

**ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee and Parks & Recreation of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on May 19, 2009 to discuss the matter of the Capital Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Lou D'Amaro, Vice Chair of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Leg. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Chairperson of the Parks & Recreation Committee
Brian Beedenbender, member of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee.
Wayne R. Horsley, member of the Parks & Recreation Committee
Lynne C. Nowick, member of the Parks & Recreation Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Gail Vizzini, Director of Budget Review Office
Lance Reinheimer, Assistant Director of BRO
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
John W. Pavacic, Commissioner of Parks
Tracey Bellone, Deputy Commissioner of Parks
Carol Ghiorso Hart, Vanderbilt Museum
Carrie Meek-Gallagher, Commissioner of Environment & Energy
Allen Kovesdy, Budget Office, County Executive
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro
Jack Caffey, Aide to Presiding Officer
Greg Rivara, Cornell Cooperative Extension

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Kraus, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:04 PM

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. And we're going to move right into Parks. Nobody has to move because we're all the same people here. We're just serving a different role. And I have one card and is -- are there any members of the Environment Committee here? Who's here? Okay. Because this does have to do with the Environment Committee. And the first card is Gregg Rivara.

VICE CHAIR D'AMARO:

Jay's not here today so I'm Vice Chairing.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Oh, okay.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And while our stenographer's getting paper, did you need a minute? Oh, you're fine. Okay. I knew I recognized when we were doing the aquaculture.

MR. RIVARA:

Yes, correct. I'm the aquaculture specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. I'm also the site Director of the Suffolk County Marine Environmental Living Center. And I'm here to talk about the Wildlife Rescue and Education Building at that county facility.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Can you hold the mike a little closer, Gregg?

MR. RIVARA:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

I'm having trouble hearing you.

MR. RIVARA:

Is it on?

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay, I think it's on but I think it was just too far away.

MR. RIVARA:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you. So, Gregg, you're going to be speaking about the Wildlife Rescue Building?

MR. RIVARA:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And marine center.

MR. RIVARA:

Right. It's 1766. It's capital program 1766. And based on discussions with DPW earlier this year and over the years, this building's been up for about three years now. We determined that it would take about \$100,000 to get the building up and running as it should be because right now it's a glorified storage building unfortunately. It's weathered in. It's not going anywhere but we have temporary electric, no water and no heat at this point. So this money would go to providing for water hookup, which is nearby, propane, piping internally and finishing the electrical service making it permanent. And I know it is not in the proposed Capital Budget.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Right. I'm trying to see --

MR. RIVARA:

1766.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Lance, what's Budget Review's recommendation because I haven't looked at the budget for Environment?

MR. REINHEIMER:

We support the installation of permanent electric. It does have a temporary electric set up. They are using the building. It's used for cold storage. We agree that it should be finished with permanent electric at the minimum, to bring in heat. You know, if that's not a large increase in scope, you know, we would support that and water so that they can use the building to its fullest. Right now it's cold storage and sort of a staging setup area.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. As Mr. Rivara said, a kind of warehousing. And you're on the working group, aren't you, Wayne?

LEG. HORSLEY:

No, I'm not.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Oh, you're not. Okay. All right. So it's on the record and so we had the recommendation of Budget Review. Are there any questions from members of the Committee? Thank you for coming down, Gregg.

MR. RIVARA:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Nice to see you.

MR. RIVARA:

Same here.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Our second card is from Carol Hart. Carol?

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Yes, I'm representing the Vanderbilt Museum. And I don't know if you have any questions on any of our capital projects. We do have some requests. So I guess the first one 7427, which is the

waterfront project, the 2011 request for 480,000 was removed. And I guess that's something that we would like to see kept in the program. We realize in the next few years things are very tight, but if we could keep it in there for two reasons.

One is that the -- this project has yet to even go out to bid. While the money's been there for quite a while, the actual bidding is being held up. The money's appropriated but it's not moving forward. This is a critical safety and liability issue. This project includes the hangar ramp which is disrepair. And because it hasn't gone out to bid, DPW does feel that the funding that's here right -- that's been appropriated should be sufficient to do what we need to do on this project. But if it's delayed further, we're not sure how far the appropriated money will go for this project.

So while at the beginning phase two, the 480,000 was suppose to be for a piece of the boardwalk connecting the waterfront horizontal to the planetarium. There is some concern that in fact when the bids come back, we might need a little bit more to just do the phase, the phase one if it continues to be delayed.

And the other thing is that while that aspect of this project is not a safety issue or preservation issue, we do feel that once the planetarium upgrade is accomplished at the end of 2010 with our new star projector, our visitation should greatly increase. And from the planetarium, this is, again, access to the waterfront. It's highly visible. We've been doing some vista pruning so you can -- people do tend to congregate down there and want to go down. So we do feel that we'll add to the visitor experience and potentially pull them to the rest of the property.

We probably will be restructuring our fee structure once we have the new equipment in, possibly allowing increasing the planetarium fees, allowing you just to pay for that and then have to pay additionally for the grounds. So, again, by being drawn in, it might encourage people to do that. Or if we keep this fee structure as it is now where you pay one sort of -- you have to pay the general fee, having more, getting more for your money on the grounds as well, I think, will entice people.

So I guess on this project I have two issues. I just want to make sure you're aware of. One is that this project is being held up at the County Executive level. We are ready to go out to bid. And I do feel there is a safety issue. I have some photographs, in fact, that I'll pass around with this this project. And we just request that the money be kept in the 2011.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Now the restoration of the boat house is not included and you're not requesting that. But when we've looked at the revitalization of the waterfront in the past, hasn't DPW expressed problems with that restoration in the past?

MS. GHIORSI HART:

With the boathouse.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

They had problems with the boathouse. And with the seaplane hangar?

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Yes. The seaplane hangar, again, similar to the waterfront project, and they really are tightly connected, money has been appropriated. It was ready to go out in February for bid but it's being held up. Currently the money that's in there about \$2.2 million should be sufficient to stabilize the building.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Now you're talking about the seaplane hangar.

MS. GHIORSI HART:

The seaplane hangar, yes.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

But if that's not -- if the seaplane hangar and the boathouse aren't being worked on right now, then is the waterfront, the 480,000 for the waterfront, is that really something that could be delayed if we're not going to be using the seaplane hangar or the boathouse?

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Well, the waterfront -- like I said, we're not -- I'm not sure how long it's going to be delayed, the waterfront -- money's been appropriated. We're getting ready to go to bid. It would be part of that project down the road. The seaplane hangar itself had some urgent needs. The building is dangerous and potentially with DPW could collapse. So we have safety issues there. There hopefully is enough money already appropriated. It just needs to be released.

The boathouse we have money appropriated to preserve that structure. And I'm going to have to come before you fairly soon to get the money bonded. So the money has been appropriated for the boathouse; just not bonded. So for both those projects more money certainly could be used for restoration. But again because of the current times, we're not requesting further funding. We just want to be able to save the buildings.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Are there any other questions? Okay. Okay. Carol, was there something else?

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Okay, just a -- yeah, really another critical project for us is project 7433, the driveway gutters project which does included our bridge. And as some of you may remembered, we had critical concerns about a year ago of the failure of the bridge; we were actually closed for a while. Engineers came in and they did the preliminary investigation, feel that we are going to have to do intensive reconstruction of that bridge. So we do have planning money for this year. And a million dollars is in the Capital Program. We had requested it for next year. It was moved to 2012.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

It's in 2012, right.

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Yeah. We're requesting it go back to 2010. Budget Review does go along with that recommendation so we affirmed that.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. I don't see that in the Budget Review Report. Is it that you recommended it to be moved up? I missed it then. Okay, it's further back. Okay. All right. Thanks, Carol for pointing that out.

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Okay. And the only other thing I would -- plumbing we had put in some requests. Budget Review is recommending 50,000 for planning for next year, which is less than we had requested. Does include construction we had requested, but I do think that that's a very reasonable approach given our current time. So I would strongly recommend going with the 50,000 planning for next year as BRO has recommended for the plumbing projects, 7447.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay.

MS. GHIORSI HART:

And also 7445, our re-wiring electrical project.

MUSICAL CELL PHONE RINGING

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And you could do it to music.

MS. GHIORSI HART:

Again, here we're dealing with critical safety fire issues. BRO has recommended retaining those requests. And, again, I would point out that we do feel those are important safety issues.

And if there are any other questions? I think those are the critical -- right now we're just focussing mostly on things that are liability and safety issues.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Thank you, Carol. No other questions, right? Okay.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC CAME UP TO THE TABLE

You're here already. Waiting to go. Now, there are a number of projects that BRO has recommended that we put back into the Parks budget. And I was just hoping we could take a look at some of those because when I look at something like improvement and lighting to the county parks, that's capital project 7079. Budget Review is recommending that we -- oh, no, this is one that I have a question about, I think. 7079, I just have a question about it. It had -- there's already 1,150,000. And there's an uncommitted balance of 458,000. Okay. Now, is that enough to do the project, Commissioner, or -- to go ahead with the project?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

It's actually for a number of projects. It's for paving work at a number of parks spread throughout the County. Lake Ronkonkoma County Park, for example, Gardiners Park, for example, what that allows us to do is to pave -- either add additional parking where it's required or to reconstruct existing parking areas where the paving has deteriorated to the point where it's become a safety issue. There are quite a few parks that we would be looking to do that at including Blydenburg, Cupsogue, Indian Island, Theodore Roosevelt, Muns Ponds, Sears Bellow, Southaven, Westhills and also at the West Sayville complex.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Why don't I let you talk for a minute while I get my pages in order because I'm working from two different pages. I'm going back and forth. So is there anything you wanted to tell the Committee?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

In regard to this project line or --

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

In general.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

I think just that we're available to answer any questions, respond to any inquires that the Committee has today. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. That's easy. Anybody else have any questions? Okay, because I know that there are

projects here that I think are important that Budget Review has pointed out. So what I'll just do is I'll follow-up with the Budget Review Office and the working group on those that I think -- because some of them are actually income producing like Cupsogue, the work that you want to have there. That's a very popular beach.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Right, Cupsogue and Smith Point are two ocean front beaches. Cupsogue, the parking lot there fills up in the summer. Very, very popular park.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

It's a nice beach.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Yes, it is.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And the Maritime museum project CP 7165, we need to do that this year because there's a match.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

That's right. Earlier this year the County was awarded a grant of over \$500,000 to construct a new boat facility, their boat shop facility which will tie into the historic marine railway that's supposed to begin construction later this year. And this will allow for them to do year-round maintenance and repair work, restoration work on historic vessels. It'll also be a destination point for folks visiting the museum. They can see the active work going on. There'll be a viewing gallery where classroom groups and the general public can view the operations.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Yeah, Natasha was really excited about that one.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Yes, she was.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

At the Trustees' meeting, she was very excited about that. And, of course, the golf courses, that's another revenue producing project.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

That's correct. That's our single largest revenue generated, the golf program. And monies for that right now, we'd be targeting West Sayville Golf Course, the irrigation system there.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Now, the computerized reservation system, that's an ongoing project?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

I'd like to ask Deputy Commissioner Bellone to speak about that.

MS. BELLONE:

It's ongoing and, you know, as the years progress you have to replace equipment. County Information Technology has a five year life span on computers. And we're probably -- we're at five years actually, this year and next year on most of the equipment so we have to look to replace existing equipment in coming years.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. And I guess the County marinas you're always having to work on. And again, that's a

revenue generating function.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Yes, we're always looking to make improvements at the marinas and including newer acquisitions. We had -- the County had acquired a facility out in East Moriches at Tuthill's Point. That's one that ultimately would fall under the purview of marinas. There's also a small facility at Northwest Harbor County Park where we have a boat ramp there and parking facility as well. But that basically would be used for any type of water borne, motorized or sailing vessels where we have those mooring facilities.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay, so if there are no other questions, I'm fine with this. And we'll be deliberating on Budget Review's recommendations. Because some of these really we can't give up the money we're spending on them because they're bringing in more money than we're spending. Well, as long as we have a new fee structure. Okay. All right. Are there any questions from the Committee? All right. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you, Deputy Commissioner. Thank you Budget Review.

If there are no other comments or questions, I will make a motion to adjourn, seconded by Legislator Horsley.

VICE CHAIR D'AMARO:

What about EPA? Is there anyone here for that?

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Just the one card. I'm sorry, is there anybody -- Carrie, did you want to speak with us? Did you speak at Energy?

VICE CHAIR D'AMARO:

No.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Sorry, Carrie, I didn't see you there.

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

I just wanted to be here in case there were any questions. Obviously my department doesn't have any capital programs in this cycle. But in case there are questions with regard to BRO's report on the energy issues or the land acquisition, so.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Any questions?

All right. Thank you, Commissioner. There are no questions. So there was motion and a second to adjourn. All in favor? We stand adjourned. Thank you.

**THE MEETINGS CONCLUDED AT 2:25 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**