

**CAPITAL BUDGET JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING
ENVIRONMENT, LAND ACQUISITION & PLANNING
AND PARKS, SPORTS & CULTURAL AFFAIRS
of the
Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes

A Capital Budget Joint Committee Meeting of the Environment, Land Acquisition & Planning and Parks, Sports & Cultural Affairs was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium, in the William Rogers Legislative Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on **May 30, 2001**, at 10:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Legislator David Bishop
Legislator Michael Caracciolo
Legislator Ginny Fields
Legislator Allan Binder
Legislator Vivian Fisher
Legislator Cameron Alden
Legislator Joseph Caracappa
Legislator Brian Foley
Legislator Angie Carpenter

ALSO PRESENT:

Peter Scully, Commissioner of Suffolk County Parks
Richard Caggiano, Suffolk County Parks
Nicole DeAngelo, County Executive's Office
Jim Spero, Assistant Director, Budget Review Office
Vito Minei, Director, Division of Environmental Quality, S.F. Health Department
Kathy Laguardia, County Executive's Office
Theresa Lollo, County Executive's Office
Kevin Duffy, Budget Review Office
Mary Howe, Budget Review Office
Jim Dobkowski, Press Secretary, Presiding Officer Paul Tonna's Office
Thomas Donovan, Presiding Officer Paul Tonna's Office
All Interested Parties

Minutes taken and transcribed by Irene Kulesa, Legislative Secretary

(The meeting came to order at 10:10 a.m.)

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay, this is Capital Budget Hearings Joint Committee Meeting between Parks, Public Works, Land Acquisition. Am I missing one? That's it. Then we'll start with a Salute to the Flag led by Legislator Binder.

SALUTATION

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay, we can do the Parks and Land Acquisition component first. That's not a problem. Oh, here's the Public Works Chairman now. We'll do that next. All right Peter, come on up. Commissioner Scully. Commissioner, won't you tell us what your likes and dislikes are in this year's proposed Capital Budget?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Well, first I'd like to thank the legislative staff, the staff from BRO who -- it's been a transition recently but the staff at BRO has been very, very interested in the Parks Department historically and there are very few areas of disagreement with them. If you read the comments that they've made, they're pretty much in line with our needs. They have advocated that we begin developing long term plans for the campgrounds and that is something that we're in the process of doing with the help of the Department of Public Works because we think that makes sense.

There are a couple of findings in the BRO report, which just based on chronology, I should point out, are no longer accurate. One has to do with the status of funds in Project 7079 paving improvements and lighting to County Parks. We've been prioritizing need for paving and re-paving in the parks and at the time BRO did its evaluation, staff noted that of seven hundred and eighty six thousand dollars appropriated for the project, four hundred and twenty seven thousand, one hundred and eighty two dollars or about 54 percent had been expended leaving three hundred and fifty eight thousand dollars remaining for further use. Since that time, we've committed additional funding for paving and re-paving and we've committed about ninety eight point two percent of available funding or seven hundred and seventy one thousand, eight hundred and twelve dollars.

With respect to some of the comments made about Project 7096 Coindre Hall, there was a comment that staff felt that we should complete the replacement of the {Port Coshay} roof on the main building prior to appropriating additional funds for the boathouse and we believe that comment was well intended but the result of comments, my staff made to the BRO staff and perhaps we weren't as clear as we should -- staff should have been in describing the significance of the deterioration of that facility.

The only other comments I'd make under BRO report are a couple of observations. It talks about planning being underway for the new marina in Shirley. We did cut the ribbon on the boat ramp there last week, so that's been completed. And with respect to campgrounds and the bathrooms, I mean bathrooms in some of the campground and park facilities, a couple that were described as being completed are now in the design phase. Generally, we've been pleased over the past year with the increase, the attention that the departments has been receiving from both the Legislature and the Executive Branch's of government and we really don't have a lot to quibble with, in terms of the BRO recommendations.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

That's good, Mr. Commissioner. Jimmy any comment from BRO on parks?

MR. SPERO:

No.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Very good. Is that all Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

That would be the completion of my comments. Obviously, I'd be happy to try and answer any questions that the members of the committee might have.

LEGISLATOR CARACAPP:

Members of the committee? Legislator Foley.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Thank you Commissioner, for your remarks. A couple questions. One, perhaps Legislator Fields will be asking this question but I'll bring it up first and that's with the Long Island Maritime Museum and after, if we could hear from the BRO. Those monies have been appropriated over a period of years as the Budget Review Office has highlighted over the years and it long predates your tenure as Commissioner. But notwithstanding the project review by BRO, Commissioner could you tell us -- could you tell us where things stand with the Maritime Museum and when we're going to see some movement on the project?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Sure. We have been working with the Maritime Museum. You know that for some years they've been operating without the benefit of any formal written agreement between the County and the museum. And there's recently been a change in the leadership of the Board of Trustees and we've been working closely trying to finalize that agreement. We see that as an important step. But in addition to that, an overall plan for the museum property needs to be approved by CEQ and we're hopeful we're going to bring that to them shortly. We've been working with them to prioritize a list of projects using the available funding and attending to things like the stucco on the exterior of the building and some leaks that they've made us aware of in and around. The gutters are priorities for them. There's about I think two hundred and twenty plus or minus dollars available in capital funding for the project.

The overall plan for the museum is really, much, much larger than that and there are, at least, conceptual plans for an expansion. The Department of Public Works is working now to design an enhanced septic disposal system for the facility because it was never envisioned initially that it would be -- you know see such large numbers of visitors. So it needs to improve upon that. Those are some of the priorities using the existing funding. But the big picture over the longer term, it seems to be, if an expansion of the museum is really going to be pursued, you know that type of investment is going to amount to millions and millions of dollars. The real scope of that project should become clear over the next 12 months.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay. Do you expect the master plan to be submitted or completed by when? Within several months? Less than that?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I think that within several months is a good estimate of the time required. They submitted a site plan to us within the last two weeks.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

And we will be bringing that to CEQ. Some of you may be more familiar with the history of that site plan than I am but it calls for a relocation at the entrance and you know some significant improvements there.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay. Also I don't -- Jim, I don't see it treated or mentioned in the review here but something that Legislator Caracappa and I have been watchful about is the Terry House in the Bald Hill School House on Portion Road in Farmingville. We had appropriated a hundred and twenty five thousand last year and I know that there were discussions between Mr. Martin and the Historical Society. Could you tell us where those things stand and when work will start? Either yourself Jim, or Commissioner or either?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Well I could tell you that we expect the HBAC system at the Bald Hill School House to be installed very shortly, within the next 60 to 90 days if it's -- I think that's a good estimate and window replacement for later this year at the school house. With respect to the Terry House, I'd have to go back and do some research on this.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay and that would -- would that take those two items take up the whole appropriation? Or there must be other monies that would be left over?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I really need to check on that to get good information for you.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

If we could Mr. Chairman, by our next regular Parks Committee Meeting have an update on

that? That would be helpful.

MR. SPERO:

Just for your information, those projects come under Capital Project 7510, 456 and 457.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay. Thank you Mr. Chairman. Thank you Commissioner.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Mr. Commissioner, I apologize I missed the first five minutes of your remarks but have you had a chance and I realize that it is fairly recently that you took over as Commissioner. Have you had a chance to prepare some kind of long term plan both with the Capital Budget and with the Operating Budget, as far as regularly scheduled improvements to the golf courses?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

We're working on that. As you know, Mr. Matthews has been overseeing the golf courses and we have been developing individual plans for each of the courses, which we are managing directly. Timber Point Project obviously, is being administered with the help of the Department of Public Works and hopefully, very shortly we'll be -- they'll be issuing a notice to proceed for the main portion of the work over at Timber Point involving the insulation of the gabion and the raising the remaining fairways. It's that plan is fairly well defined. The thing that we're adding to that with the appropriations approved for us by the Legislature in December, is to make sure that by the time the course itself is completed, that the house, you know the main house at Timber Point is subject to some rehabilitation itself. The exterior needs some work. We're looking to reclaim some of the unused space in that building for our own use and we've been talking with the Concessionaire Lessings Incorporated about that and with the golf pro. So yes, I'd say that long term plans are shaping up pretty well for Timber Point.

At West Sayville, the irrigation system has been completed for two plus years now. We're starting really to see the benefit of that. So we have less work to do over there. But we do have improvements planned and you know, I would be happy to provide you with detail on the plans for all of those courses. With respect to Indian Island, we've been working closely with Legislator Caracciolo on an overall plan for that facility. The derelict structures, which have long marred the view between County Road 105 and the Peconic River have been removed. Thanks to the help again, at the Department of Public Works and that's a major step forward. Now we'd really like to redesign a renovation, a rehabilitation of that area, which should be a real benefit and we do have a detailed plan for that course, as well and we welcome your interest. We'd like an opportunity to brief you on all three.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

So you would anticipate then, by the time we do the Operating Budget that you would have -- like the Operating Budget, part of the plan for -- it's kind of routine maintenance but it's a you know -- some of them have more of a life span. Say for instance, a rebuilding of traps and rebuilding of, you know even tee boxes and greens and things like that, which in the past we have not had a long term plan on what we're going to do with those courses. And then we get into that cycle where the course -- we put a lot of money in the course, so it's in good condition and then we don't put any money in the course, so it runs down and then we're forced to put a lot of money into it again at some point.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

That's an excellent point and I think that, you know that it all boils down to resources. Yourself and Legislator Caracciolo were good enough, when I was appointed last year, to allow me a little bit of time to take an overall look at the golf courses and we did bring in the USGA to do a survey. I think, I provided a copy of their comments to you and the basic issue at the golf course is quite frankly, our staffing levels. USGA found that our courses are staffed at about half the level one would expect at a minimum for a normally maintained 18-hole golf course.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

What I'm going to point out is that we're under that phase out of pesticides, which under those circumstances, I believe, that the staffing levels are quite considerably higher than what a normal course would require.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

You're correct about that. The USGA in its comments and its findings expressed concern about that and said that staffing levels are about half of what they should be for minimum maintenance of a golf course under normal maintenance regimes. That means the use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides when you need them and pointed out that the labor demands associated with organic maintenance practices are somewhat greater. I just -- I don't want to take up too much time but just as an example, so that the committee might understand why that's so. I'll use an example of a fertilizer application. I'm advised that a single application of chemical fertilizer would require 50 bags of material and requisite number of personnel to spread it and machines to spread it, a single application of the organic fertilizer would require 200 bags of material, four times as much, hence four times as much labor and four times as much equipment to get that application completed.

Now I'm not suggesting, by any means that we need four times as much staff because that's not the case. But it's just an indication that the increased labor associated with organic maintenance practices is real. It's not unknown. The department developed projection from my predecessor, in terms of increased staffing needs. Apparently, he didn't feel that it was politically realistic to bring their recommendations forward and we'll be talking about that moving forward. I think there's a great interest on the part of the Legislature, in making sure that as we move towards organic maintenance that it be successful and that it not fail and I think the department shares that view. So that if increase resources are required to get the job done, that they should be provided and we support that.

We have an application pending for funding under the Water Protection Fund component of the new Quarter Percent Sales Tax because these activities would have direct benefit to the Great South Bay at West Sayville and at Timber Point by reducing nitrogen loading and pesticide loading into the bay and at Indian Island, same benefits for the Peconic Bay and if that application is successful, we will obtain additional resources for that purpose.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

And I think it's fair to point out that you share the same belief and any Legislator that I've talked to shares the same belief. We have literally tens of millions of dollars in capital assets in these golf courses and even to allow them to deteriorate again or to allow them to -- you know progressively or slowly deteriorate, I think is not something that we can do or should be doing at this time. So I'm glad that you're pretty much on track with having a presentation for the Operating Budget and then our next Capital Budget you should have a long term plan then?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Sure. On the -- in terms of improvements to the golf course, we do have individual plans available for those three courses. I'd be happy to make those available to you. In terms of providing the resources on the organic maintenance side, there are both equipment requirements and staffing requirements and I guess; we'll be addressing those in part during the Operating Budget. I'm sure Legislator Caracciolo is going to want to talk a little bit about those issues. He's been peppering us with questions about what the real needs are. What it really means and he has the same exact concerns that you do. I think you're going to find that if we're investing in improvements, those investments need to be protected by regular maintenance.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Commissioner, in terms of our parks facilities and resources? If you were to quantify the revenue the County generates from its park courses -- I mean from its golf courses, as compared to the entire budget? Just to give the members of this committee a perspective?

What would the ratio be?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

The percentage of golf course related revenues to all the revenues generated by a department? I think it's a little bit less than half of the eight million dollars we expect to generate.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Correct, so just to amplify the point made by Legislator Alden, in terms of the importance of these resources and maintaining the resources, it brings me to the issue of organic maintenance. And as we've recently and not recently, over a long period of time now have had dialogue and conversation regarding that. I think it's important for you to start informing the Legislature, as to what realistically can be accomplished by the complete phase out of pesticides, which is under the schedule in existence required next January. Is that doable? Is that realistic?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I think that there are two separate answers to that and let me try and take them one at a time. The first is the issue of resources and I think -- I do think that if the Legislature takes a hard look and your point is well taken, I think it's our obligation to inform the Legislators and we'll try and do that. I do think that you'll find additional staff resources are required, in order to get the job done.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Right. You already mentioned that. You indicated that the USGA reports indicated that presently our courses are about 50 percent of manning levels and that there would be an additional requirement for personnel, should we go all organic. To quantify that right now? How many labor -- let me take that back. How many individuals do we have that maintain, right now, Timber Point?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I would say six or seven. I'd have to make a phone call to be real precise.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

And we're operating with just 18 holes because we still have 9 holes closed for the irrigation system and other maintenance projects?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

That's correct and you need to keep in mind that the staff there also provides support for two marinas, Timber Point East and Timber Point West and is responsible for some of the maintenance on the main building.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

So in effect, there are six or seven individuals are not just dedicated to the golf course. They are dedicated to other resources at that park facility?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

That is true, as well as the fact that the golf course superintendent is playing an important role in shepherding along the capital improvements over there as well. Those folks work very, very hard.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay. So let's go to West Sayville. The number of personnel there?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Same deal. Roughly half a dozen. In both cases, the County Executive and the Legislature were, we felt were very, very good to us in the 2001 Operating Budget. We do have some additional positions, low level, blue collar positions to fill for those courses and we're hopeful

that we're going to get permission to move forward and fill those. That would be somewhat of a help.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

How many vacancies, not vacancies but how many of those positions are still open?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

We are -- we have about twenty-seven vacant positions in the department, nine of which are labor positions.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay and Indian Island, what's the situation there?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Roughly the same. We did have an individual depart recently, who you know, we think, it would be productive for us to replace.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

So we're down to five there or six?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I'd have to call. I'd have to make a phone call to be precise but I think we're down to six.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay. The point I'm getting at here is in another two months, three months, we'll be -- I'll take a look at next year's Operating Budget where staffing, you know requests will come forward to the Legislature. It does no good for the Legislature to authorize and appropriate funds for positions only to have those positions frozen. What's going to happen and Legislator Alden alluded to this, we are going to start to see degradation of the golf course again. So far we've been very fortunate. This has been a very cool and wet spring and right now the golf courses look great. But once the weather turns warm and once we get into summer vacation schedules and I know a lot of park employees don't take summer vacations per se and they do have some seasonal that offset personnel who do. The fact of the matter is we will start to see some decline in maintenance.

But the real important issue here for all of us to understand is that come January, we are going to have an additional 50 percent requirement for personnel. And there has to be an understanding now, as we begin to look at next year's budget in September, when it's presented, that those staffing needs have to be met or you cannot have an organic golf course maintenance program, period, you can't. It's just not doable. That's the first part.

The second part is the materials that you need for organic maintenance, okay and the state of the art of organic maintenance. You have looked and researched this. I am researching this. Are there any golf courses in the United States, in the world that are 100 percent organic maintenance golf courses?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I can't claim that we have performed an exhaustive search. So I can't honestly answer your question about the world and the nation. We've yet to become aware of one that we could look to in the region and go to look at as an example.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Well, I've contacted several golf course superintendents in Nassau and Suffolk County, where it has been alleged they are operating organic maintenance golf courses and they are not. There are occasions when -- and other types of turf diseases pop up that you need to apply certain pesticides. So the point I'm getting at and the point we discussed last week is that I'm going to be hosting this fall, a symposium on the state of the art of organic golf maintenance and practices to see if we can, here in Suffolk County, meet the laudable goal that we have set for ourselves and if the science is where we've told it would be in three years when we phase in this program. So far it does not appear to be the case and I think if

that is the case, then we have to revisit that issue and set more realistic goals, as opposed to going forward and doing the very thing that Legislator Alden alluded to earlier and that is start to see a degradation of our golf course facilities, which if you had to put a price tag in today's real estate market what the value would be, you'd be talking about tens of millions of dollars for the four golf courses that we own.

Now what I find interesting is that the fourth golf course, which hasn't been mentioned yet, Bergen Point is not included in the organic golf maintenance program. Well that's very interesting. The sponsor of the organic maintenance program has a golf course in his district and is not included. That's very interesting. I think that deserves some attention and some review, which I intend to take a look at. With that said, all I'm trying to do at this point is bring to the members of this committee that we may not be able to meet those goals. And if we are able to meet those goals, it's going to require a lot more staff. And the Legislature needs to be prepared when we look at the 2002 Budget to give you, at least, somewhere in the area, you know your projections are accurate, would you estimate additional staff would require to maintain organic maintenance course?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Well, we --

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Systemwide?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I would refer to the --

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

USGA report?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Well, I would refer more specifically to the document. We submitted an application for funding under Water Protection Fund. I do have that with me and I had -- my staff did a great job detailing what they saw, as the staff needs. Off the top of my head, I can't spit that number back at you. But it's low level, blue-collar maintenance that we need. You know that we're pushing for the development of more specialized titles for use in the golf course with the help of the Department of Civil Service and that's moving along.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

That's based on the visit by Legislator Fisher and Legislator Fields and myself and Cameron Alden to Monmouth County where they have a National Parks Department and they have titles that are consistent with the jobs performed by the employees in a municipal golf course system. With that said and that's -- I think, we're all encouraged to hear that you are pursuing that. That's something that I haven't brought up recently because I know that takes time with Civil Service to reclassify job titles and so forth. But that's certainly a move in the right direction.

Let me just switch gears and talk a little bit about the Sports and Recreation Division that was created or several positions that were created for a Sports and Recreation Division. As we sit here today, a year and a half after that announcement, what has taken place in Suffolk County with 40,000 acres of parkland to give the citizens of this County a real Sports and Recreation Division?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Okay. Well first, you should know that because it's related to the issue. The issue of having been authorized to fill vacant positions is something we've been patient about. As you know, I served in the Executive Branch, not only in this government but others and I understand the challenge of both the Legislature and the County Executive facing trying to address the fiscal situation with the County. And it wasn't until action was taken by the Legislature to address the issue of revenues that we could realistically expect that some of these positions would be freed up. So we're hopeful that with respect to golf course staffing, especially

within the next week to ten days, we're going to need a clear picture from the Budget Office what we could expect for the remainder of this year and it will be important for us to get that.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

What positions specifically relate to Sports and Recreation and what facilities? That's my concern. What are we giving back to the people of Suffolk County for the taxes they pay, both the property taxes and the fees they pay for their park facilities? Sports and Recreation.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Currently, we did bring the -- we have appointed a Director of Sports and Recreation and we did --

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

It sounds like I'm touching some nerves here. Well that's intended because I'm not getting answers. I'd like an answer.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I apologize for that. If I digressed any about the vacant positions. I just wanted to explain, in the broader sense, what the department hopes and expects and why we've been a little bit patient. We were able to appoint a Director of Sports and Recreation. We did bring Mr. Lloyd to the last meeting of the Parks Committee to talk a little about the status of the division and its mission and I would be happy to talk to you about that. We have letters out to the athletic organizations in the County, as part of our effort to both develop a formal relationship with them and to create a data base to link people up with resources through the use of the Internet on a new web page that were designed. But with respect to the more basic question is of what are we doing with respect to facilities? Well, I don't think any of us had been particularly pleased with the pace of consummating any of the transactions under the active recreational component of Greenways Program. But the fact is we have closed two of those, both in -- one in Huntington, which is going to be managed by the Town of Huntington and another in Brookhaven, which is going to be managed by the Town jointly with the school district and the Mount Sinai Heritage Trust and plans are moving along for both of those facilities.

We recently had coordination meeting with the Town of Brookhaven, with respect to the Wedge. We were hopeful that they're going to break ground this fall on that complex. The Town of Huntington has created an Advisory Committee to deal with the issue of not only that active recreational site but the surrounding acreage of the Benjamin property and they are due to make some sort of report to the Huntington Town Board by the end of June, I believe and then we'll be pressing them for a timetable on construction there. So there is some movement on some of those active recreational projects under the Greenways Program.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay. So I guess, in my mind, when I go elsewhere and Newsday has just done an excellent series and continues to, on Nassau County and how their parks are crumbling as a result of their financial problems. When I look around Suffolk County, I don't see anywhere near the types of facilities that Nassau County provides its residents. Granted, some of them are in disrepair but many are not and in Suffolk County, we have a population that's larger. We have a park system, in terms of acreage. It's much larger and outside of some marinas and the beach at Smith Point and some golf courses, we really don't provide our residents a whole lot in the way of recreational opportunities; active recreational activities, in terms of ball fields and the very things that, I guess, active component of Greenways was supposed to deal with. And I realize that takes some time to get into the stream.

But I'm just trying to understand, as I did when that resolution came over. What is the vision for the Sports and Recreation? There is none. We're just going to have a few people in the Parks Department. They have to coordinate with community groups and what facilities are they using? And what is the necessity of us having someone in County Government

coordinate it with somebody that's using a third party's recreational facilities? Is there vision to have recreational facilities, i.e., ball fields, swimming pools and other active recreational uses for County residents? Or are we just going to act as a conduit, a coordinator between other levels of government and third party groups?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

I think that those are very, very, good questions, which really demand policy decisions, be made in that regard. Clearly, Suffolk County Parks has never had as part of its mission what Nassau has, in terms, of the hands on management of recreational facilities. If you read a recent Newsday account, you'll see that at one point the Nassau County Parks Department had a thousand full time employees. Suffolk County Parks at its peak had about two hundred and sixty, I believe and that was in 1975. So we're clearly given the resources available to us and not in a position to improve and manage those types of facilities ourselves. And I think that the philosophy that the department has utilized since the late 1980's, has been to try and find partners, whether they be private sector concessionaires who are providing horseback riding activities, as licensees, where groups like {Klein} which is managing a mountain bike trail for us at Cathedral Pines; trying to bring partners into the mix to get somewhat of a job done without the resources required to do that ourselves. I think the same approach had been taken with respect to Community Greenways, in that it called not for the County itself to make improvements for recreational uses but for partners in the process to do that and the question that you ask is a good one.

At this point, I think that we've been moving forward under the presumption that there wouldn't be any great change, in terms, of the County's role in making those recreational opportunities available. They'd rather they be up doing those improvements ourselves and managing those facilities ourselves. We would be working with partners, be they municipal or other organizations, to try and make those opportunities available to our residents. In addition and there are others present in the room who could speak to this much better than I. I think that the division for the Division of Sports and Recreation was that it would do more than just that, trying to attract events to Suffolk County. It grew out of the idea of the Suffolk County Sports Commission, which did not move forward and the idea was that Suffolk County should compete with other municipalities and the region to bring events to this County and that's what we foresee will happen when that division is up and running.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay, so in effect, the title is somewhat of a misnomer. But let me go back just quickly to -- let me go back just quickly to organic golf course maintenance. Because in addition to personnel, you need equipment and you referenced that in your earlier statement. I know Ed Matthews is working on a list of equipment. I think he quantified it last week that about four hundred and twenty thousand dollars, when will that list be forthcoming? Is that something that should have been included in the Capital Program and Budget? Or is that something as Budget Review has informed me, would be a 5, 25, 5 expense and be included in the Operating Budget when it's presented in September?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Well, that's another good question because most of them that you ask are.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Again, it's a policy issue as to whether or not that type of equipment meets the definition for Capital Budget funding. I mean, I would point out that we have plenty pieces of equipment continuing to operate in the department and used by our staff every day that date back to the 1960's. So the point, the assertion that some of the stuff isn't going to last five years, in most cases, I don't think is accurate. But the basic decision, as to whether or not it's funded from a Capital standpoint, it's a policy decision. That decision is for the Legislature.

Over the past several years, together the Executive Branch and the Legislature have chosen

to take some of those expenses that some might consider legitimate capital expenses and to fund them instead out of the Operating Budget through the use of what we're -- I guess, we're calling chief funds now, which is you know, pay as you go funding. So we don't think in a department that that's our decision to make. We'll take the resources anyway that we can get them quite frankly and we recognize that, you know policy is not set by us here. We work closely both with the Executive's Office and with the Legislature in that regard. The equipment list, I have a list with me now that I'll be reviewing. If I deem it complete, I'll make it available to you later today.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Thank you. Jim the conversation I referenced was with Fred Pollert yesterday about this issue of whether or not this would be a Capital Expenditure or an Operating Fund. Are you at all familiar with the type of equipment we're talking about? And why it would fall under 5,25,5?

MR. SPERO:

We revisited the 5,25,5 law this year and we were under a misconception, as to what the law prescribed or proscribed. The minimum criteria is for a project. It has to have a useful life of more than five years. Useful life is determined by the Local Finance Law. I think it's Section 11. Anyway, virtually all equipment purchases, all equipment under the Local Finance Law has a useful life of five years, almost everything. This would include the park's equipment or medical examiners equipment, testing equipment. So that being the case and if we're to conform with our own Local Law, we have to pay for virtually all the equipment that's currently in the Capital Budget on a pay as you go basis. So any highway maintenance equipment or parks and maintenance equipment would have to be purchased out of pocket.

And over the years, the County has really used the borrowing thing as a crutch because to make it easier on the Operating Budget, we deferred things to the -- and capitalized them. But in the long run that's much more costly to do. Because in eight years, you're paying as much money in interest as you would if you just -- as the equipment cost in the first instance.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay.

MR. SPERO:

The interest mounts up that quickly.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Commissioner, I think you've heard from our bean counters and policy review makers that clearly, these expenditures would be a pay as you go chief fund, expenditure, so they should be submitted as part of the Operating Budget.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Thanks for that. That was helpful. I didn't understand the pertinence of the Finance Law, Section 11 in determining what constitutes a five year useful life or not and that's helpful. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Just before you go Legislator Foley, just to add to what you want to know about this Division of Sports and Recreation. Beside what we spoke about already, it was borne out of the idea of bringing in a Suffolk County Sports Commission, which this was a compromise. It's to bring in events to Suffolk County. We felt we were being cheated and with relation to what Nassau was getting and the surrounding areas and not Suffolk. Also scheduled clinics for various sports throughout the County, whether it be soccer, baseball, girl soccer, anything with professional athletes and do that. Also work with community groups, which was mentioned to develop plans for active Greenways. Because a lot of times the plans are put on the table but implementing them has been kind of difficult and they're starting with two of them already. Set up the Web Site to help people, parents, kids find out more about recreational opportunities but including what we have existing in the County already.

They had to sign up for leagues of all kinds, including where to register, who to call, the fees associated with that, where games will be played, age groups and so on. And on top of that, letting parents know that there would be associated clinics in the future between that organization that they're finding out about to sign up their children with and the County of Suffolk. And these are just a few things. I can write down another ten, if you gave me another twenty minutes to go on but this is the -- to give you a clearer understanding of what the mission will be for Sports and Recreation. And also, we get a seat on the Long Island Sports Commission as part of this as well, from what I understand, which again will give us a little more leverage for the County of Suffolk bringing events here, where again, we've been cheated in the past. So just for your information.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Mr. Chairman, if I may? I would just quickly like to note that you've mentioned four things, one of which is an innate object, a Web page. Again, in my mind, when I look around the country at Parks Departments that have Sports and Recreation Divisions, there are individuals who are employed for the purpose of assisting the community groups on playgrounds, on park facilities within that park system. That is not the case here and that's why I said earlier and I'll repeat, it's a misnomer to call this a Sports and Recreation Division. You may want to call it a coordinator. That's what sounds like somebody is doing. They're going to try to coordinate events in Suffolk County. I have yet to hear of an event that has been attracted to Suffolk County by this Sports and Recreation Division since -- what event was brought to Suffolk County? What major event? We talked about the Special Olympics at Mitchell Field as being one of things that we should be able to attract to Suffolk County. You need facilities and in Nassau County, they have their own County facilities that host these events. In Suffolk County, we are going to partner with Stony Brook and with the western campus and other places like that. So I mean, again, I think it's a matter of perception and the reality is, it's really not a true Sports and Recreation Division. That's my opinion. Others may differ.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

How different? Because the perception is that the County doesn't have adequate facilities, which we know and that's a correct perception. But the reality is, this Legislature has not had the nerve to move forward with some real efforts to bring in infrastructure Sports and Recreation infrastructure. Look at the ballpark for instance. I had to pull teeth. I had to beg, borrow and steal to get votes for that facility and look what it turned out to be. The policy starts here. It doesn't start at that table, it starts right here. And as soon as we get the gumption to do more for Sports and Recreation in this County, we can expand and have a Sports and Recreation Division that truly is a Sports and Recreation Division that you're envisioning. So it starts here and not there.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Mr. Chairman, if I can get back to the Capital Program for a moment, okay? The points are well taken and to use a term from the Human Service Field, the way the Chairman was outlining those responsibilities would be, in essence, in addition to the other responsibilities, the resource center and also a clearing house for information for a variety of sports activities. Plus we can't leave out of the equation, as happens in Nassau County. But the very important role in active recreation that townships play in this County, in that, what has transpired over a series of decades in this County is that more by tradition than by anything else that the way it's worked in this County over a long period of time is that the County Government would have some of the larger, let's say camping/park amenities and it was really left to the townships to do more of the active recreational. But we find out that the number of townships have not done enough in that particular area, so that's why the County has had to step up to the plate.

If I can get back for a moment to Mr. Chairman, to a point that the Commissioner had made about the likelihood now, because of additional revenues flowing into the County that some positions may be released and filled visavis the golf courses. What I would ask, in addition to my other requests earlier, through the Chair that at our next regular scheduled Parks Committee Meeting, you also give us an update on other positions besides the golfing positions, the blue collar positions that you would -- that are not only released but you would

like to see filled? Because we've had discussions. This committee's had discussions about the need, for instance, I don't think you have even one or two electricians within your department. Or enough carpenters, or you know you have maintenance workers with two or three or four different parks at a given time. So while we're looking at all the news for the golf courses and I can understand that. But for many of the other folks who use our other parks in the County, we need to have an update and I would appreciate it by the June meeting, on where we stand with the other maintenance positions for other parks as well. Could you do that for us Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Yes, that would be my pleasure.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Legislator Fields.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Sorry about the delay Legislator Foley.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Just a question for Mr. Scully? On the freeze about hiring? What was the criteria for which positions would be frozen?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

On the date of the State of the County Address and all Department Heads Memo did two things. It advised Department Heads that a flexible freeze would be implemented for all non-essential positions, exempting positions important to revenue generation and positions that would directly reduce overtime costs.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Okay. That was the answer that I was looking for. I wasn't sure but -- and I'll interpret you just because I want to go back to the revenue generating. Wouldn't your employees be classified as being employees that are important to the revenue generating job openings or fillings?

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Yes, we think there would be and I think that the Budget Office agrees and we're hopeful, within the next week to ten days, we're going to need a clear picture what we're going to be able to do this year. The other thing that the ADEH did was to ask the Department Heads to submit a prioritize a hiring plan for 2001 and to set forth our priorities and we did that. Unfortunately, subsequent work, completion of the plan, we had several employees leave without notice and that kind of changed the, you know the basis on which we were operating. Some of them were people important to accounting for revenues received and others were people who helped us process permits and stuff like that. So those became higher priorities and we were forced to kind of confuse the people in Budget by saying look, you know we have a real need to fill this clerical position and they turned around and look, you said you submitted a plan to us two weeks ago and you didn't indicate as such. And it was unfortunate those people left without giving us any notice but it's made the situation a little bit more confusing. We have been able to fill those positions with the help of the County Exec's Office that are really important to keep the money piece of that functioning.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Okay, thank you.

LEGISLATOR CARACAPPA:

Anybody else in the audience wants to speak about the Capital Budget for Sports Recreation and Cultural Affairs?

LEGISLATOR CARPENTER:

One comment I just would like to make Mr. Chairman? Because I thought I heard someone say something negative about the Web Site. I think it's a wonderful idea and I would encourage you to proceed doing everything you can to get that information out there for the public. So they can avail themselves of all the services we have.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

We had a -- just to follow up on that real briefly. I've taken up a lot of your time. We had a coordination meeting with the folks from MIS yesterday, a Mr. Donnelly and hoping to set up this Web Site and they were very, very helpful. It's amazing what you can do when you have technically proficient people to help.

LEGISLATOR ALDEN:

Joe, can I make one more comment to this? And Mr. Commissioner, I personally think that you have a professionally run department. What I'd like to see -- you know like some extras and things like that, yes. But I think you're doing a good job with the resources that you have at your disposal and it's been run very professionally since you took over. Probably professional before you took over but I especially would like to make a comment that it's very professionally run since you took over.

COMMISSIONER SCULLY:

Thank you for that.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay, that will do for Parks, Sports and Recreation and Cultural Affairs. We'll move on now to Public Works. Isn't Public Works part of this committee meeting today? No. I'm not from Land Acquisition. So today I will be. That's fine. Environment, so -- okay, I know the Chairman is on his way.

LEGISLATOR CARACCIOLO:

I'd like to have Mr. Minei come up because there are several programs under his jurisdiction that I think it's important for the committee to get a perspective of what's not included in this budget, or what may be needed from a Department Head's point of view.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Go ahead, sir.

MR. MINEI:

Good morning. I'm Vito Minei. I'm Director of the Division of Environmental Quality with the Department of Health Services and indeed as Mr. Caracciolo mentioned, there are a number of Capital Programs under the Division of Environmental Quality. At the outset, I would like to express my personal appreciation to the Budget Review Office. In particular, Mary Howe who was recently transferred over to do the Health Department. She and I spent a long period of time and she endured quite a bit of arcane science about some of the Environmental Quality Programs and also Vickie Siracusa. We have two major programs of computerization and Vicki was very helpful and understanding our requests and also giving us some very good suggestions on it. So again, I'd like to express my appreciation to both those ladies and their professional approach to this and also their support of our requests. Are there any specific questions I can -- if I can just tick off a few of our Capital Budget requests?

From the top, we have a Program CP4027. It's referred to as the Long Island Sound Lobster Study. And on the flier last year, I'm sure you all remember there was the devastation of the lobstering in Long Island Sound. And there was a quick coming together of the minds of the County Exec's Office and this legislative body that the County should be involved in some way. And you approved the Capital Program for fifty thousand dollars and what we did was, we filled a niche that's really relevant to our Marine Monitoring Programs. We purchase,

what's referred to as moored or in place monitoring equipment. In particular, they measure dissolved oxygen and some other components. One of the problems was that the lobsters were suffocating. They were not getting enough oxygen in the bottom portions of the Sound, mostly in the Western Sound.

We have indeed purchased the equipment under that Capital Program, have deployed it. One very sophisticated piece, it's about forty thousand dollars. If you ever see it, the moored instrument has actually two attachments to it to measure near the surface of the Sound and at depth about eighty feet down. That's off of Eaton's Neck. And then the other piece of equipment, we've moored is off of Smithtown Bay. So again, I just want to express my appreciation to this group for the timely approval of it and the support we got for the entire process to get out. I know the lobsterman appreciate it and we've heard many expressions of their concerns. We're also dealing in concert with the Cornell Marine Programs. Chris Smith is a personal friend of mine and we're working closely together on their activities. Again, the support of this group with regard to opening the Vanderbilt and their lobster studies is very helpful in this endeavor.

Next is a Program 8224. There are a number of harmful alga blooms. There's --some researchers refer to it as a worldwide epidemic. We had particular concern to two individual algae --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Excuse me Vito?

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Just before you go on? Jim, what page is that one on, 8224?

MR. SPERO:

492.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Thank you. Sorry, Vito.

MR. MINEI:

We selected two of the array of algae that again, have been cropping up all over the world that have public health significance and that's why we refer to them as harmful alga blooms. One is pfiesteria. That got national renown on a 60 minutes episode about a year ago. Very nasty organism. It's an incredible study of science. It has many life cycles and many life stages. One, in particular is toxic to fish and also harmful to humans. It causes skin legions. It affects the neural system of fish. It causes them to cast themselves up -- it's called the jubilee affect. It's an amazing sight to see. Down in North Carolina, the fish are actually casting themselves up on the shoreline killing themselves but recreational fishing people; swimmers were getting skin lesions in North Carolina.

The researches were having memory loss problems and we contacted them at a national symposium and we asked, was anyone doing any of this kind of work in the Northeast and they said no. It was basically down in the Carolina's and Florida, the Chesapeake Bay, which often gets a national focus of these kinds of programs. And we made sort of an informal arrangement with the research out of North Carolina State and we're doing a number of sites and we have some positives detects. NBC News did an episode on our research work and basically, I thought it fairly represented what we're doing. It put it into context that finding these organisms is not unusual. They're often in the background biota of systems. We do not and the researchers bare this out and they've made statements to the effect that they do not believe we have the environmental conditions that might cause an explosive outbreak of this pfiesteria. So -- but we're continuing to monitor and again, I appreciate the support of the BRO staff in recommending the ongoing funding.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Yes, Mike?

LEGISLATOR CARACCIOLO:

Vito, along those lines on -- with respect to the Budget Review evaluation? They point out that this project should be continued to be funded, rather and that it be done so on a pay as you go basis, which brings us back to a point we made earlier with Commissioner Scully. And that is, will you be submitting a request for this program funding to be continued as pay as you go?

MR. MINEI:

Absolutely. That's fine with us. We understand the rationale of this idea. It came as sort of a surprise to us a couple years ago. But we understand the perspective of the Legislature, with regard to these ongoing studies and these ongoing expenditures and we will indeed make our request accordingly.

LEGISLATOR CARACCIOLO:

And will you advised the Legislature, if that request is not honored? So that we, in a timely way, can make certain that funding is continued for this program?

MR. MINEI:

Absolutely and I appreciate your support, Mike.

LEGISLATOR CARACCIOLO:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

The other critter, the other organism in this harmful alga bloom is another nasty organism. It causes paralytic shellfish poisoning and it does, as the name implies that if you eat the shellfish, it can affect human neurological systems. We, again, have had a couple of positive detects but once again, the environmental conditions do not look conducive to an outbreak that would be cause for concern. But the vigilance is still there and the fact that we have these two organisms in the background of our embayments and I think you've been following some of my discussions. We've been broadening the Marine Monitoring Program. For years, we did concentrate solely in the Peconics but again, through the support of the Legislature, we've purchased more boats. We've been able to hire staff and we've expanded our monitoring activities. So this paralytic shellfish poisoning, as well as the pfiesteria work is really countywide in its scope. So we will continue that effect and once again, I thank the BRO staff and the Legislature for their support of these important programs.

The next one on my list is -- I'm not taking these in order, so I'm just following my list. If you can follow along with me? It's CP8228, which is brown tide. And again, the County should be very proud that from the onset of brown tide in 1985, stepped in and through various funding mechanisms have supported brown tide research. The problem, if you recall, that for about ten years, from '85 to '95, research as it's often done in the scientific field was kind of done in a disparate fashion. Some funding mechanisms were helping researchers underwrite their work and the County's money was spent, primarily to Stony Brook. But researchers often times do not openly share their information. In '95, with the devastating brown tide bloom in the Peconics, there were several of you that stepped forward and asked and the County Executive made a pledge of about a hundred thousand dollars that we should be working in a coordinated fashion. And our Health Department staff wrote a work plan and Cornell, the Sea Grant Program oversaw.

We got some Federal infusion funds and I can say once again, this is a prime example that County money really does help us attract State and Federal funding. It was put your money where your mouth is and the County approved, for a number of years, that was exactly what their plan was and that was very helpful. And indeed, it has secured about three million dollars of Federal funding. So the work continues and my request, again, I have to thank

Mary Howe, she showed me that I need a little help with my accounting procedures. I need to get some of the money that I thought I had in the 2001 Budget. But I thank Mary and the BRO for supporting this program. I think this is money well spent. In fact, the leading theory was really generated through the County research funding and once again, I personally appreciate the support of the Legislature and I think it's helpful for us to show the County commitment. So I thank you on that. I think we're doing fine because we did get that additional million and a half dollars from the Fed's. We have a hundred and fifty thousand. We have a researcher at Stony Brook and that's why I have to go back and do my homework a little better. He's investigating the groundwater theory. If you follow very quickly, there's a theory that's prevailing that says there seems to be a sequence that a wet year followed by a dry year seems to be very conducive to brown tide and the reason has to do with the amount of nutrients that it brought in with the groundwater. And the researcher at Stony Brook is really following that lead. That was actually produced from a researcher at Brookhaven National Laboratory. She's now, at really, the birth place of marine biology in Kiel, Germany but she did a lot of the legwork, Doctor Julia Larosha at BNL and now that's being carried on by Stony Brook researchers in the Woods Hall.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Vito, this is the brown tide plumes that we've experienced from time to time. It's not unique to the Peconic or the Great South Bay. It's been experienced elsewhere, Chesapeake.

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Up in the Boston area, New England, as well as, I believe Texas and other places worldwide.

MR. MINEI:

Correct.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

So it just seems puzzling that with all of the research that's diverted to this study, worldwide, how perhaps right here in our own backyard, somebody may be on to something that has been overlooked everywhere else. You're basically talking about road runoff and discharges from land masses around the Peconic and the Great South Bay, correct?

MR. MINEI:

Right. Exactly. It's groundwater infiltration up through the bottom of the Bay and I'm glad you mentioned that because we're also leaders in a couple of things. One, Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Health Department have devised an instrument that is the leading contender for the United States Navy and others to use its -- it has a curious name, it's called the {Seabometer} and they've had international {seep} offs where they invited scientists from around the world and our folks down in Washington, as well as in Seattle. And they also got a nice trip to Australia paid for by the Navy and the equipment developed here by a couple of guys just interested in the subject and following through is the prevailing technology now worldwide. So we're kind we're --

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

They just got a contract from the U.S. Navy.

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

With a hundred thousand dollar contract and they're going to do some of those visits that you mentioned.

MR. MINEI:

But your point is well taken. Once again, we're showing the relationship of the surrounding land to the natural resources and again, the commitment of this Legislature and the County Executive is appreciated by the Health Department.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

And we'll continue on with that work. I thought you were going to bring up the frustration of research, which is ongoing as well.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Can I interrupt Vito?

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Project 8229, the purchase of sewage pump out vessels. I'm confused on the report. Maybe Jim, you could help me with it too? It says proposed changes. The department did not request and the proposed budget does not include any funding for this project. Why would that be? Page 497.

MR. SPERO:

This was an initiative of Legislator Levy's.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

I was co-sponsor.

MR. SPERO:

And the Legislature made available a hundred thousand dollars, which was to be matched by the Towns for the purchase of these vessels. And as of this point in time, I don't think any Town has come forward with that formal proposal to buy one of these vessels as part of this program.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

How have we reached out to the Towns? Do we know that? Have we?

MR. MINEI:

Yes we have. The process actually got a little bit more involved. The way the resolution, the current resolution reads is it directs the County Health Department to purchase the boats and also acquire Town funding as a local share. What we did was we contacted the State. There's a State Program and what we're doing is we have a request in, I believe, Commissioner Bradley sent the letter to the lead sponsor, Legislator Angie Carpenter asking for some amendments to that legislation. We've been working with the County CEQ. Basically, what we're hoping to do is let the Towns go out, do all the paperwork of applying for the grants, do their own specifications and we would check my marine resources bureau, we check the specifications. And with the CEQ, if we're oversubscribed to the program, evaluate applications to it. It's pretty straightforward. It has only two parts. A technical justification and an administrative justification. That number one, you have a problem with your embayments and that's identified around the County by the State Department, the State as well as the DEC. So you can justify it and administratively that the Town or the Village will indeed put up the local share and also will administer the boats.

So the way we're asking the resolution to be amended is to be able to allow the County to reimburse. We thought there would be a cash flow problem as well. These boats now cost about fifty thousand dollars and the State Program will only reimburse -- it says 75 percent but it's a maximum of twenty five thousand, so in essence, they would only reimburse. Right now there are indeed a couple of active proposals. Two by Southampton to each a fifty thousand dollars and one by Shelter Island to be operated by a not for profit group Fish

Unlimited and we support both of those. But we have no mechanism right now to reimburse them. So we're asking the Legislature to consider our recommendations with regard to amending that. So number one, we can parlay the County one hundred thousand dollars and the call for the Town share of a hundred thousand dollars into many more boats. In essence, that two hundred thousand would easily bring in another two hundred thousand dollars and we would purchase several more boats. So we, in essence, have three active proposals and now --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Wait, wait, wait, I'm really confused now. I started out being a little confused. Now I'm really confused.

MR. MINEI:

We didn't ask for any more money because --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Why?

MR. MINEI:

This is a good start to a program and we want to see how this works out. We want to see how many boats we can purchase with this. We want to see if the process works. This new cooperative effort with CEQ is kind of new to us working on the review of applications. So we did not request any money because right now, we only have three active requests, two from Southampton and one -- if all the Town Supervisors --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

But if we had the money, if we had the money and it was put into the budget, perhaps some of the other Towns would be interested in putting in their part of the share. So in other words, if you're saying well, we're not even going to put it in. We're not interested. Well, neither are they. Am I wrong?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

You're wrong where we set the policy to put the money in the budget in the past. We're having a technical problem with actually buying the boats with the Towns. We can't -- Jimmy can explain it better. They came and made a presentation before CEQ. We need to change the resolution first. Why are we going to expend and put much more money in the budget before we can even switch titles with Towns? There's a problem with getting title.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Okay, thank you. I'm much better now.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Yes, it's a very simple to describe here, the problem. As soon as we make the technical adjustments, I'm sure we'll be able to do -- it would be more of a reimbursement. The Towns will go out and purchase the boats. They can take title to the vessel much more easily and we can do the transaction in a much more seamless fashion than we can now, because of the technical problems in the original resolution.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Okay, now just going back to the original concept.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Would I be correct in that? Is that correct?

MR. MINEI:

The question to me, was why not more money?

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

But the first question was have we reached out to the towns?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, we absolutely have.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Have you reached out to the towns?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, we absolutely have. Letters have gone from the Commissioner to all the Town Supervisors and Village Mayors along the shore to alert them to this program and that's why we've had the contact we have. But right now --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

How long ago were those letters sent out?

MR. MINEI:

Well, several months ago.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

When was this -- last year?

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

When I was first elected, I think, it was you know like --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

381 in 2000. Would that have been last summer?

MR. SPERO:

It was probably about this time last year.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

All right, so it was May of last year? Can we get copies of the letter please, Vito?

MR. MINEI:

Sure.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

Absolutely. My only point on the math is with only three proposals right now; we're, in essence, providing the half of the fifty thousand dollars between us and the Towns. So we're putting up twelve five, twelve thousand five hundred for each of these boats. So we're only up to about forty thousand dollars total. So we're not oversubscribed for the County hundred thousand and we're still trying to figure out if this process works. I believe it's very promising and I believe it will help. We also have a question, I believe, the Town of Brookhaven has asked us what about the stationary pump outs? Will, you know --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Yes, but this isn't not -- I'm a boater and I go from here to Fire Island and I can tell you that along the way, first of all, the pump out stations don't work. They're closed. They're locked. All kinds of ridiculous things. But, in addition to that, most boaters want to get to where they're going and I've watched them circle around in the Bay while they're dumping their sewage. If you had pump out vessels, I think you could improve the conditions of the Estuary, all the Estuaries and I hope to see some responses to this and perhaps a way of allowing more Towns to get involved in it.

MR. MINEI:

The Town of Southampton has some very compelling information about the differential and the amount of sewage pumped out using the mobile boats versus the stationary. It's hardly

anything used and in fact, they often refer to them as an expensive lawn ornaments at marinas. But the boats have overwhelmed the stationary pump out stations with the amount of sewage.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

If you brought a sewage -- a pump out vessel over to Fire Island, you wouldn't be able to count how many trips it would take to fill that boat and keep bringing it back and forth. I guarantee it. I think probably part of the problem is where is that pump out for both going and where is it not going?

MR. MINEI:

Right.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

I can guarantee it.

MR. MINEI:

But we have indeed and I will make the letters available. I made the information available to all the Towns. We are not oversubscribed as yet. We will evaluate the process and then maybe we will indeed be coming back to this Legislature asking for more money. But we think it's very promising. We think the mechanism will work. We have the endorsement of CEQ to help us on this. We have the request into the Legislature to amend the current resolution.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Mr. Chairman, if I may?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Once the procurement process becomes seamless and I'm sure we'll be pushing this program much more than we have in the past. Legislator Foley.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Thank you. You went to CEQ, which is fine. But you know where this policy started; it wasn't in CEQ but with this Legislature. So how long ago did you go to CEQ with this concern about some technical deficiencies?

MR. MINEI:

It was a couple months ago; the presentation was made to CEQ. We wanted to have a proposal before you, before we came back to you.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

No, before you have a proposal, you can also come back to the committee to identify the problems with existing law prior to making suggestions on how to change the law. My point Mr. Minei is that if you have problems with the law, it's fine to go to CEQ. You should also come, even before going to CEQ. My point is you should come back to this committee, come back to both Parks Committee as well as Environmental Committee, even before going to any other organization. Since it was the Legislature that created this legislation, make us aware of what the problems are immediately. Or when, let's say, found out what the problems were even if they are technical corrections, to make us aware, so we don't have to ask thirty questions here to find out that there's a problem with the law that we had thought was moving forward.

So I would ask and again, say respectfully, but there is some annoyance in my voice only because of the fact that it was the Legislature and particularly the Parks and Environment Committee of last year that Legislator Levy and a number of South Shore -- let's say coastal Legislators from both sides of the political isle had co-sponsored that resolution. So in the future, whether it's on this issue or other issues, if you have problems with the way legislation has developed or you come across some technical problems, the first place to go, the first place to go is the committees where you want to tell us what the problems are. I'm glad you went to CEQ that's fine and there are some Legislators on that particular committee.

But I think what the first place and if I need to speak with the Commissioner, I will. Or if you could please get the word back to her? That when you identify problems or deficiencies within a resolution that we have approved, that you need to come back to the committee who oversees that particular area of the County Government, as opposed to going to a specific committee, not a committee, but another committee that is only partially represented by the Legislature. It's fine to go to the CEQ. And I think where you have to start and this goes across the board in a lot of different departments, not just in this area, but you have to come back to the committee that has oversight jurisdiction for this particular area of the County administration, if you will, to make us the first ones aware of what these problems are. So we don't have to spend a half an hour of asking a series of questions to find out that there are delays in this. Now what I would ask --

MR. MINEI:

If I could just respond?

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

In a moment Vito. I'm not finished yet. If I could ask through the Chair then, the same presentation that you made to CEQ, I'd ask that you would make that same presentation to -- again, it's going to be a busy Parks Committee Meeting at the end of June and also both to the Environment Committee, as well as to the Parks Committee to make the same presentation at our next committee meeting later this June, as you had made to CEQ some months ago. Because I thought, as one Legislator, who represents a good portion of the Great South Bay and a good portion of Fire Island that this project was moving along and -- you know, so if there are technical deficiencies and we did pass it -- I know you have a lot on your plate Vito, but this was passed and approved and adopted May of last year and these deficiencies were reported to another organization some months ago -- we need to know about also, so that we can be of help to try and change the law where it needs to be changed.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Before you respond Legislator Foley. As a voting member of CEQ and a person that was there when the presentation was made, if you were there, you'd see that it wasn't what you're portraying it to be -- where they came and made a big presentation specifically on this. They came as their regular presentation of the Health Department and this came up. The program is moving forward and you know sometimes with new innovative legislation, such as this, you hit snags halfway through the process. As you heard, Southampton already started the process. Shelter Island has already started the process. Until we realize and the Health Department realizes, wait a second, we have a problem here. It's not going to be a seamless procurement process and that's where we hit the roadblock. They made the presentation to CEQ in their regular presentation; they turned to me for advice as a sitting Legislator on that committee. I said to move it, with the summer season coming up, immediately upon us, get a hold of the other prime sponsor, it was Levy, Carpenter. Levy was gone. I told him to contact Carpenter and make the changes as soon as possible, so that maybe this could be changed before the summer season started. I think that is the more prudent way to go instead of first coming to committee, getting berated with a million questions, when all it needed was one or two technical corrections and then they can come before the committee and which is part of the process is what happened in here.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

But where's the resolution then?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

It's being --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

It was three months ago.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

It's being drawn up.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Where's the resolution?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Well, when they came before us, they still had to come up with the proper amendments. It takes a little bit of time, Brian and they're doing that and I'm going to defend them. Because the bottom line is is they were wise enough to find out the flaws, come and start the process of changing it. They followed my direction. You may not agree with it. I thought it was the most expedient way to get this resolution fixed and to get these pump out boats purchased by the Town. So that's it in a nutshell.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Well, with that said, when will the rest of us know what these problems are with the existing law? How are we going to find out?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

I know they've contacted Legislator Carpenter. We spoke about it the other day and I think they're drafting the resolution, if it isn't already filed.

MR. SPERO:

We haven't seen it yet. It hasn't come across yet.

LEGISLATOR CARACCIOLO:

I have a question. Jim, when do you say you believe this resolution was approved originally?

MR. SPERO:

It was approved last year, May 23rd; it was signed by the County Executive.

LEGISLATOR CARACCIOLO:

I think one of the real central issues here is why does it take thirteen months to find out that there's a problem? Simple. I mean, you're going to miss two complete, maybe three complete boating seasons before there's implementation of a program that the Legislature made clear a year, little more than a year ago, that it wanted implemented as soon as possible. Now, maybe this has to do with staff and maybe it has to do with other issues. That's what the Legislature needs to know. I know Vito; I know what you do. You do a tremendous amount of work and I know your staff does as well. And I think, what we have to understand is that when we give you new priorities and new programs, that sometimes maybe we have to do an addition to that is give you the staff to carry out that additional workload.

MR. MINEI:

I certainly appreciate those comments and I appreciate Legislator Caracappa's comments as well. If I could just respond? It wasn't just a matter of preparing a presentation for CEQ and just saying there are flaws in the Legislature. In fact, I'm rather chagrined at the lecture I'm enduring here, because I thought the fact that we came forward with the resourcefulness of how to rectify and move the program forward, it would be appreciated. There was a lot of research that was not identified in that resolution, like the State funding. All it said was take a hundred thousand dollars of capital money, Health Department and purchase boats with a hundred thousand dollars of Town money. If we had done that, you'd have four boats Countywide. What we did was we tried to parlay that but we did not understand the system ourselves. So there was no way last year, I could have come to you with any suggestion on how to rectify the resolution. It took quite a bit of research on following the trail of State money and how to procure it and the mechanism of it.

And also to really experience our own boat purchasing activities to realize the way it was written is probably not the best way. It takes us quite a while to purchase our own boats in the County and we have our own specs and requesting changes in specs is a change. So basically, it's been about six to nine months of research and our Office of Ecology came up with the solution and even pursued it what we thought was an advisory arm of this Legislature, which is the CEQ to assist us with it. So I thought we would be commended for

the resourcefulness of parlaying a hundred thousand dollars of County money into many more purchases of boats than what I'm hearing here today. Thank you, Legislator Caracappa.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Okay. Is there some reasonable expectation when we can work out these fine points and actually implement that program?

MR. MINEI:

If the sponsors agree with the recommendations, we could move through very quickly and we can reimburse the requests we already have. But we have indeed already sent the letters out to all the Towns. We've had inquires. The only ones we know that are actively -- are active in the purchase of boats are Shelter Island and Southampton.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Right and we're spoken about the Fish Unlimited.

MR. MINEI:

We're going to lose that opportunity if the Legislature agrees with the reimbursement program.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Say that again?

MR. MINEI:

I said if the sponsors push forward the resolution and agree with the reimbursement program, I think we can move expeditiously into implementing them, just as quickly as if we had started May of last year. Because the boats wouldn't have been purchased for the wintertime on these waters, in any event.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Vito, I have a question about this. I'm sorry, were you finished?

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Go ahead.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

I think much of the discussion is academic if we don't get the Town's own board. You have only mentioned that two Towns have come forward to take advantage of this opportunity. How can we push the other towns to come on board? What else can we do to get them involved?

MR. MINEI:

Well, some of them like Huntington, I know, have purchased boats.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

On their own without taking advantage of the program?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, just prior to this program.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

And Brookhaven Town?

MR. MINEI:

I'm not sure if Brookhaven -- yes, yes, I've seen them over in Davis Park. Yes, I think Brookhaven --

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

So Brookhaven does have?

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

So basically, we're going to have to evaluate the question of, do we reimburse past practices of Towns for taking the initiative.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Well, could we encourage them to get more, right?

MR. MINEI:

Well, we're trying to do that.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

A Town as large as Brookhaven would probably use -- you're right, a number of them. It's such a large Town.

MR. MINEI:

Right. I would agree with you and I think that's what we're trying to do. But first, I think, we have to make sure we have concurrence on this approach. Right now, we have letters out and the letters were a little vague as to how we were going to proceed. All we were saying was there is money available and we will try to process applications as best we can. We believe and we envision the process to look the way the resolution amendment request now appears. But we did notify all the Towns several months ago.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

So Vito, do you think that the ambiguity of the letter was a little off putting to the Towns, you think?

MR. MINEI:

No, I don't think so.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Is that what you're saying?

MR. MINEI:

We got the inquires we thought we would get.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

And the Towns that are active. I'm not aware of any Town purchasing boats, sewage pump out boats that hasn't contacted us.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

That's what I'm a little surprised about.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

All right.

MR. MINEI:

The only question we have now is does this Legislature want to expand the program to also include purchases for the stationary pump out systems? And Legislator Fields expressed her personal opinion and what I'm saying is the history and the documentation I've seen, supports that position but --

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Actually, I'm not Vice Chair of this. This is Environment. I don't know who the Vice Chair is.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

This is Parks also.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Are we still Parks? Okay, then I'm the Vice Chair.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

So you got the meeting.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay, Legislator Foley.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

I'm sorry, I had interrupted Legislator Caracciolo and I'm not sure if he's finished with his questioning.

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

I think, we've given this subject a lot of roll.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Ample airing?

LEGISLATOR CARACCILO:

Airing? With that said, I think, we should move on.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

No, I'd like to stay with it for a moment.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Are there questions, by Legislator Foley?

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Yes. Thank you. According to the Chair Caracappa, that it was a very brief discussion at CEQ about the deficiencies in the resolution. Vito, what's the problem with the resolution that you're trying to correct? What's the technical problem?

MR. MINEI:

There's a couple. Number one, it doesn't express the intent to parlay the money into other money, namely the State Clean Vessel Act. Money that they get through the Federal U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Number two, it's says --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Now, you say by parlaying? Just walk us through? What do you mean by parlaying all those other monies that are available?

MR. MINEI:

I mentioned that the Federal funds, as administered by the State Agencies and this is where

it got complicated for us. The Department of State --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

I don't mean to interrupt. But it's only complicated, if we want to use those monies, correct?

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

If we wanted to just follow through immediately and what the resolution was that was approved last year, it's rather a clear-cut direction to take by using County monies. But if we want to start parlaying that to receive other monies, that's where it gets complicated, correct?

MR. MINEI:

Right.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay. Go ahead.

MR. MINEI:

And what I'm saying is with two hundred thousand dollars, a hundred thousand of County money and a hundred thousand of the Town money, we are supposed to secure in some fashion, at the fifty thousand dollars each, it would have purchased four boats Countywide.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Right.

MR. MINEI:

And what I'm saying is that we will, at least, double that amount of boats by going through this process. And again, waiting for the research to have been done over the winter months when boats weren't going to be purchased in any event. So we will at least double the number of boats.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Those boats won't be ready for this summer though?

MR. MINEI:

Well, some of them can. Southampton and Shelter Island have already begun the purchase and what we're saying is if this Legislature agrees with the reimbursement process, there will be a seamless implementation of this resolution. The mechanical problem I was going to address is that the resolution is now currently written is unambiguous. It says the County Health Department will purchase the boats.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

And that's when the legal questions of, can we use it as a reimbursement program, etc., were put aside and we were told only if you change the language in there. So there was the two problems. The accounting problem of only having two hundred thousand dollars total.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

And the mechanical problem that we thought was going to be very problematic with us purchasing boats.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Why is it problematic for the County Health Department to purchase the boats?

MR. MINEI:

Because it takes quite a long time for us to get through the purchasing system.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

A boat we tried to purchase for the marine resources --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Right.

MR. MINEI:

Took us about a year.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

So what the problem is with the paperwork going through Purchasing?

MR. MINEI:

Well, it's --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Correct?

MR. MINEI:

It's the entire purchasing process --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

All right.

MR. MINEI:

Going through the Health Department Service. But if I could just add --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Go ahead.

MR. MINEI:

The other problem, the technical problem, as we've been alerted to during this research over the winter with Southampton is that the specifications of these boats change. They have a lot of experience and the cost of these boats has escalated significantly. When we prepared our first information sheet late in winter, we were thinking we were talking thirty five thousand because that's what Southampton had informed us. The boats, their original purchase a few years ago cost. Now we're informed that they're fifty thousand dollars and we're working on that. So the Towns can change their specifications a little bit more expeditiously than we can.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Right. Okay.

MR. MINEI:

Number two, they can get to their own purchasing process a little quicker than we can.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Why? Why can they get -- why do we have more of a problem with our administration purchase?

MR. MINEI:

I'm not the one to explain the purchasing process in Suffolk County. I can just tell you my

experiences that it takes a long time to get these resolutions approved get them on the encumbered, purchase the boat, get all the information in on the contract and then have these boats manufactured. But I'm not going to explain the entire purchase.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

All right, so go through them? Mention those two points.

MR. MINEI:

Those are basically, the major points. And what we did was, we were a little concerned that we, the County Health Department, was going to be in the position of unilaterally deciding which Towns, if we were oversubscribed. So we came up with the idea and it was somewhat unique. It took CEQ, by a little bit of surprised but they were very supportive. They've written a letter recently in support of the process that we would --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Do you have a copy of that letter of support from CEQ?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, we do.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Give us a copy of that also, please?

MR. MINEI:

It's in the package to Legislator Carpenter.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

If you can give us a copy of that please?

MR. MINEI:

I will do that.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

But the concept and again, I thought it was pretty resourceful of our Office of Ecology staff, was to come up with a very simple request for applications and make the application process for the Towns very simple. I mentioned it was essentially just two parts, document and technical need and that's very easy because there's a lot of documentation from the State and from the Towns and also document the commitment of the Towns to administer the program. That is pay for maintenance and service of the boats and to actually utilize them. Very simple process for us and CEQ gladly agreed and we thank them for their cooperation. Because now we will have the Legislature involved in the process of how is this money distributed among the Towns. So I --

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Who is going to be the lead agency, if you will, for the purchase of the boats? Will it be the Townships or would it be the County?

MR. MINEI:

It will be the Towns with our support. Basically, if you agree with the rewording and the requested amendment, you will now be involved in a reimbursement program. So we will help them. We will guide them to the State funding but they will do the application for the State funding under the Clean Vessel Act.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

And the County can't do the application under the Clean Vessel Act for funding? It can only be the Township?

MR. MINEI:

No, anybody could do it but I'm saying you've now -- we've already heard the lack of staffing and I would fully agree with that. Why have us, the staff of the Health Department write an application on behalf of the Town?

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

We're not writing an application but do as they do in many -- for instance, the DFY, the Division for Youth. Many times the Towns will make the applications. They'll funnel it through the County. The County will be the clearinghouse, if you will, for applications for funding from the State and Federal Budgets. So the process is going to be that the Townships will put together the applications for these funds? It will then flow back to the Health Department and the Health Department will submit it to the State? Or how --

MR. MINEI:

I don't see the need for that step. What I do see is that we could be very helpful in the process by indicating to the Towns up front that the County will commit their portion of the funding, which apparently it turns out to be 25 percent or twelve thousand, five hundred for the purchase. So we could give them this information, so they can go and secure the State funding. So they will be armed with a full commitment of both the Town and the County. I think that's more helpful than us being a clearinghouse of an application.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Well, notwithstanding that -- whether you made the presentation, however, short or long on the ways of CEQ to perhaps when the resolution is finally forwarded, if we could then have a more detailed discussion. The reason that I want to spend a little more time on this and then we can, at the moment, that this was a very important resolution, Legislator Levy had put forward. Because we all know the problems with pump out stations, stationary ones, as well as problems, out in particularly, the Great South Bay. So you know, I think, it's going to be important to revisit this at the next meeting, hopefully, the new resolution will be in the packet for next week. But I want to get a little better handle on this. Because if we were the ones, we are the ones, County Government is the local entity that has moved forward with this approach. And I just have some concerns about seeding to the Townships a lot of the responsibility for the project. Now, they may well be well fitted to do this but my concern is this was a local initiative by the County Government. And if we're going to hand a lot of the process over to the Townships, I want to make sure that if and when we do hand it over to the Townships that in so doing that that's not going to slow down the process of purchasing.

I know there are some Townships, as you mentioned were very pro-active but there are many other Towns in this County that are not pro-active. So my concern is if we hand over a lot of this -- a lot of the initiative to the Townships to do a processing of the paperwork, my concern there is that by seeding that to the Towns, we may be inadvertently, at least, in the case of some Townships, slowing the process down because there may be certain -- I know Towns that don't move forward with great acuity, as other Townships do that you mentioned. So that's one of things I just want to -- I think we need to discuss it at the next committee meeting too.

MR. MINEI:

We could discuss this but I think what we're envisioning is that hopefully, a great example of the cooperation between the County and the Towns. We will not be seeding over anything. None of the County money, until we have documentation of the need. That's why, I think, it's the beauty of the requests for applications. Because as I said, as simple as it is, there still will be documentation that we can come before you and say Babylon has made their case. Brookhaven has made their case. It is documented through the State surveys, as well as our own water quality monitoring that they have a need. And by the way, they've made their case to us that they are committed to the program and they will service the boats and maintain them and operate them on their waters. And then, we also have control as to whether or not you want to provide your twelve thousand five hundred of County money to it. So I don't see a divesting. I see it, hopefully, as really a prime example of cooperation.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

Let's look at the legislation when it comes forward, then we can continue this discussion.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay, I think, that we certainly seemed to have exhausted this and many interesting points have been brought forward and I think that there will be much information that will be presented to the Parks Committee. There is a comment from Budget Review.

MR. SPERO:

Just to -- I'll complicate it even further.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

MR. SPERO:

If the Towns own the boats, we can't bond the purchase. So we'd have to come up with operating funds for our share.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

So then we'd be needing capital to operate --

MR. SPERO:

The original resolution appropriated serial bond proceeds.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay, this is --

MR. SPERO:

We just have to keep that in mind from a legal perspective.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

LEGISLATOR FOLEY:

What was that?

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

If the Towns own the boats, then we cannot bond the money. Okay. It has to be --

MR. SPERO:

You could use pay as you go money.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Pay as you go money.

MR. SPERO:

To fund the County share.

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

We could own the boats and lease it to the Town for a dollar a year or something like that.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

But I think part of the process is that the Towns were buying the boats. Vito, isn't that part of the agreement that the Towns were buying the boats? So, in fact, they're Town's boats.

MR. MINEI:

That's correct.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay, so these are questions that will have to be raised at the committee meetings. Vito, did you have any other issues that you wanted to bring before us?

MR. MINEI:

I was just going to go through the list of Capital Programs, if there's any interest in them. Just to touch on them quickly but --

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Well, you can feel free to do that. I would prefer if you could mention them.

MR. MINEI:

I wish it would go smoother than it's been going.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Well, I'm hoping that the committee will cooperate with moving expeditiously, because we do have a 12 o'clock meeting coming up and I would like to wrap this up before that meeting begins. Okay, so Vito, you could go through.

MR. MINEI:

Maybe I will, now that Legislator Bishop has joined us. On one of the programs on my list is CP8223 Brownfields Pilot Program and I believe we have a meeting next week for us to give you a status report. I do come before you with some good news that the Governor had a press release last week that, we indeed, were one of the three sites selected for a Program called Rebuild Now New York. And the importance of that is by securing this program through the State's Economic Development Office; we now avail ourselves of engineering services for Statewide. So we're only one of three sites that were selected for this program, so we're pretty -- we're rather proud of it and what this means is we will not have to expend County money or seek grant money from the State to do the preliminary assessment of Brownfields Project. In particular, the one we have active, which is the Gabreski Airport. If selected, the Gabreski Airport.

LEGISLATOR BISHOP:

That grant is only particular to one site? Or can --

MR. MINEI:

Yes, yes. It was one site. One of three sites in the State. One is in Buffalo and one is on the Hudson River in Albany. So it is particular to that but it is helpful, which means that some of the County capital money that we have for Brownfields, we could direct to the remainder of the list.

LEGISLATOR BISHOP

We can do another additional site or two?

MR. MINEI:

Yes. So we're looking at that.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

So we have the dubious honor of being one of those three sites?

MR. MINEI:

Well, it's not dubious in this case. Because what you had to do is make a case that there indeed was envisioned economic development and with the assistance of the County Executive's staff, in particular, Alice Amhrein, has helped us shepherd this request through that we were successful in proving that there is a need to revitalize the Gabreski Airport. There were a number of criteria. Are you near a transportation hub? Were there economic development plans afoot? And indeed, we met all those criteria and like I said, of the whole basket full of applications, we were one of three sites selected for this program.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Good.

MR. MINEI:

And the only downstate site. So we were very proud of that. But it's a savings, so we don't have to dip into the County Capital funds and we have another list that we're working from with this committee that Legislator Bishop is overseeing. So we'll be dealing with that next week.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

The other program I wanted to talk about just briefly. The others were just accounting procedures. One is the Peconic Estuary Program CP8235 and we requested a continuation of the funding and once again, the Budget Review Office has supported us and once again, I want to express my appreciation of it. This is another good example of County money, I believe, well spent. Not only did we get the experience of going through the entire management planning process for one resource and we're lifting that and using it for our South Shore Estuary Programs and our Port Jefferson and Huntington and Stony Brook Harbor work for the Long Island Sound Study. But this is another example where the County commitment really helps us make the case to securing Federal funds. And we've been very successful to date, in the eight years of the Peconic Program of securing millions of dollars of Federal funding. So hopefully that will help us with the example of the Brownfield's Program and with other programs.

Well, the sewage pump out boats, securing the State money and having the County put up, certainly helps show the commitment of this County Legislature and the County Exec's Office. So the Peconic Estuary Program is another example of County money going a long way to securing Federal money, so once again, I just want to thank you. We're going to be using that for a number of activities. One is relevant to the Aquaculture Committee that's about to be formed. There's going to be very sophisticated underwater mapping technology that we're working in a consortium with the Nature Conservancy and with the State to do this side scan sonar work in the Peconics that will help with the Aquaculture Committee's work as well. So there's a number of --

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Vito, can I interrupt?

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

I'm sorry.

MR. MINEI:

I'm finished.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

I think I thanked everybody.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Are you working with SUNY Marine Sciences there as well?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, yes.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay. Legislator Fields has a question.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

You have discussed Peconic Estuary. What about South Shore Estuary? So we have any suggestions in the future where we're going to be part of that process?

MR. MINEI:

We've been part of that process from the beginning working on the Technical Committee and also doing the marine monitoring and groundwater monitoring. That's vital to all the management recommendations that are in the South Shore Estuary Plan. And once again, we were proud that, as part of the South Shore Estuary Reserve process, they secured consulting services to evaluate all monitoring and they commended us for the extent of work we do in the monitoring and they have very minor comments on enhancing the program. So we were happy about that. The purchase of the boat recently will help us expand in a more routine fashion the monitoring of the South Shore Estuary. We're now re-deploying all of our boats, as a result of the purchase of one. We will have two boats very shortly in the Peconics doing routine monitoring.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

But that's not South Shore Estuary.

MR. MINEI:

I'm about to get to it.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

All right.

MR. MINEI:

And now we'll have two boats. One moved over from the Peconics to do the Great South Bay and Moriches Bay and Shinnecock Bay on a more routine basis and we're also about to deploy a boat in Port Jefferson and Huntington. So we'll have more routine monitoring as part of a State DEC Grant for that.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

But I'm asking specifically, not about Port Jefferson or anywhere else. The South Shore Estuary.

MR. MINEI:

The South Shore Estuary, we've been active with both the Planning Department and DPW and Parks in identifying storm water runoff projects that would qualify for quarter percent sales tax money implementation. So we're active in that. I have a couple of sites I've been keen on since we did the nationwide Urban Runoff Program, which was primarily a Great South Bay Project. So we have a number of recommendations on storm water runoff. We have a number of recommendations; we have with regard to land use and acquisition programs that we're working with Planning, Real Estate and others with regard to preserving Open Space along the South Shore. So we are committing quite a bit of effort to the South Shore Estuary, as well as Moriches Bay, which is close to my heart. I live in East Moriches.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

I live in the South Shore Estuary, so that obviously and I've --

MR. MINEI:

Well, Moriches is part of that whole complex.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Yes but I worked on the Citizens Advisory Committee for seven years for the South Shore Estuary and in fact, just came from a meeting at DEC regarding the Peconic Estuary. But I would like to see -- maybe once this plan is approved and we move forward on implementation for the South Shore Estuary Reserve that we will see something next time regarding monies that are designated for some of those programs.

MR. MINEI:

And we are working with the Department of State and DEC on the recommendations. But most notably, the storm water runoff activities and also we will enhance our monitoring presence in the South Shore Estuary.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

One of the recommendations in the South Shore Estuary Reserve Plan was pump out vessels for the South Shore Estuary. So you know, again, that's -- I think we need to give a little more attention now to the South Shore Estuary not just the Peconic Estuary.

MR. MINEI:

And we're striving to do that. Thank you.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Thank you, Vito.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Are there any further questions? Vito, did you have more that you wish to present?

MR. MINEI:

That's enough for me unless there are particular comments. There is some line up --

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

It's good for me.

MR. MINEI:

Just very quickly. We have a Program 8226, which is groundwater monitoring and again, I want to thank Mary for her write-up and narrative and understanding some of the intricacies and the need for the equipment. She also gave me a heads up on some homework I have to do to get money encumbered this year for purchase I thought I had in place. But other than that, I've really nothing else to report.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay. Are there any questions?

MR. SPERO:

Yes, I just want to bring your attention to page 488 of our report. Public Works had requested a marine pump out facility for Bergen Point and apparently State funding is being lined up to support 75 percent of the construction cost of this pump out facility.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

488?

MR. SPERO:

488. This would be a stationary unit located at the Bergen Point Marina.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Jim, could I ask you a question about that? Why -- we're talking about a stationary facility and Vito and Legislator Fields, Mr. Minei and Legislator Fields have both indicated that the boats are much more efficient. Why are we spending this money here?

MR. SPERO:

I would say you need both. You need stationary facilities and you need mobile facilities, especially for transient boaters. Because I know I do a lot of boating at Port Jefferson and there's a lot of boaters that come over from Connecticut.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Can I ask --?

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

We know that. Is any of this money reimbursable?

MR. SPERO:

This wasn't included in the Capital Program.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

Okay, thank you very much.

LEGISLATOR FIELDS:

Thank you Vito.

MR. MINEI:

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

If there is no further business for either the Parks or Environment Committees, I make a motion to adjourn this meeting.

LEGISLATOR CARACAPPA:

Seconded.

LEGISLATOR FISHER:

So seconded. The meeting is adjourned.

(The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.)

{ } Denotes spelled phonetically