

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee and Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William R. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on October 20, 2009 to discuss the matter of the Operating Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Chairperson of the Parks & Recreation Committee
Leg. Jay H. Schneiderman, Chairman of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Leg. Lou D'Amaro, Vice Chair of Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Leg. Steve H. Stern, Vice Chair of Parks & Recreation Committee
Leg. Jon Cooper, member of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

William J. Lindsay, Presiding Officer
George Nolan, Counsel for the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel
Gail Vizzini, Director of Budget Review Office
Lance Reinheimer, Assistant Director of Budget Review Office
Kevin Duffy, Budget Review Office
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Joe Muncey, Budget Review Office
Tom Isles, Director of Planning Department
Commissioner Carrie Meek Gallagher, Department of Environment & Energy
Commissioner John Pavacic, Parks Department
Barbara LoMoriello, Deputy Clerk
Commissioner Patrick Skip Heaney, Economic Development and Workforce Housing
Allen Kovesdy, Budget Office, County Executive
Steve Tricaraco, Aide to County Executive
Emerson Hasbrouck, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Dale Moyer, Cornell Cooperative Extension
Noel J. Gish, Vanderbilt Museum
Carol Ghiorso Hart, Vanderbilt Museum
Rick Brand, Newsday
Michael E. White, Long Island Regional Council
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Nowick
William Shilling, Aide to Presiding Officer
Michael Pitcher, Aide to Presiding Officer
Dot Kerrigan, AME representative

VERBATIM MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

VERBATIM MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:45 PM

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Good afternoon. I'd like to call this special hearing on the Operating Budget to order. If you all will rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Stern.

SALUTATION

You may be seated. Today we will be soliciting public comment on two sections of the budget, that pertaining to the Environment, Planning and Agriculture Committee, which I serve as Chair; and also the Parks Committee, which Legislator Viloría-Fisher serves as Chair. We will allow the public to be heard. Please fill out a card if you wish to be heard. I only have one so far.

At first, though, I would like to turn to Gail Vizzini from our Budget Review Office to give us a general overview in these two areas.

We are now joined also by Legislator Viloría-Fisher.

MS. VIZZINI:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to brief the Committee in regards to the aspects pertinent to this joint committee meeting from our review of the Recommended 2010 Operating Budget.

First beginning with Parks and Recreation, the 2010 Recommended Budget for Parks includes \$17.4 million. This is 1.7 million less than the 2009 adopted budget. Organizationally, one office systems technician responsible for 24/7 IT coverage is transferred to the Department of IT. It abolishes five vacant positions: The Parks Foundation Director and four Parks Supervisors. Although Budget Review concurs with abolishing the Parks Foundation Director, we are recommending reinstating the Park Supervisor positions for appropriate coverage.

We further recommend creating three new Park Police Officers and filling two current vacancies to be in conformance with our own legislation regarding the number of filled Park Police Officer positions necessary to maintain the safety of our acquired land.

We recommend creating one new accounting trainee at grade 17. We have, as the Executive Budget Office has found, very challenging to reconcile the information in the financial system to project expenditures in revenue because of delays, particularly in terms of getting the Parks revenue information into the system. Therefore, Budget Review believes that the accountant trainee would be instrumental in not only additional fiscal accountability, but in getting this information posted in a timely manner so we can make better projections as far as revenue.

The budget transfers 12 positions and the associated equipment, supplies and benefit costs from the General Fund in historic services to the hotel/motel fund. Similar to the administration's use of 477 monies, the hotel/motel revenue is being used to fund salaries and associated positions. This is approximately 852,583 for the employee related expenditures.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Gail, is there -- my recollection from that hotel tax for the Parks Department, there's more money

than that available. Is there not? Closer to two million or 1.7, 1.5? Is the rest accounted for within Parks as well?

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, there's 852,000 for personnel and 841,000 for the associated supplies and materials.

We're further recommending in light of their staffing situation an additional \$50,000 for overtime based on historical expenditures and additional 170,000 for temporary salaries. If these line items are not increased, more than likely the necessary funding will come from the straight salary lines.

The 2010 Recommended Budget assumes that the Parks fee schedule will sunset March of 2010. In addition, the privatization of the marinas, there is additional revenue of approximately \$300,000 thereby doubling total marina revenue to a total of \$650,000.

The Vanderbilt.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

What was that 300,000? What was that based on, it was -- is that based on RFP responses?

MS. VIZZINI:

We don't know a lot about it other than what the narrative provided. I think it's anticipated revenue associated with some sort of increase or percentage or something like that. As far as we know the Request for Expressions of Interest went out and there were responses. But due to the confidentiality they have not shared anything with us.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So there's basically \$300,000 in additional revenues based on privatization of those marinas?

MS. VIZZINI:

That's our understanding. It's in the narrative to the 2010 budget.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So if we decide not to privatize those marinas we have to come up with the additional \$300,000?

MS. VIZZINI:

Unless there's other --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Places, okay.

MS. VIZZINI:

-- mechanisms that you resort to, yeah.

The Vanderbilt: The Vanderbilt is funded in the 2010 recommended budget with hotel/motel tax revenue. The 2010 funding is 1.8 million, which is 160,000 less than the 2009 adopted. It includes revenue of 804,215 from hotel/motel.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Can you say that again, Gail?

MS. VIZZINI:

Sure. The 2010 recommended budget includes \$1.8 million for the Vanderbilt. The funding is comprised of 804,215 from hotel/motel, 200,000 from a transfer from the endowment, which we believe is premature since our efforts should be to allow the endowment to regenerate itself. And the remainder is revenue straight from the Vanderbilt itself.

The Vanderbilt is going to need monthly distributions to make payroll. So although the hotel/motel

tax is reconciled on a quarterly basis, we are recommending, and this probably can be done administratively through the Treasurer and the Budget Office, that the allocations to the Vanderbilt continue on a monthly basis rather than making them wait for the quarterly reconciliations of the hotel/motel tax.

Planning: As we have said before in our reports, we bring to your attention that the Water Quality Protection funds in our opinion are more suitable for capital expenditures rather than a continuation of the Operating Budget cost positions and associated costs for those positions. We're recommending that we limit funding to the Long Island Regional Planning Board to a maximum of a \$100,000 pursuant to the original legislation, until such time as the required business plan is submitted and accepted by both the County Executive and the Legislature.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can I rewind for a second on the Vanderbilt? I'm just thinking about, you said the Parks fees sunset in March?

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, when we --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

And those fees were intended to fund the Vanderbilt. And the new hotel tax, which is also funding the Vanderbilt kicks in, assume, let's say, January or December or January. So there's a point where there's going to be this double funding of Vanderbilt.

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, not really because the full -- it was a terrible season for Parks so it's -- I hear what you're saying but --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Winter. That January to March isn't going to produce a lot of Park revenue. Okay.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yeah, there's not going to be any duplicity in funding.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

If I may, Mr. Chair, although the money was used to -- although the money was used for the Vanderbilt, the fees going to the General Fund and the fees that we will be collecting, the revenue collected in 2010 will be used for expenses other than -- it doesn't have to go, it's not married to the Vanderbilt, in other words. It goes into the General Fund.

MS. VIZZINI:

Hotel/motel will basically displace the General Fund transfer. It'll stop on December 31st.

I do want to mention Cornell.

LEG. COOPER:

Excuse me, Gail? On the Vanderbilt, one last question, are any of the anticipated revenues for 2010 based on catering at the Vanderbilt? And if so, how much?

MS. VIZZINI:

The Vanderbilt, and they're here, I'm sure they'll be able to respond but based on what we know they're still doing the RFP and they're still processing those responses and projecting what that might produce in terms of revenue. So there is site use revenue, which -- was that tenth or

something? Yeah, but not -- Carol probably would be better able to give you the detail that goes behind their portion.

LEG. COOPER:

Okay.

MS. VIZZINI:

I just want to mention Cornell. In our recommendation, again, it has to do with the 477 funding, the four programs that are funded with Water Quality monies and administered by Cornell expire at the end of 2009. The way our review reads, it basically says to delete the \$1.2 million. The intent of that is for Energy and Environment or, you know, Cornell or Health, whoever the appropriate entity is, probably E&E, to provide you, the Legislature, with a status update. These programs are ending. What was their goal? Did they accomplish it? Was their measurable progress and why has the funding automatically rolled over into the 2010 budget? This is an issue that we have brought to you in the past.

Shortly after the report was released the Commissioner of Environment and Energy called me. I thought we had a productive conversation and it's my hope that you get the information that you need to make the budgetary determination as to whether -- yes, you agree; these programs should be contained and should be able to accomplish their intended goals, what are those goals, because we do not get this information. This information is reported to the Water Quality Review Committee, which is advisory to you. But we are hoping that there would be some sort of improvement in a protocol whereby the information goes to all of you so you can make the budgetary decisions. Otherwise the money is just automatically rolled over and renewed and continued.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

In your report did you recommend that that 1.2 million go somewhere else or stay in one --

MS. VIZZINI:

No, it stays in Water Quality. It was kind of like, you know --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Discretion.

MS. VIZZINI:

Yes.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Legislator Fisher.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Gail, can we go back to your report on page 254 where you talk about revenues. Can you just explain the difference in the estimated budget and the 8.29%, which is less than the adopted budget. I'm a little confused there as to why we have that difference.

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, you know, both budget offices make their projections in terms of what an adopted revenue number might be. Then when we do the following year's budget, we need to estimate whether or not that same dollar amount is going to come in. As I indicated in my earlier comments, June was terrible. I think it rained most of June. So golf fees are adversely impacted, beach fees. So the estimate -- they estimate that the revenue is not coming in, roughly about eight percent less than we thought it was going to be in the aggregate.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

And that's including the fee increase. So had we not had that fee increase, it would have been a devastating blow to the budget.

MS. VIZZINI:

It would have been worse, yes.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. And if we were to sunset the fees in March, when they sunset, then how would we make that up in the 2010 budget? And how will that impact the Recommended Budget?

MS. VIZZINI:

Well, the Recommended Budget assumes that the fees will sunset. We recommend that we continue these fees to offset our cost of the parks system. And if we leave them the way they are, that we would expect that that's equal to about \$800,000 in what would be new revenue to the 2010 budget.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay, but \$800,000 is what we, say, brought in last year.

MS. VIZZINI:

Right.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

But now we're talking about nine months, not 12 months.

MS. VIZZINI:

We're hoping for a better season.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. The other part of that is that we're also talking about marinas being privatized. And that's included in the County Executive's budget. There is no way that that can be done before the end of the year and certainly -- probably not until late next year because of the RFP process. The County Executive had 300,000 -- that privatization would bring in. But didn't he also eliminate some supervisors and isn't there costs associated with that? He eliminated marina supervisors.

MS. VIZZINI:

There were no filled positions that are abolished. But employees who work in the marinas budgetarily are shown in other areas. The Commissioner has the discretion to require them to work where they're needed, which I would expect although, Mr. Kovesdy, I see him at the podium is prepared to respond. I would expect that while we continue to operate our own marinas, they will continue to do a portion of their work at the marina. But organizationally and as far as the budget is concerned, they have been transferred to other parks. Other parks.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes, but that was done with also the elimination of a supervisory position in the budget. Wasn't there? I mean, your recommendation is that we don't eliminate the position.

MS. VIZZINI:

We have several recommendations. One is to put back the -- put back the park supervisors.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Right, okay. Thank you, Gail. Allen.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Go ahead.

MR. KOVESDY:

Yeah, good afternoon. I just want to explain how the revenues were done because that was a

question that you asked. Being that there is a lag between what's on the County computers or IFMS and what -- the Parks records, we met with the Parks Department in August and we got the final numbers that the Parks Department keeps on their journal through the end of August. We used those numbers. Those numbers were significantly less, as you know, due to the weather.

At that point we extrapolated how many rounds of golf could be played on the four County golf courses and what the likelihood of beach -- usually after Labor Day weekend we do not get too much beach money in. And we took those numbers and we did it to the end of the year. Based on the fact that we lost most of the money in June and July, myself and the Commissioner's staff we agreed on the 2009 estimate, basically the added fee covered the shortfall due to the weather.

2010 we took -- we looked at historically for the last four years the beach fees. We looked historically at the golf fees. We looked at the camping fees and we basically took an average of what those fees were figuring that the weather over a four year period would cancel out the good years from the bad years. And at that point then we subtracted out the money, the increase. The Parks Department was kind enough in their budget to give us estimates with the fee increase continued and without it. And the \$800,000 we just took off the top at that point. But 2010's based on historical model of what we get from golf, beach and 2009 took the actuals through August 31st and then carried it through the end of the year.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you, Allen.

MR. KOVESDY:

And the positions that were eliminated were long-term vacant. And they were not funded in the budget so if they were in there, they would have been turnover savings. So they really had no impact on the taxpayer whatsoever.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Just one related question because it seems like golf brings in quite a bit of revenue for the County and it seems like we got hurt in June with the weather. And I know some areas have park fees, golf fees where you can buy like a Monday to Friday pass and you can play as much as you want, it could be like an off-season thing. And we might want to think about initiating something like that because that guarantees you whether the weather's good or bad, they've advanced paid for that ability to go during the weekdays on those off periods and play. So it's like a fixed rate and it might be something to think about.

MR. KOVESDY:

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Gail, back to you.

MS. VIZZINI:

I'm available for any questions.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Any questions for Ms. Vizzini? Seeing none, let's go to our audience. Our first speaker is Dale Moyer from Cornell Cooperative Extension.

MR. MOYER:

Good afternoon. I'm Dale Moyer currently serving as the interim Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension. I'd like to thank the Committee, that is the EPA Committee for their past support of Cornell Cooperative Extension water quality projects.

In the County Executive's 2010 proposed Operating Budget no cuts were suggested except for

previously agreed upon 10% reduction in our water quality funding. In the Budget Review Office recommendations the BRO recommended deleting our Cooperative Extension water quality projects. BRO requested that the Department of Environment and Energy present an assessment of our program to the Legislature.

We at Cornell Cooperative Extension have provided extensive reports to both Department of Environment and Energy and the Department of Health Services regarding our achievements and financial records of these programs. I am pleased to say that Commissioner Gallagher is here today and she will be submitting that -- those reports to you, hopefully in the very near future.

Deleting the funds of these projects for 2010 would result in 23 full-time employees losing their jobs and an additional 15 employees having reduced hours or at a risk of being furloughed.

In addition, discontinuing these projects for even a short period of time would be disruptive to the projects and the overall goal of improving water quality. I respectfully request the Legislature fund Cornell Cooperative Extension's water quality projects as per the recommended by the County Executive Levy's proposed budget.

Thank you for your time and your support throughout the year. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:
Questions from the Committee?

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:
Dale, what are the four programs? It's storm water?

MR. MOYER:
There are five programs total.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:
Okay. Can you just name them quickly.

MR. MOYER:
Two in marine and two in ag. Of the three in ag are the agricultural stewardship and the alternative to pest management, which look at eliminating pesticides, especially those that are getting in groundwater and looking at nontoxic alternatives. The third one is the integrated or Pest Management Program for Suffolk County properties where we've worked with Suffolk County employees on reducing pesticide use on properties both buildings and grounds, including golf courses.

And the two in the marine are the Storm Water Phase II Project and the Bay Scallop Project, which is trying to restore bay scallops in the Peconic bays and other areas.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:
Does that include the SCAT Program?

MR. MOYER:
What's that again?

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:
Or is that -- the SCAT Program's not part of that.

MR. MOYER:
The SPAT program?

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

That's oysters. SPAT. SPAT, rather.

MR. MOYER:

Right. That's another program which helps in that program but it's a volunteer program where we have several hundreds of volunteers that help in raising oysters and clams and scallops. That's something they do in their creeks by themselves. It's a related project but slightly different than trying to restore the scallop industry in Peconic Bays.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Dale, you know I sit on Soil and Water. And I see some of the equip money that comes in and other federal and state grant monies. Does your ag stewardship program work on those?

MR. MOYER:

We work very closely with the Soil and Water Conservation District and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service that have monies coming in especially NRCS, the USDA, have cost sharing dollars. And we work very closely with them when we do our evaluations on our ag stewardship program. We go through our assessment. We look at what the farmer is or is not doing. And if they need some help, we recommend them to work with NRCS in terms of getting some cost sharing. So we work very closely with those two agencies into providing them grower referrals.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Dale, would you be able to provide for us or for the Commissioner the money that has come in through those programs to Suffolk County --

MR. MOYER:

Yeah.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

-- through the different grants?

MR. MOYER:

We should be able to do that. I think in some of our reports we've included that in terms of -- there's one program that's a mixing -- loading facility program where growers can get cost sharing up to 75% by establishing a mixing/loading pad. And right now there's probably over \$600,000 in that fund. I know several hundred thousand have been spent so far. And so that money's coming in through the state through DEC and is disbursed through the Soil and Water Conservation District, trying to minimize any groundwater contaminations as a result of spills of fertilizer or pesticides.

So, yeah, there are several and we can provide that information to the Committee.

CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you. I think that be helpful, Dale, so we know how much is coming in because of the programs that you're doing.

MR. MOYER:

I know the USDA program usually brings in several thousand each year for cost sharing to support the stewardship programs of agriculture.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Staying with 477 for a moment, the Bay Scallop Program, which seems to be having some real success in terms of increasing the population, that was never meant to be an ongoing program, was it? It was supposed to basically get that critical mass out there and hopefully nature would, you know, stabilize it and it would go on its own; is that correct? What is the -- why are you seeking additional funding for the Bay Scallop Program?

MR. MOYER:

Okay. Can I refer to my marine specialist and ask Emerson Hasbrouck to come up here please and answer that because I am a land person, not a marine person.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

That's fine.

MR. MOYER:

So if I could ask Emerson to come up here and answer that question.

MR. HASBROUCK:

Emerson Hasbrouck, Program Director for the Cornell Cooperative Extension Marine Program.

The scallop project has been very successful and, in fact, is reaching or starting to approach that critical mass in the way that you referred to. And, in fact, this past year for 2009 in our SPAT collectors that we put out to collect larval and juvenile bay scallops, we've collected more this year than we have if you add up all that we've collected in the SPAT collectors for the entire life of the project.

So the spawning success of quote, the natural population, which is really just offspring of what we've put out there over the past couple of years, is starting to approach that critical mass. But we need another year or two to make sure that we are at that critical mass to make sure that reproduction success continues.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is it the same level of funding that you need to get the two more years of data?

MR. HASBROUCK:

The budget that we submitted is 10% less than this year.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Wasn't the original budget, though, it wasn't just data collection. It was, you know, it was for the, I guess, the scallops themselves, the seeds, and, you know, the equipment and it was all kinds of startup costs.

MR. HASBROUCK:

Yes.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So I would expect that you would need a fraction of that cost to collect the data for the next two years.

MR. HASBROUCK:

I don't directly implement the scallop program, and I'm sorry, I don't have the numbers in front of me. But I believe the costs earlier on were greater because of those startup costs where we had to purchase significant numbers of nets and a barge to tend those nets and so forth. So the budget, I believe, is less than it was the first couple of years and it's 10% less this year.

But we're continuing the spawning. We still have our net system set up in Orient Harbor. And, in fact, this year we've successfully spawned over a million bay scallops that are in the system right now. And we're going to plant on public bottom lands; half of those 500,000 over the next couple of months. And then half of those will be overwintered in our system to encourage greater survival and to encourage spawning next year.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Emerson, do you see in two years the need or no longer the need for 477 funding in this program?

MR. HASBROUCK:

Well, it depends on how the resource responds and how successful, you know, the progeny of what we put out there is and continuing to successfully spawn and replenish the bay scallop population.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Just to share -- just to share --

MR. HASBROUCK:

I don't -- I'm sorry, I don't know for sure, but if we get another brown tide event or something similar and there is, you know, other conditions aren't optimum for successful wild spawn, then we made need to supplement the wild population further.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Just to share a little bit of what I think is our perspective and we have a limited amount of 477 funds, we want to see it go to water quality projects. And if somebody comes along with a great idea and they tell us this is a one year or two year project, we look at it and go, *okay*, and then we fund it; but then we expect after two years to not have to continually fund it every year and have those monies available for other projects. This isn't supposed to be an ongoing project. It was supposed to be a self-sustaining project. And now you're looking for another two years of funding here. And that means money's not going to be available for other projects. And frankly there's a lot of things that we'd like to do in terms of improving our water quality. So it puts us in a difficult position.

MR. HASBROUCK:

Yes, I understand that. We're requesting one year as additional funding right now. And we won't know until we get into 2010, you know, the cumulative success and whether or not we've reached that critical mass. So we'll have to make another assessment for you during 2010. And we'd be happy to provide that to you, you know, during the late summer of 2010 to give another status update in terms of where we think the supplemented wild population is in terms of continuing to sustain itself.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let me go back to Dale because I'm going to switch from marine to soil, which is, I guess, your specialty.

And first of all, thank you, both of you for the tour that I recently went on of Cornell Cooperative Extension. Very impressive.

I wanted to ask again about this pesticide phaseout money and -- because I've brought this up before. And this originally was to help the County implement its pesticide phaseout to train DPW in terms of turf management practices and alternatives to pesticides. And it, too, has become this ongoing program. And you have some very talented people, there's no doubts, some very, you know, well educated, you know, experts in this field.

Yet my hope is that this money would start to reduce and the County would start to take over these functions. And I'm just curious, I know that you're providing almost like a consultant based service to the County whenever there's a turf problem at a sports field or a golf course, etcetera.

I'm wondering, do you have any kind of maybe a log of how many hours in direct consultation with DPW occurred so I can start to assess whether the County is -- if this is the best way to expend the money or maybe we should switch over more to a on-call basis, you know, we pay for the service as we use it. Right now it's a blank. And I think it's about a quarter million dollars that we're paying into this. And you could correct me if I'm wrong, maybe it's 200,000 on this pesticide phaseout component. Do you have any kind of hours on this so I would know how much staff time Cornell devoted to this?

MR. HASBROUCK:

Yeah. It would be nice if we could set up a program in this case for five years and kind of phase out pesticides. But there have been many challenges including, you know, the golf courses that want to have some sense of greens, greens and things like that. And so to look at -- and one of our jobs is to look at alternatives to those pesticides that they're using and try to develop alternatives through the university system or through our own evaluation. And that has taken a lot of time. And I understand you're looking at it from a sense, we start the project and in five years, three years, we're done. Unfortunately, has not been that easy to completely phaseout of the use of pesticides. But the time that we have spent, I actually do have some numbers here, if you just let me look at these and I can pull them out.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Dale, if you want to take some time and I'll bring you back up when you're prepared to answer, that's fine, too.

MR. MOYER:

No, I have it right here. On average we're doing around 2,750 total consultations and outreaches each year. And this ranges from the community college to buildings such as this one we're standing in to golf courses, to parklands, all the facilities, even some of the beaches and parklands at beaches and so forth that we've been involved with. So there is a tremendous amount of time.

There's also a fair amount of coursework done where we're teaching some of the individuals, whether it's the Department of Public Works or Parks, golf courses, on different pest management strategies so there's a tremendous amount of time and energy put into that each year. It's a dynamic system whether, you know, whether it's the buildings or the grounds. And it does take a tremendous amount of time and energy to move to this zero pesticide. And to give you an estimate of, okay, we're going to get it done in two years, three years, I could not give you an answer on that. But I think maybe for future discussion, if that's the direction the County wants to go in, we should look at, you know, is -- what's the objectives, where we go, and how do we -- if the objectives or the desire of the Legislature and the County is to phase out, how do we phase out of this particular project if that's the desire of the Legislature.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Then maybe we just need to rename it and no longer call it, you know, this pesticide phaseout help. And maybe it should be an, you know, ongoing consultations in terms of how to deal with turf management without pesticides or limited pesticide use. But it certainly -- this 477 piece was meant as a short-term -- short-term help in getting the County to move away from intensive pesticide use. So it's just every time I see it there, I'm curious as to why it just keeps going and keeps going.

MR. MOYER:

I think the other thing is that you might want to talk with some of the partners we have and within the County whether it's Parks Department, the golf folks, Building and Grounds, DPW people that we work with and get their feedback on what we're providing to them because they're the ones that are -- we're providing the service to -- that pass it on down to the other employees.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is there one component that's taking most of the time? Is it golf courses or college campus or is it rodent problems, that kind of thing? Or is it primarily weeds in the golf course or crabgrass, that kind of thing?

MR. MOYER:

You know, if you look at the list of accomplishments and things that we've worked on, it's pretty diverse in terms of grounds and parks. We do spend a fair amount of time with one of our technicians working with the golf courses and scouting them on a weekly basis trying to minimize or eliminate pesticide use whenever possible, whether it's for dollar spot or chinch bugs or anything like

that. So there's a fair amount of time with one individual, the technician, that is out in the golf courses, a fair amount of time especially March through September or October.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. Thanks, Dale.

MR. MOYER:

I think the other thing, which maybe Commissioner Gallagher has and could relate to is we did a cost analysis looking at a program like that being moved to the County -- County funded or County employees. And our analysis along with them showed that we provide a significant savings because our cost that we're paying our employees unfortunately are somewhat less than the County employees. And it's also the fringe benefit package, which comes from the state, is about 45% of the salary. So there's substantial savings that the County receives by contracting with us on -- on not just the Pest Management Program for Suffolk County properties, but all these programs.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you, Dale. Commissioner Gallagher, did you want to add to this conversation?

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

Yes. So the packet that I handed out, what we tried to put together quickly in response to the recommendation from BRO's report, which we saw late in the day Friday, was actually a brief -- we tried to include a brief evaluation up front of each program in terms of the program narrative and how we thought they were doing in addition to the accomplishments that Cornell had submitted to us for the life of the program, their goals for funding for 2010. That's all information that we had shared with the Water Quality Review Committee as well as then a cost comparison saying, *well, if we had to now take this in-house and try to continue these programs, maintain them at the same level, if as a policy decision the Legislature thinks that should happen, it would -- this is what it would cost.*

And in all cases it would cost us more not even including the fact that Cornell University provides fringe benefits for the employees that are working on these projects. We do feel that -- and this took place over actually two separate meetings of the Water Quality Review Committee. We had a meeting in June where Cornell presented on the programs that they were requesting funding -- continued funding for the 2010 budget.

And then we had -- my staff had separate meetings with Cornell Cooperative Extension to revise some of that information and get some more questions answered. And then the Committee reconvened in August and voted to recommend the continuation of these programs for one more year to the Legislature.

Now, we started back in 2008 at actually the request of BRO and the Legislature that we would have these projects go back to the Water Quality Review Committee for this ongoing, if there's going to be a continuation of funding for another year, on projects that had been these multi-year projects.

So we have found, both the department and the committee has found that we, you know, we recommend that these projects be continued for another year of funding. In some cases it's like with the Stormwater Phase II Program, we would be out of compliance with DEC and with EPA if we did not have someone to implement that program because it is a federally mandated program and we're required to do that for our SPDES permit.

In other cases it's -- the other programs, the pesticide phaseout program, we really wouldn't -- it would be very difficult for us to take over in-house. And it really comes down to a question of *do you want to be using pesticides and chemicals or are you going to use labor?* I mean, it's very labor intensive. And what comes up every year is there are new pest problems. So even though Parks or our buildings facilities people may be trained on pest problems that we had last year, if a new pest problem comes up, we need to call on a specialist to come in and say, *well, how do we deal with this*

and what should the recommendation be? There's a whole pesticide community advisory, citizens advisory committee that has to be run. We need support staff to that, etcetera and so forth. So it's much more involved than, you know, just being able to immediately take it over.

So what I tried to put together, and I'd be happy to answer questions after you've had a chance to digest it, but we would recommend that this be continued in the budget for next year. It's much easier logistically if it's included in the general budget that Cornell has the way that it originally was instead of having to create new contracts for the projects are in the general contract and that's why there's some of this confusion with their in Health Services because the general contractor's oversight was turned over to Health Services. The Stormwater Phase II is directly with Department of Environment and Energy.

But please be assured we do cite programatically, we administer and oversee these programs. The Health Services really is more of a ministerial agent in terms of the contractual, you know, they -- after we've agreed that the voucher should be paid and the programatic aspects were taken care of, they then go through the contractual process to make sure that they get paid. And it's helpful to us because as you know, my department is very small and I don't have the staff to start adding a lot more contracts. Many of these contracts, we do all the programatic piece, we bring the resolutions to you, we work with the towns to get the contracts in place and then the actual processing of vouchers gets taken over by the sponsoring department and that's helpful to us because we do not have that type of structure in place.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Any questions for Commissioner Gallagher? I don't know, maybe you don't have this number in your head, but -- so if these are at least for the moment seen as ongoing programs and we know some of the 477 goes to salaries, it leaves what, around 2 million roughly in discretionary 477 that we could assign to projects that come up through Water Quality or through our own efforts? Is that roughly about right?

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

Yeah, I think that's roughly about the estimate we have given our existing commitments and ongoing projects, and like you said, the salaries and benefits, etcetera and so forth.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

But the more we take on ongoing projects, the less we're going to keep shrinking that discretionary, you know, year to year pot.

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

I understand. That's why we did request and Cornell agreed to acquiesce where we ask for a 10% reduction in their requested budget for 2010.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Make more money available for those other things.

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

Right.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Plus I think we've had a 10% reduction in 477 money on a year, you know, per year basis.

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

Yes.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Just because the economy -- sales tax was down by 10%.

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

Right.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Any other questions? Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Very quickly, I would -- I'd be curious to know what you thought of Legislator Schneiderman's comments regarding the Scallop Program and longevity of that program, where you think that program is currently at and do you foresee it going on for years and years? Or as Legislator Schneiderman contends that this is a program that should be phased out?

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

I think we would hope that it would slowly be kind of ramped down in terms of our level of funding. There may be a role for the County to play, you know, at a much -- a lower level of funding on an ongoing basis just because, again, this is something that it does require monitoring and sometimes there -- again, it's a labor intensive type of program. So we would hate to see that we've invested \$2 million to get to six-and-a-half million scallops and then you have a brown tide or a red tide event come and reduce those numbers and then say *well, we're walking away, we're not going to support trying to, you know, to get back to where we were.*

So in some -- in some ways I think that -- especially when we see what's -- we'll start to see what's happening with aquaculture, how that takes off. I think there can be some synergies with other programs that are out there. And I do foresee the County always playing a role in this program, but hopefully at a much reduced level of funding after the next year.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Let me just throw out one idea. And when I was talking about the Pesticide Phaseout Program, which seems to be an ongoing piece of this consulting, and the reason why I asked if one thing was taking up a lot of the time, I was curious whether the greens at the golf courses -- because they have to be so perfect and so manicured, was taking a lot of staff time to make sure that those were green. Because there may be some other strategies to employ there that may not be pesticide free, but in terms of mitigating pesticides like lining, you know, underneath the green, you could potentially line it, that would prevent pesticides from getting into groundwater, you'd then be able to use those chemicals but without impact to groundwater. And that may free up time for other things.

So I just -- you know, unless you look at that whole picture and see where the time is going and whether there are some other ways of mitigating or attenuating pesticide use, you know, there might be some cost savings there, but you'd have to really dive in and look.

COMMISSIONER MEEK-GALLAGHER:

Just one note, the pesticide safety has been seeing an increase in request for waivers because of, I guess, a staffing -- shortfalls or staffing pulled aside, I think you might have been at a meeting recently where that issue was brought up. So the question again becomes do we want -- it's much cheaper to use pesticides. Because if you're not going to use pesticides, then it requires labor. And labor's much more expensive.

So again, that's part of the balancing act that we're doing in trying to make sure we can comply with the pesticide phaseout law while, you know, surviving in a depressed economy.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. It look's like it's just me up here now, so was it something I said? All right.

All right. Well, I do have another speaker card unless, Commissioner Gallagher. Unless you wanted to add anything else, I'll go over to Michael. Michael White from the Long Island Regional Planning Council wishes to address us. Michael.

MR. WHITE:

Thank you, Legislator Schneiderman and members of the Committees.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Wherever they may be.

MR. WHITE:

Michael White, the Executive Director of the Long Island Regional Planning Council. And I just wanted to spend a few minutes addressing some of the comments that are in the Budget Review Office profiling of the budget beginning on page 261.

The first item is with respect to employees. The Chief Planner who is mentioned at the beginning part of that paragraph, the Chief Planner is indeed an employee of the Suffolk County Planning Department and in 2009 and is anticipated in 2010; the majority of that person's time is spent serving the County Planning Department and not the Long Island Regional Planning Council. That's really a function of our working cooperatively with Tom Isles and his department and then -- and really his ability to cover the needs of that department being also short staffed. So to be clear, the Chief Planner is not any longer assigned on a hundred percent basis to the Planning Council.

With respect to that same issue, there will be hopefully in 2010 continued in kind services performed by the County for the Council. Similarly that's in Nassau County as well. And beginning in 2010 we are actually going to suggest as a function of -- sort of our institutional administrative record keeping, a tracking system for those in kind services.

Secondly, with respect to myself as executive director, I still am and remain an employee of Suffolk County. The Council at this point still does not employ any employees on its own. We have been working administratively to establish a payroll and to get applications moved through the New York State Health Insurance Program and the New York State Retirement Program. Pending that approval, I will remain hopefully an employee of Suffolk County and still remain assigned to the Long Island Regional Planning Council on a one hundred percent basis.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

From an accounting standpoint, and I think this was said in the report, but your salary and benefits are considered -- are in kind contribution toward the Planning Council? Plus we have a financial contribution and does -- does those two together roughly equal Nassau County's contribution?

MR. WHITE:

Okay. Let me take that at small bites. I am not an in kind contribution. In fact, in 2009 there will be a reconciliation from the -- let's call it the cash amount in the Suffolk County 2009 budget for the Regional Planning Council to effectively reimburse the Planning Department for the money they've spent paying me. To the extent that in 2010 the proposal, and we'd like to suggest adoption of that proposal, that my salary and my line, my employment continue with Suffolk County until May of 2010 with the \$285,000 proposal that's in there for a -- let's call it again, cash contribution to the Planning Council. Again, that will be used to reconcile the Planning Department's budget with respect to paying me.

So, I am not an in kind service. I am paying me effectively as using the money that Suffolk County is putting in as a -- on a cash basis.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

I guess my question gets down to, is Nassau paying the same amount of money ultimately as Suffolk is paying for the Planning Commission?

MR. WHITE:

In 2009, they are. And because I am a Suffolk County employee, that's really again a pure cash basis. They're paying for the work -- programatic work of the Council and other expenses of the Council. For 2010 that is similarly proposed and I'll get a little bit later on down the line where there's a suggestion that right now Nassau County is looking at a \$225,000 contribution rather than a \$285,000 contribution, which is presently what's in the Suffolk County budget. We are still working with Nassau County to move that up. Their budget process is a little slower than -- and a little bit longer in time during the year than Suffolk County.

So with respect to that issue, I would again request that the 285 stay in play. If it turns out that Suffolk -- that Nassau County doesn't do more than the 225, then I guess we would understand that Suffolk County might only match Nassau County for the lesser amount. But if Suffolk County adopts a 225, frankly I have no chance of getting any more money out of Nassau; I'd like to bring them back up to 285.

Last year the proposals were for 300,000 each. In 2009 our 300,000 from Suffolk was reduced to 285. I think that went along with the County reductions throughout departments. So obviously we're living with that. And for the -- again for 2010, that 285 -- the \$285,000 number is being utilized.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Kevin, is that -- do those numbers jibe with your numbers in terms of the contributions from Nassau versus Suffolk?

MR. DUFFY:

We had received a -- some financial information in a booklet, which is on page 262, the last bullet there. What our concern has been is that the Ninth Resolve Clause of resolution 636-2005 amended by 1097-2007 indicated that until a business plan is submitted and accepted by the Suffolk County Executive and Legislature, the Council shall be limited to funding of no more than \$100,000.

If you look at the County Executive's Recommended Budget on page 54, he also basically in the Eighth Resolve Clause refers to the submission of a business plan. We are not aware of the business plan having been submitted. I would assume it would have to be done by resolution of the Legislature signed by the County Executive.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Are you prepared to address that point?

MR. WHITE:

Absolutely. Indeed, the business plan was done before the end of last year and submitted to County Executive. It was -- there was great discussion about it at the Council at which the County Executive and the County Legislatures are represented. It was submitted to the County Executive. I think the point being made is that it should go through a formal resolution of the County Legislature. I am -- I guess that has not been done.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

It sounds like it has to.

MR. WHITE:

And I would suggest that since the Council had formulated the plan and had submitted it through the County Attorney's Office and the County Exec's Office, I would suggest -- I would present it again. And if we could move it through the very next cycle, we would appreciate that.

MR. DUFFY:

Could I ask one other thing? You talked about that the -- there would be a reconciliation of the contributions of Nassau and Suffolk for 2009. Who is that going to be submitted to and who will be reviewing it? And I would assume that whoever does the review will report to the Legislature that

that reconciliation and accounting has been confirmed.

MR. WHITE:

I didn't mention a reconciliation between the two Counties. What I did mention was a reconciliation between the fact that there's a -- was originally \$300,000 in 2009, became \$285,000 with reductions made through the County budget. And in 2009 since my salary is being paid by the County, the reconciliation will be that the monies, let's call it again, the cash of 285,000 originally 300,000 would be utilized to have covered the salary that the County Planning Department has made.

At the end of the year we would be also happy to present to the County -- County Legislature as well as the County Executive exactly how much money we've received by the end of 2009 from Nassau County. Frankly in Nassau -- in 2009 we were receiving an additional \$350,000 from the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency. And again, that goes to another point that's made in the --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

That wouldn't count as Nassau's contribution. That's a separate entity; right? And I'm not sure whether there's a requirement that Nassau County and Suffolk County have to pay the exact same amount or there's got to be a reconciliation. Kevin, are you aware of that? Is there --

MR. DUFFY:

My understanding, if you look at, again, page 54 of the Executive's budget, he makes the payments of the 285 conditional upon the County of Nassau adopting a binding commitment to pay 285 to pay the Council's 2010 operating costs.

What our concern has been, we've talked about 2009. What about the earlier years? Because we have indicated, I guess, on page 262 that there appears to be no provision dealing with the reimbursement and equalization of past expenses. That's why --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is there a requirement that Nassau and Suffolk are in at the same level?

MR. DUFFY:

My understanding there is. If you look at the resolutions that are discussed in the report, 636 as amended by 1097 and 832 of 2008.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So you're saying that you believe there is a requirement. And then the past years it has not been equal so then technically there would be a balance in our favor.

MR. DUFFY:

I'm not sure. I'm not sure. That's why I'm asking.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. No, I think that that's important.

MR. DUFFY:

Has there been a reconciliation going from day one that the Council comparing the contributions of Nassau and Suffolk to determine whether or not they have been equal? That's an issue we're raising.

MR. WHITE:

Indeed -- first of all, I'm not sure that there's an absolute requirement and law to do that, but indeed we did do that last year. And that's how, in fact, we got the \$350,000 additional from the Nassau County IDA. Granted there's the Nassau County IDA and there's Nassau County. But that was one form in which Nassau County as a whole stepped up to make that difference that was

recognized over prior years.

So in 2010, indeed, we have an additional commitment from the Nassau County Industrial Development Agencies for a further \$350,000 amount. Again, that's financial support. That's not in kind services.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yeah, I mean -- I guess we do need some kind of accounting of the two so we can -- even if we are to say, *okay, that's Nassau's piece, the IDA piece*, it still would be nice to see for the last few years using, you know, your staff as our -- your salary, etcetera and benefits as our piece and what other -- whatever other monies we put in and look at Nassau and their contribution and see how to reach equivalency. I think that would be important, whether it's codified or not.

The other piece we were talking about before this -- now I have to think about what it was, before we were doing the reconciliation --

MR. WHITE:

The business plan?

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

The business plan, thank you. So there was a -- that seems like that's a requirement, now that there is a business plan, it's adopted by the Legislature. So to get that moving forward, and maybe Director Isles can provide some insight from the Planning Department, but I would -- the County Executive, somebody would have to bring a resolution. I could bring a resolution if you provided me with the business plan, or the County Executive? If -- is there somebody from the Executive branch here? So that -- Allen?

It seems like we skipped this procedural step of coming to the Legislature and approving the business plan. It sounds like there's a requirement that we can't spend more than a \$100,000 without the Legislature approving this business plan and we don't have that business plan. So can we fix that?

MR. KOVESDY:

I'll bring it back. I'll bring it back. Just a point, last year we did reconcile from 2007 to 2009 the difference between Nassau and Suffolk County. We equated it to in kind contributions and we equated it to the total amount the County of Suffolk paid.

I'm sure Kevin can tell you that in 2008 the County of Suffolk did not pay the full \$300,000 in the budget. It stopped at the level that Nassau County paid, so that we didn't overpay. But we did a complete -- in order for them to do the business plan, two people in our office did a complete reconciliation of the history of Nassau and Suffolk, both in kind and staff wise to make sure that we were getting the best bang for the buck. The end result, as Mr. White said, was Nassau County came up with the extra money to balance it over time.

But I will take it back that you need -- that you were asking for a resolution for two thousand -- now you're talking about 2010 or 2009 business plan?

MR. DUFFY:

It would be all of them.

MR. KOVESDY:

We have the plan --

MR. DUFFY:

And excuse me, Legislator Schneiderman.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yeah, I think in general it's been the business plan. Kevin?

MR. KOVESDY:

All right, 2009/2010.

MR. DUFFY:

Perhaps they could do the -- as an attachment to the resolution, show the reconciliation of what has been paid?

MR. KOVESDY:

We'll provide adequate backup for the Committee if the Committee asks us a question, okay.

MR. DUFFY:

Okay.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Michael, was there more you wanted to add?

MR. WHITE:

Again, I just -- yeah. I just want to thank Allen for all the work that he and Connie and the Budget Office has done to help us out on that reconciliation. It was a quest. But I would point out that until this year, all the monies that were purportedly spent on or on behalf of or by what was then the Regional Planning Board, came out of the Counties. So it's only 2009 that indeed the Council is a separate operating entity. And as you can see by my description so far, we're still not in full operation. So frankly to start the kind of reconciliation that's asked for going forward from both Counties, I think, is an excellent idea and we'd be more than willing to present that to the Legislature.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So let me just ask about the Council itself because back in the old days, Lee Koppelman, I think, used to direct something like this. I don't know that there was any money ever really assigned to this in particular. Now it sounds like there's a budget, 700, \$800,000 something in that range. So what are we getting?

MR. WHITE:

Me?

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So just give me, I know I'm the only one up here. But, yeah, tell me a little bit about --

MR. WHITE:

No --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Because you've been doing this now for a couple of years. And I'm going to have you report to the Environment Committee, I don't think at the November, but maybe the December meeting, so you can update us.

MR. WHITE:

Yes.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

But maybe you can given me a little preview of what to expect at that presentation. Just tell me a little bit about what the committee's been doing -- the Council's been up to.

MR. WHITE:

I didn't mean to be glib, but it is still only me. But the important part is that we are doing the work that has been assigned to us through the legislation and the cooperative agreement between the two Counties. And that is that we've advanced the producing and developing a regional comprehensive sustainability plan.

So working with both Counties who are updating their own master plans, working with the towns and villages and the cities as well as a number of other business industry and community organizations, we have proceeded with this sustainability plan effort.

What we will be doing hopefully for the December meeting as we had discussed, we will be bringing forward members of the Council as well as key members of the study team who will show you where we -- what we've done so far in the sustainability plan, which is really divided into two phases. The first phase was really looking at baseline conditions. We've now moved toward some -- setting some goals with respect to meeting the challenges that Long Island faces. And by the end of the first phase, we'll present some sustainable strategies including some early action items as to what needs to be done to resolve some of our problems.

So in addition to having an outstanding team of consultants and a team of professionals from both Counties as well as some of our towns and villages, we've also established a leadership advisory cabinet, which is putting -- which is headed by Bob Catell and Pat Foye. We have right now approximately 25 members on that cabinet. And that cabinet working with us and our consultants are also establishing what we call stakeholder resource groups, technical advisory groups, in 12 different categorical areas.

The idea being that, well, we have professional consultants who work internationally as well as have a team of on-the-ground people from Suffolk County working on their team and working with our Counties who have outreached to the community at large to have input into setting the goals and the strategies.

So what we would present at the December meeting is a compilation of the information we've gathered so far, some framework of the goals that that we're looking at in terms of what the challenges are and how we can meet those challenges and some summary about how we're going to reach the strategies and some of the criteria we're going to use to assess the strategies as well as the metrics that will be used to assess whether or not implementation of the strategies are going to really make the difference.

The key difference, Jay, if I could have one more thing on this one, the key difference between this approach and the initiative that we're carrying out is that we've heard a lot about over the years, the what's, the where's, even some of the why's about what's wrong. The key difference in this effort will be the how-to, who's-got-to-do-what and where can we find the money to make the changes. So that's basically what we're working on.

Among other initiatives that we have, which we'll also talk about such as our Project of Regional Significance, which ties into tracking projects such as the Heartland Project, such as the Lighthouse Project, such as EBCO Development out in Riverhead, their proposed third track, now what we hope is going to be at least a double tracking between Ronkonkoma and a new East Farmingdale Station. So we carry on a lot of -- let's call it collaborative dialogue and meetings on topics such as those working with Energy Environment, working with Planning, working with LIPA, working with Empire State Development. But again the key thing that our time and monies are spent on is really the development of the sustainability plan.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Tell me who are the consultants who are doing the sustainability plan?

MR. WHITE:

The lead consultant is a firm by the name of Arup; that's A-r-u-p. They're an international planning & engineering firm. They've done work in the UK, the Middle East, Shanghai, Japan. They're based really in New York City. Now have an office out here working with us.

One of the local people on Long Island who's working with us is Lisa Ligori from East Hampton. She's on the Arup team. Locally we also have the Hofstra National Institute of Suburban Studies. And we also have Lero Engineering as well as the PFM group led by John {Cape}. He's a former Budget Director for the State of New York. They have offices in the city as well as the Island.

So we've tried to put together a team through a wide open procurement process where we received a dozen different proposals to come down to a team of experts in the field and really taking a hard look at what's going on out there in the world with respect to addressing the sustainability issues and how they can be applied to Long Island. I would also stay that we've been --

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

So, Mike, what's the price tag on that study?

MR. WHITE:

The total price tag is 1.5 million. We've presently authorized 750,000.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

750,000's been authorized. We know it's going to cost 1.5 million so I guess there's -- we believe there's going to be an authorization of another 750,000 later on. Or we're going to get a half a study, right?

MR. WHITE:

Well, you know, I'm taking -- this is where I might say we're going to -- we're sort of taking the Robert Moses approach. We're going to build a bridge and we know we're going to get to the other side. But here's the reality, though. We've been fortunate enough the way the Counties have established the Regional Planning Council that we've operated on a multi-year fund. So, indeed -- we've saved our money from 2008. We've saved some money from 2009. And so even at a level of reduced funding for 2010 from both the Counties, we still believe we can make the knot here. We can accomplish this.

The other thing that we're looking at because we are a council, is we have the ability to seek, and I think right now have some solid opportunities on private foundation monies. While, you know, those monies are to some extent as scarce as governmental monies, we fit into some of the work that foundations here on Long Island are doing. And so that's one of the ways we're going to fill that gap. We have a continuing dialogue with Empire State Development knowing that a good piece of the work that we're doing is an involved respect to economic sustainability. And, again, the state budget's not looking so good but they haven't said no yet and we remain optimistic for 2010.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

A million and a half isn't cheap. That's a lot of money to spend on a study. The worst thing that could happen is you finish the study and it sits on a shelf. So we all know a lot of the land use activity happens at the town levels. So, one I'd want to know to what level the town's involved. And, you know, what are the odds when this thing's done that we actually can see some changes made.

MR. WHITE:

First thing is and I want to make this crystal clear, I would not be standing here, and I have not been taking this job for two years to wind up with another study that's going to be sitting on the shelf, that's another study about the deficient conditions and some vision that lacks charting a course of how to change it. What this is meant to be and what you will see in the presentation that we made -- we will make, and the scope of the studies available -- in fact the first thing we will do is

submit to all the Legislators the actual scope. You will see that it's clearly driven by getting to the *how to make the changes* and *who has to do what*.

So at the end of this plan, an integrated action plan, not the planning study of traditionally what's happened in the past, it will actually say *here's what we can do to reach these strategies, here's how implementing the strategies will make a difference and here's got to do what. Does it require County legislation? Does it require Town legislation? Does it require State legislation? And where are the funding mechanisms to do that?*

So that is a major feature of this plan. Indeed when you look at the scope, when you hear the presentation, I'm sure you'll realize that we're spending less time and hopefully very, very little time, if not, any time at all duplicating what's already been studied and already been done. The first piece of the piece of work that was done was a compilation of over 750 extensive documents and review of those documents so we don't do that over.

In addition we have a solid coordinating effort, as I said, with both Nassau County and the New Suburbia Plan, with Tom Isles and Suffolk County and the update of their Master Plan, with LIPA on the update of their energy plan, with ICLEI on the carbon footprint, with Long Island Index on the work that they've done. So we're not duplicating the study work again. We want with this effort to really be compiling information and using it to making some kind of decision.

So I'd like to be standing here in front of you in July of 2010 pending getting the other \$750,000 and getting that work done and presenting those recommendations on what the County Legislature can do to make that difference.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

My last question, and I'm sure it does but I just want to make sure that you're looking at public transportation component, and you already said you're talking about a double rail, and also on the solid waste component, which I think is the way we handle solid waste -- as you know, I've been very critical of in terms of the wasting of resources and the use of non-renewable resources and the traffic and the air pollution and everything else, and the taxes involved, the expense of, you know, trucking, you know, two billion pounds of waste to other states so I'm curious -- I just want to make sure that that's something you guys are looking at.

MR. WHITE:

The answer is question. And let me just back that up a little bit. First with respect to transportation, one of the things that we've been fortunate with the Council is to really take over or really take on a completion of a piece of work that was actually funded by NymTec that both counties had been working on. It was called the Long Island 2035 Visioning Initiative. And that was specifically based on looking at transportation infrastructure and land use, sort of getting a look at how do you build a consensus on where the new population growth is going to be accommodated and what kind of transportation infrastructure exists or is needed to handle that.

So clearly the focus is going to be as what's come out of that visioning initiative on transit oriented development, getting people out of their cars, less vehicle miles, reducing carbon footprint. But then we come to, and we've had numerous meetings and maintain a continuous dialogue with the MTA who, again, has their own financial problems. And some people who don't want to do the things that need to be done such as third track. And as I was mentioning also, we had a meeting last week with respect to a second track initiative. You know, the track between Ronkonkoma and what's now -- what used to be the old Republic Train Station and into Farmingdale, that looks the same as it did in 1844. That's just wrong. And, you know, it's too long that it's been like that.

So, the answer is absolutely. Transportation, transportation improvement, infrastructure improvements and frankly roadway improvements. You know, there's no doubt that County Legislators have identified and certainly the County Executive has identified the need for transportation roadway improvements, specifically the Sagtikos corridor. The state's neglected Long

Island in many of those avenues and corridors.

Secondly, yes, waste. Waste is part of the study. We'll be picking up again on a lot of the work that the towns have done in developing their solid waste management plans as well as the County who did have a Solid Waste Task Force. And clearly that's going to be driven by the Environmental resiliency/stewardship issue, cost issues as well as the carbon footprint issue. You know, we can all sit here today and say, absolutely, it makes no sense from a greenhouse gases carbon footprint issue to be trucking waste from Long Island to Ohio, Pennsylvania and South Carolina. But, yet, I don't know how many trucks today, but thousands of tons every day do that. There's got to be a better regional solution. So that will be part of the dialogue.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Public transportation piece, and this will be my last comment, you want to get people to take the trains, get them out of their cars, the trains have to get there faster. In modern cities around the world are all going to high speed rail. You know, the MTA, Long Island Railroad, they don't seem to have any interest in high speed rail. Yet President Obama's putting, you know, billions of dollars into high speed rail in terms of stimulus. And it seems to me we're going to be left behind. We're going to miss the train so to speak if we don't start thinking about Long Island for high speed rail. At least portions of the Island where we can get people to work in half the time that they currently take to commute. And then they'll see they'll leave their car behind and they'll take the train because it will be significantly faster. But people will start demanding that. And they'll choose those cities to live in that have that kind of infrastructure. And I think if we're going to think about the future of Long Island and its economy, those kinds of ideas, those big ideas need to start entering that planning phase.

MR. WHITE:

I absolutely agree with you. And I agree with you about the high speed rail, but again approaching it on maybe small bites first. The last time I took the train from Penn Station out to Huntington, I don't think that train went above 15 miles an hour. So let's not get to high speed before we can reach maybe forty. And obviously the improvements along the main line corridor and the stations are required to do that.

One thing else that I want to say about the rail, that's also I think a very important initiative, and we had a discussion last week with the counties about this initiative that's going forward in terms of the cross harbor freight project, and this is the idea that in order to reduce truck traffic and traffic congestion and the carbon footprint on the Long Island Expressway from all the diesel trucks, we should be moving freight on and off Long Island by train. And, of course, we can't do that today. Or we can do it so little that's it's almost insignificant. And that's because the only way you get east of the Hudson is if you go across a freight -- a rail freight bridge up near Albany or you do the same thing they were doing in 1844 and you float the freight cars across the lower harbor on barges. Okay. And it's an amazing thing to see. I expect to see, you know, Civil War soldiers standing on the barge.

So the cross harbor freight project initiative is an idea that perhaps it's time for a freight tunnel so that freight can get east of the Hudson and freight trains can get onto Long Island. And this is based on a project that's being looked at by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey as well as the Federal Highway Administration and an Environmental Impact Statement is going forward. We've suggested and I believe we have agreement from the counties that we'd like to see Nassau and Suffolk County be part of that Environmental Impact Statement to the extent that it will require intermodal facilities, one if not more on Long Island. So how do we take a look at that whole picture if we have more freight -- rail freight coming on and off Long Island, how do we accommodate and where will we need those facilities on Long Island. So I'm kind of excited about that as a transportation opportunity as well.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

I think you're in a unique position, to actually throw ideas out and look at them and study them and,

you know, looking at the economic data we see Nassau and Suffolk really being hit worse than the rest of the state in terms of the recession. So I think it is time for some big ideas so I'm looking toward the Council to come up with some of these and lead the way so that we have a pathway to rebound in a significant way later on. Thank you, Michael.

MR. WHITE:

And we look forward to coming to report in December. Thank you, Legislator Schneiderman.

CO-CHAIR SCHNEIDERMAN:

Anyone else who has not filled out a card? I thank you all for your patience and indulgence. And I think I can adjourn the Committee of one at this point. Thank you.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 3:03 PM

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