

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Economic Development 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 November 18, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. William Lindsay III, Chairperson
Leg. Steven H. Stern, Vice Chair
Leg. Kara Hahn
Leg. Kevin J. McCaffrey
Leg. Jay H. Schneiderman, Deputy Presiding Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Jason Richberg, Clerk of the Legislature
Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office
Brian Sapp, Aide to Leg. Lindsay
Alyssa Turano, Aide to Leg. Hahn
Christina DeLisi, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman, DPO
Jason Hann, Aide to Leg. McCaffrey
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office
Greg Atherton, Aide to Leg. McCaffrey
William Shilling, Aide to Leg. Calarco
Edward A. Brennan, appointee/SC Citizens Advisory Board for the Arts
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 3:36 PM

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

Good afternoon. Welcome to the Economic Development Committee meeting. If we could all please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Stern.

SALUTATION

Mr. Clerk, do we have any public comment cards?

MR. RICHBERG:

No cards, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

Thank you. Anybody in the audience that wishes to speak before the Committee? Not seeing anybody, we'll go into the agenda. So we'll start with our Tabled Resolutions.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Tabled Resolution 1715, To appoint Edward A. Brennan as a member of the Suffolk County Citizens Advisory Board for the Arts. (Lindsay) Mr. Brennan, if you would come forward and have a seat at that table here in the middle.

MR. BRENNAN:

Great. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

Good afternoon, Mr. Brennan. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your willingness to serve on this -- on this board. If you could just briefly tell us a little bit about yourself and what benefits you think you'd be able to bring as a board member.

MR. BRENNAN:

Thank you, Mr. Lindsay. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Edward Brennan. I am a resident of Suffolk County born and raised on Long Island. And what I hope to bring to the Arts Council Advisory Board is a mix of both my experience in the business world on Long Island and also my education experience in the arts world.

Currently I'm employed by Cablevision as a Senior Director of Instructional Design, but have spent the last 25 years of my career in financial services. My degree and my training is actually in theatre. I have a Master's degree in Theater History and have spent nearly 20 years as an arts educator on Long Island part-time working for several different high schools. Currently I'm employed by St. John the Baptist High School as their drama director part-time. And I work professionally as an actor and a director here on Long Island and also in Manhattan.

And currently I am also on the Board of Directors at CM Performing Art Center in Oakdale as their treasurer for the last four years. And I have helped to organize some processes and procedures at CM, as an example of my experience, to reduce their debt from \$250,000 to \$10,000 where we are currently. That's not being done alone, but I think that I'm doing it in partnership with the other leaders at the organization and help them to send a vision and a process to do work through that work.

So I'd like to think that I bring the right mix of business experience as well as arts experience. And that's my interest in being parts of -- part of the Arts Council.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

Thank you. I'll open up to any questions from members of the Committee.

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you for your willingness to serve.

MR. BRENNAN:

Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

With that I'll make a motion to approve; second by Legislator McCaffrey. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Mr. Brennan, congratulations. This will go before the full Legislature on December 1st. You're not required to be there, although you're more than welcome to come. And once the vote is final, we'll let you know. Thank you very much.

MR. BRENNAN:

Thank you; appreciate your time.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

Back to the agenda to **Tabled Resolution 1801, Adopting Local Law No. -2015, A Local Law to reauthorize the Hotel and Motel Tax through 2017. (Pres. Off.)** I will make a motion to approve; second by Legislator Hahn. Any discussion? Legislator Schneiderman.

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, first let me say that, you know, the Hotel Tax as written, I don't believe, serves my district as well as it should since most of my district contains a large percentage of the hotels in Suffolk County. There are earmarks in it for Vanderbilt Museum and Walt Whitman Museum. There are -- there are no specific earmarks for things like the Montauk Lighthouse, which is, you know, clearly, I think, the most important, you know, monument in tourist destination on Long Island.

So I have asked Assemblyman Englebright who carried this bill to make changes. I know they're looking at changing the bill in the future, but they've reauthorized it for two years. It certainly provides a lot of cultural art and historic building funding.

I should also say that, you know, for the record I do own -- co-own a hotel. Like property taxes, many of us own homes and we vote on things that affect property taxes. The Ethics Board has determined that I can vote on the Hotel Tax because it affects hotels equally. There is no particular benefit or detriment to my hotel that's different than anybody else's.

But I'm not going to support this because I want to send a message that the law needs to be changed so that it better protects all the industry. So, I won't be supporting the authorization.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Mr. Chairman, if I could add to that, I mean, I kind of disagree because if we were to appropriate sales tax revenue based on where it's generated from, I think that there may be some more sales tax coming from the West End of the County than there is from the East End. And if we appropriated the delivery of services based on sales tax geographically, I think that would -- I think that's a fair comparison. So, I think, you know, the way we appropriate it is fair.

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Again, so there's two earmarks for Western Suffolk. You know, Vanderbilt gets roughly a million

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dollars and Walt Whitman gets what amounts to about 135,000. The Hotel Tax, you know, east, west, generally it's about the same amount of money. Western Suffolk is primarily business travelers and Eastern Suffolk is primarily leisure travelers. And taxes bring in around nine million total, some of which -- two million goes to LICBB and some goes toward cultural; some goes toward the County's General Fund. But when you have these two specific earmarks for Western Suffolk, which generates half the tax and nothing for Eastern Suffolk, to me that's not fair. And I think that needs to be fixed.

It also forces us to go out and contract out tourism promotion services. So we can't even do it in-house if we wanted to have economic development through our tourism promotion. We don't even have that choice. We have to contract out with a group which traditionally has been LICBB.

So I have some issues with the way the bill is structured. And it's not perfect. And I've asked for changes to it. I think if those changes were made, I would be supporting this. But they haven't yet made them so I'm going to abstain from today's vote.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

No other comments so I will call the vote. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Abstain.

CHAIRPERSON LINDSAY:

One abstention, Mr. Clerk. **(VOTE: 4-0-1-0)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Introductory Resolution 1925, Adopting Local Law No. -2015, A Local Law Authorizing the Establishment of a Local Development Corporation known as the Recreation and Economic Development Corporation of Suffolk County. We're going to -- we got motion to table for a public hearing by Legislator Hahn. I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion's tabled. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

IR 1929, Adopting Local Law No. -2015, A Local Law to Amend Chapter 155 of the Suffolk County Code Clarifying funding sources for the operation of the Suffolk County Landbank Corporation. (Co. Exec) We also need to table this for public hearing. It'll be the same motion, same second. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? That motion is tabled as well. **(VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

And we have no procedural motions so we are adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 3:43 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**