

**ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
Of the
Suffolk County Legislature**

Minutes

A **public hearing** was held at the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on **April 7, 2004**.

Members Present:

Legislator Michael Caracciolo • Chairman
Legislator Jay Schneiderman • Vice•Chair

Members Not Present:

Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator David Bishop
Legislator Peter O'Leary

Also In Attendance:

Legislator Jon Cooper • District #18
Henry L. Barton • Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Alexandra Sullivan • Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Linda Bay • Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa
Richard Amper • Executive Director/Long Island Pine Barrens Society
Julie DeBold • Long Island Farm Bureau
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer

(* The public hearing was called to order at 1:26 P.M. *)

MR. BARTON:

Mr. Chairman? Mr. Chairman?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes?

MR. BARTON:

You do have a public hearing.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

We do have a public hearing for the Environment Committee.

MR. BARTON:

Correct.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Right. I think there's one card; is Mr. Amper here?

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

We're adjourned.

MR. BARTON:

You are adjourned.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right, so we'll move right into the Environment Committee. We're going to do the public hearing and recess to the 14th.

MR. BARTON:

Mr. Chairman, perhaps I could read the notice?

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Go ahead, Henry.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let me trade places here. Mr. Clerk, I just want to make sure that we have the quorum that we need of Legislators for this public hearing?

MR. BARTON:

I just need two, a motion and a second.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

To hold the public hearing you need only two?

MR. BARTON:

Correct.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Yep, and we have three.

MR. BARTON:

As requested, Mr. Chairman, the public notice: "Notice of a Public Hearing. Notice is hereby given that a Local Law entitled a Charter Law adding Article 12B to the Suffolk County Charter to establish the 2004 Suffolk County Farmland Preservation Fund has been introduced in the Suffolk County Legislature. Said Charter Law would create a new \$30 million fund to purchase farmland. Notice is further given that the County Legislature will hold a public hearing in the Rose Y. Caracappa Auditorium of the Suffolk County Legislature in the William H. Rogers Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on the 7th day of April, 2004, at 1 PM in the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee. It is requested that speakers prepare a written statement to submit for the record." Signed Henry L. Barton, Jr., Clerk of the

County Legislature. It's dated April 1st. There is one card, a Julie DeBold from the Long Island Farm Bureau requests to be heard.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Okay, please come forward. You could use either microphone.

MS. DEBOLD:

My name is Julie DeBold. I speak today on behalf of Joseph Gergela, Executive Director of Long Island Farm Bureau. Long Island Farm Bureau is in support of and appreciates all possible funding opportunities presented in an effort to preserve Suffolk County Farmland. Suffolk County has been the innovator and continues as a national leader in Farmland Preservation. We currently have several thousand farmland acres in play for preservation. It is an important time where additional funding will facilitate our ability to reach our critical mass goal of preserving 20,000 farmland acres. Suffolk County is New York State's leader in agricultural product sales. By acquiring the development rights on our remaining farmland, we preserve not only Suffolk County's Agricultural Heritage but also pledge our support to the future of Long Island's farming community and economic viability. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Thank you. Are there any other speakers? Mr. Amper, I thought I saw you. For the public hearing, right, Dick?

MR. AMPER:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN CARACCIOLO:

Okay.

MR. AMPER:

My name is Richard Amper, I'm Executive Director of the Long Island ••

MR. BARTON:

Just make sure it's on.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

Dick, you need to turn that mike on, just pull the switch closer to you.

MR. AMPER:

This may be a first, the Legislature could not hear me; remarkable.

My name is Richard Amper, I'm Executive Director of the Long Island Pine Barrens Society. We need very carefully to be understood. The Pine Barrens Society opposes the creation of a new revenue source for farmland of 30,000 acres at this time because we believe the Legislature and the County Executive are engaged in what we consider a very encouraging process to reform the mechanism by which the land is purchased. We're afraid there will be confusion between this, the proposed extension of the quarter penny sales tax, the proposed Community Preservation Fund in Brookhaven and the reforms to make the Real Estate Division's capacity move from roughly 500 acres a year to roughly 2,500 acres a year which we think has to happen especially if the east end is to be preserved. So we are urging that this be considered in the context of that.

We acknowledge that there is a need for additional funding for these purposes, we have never opposed funding for farmland or open space preservation. We think the time sequencing is such that we do not want to confuse the economic issues and the real estate process issues. I have copies of our letters not just to this Legislature or to this committee but to the County Executive asking him not to move ahead with extension of the quarter penny sales tax until the procedures by which the Real Estate Department is to function and the oversight of this Legislature have been put in place, we think within 30 days.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Thank you, Dick.

Okay. Any other public speakers for this public hearing? Hearing none, we will close the public hearing and I will recess the committee until next Wednesday, the 14th, at 11 A.M. in the Rose Caracappa Legislative Auditorium ••

MS. BURKHARDT:

I think Mr. Amper wanted to speak and ••

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

He did, he spoke.

LEG. SCHNEIDERMAN:

We need a motion to close the hearing.

CHAIRMAN CARACCILOLO:

Okay. Motion by Legislator Schneiderman, second by the Chair to close the hearing. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Unanimous, the hearing is closed. Thank you, everyone.

(*The Public Hearing was closed at 1:32 P.M. *)

***Legislator Michael Caracciolo, Chairman
Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee***