

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, October 2, 2013.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Renee Ortiz - Assistant Deputy Clerk
Alicia Howard - Legislative Aide
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Claire Mangelli - Aide to Chairman Horsley
Justin Littell - Aide to Legislator D'Amaro
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick
Paul Perillie - Aide to Legislator Gregory
Sharen Wagner - Budget Review Office
Carolyn Fahey - Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator.
Tom Vaughn - County Executive's Office
Rick Brand - Newsday
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN AND TRANSCRIBED BY:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

*(*The meeting was called to order at 1:03 p.m. *)*

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All righty. Good afternoon, and welcome to the Wednesday, October 2 meeting of the Economic Development and Energy Committee. Will we please all stand for the pledge.

*(*Salutation*)*

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

*(*Moment of Silence Observed*)*

The first piece of business we'd like to -- Joanne, what's our number here? 1805, yes. Okay, 1805, Jumpstart Suffolk County.

What I'd like to do is take 1805 out of -- first of all, I don't have any cards, correct? Nobody would like to speak. All right. 1805, out of order, **I'll make a motion to take 1805, Amending the 2013 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with Jumpstart Suffolk (CP 6424). (Co. Exec.), out of order.** Seconded by Cilmi. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. So what we'll do from that is, Ms. Minieri, Commissioner, why don't you come up and tell us what this is about. She's asked to move this up front because she's got another meeting that she's got to attend.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Hello. Good afternoon, everyone. I'm here to discuss a little bit about the request in front of you to allocate \$2.5 million of our Jumpstart Program to the Town of Babylon in connection with the Wyandanch Rising Project. About a year and a half ago, I came in front of the Leg. and discussed the Jumpstart Program that the County was going to provide for those regionally significant and transformative projects. And when I discussed the program, they were very, you know, general qualifying requirements; one, obviously, that these projects be regionally significant, that they have a transit connection to them, transit-oriented, that they're mixed-use type of projects, large master plans that are creating neighborhoods so that we would be able to attract and retain our young, talented population. We would be able to attract, retain, and grow the businesses here on Suffolk County all for the purposes of creating jobs which would allow for a long-term sustainable economy for the residents.

So last year we did not request any allocation of this money, but this year, it seemed very, very obvious that the Wyandanch Rising Project, in fact, would look to possibly qualify for this award. We did receive a request from the Town of Babylon in connection with Wyandanch. I think everyone here is -- knows that over the summer the Wyandanch Rising broke ground on their first residential tower as well as Geiger Park. The Jumpstart money, as I mentioned a while back, we really wanted it to go towards these type of regionally-transformative projects that we can see immediate results. It really would require that a municipality have an adopted master plan, a commitment to complete financial assistance, and today this request would have Suffolk County join both New York State, the federal government, as well as the Long Island Railroad in becoming a part of this public private partnership for the Wyandanch Rising Project. So today, I'm here to -- I actually invited Jonathan Keyes, who is the director of downtown revitalization for the Town of Babylon, to answer any questions with respect to this request and with respect to the Wyandanch Rising Project

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you very much, Ms. Minieri, for your bringing us up-to-speed on this. So just a couple quick questions on my front and then I'll turn it over to my colleagues. The other projects that would be considered, you know, that we're certainly all concerned about, the transit hub at Ronkonkoma. Certainly, there's a lot of conversation about the other project that was listed as a special project, would be the Wolkoff Property. Now where are they at? Do you anticipate that this is going to continue forward into next year's budget, so that they could have opportunities we're not blowing out the budget on, on Wyandanch versus that? We're not making a choice, this just happens to be first; is that the way I'm reading this?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yes, exactly. Yeah, we do have in the budget for next year \$5 million for Jumpstart. Without jumping ahead, I would, yes, anticipate that the Ronkonkoma Hub would be in a position. Right now, that project is still going through its approvals process as is the Heartland Project. We will so request consideration for any transformative project that any town is in the process of creating. Some of them -- East Farmingdale is a possibility. Again, what we're really trying to do and to bring to this committee are those projects that have the commitment, have the financial assistance, have the approvals, have the project in a process of development where construction, vertical construction, is near and dear to the timetable. This particular project with respect to Wyandanch and this Jumpstart money is really going to assist them in completing their road network for the open space that they have designed within this project to create the community in and around the transportation hub. And what's really unique is that Wyandanch is the first transit-oriented development, but it is expected that the Heartland, the Ronkonkoma Hub, and other opportunities in and around the transit stations will begin to develop within each of the municipalities and that the towns would seek the county's assistance in regard to furthering those developments.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. That makes sense. Now, is one of your requirements for release of monies to a project from Jumpstart. Is it that they have to be permitted? I mean are -- the permits have to be in place before? I know that's what we do for the stabilization funds for the sewers, say, Well, you got to be permitted. That really gives you the indication that this project is going to move forward.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

The Jumpstart is a reimbursement program, so they would have to have all their permits in place and actually spend the money and then submit the cost for eligibility review.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Now, the last question I would have is how are we doing on the labor front on this issue? Is it all in place? I mean, we've got our -- it's going to be union labor and the like?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Correct, yes.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. That --

LEG. STERN:

I have a question.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Sure. Legislator Stern and then Legislator D'Amaro.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You had mentioned some of the purposes behind it. Maybe you or

someone else would be able to, maybe, more specifically describe what the monies are going to be utilized for. So I understand there's infrastructure needs in the area. I understand the development of public spaces, especially around the train station hub. That's a really general description. Is there anything more specific so that we can get a better feel specifically for what the monies going to be allocated towards?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Sure, I can -- Jonathan --

MR. KEYES:

Hi. Yeah, I can answer that. Jonathan Keyes from the Town of Babylon, as Joanne mentioned a moment ago. So just very quickly to echo and reiterate everything that Commissioner Minieri stated about the project, this is a high impact project that we anticipate will serve as a model for many of these types of developments throughout the county, and I believe it meets all the criteria that have been outlined for this funding source. It's a transit-oriented project, promotes walkability, it's adjacent to the train station. With regards to specific uses, the town is invested in the construction of a new roadway network and pedestrian facilities surround -- throughout this area, and to compliment and to allow for the private development that's taking place right now. So the funds would be used for roads and curbs and sidewalks and support of this development.

LEG. STERN:

So it's for the roads in the area and it's for pedestrian sidewalks.

MR. KEYES:

Yeah, pedestrian improvements and enhancements to the area. We have a park facility that's being constructed as well, and it would support that project.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I'm sorry. What was the facility?

MR. KEYES:

The plaza, the park plaza.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Legislator D'Amaro.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thank you. I wanted to ask you about what you said before that the programs you're looking to fund or the projects you're looking to fund need to have approvals in place and shovel-ready or vertical development, as you said, but was that really the intention of this program when it was first created? In other words, it seems like it's less Jumpstart. It's more like "jump on the bandwagon," if you know what I mean. So Jumpstart to me meant that we're looking for areas that would be capable and slated to develop the type of development we want to encourage, and this funding was available to help jump start that process as opposed to saying, You need to have completed half your process and here's some funding, and I'm wondering if the intent of the program has changed.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

No, the intent has not changed. The program is really to encourage and foster master planning and to have municipalities look at their land-use plans in connection with their transportation plans. And in order for this program to really be effective, the town needs to show a commitment and some

form or fashion of financial ability to further and -- to further their planning process and to move their planning process into a development and into a construction process. Today I am standing before you asking to award the Town of Babylon because they are -- you know, it is the first award for this type of program. It was -- it was the most obvious transit-oriented development to really qualify pretty clearly for these types of dollars. The request came in. That's not to say that if a town is putting together a team of professionals in the private industry and is creating the public-private relationship seeking out aid from the state or the federal government with a master plan that was designed and furthers the concept of transit-oriented development and the creation of mixed use residential projects along transportation hubs so that these programs and projects could further the concept of Connect Long Island where we are really promoting to attract and retain the young population and create jobs.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So the program would consider, then, projects that are less along than, say, the Wyandanch Rising Project.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

In different stages, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

It would. It just so happens that this particular project has been very successful in going forward and securing all the support that it's gotten and that it's received and it's doing well in getting funding, but, of course, this project existed long before this program.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yes, it's been in the making over a decade.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. So again, the point I'm making is that this project has been around around for quite some time and there's been funding in place for it, so it doesn't really need so much of a jump start as opposed to, again, I thought the intention here was to look at areas that perhaps don't have projects far along but have the capacity to do a project that would meet the criteria but yet don't have the funding to do the criteria and this would help that process.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

It could assist that process, but the level of funding from this program is very minimal compared to the Wyandanch project. Phase I alone is over a \$100 million, and so this type of money is really -- and, again, it was a goal to have this type of dollar really close a gap and to see action or to see vertical development quickly. The Jumpstart money could, in fact, assist other municipalities and be reviewed and see whether they would qualify, but this is really not the money that is the primary source of --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, I agree. I mean, the name itself "Jumpstart," it's obviously not the primary source of funding for any project. But at the same time, if it's Jumpstart money, it would help move a process along that, perhaps, can't get off the ground without that type of assistance, and I thought that's what this program was about. I also want to ask you does this wipe out the capital budget line for this year?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

For 2013, yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

So this is the entire funding of Jumpstart money?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And there's no other projects that we're applying for this funding in 2013?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

That is correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Did the department look for other projects, or did you just wait to see what came in? How did that process move along?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Well, I've been out there meeting with -- meeting and talking to different towns, different developers, different projects, and the Town of Babylon, as you would be well aware, has been moving very quickly on Wyandanch and a lot of activity has occurred and they submitted the request and we reviewed and we recommended --

LEG. D'AMARO:

So in all of those discussions, everyone you spoke to said, No, we don't need a Jumpstart Program, we don't need any funding?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

No, they didn't say that, but they didn't request any.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. Why not?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

I don't know. I would believe that -- I could -- I don't know the answer directly, but I would surmise that their projects aren't in a stage yet where this particular funding would possibly have been awarded; that's all.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And where are those criteria?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

The Ronkonkoma Hub project would potentially be available for this award probably as they move forward through the SEQRA process, possibly next year, 2014.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Is the funding, if this is approved today, would that funding go -- you said for reimbursement to the town. So this is for funds that have already been expended?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

No, they would have to spend it and then --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Okay. So that's just a mechanism. It's a reimbursement mechanism for anticipated expenses.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Eligible expenses.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Eligible expenses, right, for infrastructure and the other items that you mentioned. Now, again, this project, though, was self-sufficient. It came along this far without this funding.

MR. KEYES:

If I may, I'd like to speak to that.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, do you understand my point?

MR. KEYES:

Oh, yeah, absolutely.

LEG. D'AMARO:

My point is that it's a great project and it is moving along, but it was really committed long before this project here was created, and it never anticipated funding from this source, and I thought this source of funding was for projects that were trying to get, you know, crawl-before-you-walk kind of stage.

MR. KEYES:

So I think there's a few ways to approach that. I think early on in the 10 years that this project has been underway and in the five I've been with it, we never knew where all the money was coming from at any given point, and we've always tried to find new unique opportunities for funding, and we've been very successful in getting state and federal and local funds as well as some philanthropic.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right, but that holds true for any project.

MR. KEYES:

Yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And that also doesn't address the intent of this particular program.

MR. KEYES:

I can't speak about the overall program's intent; that would certainly be a question more for Joanne. But what I can say is that I think in terms of achieving a significant impact early on and having this money available to us early on in the project rather than later allows us to jump start the initiative in the sense that we achieve a very high impact on the ground immediately. This is an area where we're trying to achieve a total transformation based on past stigmas in the area and trying to change the way people think about it. So the extent that we have this available to us now and don't have to phase out our implementation over a long period of time, it does have, what I would call -- it jump starts the downtown development. It attracts investors that much sooner to the area.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah. The project is definitely having a positive ripple effect in the community, and it's anticipated that it will, and that's what we're all hoping for, and I support that. But, again, this project was committed long before this program, and I was just concerned about our department reaching out to other potential sites and developers and projects, and we have \$2.5 million here in 2013 all going to one project that's already been committed before the project existed, and I just would encourage the department to explain to me how there's no other project in Suffolk County that could benefit

from this funding in this year. I don't understand that. I mean there are other developments going on. There has to be. I mean, I'm not doing this on a daily basis, but I would assume there are other projects that could use some seed money or commitment of reimbursement to help them with their grant applications or funding or whatever it is, planning stages, that they're in. So that's what I thought was the intent of this program. So if you don't want to respond to that, that's fine, but, you know, that's what I thought.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yeah, it is, and these are, again, regionally-significant transformative projects that are underway that are available to receive this type of funding.

LEG. D'AMARO:

All right. Thank you for your time.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. Thank you, Legislator. Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I had similar questions wanting to understand that this is still funded for next year. So you said there's \$5 million in proposed '14 budget.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yes.

LEG. HAHN:

So I would like to see, along the lines of what Legislator D'Amaro was asking and Legislator Stern, I would like to see the description of the program, the criteria for applications so that we can, each one of us, can work with projects that we may be aware of within our own districts and alerting them about the grant money. And so one of my questions was, how did you advertise the availability of these dollars? Was there, like, a formal application process or et cetera?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

It's very similar to how the workforce housing program works. When a project has a development budget put together and they are looking to access funding, they'll submit an application to the real estate department for the workforce housing, and this program was very similar to that. I think the key elements of this program, and we have the guidelines which we will forward to you, but the key elements were that these were -- these funds were going to be targeted towards regionally-transformative projects that have a transit-oriented development, multi-, mixed-use master plan the two municipalities that are planning to combine and coordinate their land use with their transportation plans.

LEG. HAHN:

Right, and I would absolutely agree that this is a regionally-significant transformative project; there's no question about that. Define for me "vertical development," because I don't, I mean --

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Oh, I'm sorry. When you go north and south, the building, when the building actually goes up.

LEG. HAHN:

Right, so but you kept mentioning that but then he talked about streets and sidewalks, which don't seem real vertical to me.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

No, those are horizontal.

*(*Laughter*)*

Usually you need the infrastructure in place before you go vertical, so when you're ready -- and I apologize for using that term -- but when you begin to build the building, the residential over the retail, that means the infrastructure has been put in place so that when that building is ready, it plugs into everything it needs: water, sewer, electric, cable and the like; and it has roads and parking and everything it needs.

LEG. HAHN:

Good. So then that makes sense how you defined for us how this actually would jump start the vertical development. So I just misunderstood; I thought you were talking about these funds going towards vertical development which is not the horizontal stuff.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Sorry for that confusion.

LEG. HAHN:

That's okay. Okay. Yeah, so, most of my questions have been asked and answered. I just needed those further refinements, but I would like it if you could follow up with the criteria, the guidelines, the mission, because we do have to, you know, finalize the budget, and as we move forward, I think we all need to understand that this wasn't a program developed for one project. There are, you know, 'cause there are other very significant projects happening in places like Ronkonkoma, in places like Port Jefferson. You know, there are master plans happening, and they need those kinds of funds.

Do you anticipate -- so now you're setting a precedent whereby a \$2.5 million grant goes to one place, you know, so that will be what people will be expecting in the future as well, that kind of level, I'm sure, of funding that they can apply for and will want to get. And to give it all in one place, you know, sends a message that we're all in on a project but also that in the future that can happen.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

As you know, we're hoping that this Wyandanch Rising Project will be the very beginning of additional projects along with the Ronkonkoma Hub, the Heartland, and any other location in and around transportation Hub so that we can create that connection and create these places to live and work and to connect to regional job hubs like Brookhaven National Lab, Stony Brook, Cold Spring Harbor, you know, all the wonderful institutions we have here in Suffolk County.

LEG. HAHN:

Excellent. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. Thank you very much, Legislator Hahn. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. Thank you both for being here. It's good to see you. I want to delve a little bit further into the questions that were raised by my colleague and possibly ask a couple others with respect to this project and with respect to transit-oriented development in general. So let me just ask about this project specifically first, and I'll preface my question by saying that we all hope that the transformation that's anticipated for the Wyandanch community comes to fruition because

that community is desperate for an uplifting, and hopefully this project will do that, and it will be sustainable.

So let me ask with respect to Wyandanch Rising specifically, have we committed any additional money to this project previously? I seem to recall spending some money.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

At this point, we waived sewer connection fees and --

LEG. CILMI:

How much was that worth?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

11 million.

LEG. CILMI:

\$11 million. We waived sewer connection fees of \$11 million, okay.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

They built a whole sewer system that didn't exist before. I don't believe there's anything else. We did some 729(h) contributions.

LEG. CILMI:

How much of those?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

That, I'll double check with Jill, but I think there were a couple of 72-h transfers, and that's for the town.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Right. So we've transferred some property to the town presumably for affordable housing purposes that relate to this project. We've waived \$11 million of sewer connection fees, and now we're going to be committing \$2.5 million to infrastructure. You talked about specifically what that infrastructure was, and you said there's some roads and sidewalks and stuff. Could you speak specifically, Joanne, to what roads and what sidewalks we're talking about.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Sure. In connection with -- and, then, this is only Phase 1 of the Wyandanch Rising Project, which is about 177 units in two buildings, Buildings A, which broke ground in July, and Building B, which the Albanese Group is looking to break ground before the end of this year. Those two buildings will have 177 units with about 40,000 retail at the base.

In order to create, again, part of the transit-oriented development concept is to create open space, a sense of place, so included in the master plan for Phase 1 is an open space park for people to gather and throughout -- near the train station are roads, roads that surround the building.

LEG. CILMI:

These are Town of Babylon roads?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

They will be public roads, yes.

LEG. CILMI:

But Babylon roads, not county roads?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Babylon, Town of Babylon, correct. And they are -- the road network is necessary as you place -- as you put together the site plan, and part of Phase 1 will also include -- we're working closely with the Long Island Rail Road because it will include a new train station that's being moved to a certain part of the town, as well as the Long Island Rail Road is committing to developing a garage. So the site plan is taking, you know, just a blank site and incorporating putting the buildings, the roads, the plaza, the train station, the intermodal wall in and around that Phase 1, and that Phase I will obviously inform and will begin to design. The Town of Babylon right now is going to begin to determine what will Phase II, Phase III, and the like. This will be close to 800 to 1,000 units of housing when this master plan is completed.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Would you expect that there would be a continuing financial commitment on the part of Suffolk County to this particular project?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

No. I would believe that, to the extent that each phase unfolds, there would be applications and there would be an evaluation as to whether or not these types of funds would be made available.

LEG. CILMI:

So there could be?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yeah, I think there could be for all of these large projects.

LEG. CILMI:

Let me ask you about transit-oriented developments in general. How many of these have we seen so far in Suffolk County or on Long Island?

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

I believe this is the first one.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And we've committed \$2.5 million this year, which has yet to be spent, and you've asked for \$5 million next year in our budget.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

Yes, to continue the opportunity for the program. I believe -- the program started in 2012, and we did not propose any Jumpstart. We did not propose any Jumpstart.

LEG. CILMI:

So my point in asking that question is that \$7.5 million is an awful lot of money to commit to a concept that we don't even know is going to work. Some of the concerns that I hear in my community relate to the continued deterioration of areas relative to rental space. And, you know, some would suggest that when there's no ownership interest in a property that people tend to take less care of it. People are also concerned about the market for these types of units. We hope that these developments would encourage our younger folks to stay around, and we all know how important that is. The fact is we don't know that that's going to happen. We don't know that our younger folks are going to occupy these developments because we just haven't had any yet. So I share Legislator D'Amario's concerns, and I'm sure we all have concerns about spending so much

money on one project.

My additional concerns, again, are on what looks to be an investment that the county is being asked to make in town infrastructure after we've already made a quite significant investment in terms of waiving the sewer connection fees and whatever the investment was with the 72-hs that we approved.

So I'm not sure how to deal with this at this point. We made quite an investment, and you're asking us to make an additional investment, and I have yet to be convinced that we as a county have made an effort at going out and talking about the fact that we have this Jumpstart money available and soliciting applications for the money. And at this point, you know, I hate to approve something just because the money is available for 2013 and if we don't do it, then it's theoretically gone. I mean we're at this point facing tremendous budgetary problems. The money really isn't there in the first place, and we have an operating budget that we're dealing with now that, I think everybody would agree, including the county executive, pushes some of our financial challenges down the road a bit, and, you know, that may even be a necessity at this point. But this is committing us to additional debt, and I don't know that I'm convinced that it's a wise or appropriate investment at this point.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

I could only recommend that you consider this investment and the kind of economic impact this type of development will have on the county as a whole. I think this two and a half is leveraging tens of millions of dollars. We have private developers in there investing well over \$70 million. This is really the initial phases of revitalizing an economic area that will, over the long term, provide multiple returns to Suffolk County, so I urge you to please consider that in your decision.

LEG. D'AMARO:

But as Legislator D'Amaro pointed out, this Wyandanch Rising Project was conceived long before this funding became available, and we've already waived \$11 million of sewer connection fees.

COMMISSIONER MINIERI:

In connection with the funding, you know, similar to the State of New York, their consolidated funding applications come out every year, and every year, towns, municipalities, private companies put in applications to access those funds. The Town of Babylon was awarded money under two rounds of the New York State's consolidated funding awards, so Jumpstart is similar in nature to that. The Town has over years as they develop the plan, have been able to identify sources as do other, on the private side as well as the municipality side, look to -- look every year at available fundings to further their developments. So Jumpstart is another one of those that the county is proposing to offer to further their economic development program.

LEG. CILMI:

Let me ask you this, Joanne, and to you from the Town of Babylon, when you came to us and asked us to waive the sewer connection fees for \$11 million, did you anticipate at that point asking for this additional money, or did you feel like you had all of that covered? Because I feel like at this point, you've said to us, Look, all we need from you, County, is this \$11 million waiver of sewer connection fees and everything else is all set; we have private interests that are invested; we have the town invested; this investment from the county is important to us. But now you're coming back to us again, and I'm just wondering if that was anticipated.

LEG. GREGORY:

Tom, if I can, through the chair, I could respond to that because I think I may have better ability to answer that question. At the time we waived \$11 million, the Jumpstart Program didn't exist. That was several years ago. Jumpstart Program, that was last year, so I don't know what their

anticipation was, but certainly the Jumpstart Program didn't exist, so they couldn't anticipate monies from the program because it wasn't around at the moment.

LEG. CILMI:

So that speaks to my point is that they've already figured into the equation here the infrastructure improvements that would've been necessary -- that are necessary in order to make this project successful. So if that's the case, then we're just -- you know, you have a financially-strapped county that's being asked to further subsidize this project because more than likely the Town of Babylon is financially strapped as well, and nobody appreciates more than we do the challenges facing local governments fiscally, but we're facing as big a challenge, if not bigger, than anybody so...and I don't know that it was several years ago. I remember being here when we approved the waiver of the sewer connection fees. I believe I supported that.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That was under the former county executive.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

MR. KEYES:

I would just like to add, too, that the town came to request an \$11 million waiver after having financed at no cost or low cost \$15 million for the extension of that sewer district into the downtown area to service not just the site in question but the entire redevelopment. So the town is certainly willing to come to the table and provide its own funds and do what it can to support this project.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

May I add to that, on the sewer issue, if I can, Legislator. They also enlarged the connection up at that point where they were working it towards the project, and the enlargement was so that we could at some future point sewer the residents of Wyandanch as well. So it was mutually beneficial to all parties at the time.

LEG. CILMI:

Sure. And that makes sense when there are county assets that can be leveraged to support projects throughout our county. I think it's, you know, certainly each one stands on its own merit but that's a valid request. But in this case, we're being asked to commit county taxpayer resources that, quite frankly, we don't have to develop, basically, town assets, and I just -- I'm not convinced that that's something that we should be doing at this point given our financial condition and given everything else that we've heard. That's all the questions I have. I appreciate your answers, though.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you very much, Legislator Cilmi. Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for giving me the opportunity to speak. This, obviously, is a bill that affects my district, so I thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I'm not a member of the committee. I, obviously, support the monies from this program for the Wyandanch Rising Project. I do appreciate the concerns that have been expressed. I think the commissioner, deputy county executive expressed it correctly that this is not a statement or an indictment against any other potential transit-oriented development projects; this is just more of a statement that the Wyandanch Rising is, obviously, a significant project, regional project, and it could use the monies right now, and these monies would help spur further progress within the project itself. We have Building B monies that are going to be considered shortly. There's anticipation that the development of Building B or the

building of vertical -- will go vertical shortly, and these monies will help do that. And the plaza and the roads are an integral part of this project because you have the open air concert area, the ice skating rink, the public spaces that this money will go support.

And just this morning, I spoke to, at 8:00, I had to speak to the Wyandanch participation in government class. There were 40 kids, seniors, and whenever I speak to them, inevitably this subject comes up, and they are so excited about the future, the opportunities here to go away to school, to -- as we know, housing is a big issue. Affordable housing is a big concern in many places in Suffolk County, and a lot of their questions were geared towards that. You know, what's the Wyandanch Rising Project -- how is it going to help us to be able to stay here, live here, how is it going to impact the community, and they're very excited about it as well as the community at large. And quite simply these projects, they are expensive. They cost a lot of money. I mean, the Wolkoff project is probably at least twice the amount of this project as far as expected investment, private investment from --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I would think 10 times.

LEG. GREGORY:

Well, yeah, maybe 10. But, you know, certainly, you know, the nature of the project, the impact that it will have has been recognized by the federal government and their investment, the state, the town has put money in; we've put money in at the county level. And it's going to -- it's not -- you know, it's located in the Wyandanch community, but it's going to be a project that's going to impact the surrounding communities, and that's why I think it's important that we make county's monies available as other levels of government have invested and will continue to invest. There's the Opportunity Fund that the state is looking at doing right now. They're having meetings to invest and other programs related to the Wyandanch Rising Project, so I encourage my colleagues to support this. This is a worthy investment. The community -- I think it will have an impact. It's not only rental housing. There are other phases. There are opportunities to purchase housing as well. That's something that the community had mentioned that they want. They want the opportunity to purchase homes, but they're excited, and that's the main thing. And I think looking at studies and projects all across not only New York State but throughout the country, this model has worked, and the market has changed, and they have realized that with the way the project is going, and I think it's going to be successful and I'm excited.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Thank you very much, Legislator Gregory. I'm going to turn it over to -- Legislator D'Amaro has one more question, but I quickly wanted to add that the Jumpstart Program itself was originally \$5 million dollars, is that correct, in the budget?

MR. VAUGHN:

Yes, Legislator Horsley, and --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Now, this is 2.5 million. The other 2.5 went where?

MR. VAUGHN:

It went to the Brentwood Health Clinic.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Went to the Brentwood Health Clinic. So half the monies, when you look at it in its holistic way, half the monies went to the Town of Islip. I just wanted to make that clear.

LEG. CILMI:

For a health clinic.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And that was to jump start the Brentwood Health Clinic, as a matter of fact, now that I think about it. Was that resources we didn't have?

I just wanted to clarify my comments. It's important for me to do that because I don't want any misunderstanding. I agree with the Jumpstart Program. It was in our budget. It's a policy directive set by the county executive which we supported by approving that budget, and I voted for the budget, which I think most of us here today did. I agree with making the investment in Wyandanch. As Legislator Gregory stated, this is a very worthy project. And I also feel that by making the investment, we get it back tenfold. It's not just about whether it's town assets, county assets; it's about getting a return on the investment, and I think it is money that we have. It's money that's in our budget. It's a policy directive that was put in our budget that we supported, and we're going to make this investment because we're going to get a return on investment that far exceeds what we're spending.

My question was, though -- and I was encouraged to hear that there's \$5 million in the proposed budget for next year -- is only that going forward that I would like to see that criteria not be that you have to be as far along as, perhaps, this project was. My understanding was that the intent -- because I want to make these investments across Suffolk County in these communities for this transit-oriented development, my point is that you may not find many projects similar or as far along as Wyandanch Rising is today, and we should have an open mind to other projects that perhaps need the jump start to leverage the funding to get the project off the ground.

My point is not necessarily directed at Wyandanch Rising. We can talk about the merits of that program all day, and it's a great program, and it's something that we've all committed to, as Legislator Cilmi mentioned, with waiving the sewer hookup fee and some 72-hs. So I want to continue that, but going forward into next year, I think we really need to use this program more as an initiation program as opposed to looking for projects that are so far along that they could perhaps not need the funding to even get off the ground. That was my point: using it as more of a seed program or seed money or leveraging the funding.

All right. It's just important for me to clarify that because I don't want any misunderstanding. I've always supported the Wyandanch Rising program, and I think we do have the funding available for that, and I think we did take that policy direction in our -- when we enacted our operating budget, and I think we will get a substantial return on that investment, and I think it's the right thing to do at the end of the day. However, for the county program going forward into next year, I'd like to see that opened up a little bit more to some other areas and some other uses that are not -- and other projects that are not as far along.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. Everybody good? All right. We have -- I don't think we have a motion on this, do we?

LEG. HAHN:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. We have a motion to approve by Legislator Hahn. Seconded by Legislator -- Legislator D'Amaro seconds the motion to approve. Everybody good? All those in favor? Opposed?

LEG. CILMI:

Opposed.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

One opposed. So moved. The motion has been approved. **Approved (VOTE: 5-1-0-0, Opposed: Cilmi)**

CHAIRMAN MINIERI:

Thank you.

MR. KEYES:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. Let's go back to the agenda. Thank you, everybody, for coming down.

IR 1703, Approving the change of project for Downtown Revitalization Grant to the Rocky Point Civic Association and amending the contract with the Town of Brookhaven to reflect same (CP 6412) (Anker). I had a call from Ms. Anker. She said because of a previous engagement, she couldn't be here today, but she wanted to come down and speak in favor of this project. Anybody -- I'll make a motion to approve. Second by Legislator D'Amaro. All those in favor?

LEG. STERN:

Quickly, on the motion.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Just on the record, my notes reflect here that not only that this is a requested reallocation but that this particular proposal did go through the Suffolk County Downtown Citizens' Advisory Panel, and it was recommended by them as well.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Excellent. Okay. On the motion, All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

1725, Amending the Adopted 2013 Operating Budget and appropriating excess revenues received from Hotel/Motel Tax in 2012 (Schneiderman).

Motion to table by Legislator D'Amaro. Did you want to make the second on that, Kara, or did you want me to do it?

LEG. HAHN:

(Inaudible)

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. Legislator Hahn seconds the motion to table. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. It has been **tabled. (VOTE: 6-0-0-0)**

MS. GRIER-KEY:

Excuse me?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Is it on a particular bill?

MS. GRIER-KEY:

Yes, it was actually on 1725, and the information I have is misinformation. I was told this hearing was starting at 2:00, so I just wanted to speak on that, and I wasn't aware of that time, and I did drive pretty far to get here.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Ma'am, why don't you -- we'd love to have you. First, your name.

MS. GRIER-KEY:

Hi. My name is Georgette Grier-Key, and I am the director and chief curator of the Eastville Community Historical Society. I am also the president of the Association of Suffolk County Historical Societies and ex-officio board member of the Suffolk County Historical Society. And I wanted to be here today to speak on the -- amending the adopted 2013 operating budget for the appropriation of excess hotel monies that this bill that Legislator Jay Schneiderman is putting before you guys. And I just wanted to speak to the importance of supporting this bill.

Most of these organizations are upfront in doing a lot of the work, and as someone who has sit on many of these different boards and been a part, I really think that this is a really good bill that should be supported, and I also brought some of my newsletters, just in case, for the committee members.

But I just think that this is a good bill. With Sandy hitting, a lot of these organizations have incurred issues in reference to not having any funds to do work that they needed to do. I did also call some of your offices so you may have received a message from me in reference to this bill, so I am in support of it, and I just can't stress to you the amount of support we need. Grants are drying up. As we know, line item money is drying up, and this would really help us in a major way.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Ms. Grier-Key, Legislator D'Amaro would just like to ask you a quick question.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thank you. Thanks for coming here today to give us your point of view. I just want to let you know that this bill is being tabled by this committee today, but that is not a reflection on how we feel about your organization or the funding that you need. We see that from many great organizations across the county. What I'm going to encourage you to do is that if this bill does not pass, this funding may become available when we do our 2014 budget for next year, which we're going into that process right now. So if you're in touch with Legislator Schneiderman, you should continue to be in touch with him and give your requests into him, and he can carry that forward into the legislature and into the budget process.

MS. GRIER-KEY:

Okay. Now, the money, you're saying, is going to go over to 2014. Am I correct -- are you correct in saying that this money won't disappear once we hit 2014?

LEG. D'AMARO:

I can give you absolutely no guarantees until we go through the budget process, but what I'm saying to you is that if you are going to be successful in getting funding and meeting the requests that you have, you need to communicate that to us, and that's what I'm suggesting that you do if this bill doesn't go through, and it's been tabled already.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Just to further explain the process, what we're doing is we're putting it into 2014 from the 2013 budget, just rolled it over to the next year. And we're going to make -- we're going to have a long list of those organizations we think is worthy of that monies, which could include yourself, and that's

the reason we're saying, you know, go out and talk to Jay. Make sure that he advocates for your organization. Rather than having it come from one legislator, how to spend his monies, it will come from all 18, and that's the reason why we're opening the process to the full legislature rather than just one legislator's issues.

MS. GRIER-KEY:

Thank you so much for that, and I do respect that. But the conversation I had with him and the reason why I'm here today is because, unfortunately, the East End kind of gets the tail-end of things, and it's as if we have money on the East End, and we do not in some of these dire organizations. And I do believe it's worthy for all of the legislators to have a look and recommend their own organizations, I just do really believe that we have been underfunded through other efforts that have happened in the county, and a lot of the smaller organizations cannot thrive because we are not getting the support that we need, so please help --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

I got to tell you, I am sympathetic to, particularly towards historical societies. I'm a trustee in a little village historical society myself, and...but I got to tell you, Mr. Schneiderman is very good at getting funds for his district, and I think if you have him as your advocate, tell him to push, and you should be listed high up on his needs list. Okay.

Anyway, Legislator Cilmi, did you have a question?

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah. I realize this is sort of irregular because we've already tabled a bill, but I did have a question with respect to what this does. So it takes some excess money that's in the hotel-motel fund that hadn't previously been allocated.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's correct.

LEG. CILMI:

And it allocates it to a number of different organizations throughout the county. Right. Right. And normally that money would then just fall to fund balance, right, and be --

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

No. It would remain in hotel-motel.

LEG. CILMI:

It remains in -- okay. So it creates a fund balance in the hotel-motel fund. Now, so next year that fund balance in that fund carries over, so for sure that money will be spent --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, if we spend it.

LEG. CILMI:

If we spend it -- in these, you know -- with these sorts or organizations.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Yeah. Remember, the hotel-motel there's -- a percentage goes to cultural, and a percentage goes to historic.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

LEG. HAHN:

It can only be spent that way.

LEG. CILMI:

Is the budget process the only mechanism by which the hotel-motel fund money gets allocated, or is there some committee that makes the determination?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Budget process.

LEG. D'AMARO:

If I may, through the chair. There's also a portion of the state law that authorized the hotel-motel tax that earmarks a specific percentage to organizations in the county that we have no say over. It's built into the state law. And then whatever is left over flows down to the county, and that is put into the hotel-motel line and then distributed through our operating budget, through that process.

LEG. HAHN:

Don't we also have that group that distributes the grants?

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's Economic Development.

LEG. CILMI:

Right. That's what I was thinking of, the Cultural Advisory Board.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's not hotel-motel.

LEG. CILMI:

It's parks-related money.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

That's right. That is --

LEG. HAHN:

It is hotel-motel tax --

LEG. CILMI:

It is hotel-motel but --

LEG. HAHN:

-- but there's a certain portion of the hotel-motel tax that goes towards that.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right, but that's not the funding we're talking about here. That would be the cultural aspect of it.

LEG. CILMI:

Right. So if we have a group to better allocate that money, maybe we should have a group to allocate money for historical associations as well. I'm just thinking out loud.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Why; do you think we're not doing a good job?

LEG. CILMI:

I never said that.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Can I interject?

MS. GRIER-KEY:

Can I interject? I know this is tabled and this is unprecedented, but I'm glad that I'm here. I think what you're saying is 100 percent correct because there are different aspects to historical societies versus cultural societies, and I think that's another reason why we have been getting left out. I'm actually a transplant into a historical society. I'm actually an artist, so I know both sides of the table, which is very important to have that difference because they are very different. And, more than likely, the funding streams that we're able to go after are very different, so that makes it a different ball game. And that's another reason why this hotel tax money is really important because, although there's the Suffolk County Downtown Revitalization that cultural societies can go after, it's too competitive for us to compete.

I previously worked at Huntington Arts Council, and we received money from NYSCA to do the same thing where we're not competing with all of New York State; we're just competing with Long Island organizations, because if you put us against them, it's not an even playing field, and more than likely, we would not get the money because, of course, they have the population. They have all of these different things that we don't have access to, and it makes them more attractive, so that's part of the problem.

But thank you for entertaining my conversation although it's been tabled, and I have a few newsletters just to give you an update of what we've been doing. We have organization from Nassau County, which is Rock Hall, all the way to Montauk Point. And October 26, which is a Saturday, we'll be going to Montauk Point and Gurney's if anyone wants to go, so the information is in here. I had to give that plug. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Plugs are good. Thank you very much.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thank you for your perspective.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

All right. Anyway. I took the vote on that, didn't I?

MS. HOWARD:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Okay. The motion's been tabled.

IR 1777, Accepting and appropriating a 100% reimbursed grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program and authorizing the County Executive to execute agreements (County Executive). Motion by Legislator D'Amaro. Seconded by -- I'll second the motion and place it on the consent calendar. We're good? All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? So moved. **Approved/Consent Calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-1, Not Present: Nowick)**

1778, Accepting and appropriating a 100% reimbursed grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Community Development Block Grant Program and authorizing the County Executive to execute agreements (County Executive). Same motion, same second, same vote. Carolyn, do you want to add anything to this? We're good? All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **Approved/Consent Calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-1, Not Present: Nowick)**

1779, Accepting and appropriating a 100% reimbursed grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for the Emergency Solutions Grants Program and authorizing the County Executive to execute agreements (County Executive). Same motion, same second. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved. **Approved/Consent Calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-1, Not Present: Nowick)**

IR 1802, Allocating and appropriating funds (Phase XI) in connection with the Downtown Revitalization Program (CP 6412) (County Executive).
Anything you want to add? Any questions of Ms. Fahey? **Approved (VOTE: 5-0-0-1, Not Present: Nowick)**

LEG. STERN:

I just want to confirm that these are the recommended grants.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

Come on, Carolyn, come on up. Question to you. You got to come.

LEG. STERN:

These are the recommended grants that have been through the process and approved by the advisory panel?

MS. FAHEY:

Correct.

CHAIRMAN HORSLEY:

They're looking at the list. We're good? Okay. I'll make the motion to approve. Second by Legislator D'Amaro. All those in favor? Opposed? So moved.

Okay. I think that completes our agenda.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 2:05 p.m. *)*