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EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Education & Human Services 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 July 18, 2017.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Leg. Monica Martinez, Chairperson
- Leg. Thomas F. Barraga, Vice Chair
- Leg. Kate Browning
- Leg. Robert Calarco, DPO
- Leg. Kara Hahn
- Leg. Leslie Kennedy
- Leg. DuWayne Gregory, Presiding Officer

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
- Amy Ellis, Chief Deputy Clerk/Legislature
- Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office
- Ben Ziwn, Suffolk Community College
- Kevin Peterman, Suffolk Community College
- Katie Horst, County Executive's Office
- Lisa Pinkard, Aide to Leg. Martinez
- Seth Squicciarino, Aide to Leg. Hahn
- Ali Nazir, Aide to Leg. Kennedy
- Kathy Liguori, Habits Preschool
- Dana Friedman, Child Care Commission
- And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

- Diana Fleisher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:37 PM

CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen and welcome to today's Education, Human Services Committee. If we could all rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by Legislator Hahn.

SALUTATION

Thank you. All right, following the agenda today we do have two cards. If anyone wants to speak before the Committee, please sign -- please fill out the yellow cards. First we have Miss Kathy Liguori who's representing Habittots Preschool. Kathy? Oh, there you are. Hi, Kathy.

MS. LIGUORI:

Hello. My name is Kathy Liguori. I'm from Habittots Preschool and Childcare Centers.

First, I wanted to say thank you for originally approving the organization of the Child Care Commission for Suffolk County. In one year as a group we met 14 times, not including the additional small group side-bar meetings that were held by the Chair, the Co-chair and the Secretary, organizing meeting agendas, writing minutes and a report of our accomplishments.

For well over ten years, I've come before the Legislature committee meetings to suggest a child care commission to be organized and we did it so I want to thank you for that. I was really proud to be a part of such a knowledgeable and professional group of people representing a very challenging industry. From a grassroots approached, we organized and held a summit that I feel touched the grass tops as we impressed those that attended with a more enhance perspective and a personal desire to want to do more.

I know I did. And I think I can speak for all to say that we all left that day with more hope for the child care industry in our County than ever before because for the first time, at least that I can ever recall, we had two executive branches of our government come together. And our County Executive was there to speak in favor and about his concern and interest in early childhood education for our County.

So for that reason alone, in my opinion the summit was a huge success. So I want to thank you for that; for without this legislation, the Childcare Commission could have never been. I was excited about the work that we did and I'm even more excited about the work that we can do.

We had Dr. George Askew as a keynote speaker. He was the original founder of Dots for Tots and he's the Deputy Commissioner -- or the Commissioner of Department of Health for New York City. And one of the statements he left us with was that children are the living message being sent to a time that we will not see. That statement in itself made me proud of the work I do. It's not all hearts and flowers every day dealing with the children and the parents. And

1 that just really set my north star.

2

3 So all that being said, I ask you to vote in favor of IR 1566 to
4 extend the life of the Childcare Commission. Thank you, Legislator
5 Martinez. Thank you all.

6

7 CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

8 Thank you. We next have Donna Friedman.

9

10 MS. FRIEDMAN:

11 Thank you. Good afternoon. I am here to talk in support of the
12 Child Care Commission for three basic reasons: One is that we know
13 the policymakers, professionals, parents and the public all need to
14 better understand the importance of those first few years where 90%
15 of brain growth occurs. And we also know that by investing in
16 quality early-learning experiences, we can have a lot of benefits
17 for the kids, the families, the schools and the local economy.

18

12:41PM

19 In addition, it's important for all of the members of the community
20 to better understand their role in helping children succeed. And
21 that's the second reason. And as Deputy Commissioner of Social
22 Services, I am working with Steve Bellone, the County Executive, to
23 create a model of community coalitions where the barber shop and
24 the library and the school and the child care programs all come
25 together to assist children; and most importantly educate the
26 community further about the needs of young children.

27

12:42PM

28 And, finally, the third reason is that this Commission's been very
29 productive. We issued a report about our accomplishments; very
30 proud of the leadership that Legislator Martinez has shown. But
31 we've, you know, really done a lot of analysis and policy review.
32 And I think the report reflects it. But unlike, perhaps, I've
33 heard other commissions, we are really -- a group that's worked
34 very hard and I think accomplished a lot. I hope you vote for the
35 extension. Thank you.

36

37 CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

38 Thank you. Okay. There are no other cards in my possession and
39 there's no one else in the audience who would like to speak so we
40 will continue with our agenda.

12:42PM

41

42 INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

43

44 I will move onto our resolutions. We'll begin with resolution 1560
45 -- well, prior to that, I'm so sorry, I know that we have Suffolk
46 Community College here representing. Is there anything that you
47 would like to address the address the Committee on?

48

49 MR. ZWIRN:

12:42PM

50 No.

51

52 CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

53 Thank you. And I know that there is a rep here from the Department
54 of Social Services. Anything to comment from Commissioner O'Neill?

55

56

1 AUDIENCE:

2 No.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

5 Thank yo.

6

7

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

8

9 All right, so moving onto Introductory Resolutions number 1560,
10 Accepting and appropriating a grant award from the Environmental
11 Protection Agency through the New York State Environmental
12 Facilities Corporation for a Green Innovation Grant Program GIGP
13 entitled, "Campus Green Roofs Initiative", 90% reimbursed by
14 Federal funds at Suffolk County Community College. (Co. Exec.) I'd
15 like to make a motion to approve.

16

17 LEG. BARRAGA:

18 Second.

19

20 CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

21 Second by Legislator Barraga. All in favor? Opposed?
22 Abstentions? Motion carries. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0. PRESIDING OFFICER
23 GREGORY INCLUDED IN VOTE)

24

25 Resolution 1566, Extending deadline for the Child Care Commission.
26 (Martinez) I would like to make a motion to approve.

27

28 LEG. BROWNING:

29 Second.

12:43PM

30

31 CHAIRPERSON MARTINEZ:

32 Second by Legislator Browning. And on the motion, I just really
33 want to thank the Commission, I know some of you are here, and the
34 work that you did this past year has been amazing. And I know that
35 there's still a lot to be done. And as you say, we touched the
36 grass top and not the actual root because it's exactly what you've
37 done. And there is no much more that we need to accomplish.

38

12:44PM

39 And, you know, this Commission was only given a year life and we
40 were going to revisit it when it expired. And here we are today.
41 I know that the Commission has spoken on several occasions as to
42 whether we should continue with it or not. And believe me when I
43 tell you I think there's more that can be done. And I want to
44 thank actually our Presiding Officer, Legislator Kennedy and Hahn
45 for being present at the summit and providing your insight on child
46 care and the need for affordable child care and finding resources
47 for our families out there.

48

12:44PM

49 So I do want to thank you. This is something that affects all our
50 families across the County; not just those that are, you know, who
51 are struggling, but it's really something that affects everyone.
52 So I do want to thank the Commission for doing the work that you've
53 done. And without further ado, I would like to call the vote. So
54 if there is no opposition to this, all in favor? Opposed?
55 Abstention? Motion carries. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0. PRESIDING OFFICER
56 GREGORY INCLUDED IN VOTE) Continue the great work, ladies and

1 gentlemen.

2

3 And our final resolution, 1577, and that's Directing the Department
4 of Social Services to cease placement of public assistance
5 recipients in substandard housing. (Browning) Motion by Legislator
6 Browning; second by Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed?
7 Abstention? Motion carries. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0. PRESIDING OFFICER
8 GREGORY INCLUDED IN VOTE)

9

12:45PM

10 There is no further business in this Committee. We are adjourned.

11

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13

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:45 PM

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