, not so much a challenge. So that's kind of where we are with Accelerate Long Island, and hopefully you're as excited as I am about it, and if you have any questions or concerns or issues, I'd love to hear them.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Mark, that's -- I just love your excitement. That's why this is a perfect avenue for you. I really, I'm impressed.

I think, my first question would go to -- well, I've got two. One would be, and you had mentioned, the problems with venture capitalism and stuff like that. When we talked about economic development, even going back to the '90s and we're talking about biotech and how we can bring companies to the 110. A lot of this is not new, but it really did hit a stumbling block with venture capital. How do you get the monies from Boston or California here? I mean, it's -- the whole country is vying for the same action. I see commercials from the governor of Texas and men like him about how they're looking for venture capital. I mean, how do we compete? How do we do that?

**MR. LESKO:**

Well, so we're not alone. I mean, a lot of the areas of the country are struggling with the issue of attracting capital. And I think, personally, I think it boils down to two elements. First and foremost is deal flow, so I don't care where you are, whether you're in Long Island or Nebraska, or wherever, if you have quality deal flow and the investors know about that, they're going to take a look at the companies that you have.

The problem we've had historically is -- and this is kind of where Accelerate fits in nicely -- is that you haven't had an entity like Accelerate out there promoting the quality of companies that we have on Long Island. And, frankly, up until fairly recently, we just haven't had a critical mass of high quality companies to showcase to the large institutional investors, the large receive firms, so I think, you know, and it's -- I'll tell you, this is my life, so I can tell you how it goes. It's a slow grind because you got to go in, you got to meet with the VCs, they want to meet for several hours, they want to hear about the financials, and then they'll get back to you, and then they'll say, Well, we want to look at these too, and then you take those companies in and you do another day, and then they get back to you, so -- and you do that times 10, times 20, times 100.

But that's what needs to be done, and that's what these companies are doing. Your startup company is pitching investors dozens and dozens of times until they finally find their investor that likes them and wants to invest in that company, so that's why I say it's a long-term play. But right now, I think we have kind of a very important time period because we've now identified a large number of startups. I think startups generally are kind of in vogue, so a lot of our young, talented people are thinking about creating a startup as opposed to applying for jobs at big companies, and the economy helped us in that regard too. And so it's really, number one, quality of companies and, number two, promoting those companies to those investors and trying to get them to kind of take interest because, remember, they get solicited thousands of times a year by people like me who want to promote companies, so you've got to kind of distinguish yourself from the noise.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

That's very interesting. The other question I had was involving energy costs. These kind of companies that you're referring to, are they high energy users? Does that restrict us? How does that...

**MR. LESKO:**

It depends. I mean, I think so. In our world, the subsector where energy costs become a concern is when a company either is a manufacturer or wants to become a manufacturer. I think that's where your high energy usage comes in. You know, your biotech companies, your software companies, typically that's not so much an issue. The one little other subsector where you do see energy usage or cost of energy as being an issue is the area where folks are managing or analyzing big data, so they're using big servers, and that can cost, you know, a lot of money to keep up and running.

And obviously one of the things we're trying -- some of the companies that we're working with are trying to solve is exactly that problem. So the Advanced Energy Center, these companies, a lot of them are devoted to pursuing alternative energy sources and that type of thing, fuel cells and solar panels and that type of thing.

So but now I will say our partner, LIFFT, does encounter that issue all the time because they are dealing with the manufacturers, and the cost of energy is always a concern for them.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Yeah, I -- and thank you for your comment. You hit it right on the head. And not to mention sewers as well for Suffolk County, we've got that issue as well, and I speak about that all the time, so I'm not going to get into that, but we know we need them.

The last thing, I have never heard of the term "incubators." I've never heard of a virtual incubator before. I thought that was interesting. But I am truly excited about your efforts here, Mark, and I know we have some questions here from the legislators, so I'll pass it off to Steve. Legislator Stern.

**LEG. STERN:**

Thank you for being here today. So I was looking at the Accelerate Long Island website, and there are seven organizations that are listed as providing financing assistance, VC-type organizations, seven listed incubator-type organizations. The companies that you assist, are they coming to you as a result of relationships from those other organizations, or do you see your involvement with these companies more as, you know, they come to you and it's your role, responsibility to take them, based on what their needs are, to each of those entities or combination thereof and you make that determination as to where they are going.

**MR. LESKO:**

That's a great question. It's a mix. So I think coming out of the box, having the two seed funds, which was a new piece of the equation for Long Island was a great attractor, so we got a lot of interest very early because of the funding that we had available. I would say our partners at Stony Brook, you know, there's a very, very mature ecosystem within Stony Brook, steered a good number of the companies our way, and I mentioned the Clean Energy Incubator; the Center for Biotechnology, which is a state center that focuses on biotech startups is another great piece of the ecosystem at Stony Brook; the small business development center at Stony Brook; I mentioned the Calverton incubator; those have been good feeders for us. Canrock Ventures runs its own incubator; The Thought Box in Hicksville. There's another new incubator called the LaunchPad in Mineola. Andrew Hazen, who is also very involved in the Angel Network, he's a great -- he's one of the leaders that I mentioned before. Guys like Hazen and Calone and Mark Fasciano and Jeff Leventhal, you know, those guys have emerged as the leaders of the ecosystem, and so Andrew also has a seed that he and Rich Foster have started at LaunchPad, and that's been great. Partners at LISTNet and LIFFT have been really helpful.

And then it's, you know, website's been great. Social media has been very, very good at getting people -- making people aware of what we're been doing. Frankly, we've been pounding the pavement. I mean, we've been out -- any company that calls in or e-mails in, we'll go meet with. I've been in the City a bunch, you know, kind of trying to spread the word about what we're trying to do out here, so all of that combined I think has led to the hundred plus companies that we've been exposed to.

**LEG. STERN:**

And when you're looking at spreading the word, particularly in Manhattan where the seed capital is, how do you find -- what's the process that you're going through right now and maybe plans for the future in contacting the right VC companies, the right investment banking organizations? Is there a particular process that you utilize, or are you going down the list and saying, you know, other companies have had success in the past where I'm familiar with them, or are you trying to uncover new sources that might be based in the City?

**MR. LESKO:**

Well, so I'll give it to you -- I'll give you three answers, kind of top down, bottom up, and then what I do on a daily basis. Top down, I mean our board's been very helpful in that regard, so many of our board members, you know, ranging from, you know, Michael Dowling at North Shore LIJ, Stu Rabinowitz at Hofstra, Sam Stanley at Stony Brook, Bruce Stillman at Cold Spring, they have a lot of board members themselves that are venture folks and investors, and so they make introductions on pretty much a daily basis.

We have kind of what I'll call sister organizations in the City, places like New York City Tech Connect, New York City Meetup -- Tech Meetup, I think it's called. And we general assembly -- they're organizations that have been around for several years that are very -- doing similar things in New York City, so we have established connections with them and they have their own networks and they -- everybody is kind of very open about all of this, so they make introductions.

And last but not least, this is really a contact sport, so people need to understand that. So a lot of this is based on personal relationships, and you just have to get out there and do the face-to-face meeting, you know, at an event and then follow up with the lunch, and then all of a sudden, somebody -- you know, a funder potentially gets interested in a couple companies and then you bring them in and then you're off the races. So a lot of this is by chance, but I would say primarily our board's been very helpful.

**LEG. STERN:**

You had mentioned before wanting to get those that live here that might do business elsewhere, might have investments elsewhere, more excited in their hometown, in their home region. I'm wondering if you've had any experience working with family offices that make these kind of investments but you might be able to appeal to their sense of community and wanting to maybe look back in their own backyard for these kind of investment opportunities.

**MR. LESKO:**

Yes, and we've actually already started that. So one of the key kind of -- I knew them as gatekeepers to the family offices or the private wealth management offices of the big banks, of the big investment banks and retail banks, so we've kind of started with them, and then they've made introductions to the family offices or to their high-net worth clients. Again, it's kind of a, you know, one-by-one-by-one type of thing. And -- but you are 100 percent right. I heard somebody say something, and I'm going to repeat it, although I can't sit here and say I've confirmed this, but I heard one of the private wealth management types at a big bank say that there are a thousand families that have a physical presence on Long Island that are worth -- each family is worth \$100 million or more, and so if you think about that amount of wealth and just, you know, accessing a fraction of it or a small percentage of it and deploying that into the startup community would have a huge impact, so I think where that really plays out is in the angel investor community. So we have the Long Island Angel Network, which has been around for several years. They've actually kind of become newly invigorated, and one of the barriers to getting, you know, seeing a lot of angel level investments is angel competence because they're individuals, much like all of us, that may not have a history in investing, so it's kind of a daunting task to look at a very technical biotech company and think, Oh, my gosh, I've got to do due diligence on this company on my own? I took biology when I was in high school. I don't even understand this, and they want to write a \$50,000 check. If you have an entity like an Accelerate or like the Long Island Angel Network or other kind of intermediaries doing that due diligence and reporting back, it gives the investors confidence to write the checks.

**LEG. STERN:**

Goes a long way towards establishing credibility.

**MR. LESKO:**

You got it.

**LEG. STERN:**

Absolutely. Last question for you. You had mentioned the internship program and where the interns come from and the kind of work that they're doing. How many interns participate in the program?

**MR. LESKO:**

About 20, and I would say a thin majority are from Stony Brook pretty much, and the rest are sprinkled throughout the other institutions on Long Island. And we've been working with pretty much most of the colleges and universities on Long Island in one way or another, and, you know, our hope is that the internship program will grow. If you know potential interns, send them our way. It's for credit, and it's a great experience. I mean, we can let them talk to our interns; don't take it from me. We have a Friday lunch-and-learn, so we have companies come in and do their pitches, and then we have preseason folks give presentations, and then there's a Q and A component, so there's like an academic component to the thing.

**LEG. STERN:**

Very good. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Interesting. Legislator Hahn.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Thank you. I'm glad you left off on education. Mark, you know, I mean, I think -- I think the world of you. I think what you're doing here is the most important thing to happen for Long Island economic development in decades. I mean, I think the potential of Accelerate Long Island, which is really the Island's potential has always been here, it just hasn't been harnessed, and you're harnessing that, and you're directing it, and you're very deliberately growing that, and, you know, thank you for doing that. We miss you in Brookhaven, but thank you for doing this. I think, you know, this is clearly what is needed here on Long Island, and, you know, my questions I think I've asked you before, but I want to just keep making sure that we're on the pulse of what we as a county can do to help. There's limited roles that the government, and particularly this one, has, but I've noticed as I've gone around and talked to individuals like Andrew Hazen and like some of the others you've mentioned, particularly with, like, Suffolk Community College, and I know you've sat in on some meetings with me and some individuals over there; but what can we do from the educational standpoint?

As we -- you know, like you said, we need to tend our own garden. We need to grow our own companies, and as they grow, there's going to be greater and greater needs for -- you know, I'm actually surprised to see that it's 47 percent are IT, social, mobile of the companies there. So, you know, are we -- is our workforce trained to be growing these companies at the level that we want to see them going up to becoming 500 employee companies here? And do we have the kind of skills -- are we training the skillset needed at all levels, you know, not just at Stony Brook University and Hofstra but at Suffolk Community? You know, are they -- are we, even from a BOCES perspective, are we getting kids excited for the high-tech fields even earlier on? And, you know, I know I'm trying to connect Suffolk Community with Stony Brook on software development, you know, getting more going there, but can you speak a little bit to that need?

**MR. LESKO:**

Sure, absolutely, and thank you for the kinds words, Legislator Hahn. First I should say that the -- I think the general sentiment out there is that Suffolk County is very progressive and a fertile environment for startup companies. And that the County government kind of gets it, you know, and that's been my experience both in government but also recently at Accelerate, particularly with some of the startups that have dealt with IDA or dealt with the economic development folks, so hats off to you. I mean, I think you definitely are very startup-business friendly, let's put it that way, and I think I speak for the companies that I have touched in Suffolk County.

On the education front, I would say -- we've talked a lot about this, you and I, and I know this is a major issue for you as it is I think the entire Legislature. You know, I think there's a real opportunity in the community college setting to kind of reposition, recalibrate where the college is, and, you know, I know that the college is doing that, and I know that we've met with the college and we've seen them do it. And it's really kind of -- I think it starts with what I understand is known as a skills gap analysis, so you really do an assessment of the workforce needs, projected workforce needs in the near term, the skills that will be needed, you know, in the growing industries and figure out whether at the community college level, the BOCES level, that our secondary and community college level education systems are preparing the students to be prepared in terms of skill development for those jobs. I think right now -- and we're not alone on this, by the way. This is a nationwide issue. There's a huge need for software developers, computer programmers, that type of thing, particularly in the kind of brand new computer languages that are being used; Ruby on Rails is an example of one of them. You know, if you know how to cone rails, if you do, I don't know why you're sitting there.

So, I mean, if you're trained in that computer language, Rails, you can make six figures tomorrow. Now, you might have to move, but there are a gazillion companies that are looking for folks with that skillset. It's not the easiest thing to get, but -- you know, so I would strongly urge this body to engage with the community college to take a look at, you know, computer science, software programming, that type of thing. And remember, you don't have to necessarily establish kind of a curriculum that would be compatible with getting a Bachelors in computer science because a lot of these companies are hiring, like, kids directly out of high school who just have the skillset. So as long as you're a certified programmer in the certain language, like Java, you become hireable for these companies. So if there's a way within the community college setting to set up a program to do that quick, one-semester type of train-up of your students, they become a commodity almost overnight, and that would be, I think, a huge benefit to a lot of the kids that are attending community college. And those jobs pay; let me tell you something, they pay a lot of money.

So a similar type of issue. This just came up with the other day. I was meeting with -- I won't name them -- a major health system and they were explaining to me that there's now a huge shift in the nursing profession so that health systems now are not hiring nurses with Associates degrees. They are moving towards hiring nurses with Bachelors and Masters, and that's driven by the technology advances in hospitals primarily because the nurses have to be trained to handle all of the various machine and have to have the, I guess, intellectual ability to do all of that. And they are also becoming practitioners, you know, they're doing a lot more diagnoses, and so I think the community college level programs have to embrace that reality so that they may become more feeders to -- for your colleges, like Stony Brook, so that, you know, the nurse -- the folks that want to be nurses get their first two years at the community college and then go off and get their last two somewhere else.

You know, I'm not expert in that field, but I'm just telling you these are just little examples of kind of emerging trends in the workforce. But, you know, I would say locally if I was to focus on any sector that had a real need for a highly trained type of individual it's in IT. You really -- I mean there's a huge opportunity there to train up some Suffolk County residents and get them pretty high-paying jobs in a new blossoming sector.

**LEG. HAHN:**

I agree, and that's what I've heard from a number of those individuals that I've talked to. Also entrepreneurship education, I've heard, is sort of a need. Have you looked at those other areas, other triangles around the nation, you know, their MBA level/Master's, doctorate level that focuses on entrepreneurship. Do we have that here? Is that something that could grow here more, more so? You know, I can't remember who said it, but someone said -- and that's why your mentorship program is so important, but someone said, you know, We don't have the people who run the

companies and really know how to get in there and do that and with the business plans, et cetera, so I think that's another opportunity for education, and I don't know if you would agree or not there.

**MR. LESKO:**

Yeah, so we -- those programs are kind of, if they don't already exist, are being formed all across the country. This is kind of a trend, I mean, along with kind of the building startup communities, you see that happening at universities and community colleges really pretty much across the country.

I would take a little bit of a different perspective on that. You know, places like -- in Suffolk County, places like Dowling, Saint Joe's, Stony Brook have great entrepreneurship -- Touro Law has a great entrepreneurship program, so you do have programs like that. What I think, particularly maybe at the community college level, which may be your particular area of interest, having meaningful experiential learning programs, like cooperatives where the kids get hands-on experience. I think that's invaluable. So that if you have kind of a rich network of technology companies and a student comes in and, say, within two years can get trained on a computer language and can go spend six months working as an intern sitting side-by-side with the founder of a software company, I mean there's no match for that type of experience, and you are seeing that happen a lot across the country.

And I actually think Suffolk Community College does a pretty nice job of that in certain sectors. I mean, I believe -- you would know better than I would, Legislator Hahn, and the rest of you -- but I believe they actually may be kind of like national leaders in some of those partnerships with industries, so industry identifies a need, comes in, sets up a partnership, as I understand it, and then they build a curriculum around that. So I would just kind of support those efforts because I think the college does a real nice job. And, again -- I keep harping on this, but, you know, it's near and dear to my heart -- in the IT sector, I would heavily engage all the way from CA down to baby startups and see where they're hiring and see if you can create some quick programs to try to address those needs.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Yeah. I think -- and I've said this to them -- I think there's a real opportunity to emulate what they've done on the manufacturing side, HBAC, et cetera, with IT and I think there's a real opportunity there.

How about -- and I'll just sort of switch gears -- housing? You know, Patchogue has this art space kind of idea they have going that was successful with a housing opportunity. I mean is this the kind of population where an idea space would be a hot idea for, you know, helping the young entrepreneurs have a place to live, maybe a TOD, you know, something that's transit-oriented in a convenient location. I think clearly affordable housing is an issue that's critical, and tis as well.

**MR. LESKO:**

So I think on the kind of lifestyle issues -- I'll call it "lifestyle issues," so housing is part of that. I think that my sense is in Suffolk County, there's a lot of exciting proposals that are out there and a lot of exciting existing locations.

The thing we can't address is proximity to New York City, so for the worker who wants to be within a half an hour of New York City, there's nothing we can do about that because we just aren't that close, and they're going to end up living in Queens or they're going to live in Nassau County. So but for the rest of the entrepreneurs or the workers, I actually think Suffolk is very well-positioned, so of the existing communities that are kind of exciting for the entrepreneurial class, and believe me -- it's funny you brought up Patchogue. I took a very successful entrepreneur who wants to locate their company in Suffolk County, I took him out and we spent the day with Paul Pontieri, and

we walked all through Lindt (ph) Art Space --

**LEG. HAHN:**

Don't forgot Port Jeff. Don't forget Port Jeff.

**MR. LESKO:**

Well, I was going to say Port Jeff too. So, you know, the areas that we've kind of spotted are Patchogue and Port Jeff. Huntington, as I mentioned, has got a lot of activity. Bay Shore is an area that people are interested in. Babylon Village is another area that people are interested in. In terms of the emerging areas, the ones that are kind of planned for the future, obviously, I have a soft spot for Ronkonkoma; I know the County Executive's Wyandanch rising project has a lot of potential; Farmingdale has a lot of potential, primarily because a lot of people still think that if we're going to have a farmer cluster, it's going to be located on the Route 110 corridor, and you have Broadhollow Bioscience Center at Farmingdale, so you do have some pieces there that fit nicely.

So I think between the existing areas and the new ones, it's -- you got a nice mix and as Chairman Horsley said, you know, sewers are a big part of that, frankly, because you are going to have that density, you're going to have to have the restaurants, and in biotech, you got to have sewers because of the effluent issues, so it's -- you know, a lot of those areas the right mix.

The other thing I would tell you, now that I'm in the private sector, you do have to let the market dictate where you're going to have your hub of activity, and so these companies are going to kind of gravitate to where they want to be. I will tell you right now -- and it's not me choosing it, it's just what we've seen -- you know, it seems to me that there's a lot of activity now in Mineola, in Hicksville in Nassau County, and in Huntington in Suffolk county. That seems to be where the focus of activity is right now, but that can always change.

**LEG. HAHN:**

One more piece on the funding side. SBIR grants and just educating researchers and others out there about applying for them, getting them, that they are available. I've heard it said that our region is actually under-utilizing those grants, and so it's certainly something that I think our economic development can help talk about, publicize, hold workshops on, whatever, so -- and I'm sure you know about those as well. And the other one is the STTR grants, but the SBIR Federal, the early stage funding grants.

**MR. LESKO:**

I mean, so there's kind of like a whole family -- those are the two leading ones, but the whole family of federal and state grants that are -- target research-based businesses. So what you are now seeing because of sequestration and because of, you know, reduction in federal funding for R and D, you're seeing researchers who for years have lived off their, say, NIH grant, so now they have to really pivot and they have to create a company and write an SBIR grant to NIH to try to get funding for the same research, really. That's actually a very good development, I think, for Long Island because it's now taking -- forcing researchers to now think in a commercial context to try to get funding for, you know, the research that they want to do.

You have a whole list of state -- NYSERDA and those type of grants of the state. You have a really interesting program out of the National Science Foundation called the iCore, so the iCore funds individual companies all the way up to regions in terms of training technology-based companies. You typically have to have a company that has received an NSF grant in the past in order to qualify for the iCore program, but take a look at that. That's a really -- we took a good, hard look at that. What ended up happening was a consortium in New York City ended up getting a major iCore hub grant, so we've kind of deferred to them in terms of the region. But the iCore is an interesting -- for individual companies, it's an interesting option.

You know who does a really nice job in terms of SBIR training?

I know that LIFFT has a new program. They've gotten some funding to do SBIR training. I would urge you to potentially collaborate with them. They'll come out and they'll do the whole thing for ya. And SBDC does the same thing. You know, I think they have a staffer now who is an expert on SBIR grants.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Yes, I met with them, and I heard about it. But I've been told by someone at the incubator that there just needs to be greater education out there for the researchers about it, like that it's really -- and how to apply, you know, the grant writing process. They certainly need help for them with that.

**MR. LESKO:**

If you want to learn -- I mean, just a suggestion, but if you want to learn a lot about the SBIR process and hear from a really great company, I would urge you to, maybe even in this setting, ask a company called MesoScribe to come before the committee. They are, I believe, in Saint James, if I'm not mistaken, and they're incredibly -- they're an advanced materials company that I think obtained over 20 SBIR grants, and now I believe they're profitable, super company, great CEO, young, vibrant, and they would be a good example of what the SBIR program can do for a startup.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Thank you so much, Mark.

**MR. LESKO:**

Good to see you.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Okay. Thank you very much, Legislator. By the way, Mark, we passed the other day in our capital budget moneys to -- for the stem building over in Suffolk Community College that we're going to be -- we're moving into the 21 century. It was a positive thing, and I thought you should know that, I guess, starting 2015, we'll be moving along with that.

Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief. Mark, thanks for your presentation. Thanks for being here. I have to admit when I heard of this, the beginning of your organization, I was very skeptical, not of your excitement and ability to run it but that it would be just another organization that talks about the same things and works on the same things that every other organization works on and talks about. But I think what you're doing absolutely fantastic. I think the way you've sort of defined your mission by Accelerate Assist, Accelerate Ecosystem, and Accelerate Funding I think is spot on. I loved the way that you've focused on those three very specific needs in terms of our region. And you said something in your description of Accelerate Ecosystem that, to the effect this may seem sort of ethereal to us, but I tell you, the need to create a fertile, as you described, ecosystem for our businesses and our entrepreneurs in which to thrive is so important to the long-term sustainability of our economy here on Long Island. And there are no shortage of examples of regions in our county where they've allowed their ecosystems to perish at great financial cost and at great human cost to their populations, and I have feared for a long time that that's happening here on Long Island. And I think what you're doing is a start, just a start, but it's a great start, and you have to start somewhere. I think the fact that it's being driven from a private sector point of view as opposed to a government point of view I think is good and appropriate.

And so with that said, I really just have one question and again just to compliment you on what you're doing. My one question has to do with the investment portion of your presentation and the statement that you made that not enough Long Islanders know that there are, you know, companies that exist or ideas that exist that are worthy of investment. Have you thought of creating an investment vehicle that's sort of accessible to the retail investment market on Long Island so that somebody like me who doesn't have a couple of million dollars or a few hundred thousand dollars to, you know, speculate on entrepreneur may be able to invest a few thousand dollars in the list of companies that you're working with. Is that something that you've thought about?

**MR. LESKO:**

Well, I have thought about it, but I can't say that it's my idea. So I think that because of the scale that you would be talking about, you know, a lot of people would be interested in investing small amounts. I think that sentiment is what's driving the Jobs Act, which is the federal act that will eventually allow for crowd-funding for startup companies through investments, and the SEC is now writing the regulations to implement the Jobs Act. In fact, I think that they were expected months ago and they haven't yet been issued.

But, you know, a lot of us are familiar with crowd-funding in a non-investment setting, like Kickstarter, Indiegogo. Actually, you should know, if you don't already, probably one of the poster children for crowd-funding exists in Shoreham at the test lab site, Wardenclyffe Lab, where a blogger, a very famous blogger out of Seattle that runs a blog called "The Oatmeal Blog" lead an international crowd-funding effort that raised \$1.4 million or \$1.5 million from, like, 33 or 34,000 people across the globe, and that allowed a nonprofit up in Shoreham to buy that property and save the Tesla Lab, Nicolette Tesla, who invented, basically, electricity among other things, A.C., electricity.

So that shows you the power of crowd-funding, and so I think people realize that. Right now, if you wanted to give money, say, to a startup company, they'd send you, like, a coffee mug or a T-shirt or something like that. I think what you're saying is you'd like to be able to be an investor, you know, but for a company that's not public, you can't do that because you can't buy stock on exchange, so that's the idea behind the Jobs Act and allowing crowd-funding.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Do you see a role, then, for Accelerate Long Island in terms of --

**MR. LESKO:**

I think so. I think, you know, one of the things that we're doing -- I'll give you another teaser, but we're about to launch a platform on our website that's going to profile startup companies. Right now, because the Jobs Act Regs have not been issued, it'll be an informational profile so you'll be able to go, like, literally look at either the websites or the PowerPoints from the -- a lot of the companies that we're working with. When those Jobs Act regs get issued -- and by the way, the company that's developing that program is a Long Island company called "ProSeeder." Great company. And so once the switch goes on in terms of allowing crowd-funding, the idea would be to flip the switch on that platform and have it be a vehicle for investors, maybe like yourself. You might get interested in one of those companies. You can go in through our website, get on their crowd-funding site and invest a couple grand if you want, and that makes it easy. You can do it all online, and all the official documents will be on there. You can do your own due diligence, and I think that would probably accomplish what you're talking about because otherwise, the smaller lever investors -- there may be other ways to do it, but you got to really aggregate them into a fund, so, you know, instead of having you do individual investments into individual companies, you'd probably throw a couple grand into a larger fund and then, you know, be a part owner of that fund.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Right. You create like a mutual fund or a trust, similar to the way a real estate investment trust is done with companies.

**MR. LESKO:**

Right, something like that. You know, the one -- the other thing I would say is we are seeing a movement, oddly, in my view, or interestingly, I should say, almost a way from taking investment from venture funds and that type of thing, so the best way to build a business is to not take any funding at all, is to start selling product right away and generating revenues, and those of you that run businesses know that, and then you don't have to be diluted; that's the issue.

So everybody kind of thinks it's great to get venture capital, but remember, a price tag is associated with that, and that is that venture capital has come in and they take 51 percent of the company and half the board seats and you, you know, you give up ownership and you give up control of the company. That may be a good thing for the company, but a lot of our companies and a lot of the gurus in this space are now really advocating getting your product out to market right away, booking sales, and trying to live off the sales.

So there's going to be -- I think your point is well-taken in the sense that for folks that don't have multiple millions of dollars, you know, and I certainly count myself among them, that may want to invest in startups, I think in the next six months, year, you know, that timeframe, you're going to have a lot of different options in terms of getting involved, and that's exciting.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Very good. Well, keep up the good work. I would love to hear back from you another half a year or something to see where you're at.

**MR. LESKO:**

Would love to do that.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Thanks, Mark.

**MR. LESKO:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

We're trying to wrap this up. Legislator Hahn, real quick.

**LEG. HAHN:**

But I also think that part of your point, Legislator Cilmi's point was to be investing in Long Island and in Long Island's future, and so it's -- you know, we could be small investors, you know, maybe not looking to get back a whole lot but looking to truly invest and help grow the companies here. So I think that's part of the point as well.

**MR. LESKO:**

The other thing, I mean, there's the famous friends-and-family round, so we think that the ProSeeder platform may give you kind of a glimpse at that super early-stage companies where you may not be family or personal friends, but at least you'll know about them, and you'll be close enough where you can just call them up and say, Hey, look, I'd love to get involved in your company, could you use a couple grand? There's a lot of companies in that space that would be willing to talk to that level of investor, and you could be part of a friends-and-family round, and if you could do that online so that it's more manageable, that would be great, that would be fantastic.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Okay. Mark, thank you very much. We appreciate you coming down here today. You know, I got to tell you, I went to the IDAs -- as you say they like to party hard -- party up in Huntington at the -- I don't remember the theater's name. The -- The --

**MR. LESKO:**

The Paramount.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

The Paramount, yeah, at The Paramount, and meeting some of the entrepreneurs there that were crammed in the room down in the basement, it felt like I was, like, watching the page turn on a new generation of Long Islanders, and it was really, it was exciting, and I felt good about it. This is, you know, this is -- these are the next entrepreneurs. These are the next people that are going to be running Long Island, and it was all good to see. And, Mark, I think you're leading the charge, and I really appreciate you being here today. You're good for all of us.

**MR. LESKO:**

Thank you very much. Appreciate the kind words. Thank you.

Okay. We have introductory resolutions.

**IR 1504, Adopting Local Law No. -2013, A Local Law to adopt a new Strategic Industries Property Tax Abatement Plan.** It needs been tabled for a public hearing.

**LEG. STERN:**

Motion to table.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Make a motion to table by Steve Stern. I'll second the motion. Carolyn, did you want to just say what it is, or you want to wait until after the public hearing?

**LEG. CILMI:**

Mr. Chair, if I could just ask Carolyn for the future, I know the document that describes exactly what this is is a very lengthy document, so if you could be prepared to sort of summarize that for us at our next meeting, that would be terrific.

**MS. FAHEY:**

Sure, no problem, and I would have no problem reaching out. I'm going to reach out to each one of you, anyhow, to make sure that you understand the program and the details involved, so maybe during that conversation, I can answer most of your questions.

**LEG. CILMI:**

All right. Thanks.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Carolyn, was I a member of that board?

**MS. FAHEY:**

No, you were not.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Back in the 90s, representing the Town of Babylon? I think I was.

**MS. FAHEY:**

Maybe the initial board but --

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

The initial board. Oh, I got bumped, huh?

**MS. FAHEY:**

You got replaced, yes.

**CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:**

Okay. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. It's been tabled (**VOTE: 5-0-0-1, Not Present: Nowick**).

We're adjourned.

*(Meeting adjourned at 2:47 p.m.)*