

**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 Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature to discuss the Operating Budget was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on October 18, 2011.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Chairwoman/Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee  
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Chairwoman/Parks & Recreation Committee  
Leg. Thomas F. Barraga, member/Parks & Recreation Committee  
Leg. Ricardo Montano, member/Parks & Recreation Committee  
Leg. Wayne Horsley, Vice Chair/Parks & Recreation Committee

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Robert Lipp, Deputy Director/Budget Review Office  
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office  
Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office  
Sarah Lansdale, Director/Department of Planning  
Lynn Chieffo, Administrator/Department of Planning  
Tom Culhane, Commissioner/Department of Environment & Energy  
Joe Montuori, Commissioner/Parks Department  
Karen Summers, Parks Department  
Richard Meyer, AME  
Frank Castelli, SC DEE  
Lisa Ann Broughton, Economic Development  
Rick Brand, Newsday  
Jack Caffey, Aide to PO  
Marge Acevedo, Aide to PO  
Eric A. Kopp, County Executive's Office  
Tom Vaughn, Aide to County Executive  
Deb Shinkewicz

**VERBATIM MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

**VERBATIM MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:**

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

**(THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:30 PM)**

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Good afternoon everybody and welcome to today's joint meeting of Environment and Parks Committee. Please join us in the Pledge.

**SALUTATION**

Thank you. Commissioner, if I could just start with Planning and Environment, because Lynne Nowick and I are doing a tag team today. After I finish with Environment, I'm going to get her so she can come up.

Hello. Come on. Everybody come on up. Throw it at me all at the same time.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Good afternoon. My name is Sarah Lansdale. I'm the Director of Planning for the Suffolk County Department of Planning. I have a couple of prepared remarks and then I'm here with Lynn Chieffo, the Chief Administrator for the Planning Department, and we'd be more than happy to answer any of your questions.

Since Suffolk County is at a crossroads, we know that through our work in the Comprehensive Plan, the first volume that was prepared earlier this year and released publicly, decisions about when and where and how we grow are guided by our land use decisions and our ability to make informed policy decisions. Suffolk County's challenges with drinking water, with open space protection, farmland, land use, traffic and sewers, they're all interconnected and require a holistic approach to recommending strategies and encouraging the implementation of these policies.

Our population is 1.5 million and is larger than 11 states. And we need to look at things in an inter-connective holistic way, the way that the Planning Department looks at these things, not in isolation, but how they relate to one another.

We've always been, the Planning Department, at the cutting edge of gathering data and assisting the County in planning for a better future. You know -- and I brought a couple of studies of our Hurricane Mitigation Plan that was produced by the County Planning Department. Without this plan and the protection of the barrier islands, you know, I cringe at what could have been the impact of the most recent hurricane.

And then our 208 Study that we conducted, I cringe to think about what the water quality would be now if it weren't for the Planning Department and our foresight in thinking about critical land use decisions related to water quality.

In this economic downturn, it's even more important to take a regional approach to critical issues. It's also an opportunity, as there's a need to coordinate and maximize the effectiveness and collective long-range planning efforts. The collection analysis and public accessibility of critical and detailed information is the sole responsibility of the County Planning Department, and it will guide future policy and better policymaking decisions in the future.

So, as I said recently, the Planning Department has completed its first volume in the County's Comprehensive Plan, the first update in more than 30 years. In addition the County -- just some selected highlights, we've recently launched a very successful Aquaculture Lease Program. And just talking about the economic impacts of that program, we -- it's estimated that during the second round of leases, that will generate \$6,450 in fees associated with the program. But more importantly it will -- the economic impact of the County's Aquaculture Lease Program, which is

managed through the Planning Department, will generate more than \$2.3 million and 50 full-time jobs.

There have been four positions that have been identified in the County Executive's budget to be eliminated. And those are the positions of Planner in Zoning and Subdivision, environmental analysis, the Environmental Planner position, Principal Planner, Chief Planner; and then there's two vacant positions that have also been identified in the County Executive's recommended budget.

I just wanted to take a moment to go through some of the specific responsibilities if that's helpful in these associated positions.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

I think what's very important is for us to know the critical need for these positions, why they need to be restored and which ones in your priority order would we have.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes. So the Chief Planner position oversees the review of town and village zoning and subdivision referrals that have Countywide significance and are mandated under Section 239 of General Municipal Law, New York State Law, as well as Article 14 of the Suffolk County Administrative Code. We review approximately 1600 referrals a year. And under State law the Department is mandated to review these referrals, once their deemed complete, within a 45-day window.

So, in addition, this particular position is 30% grant funded through 2012 through the HUD Sustainable Communities Initiative. And that's to undertake an analysis and come up with recommendations to improve the performance of various transfer of development rights programs.

So without this position, what would occur is we would have to reassign those responsibilities to other senior level staff as well as -- and I'd be fearful of that, we may not be able to comply with that 45-day review window that's State law.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Okay, so when you say the function is mandated, or the program and not the specific title is mandated -- I'm just trying to be clear.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

That's correct, yes.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Okay. That's 30% funded. Now, is that a recurring grant?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

No, it is not.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

So it's -- for 2012 it's funded?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

It's part of 2011 as well as 2012.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Okay, so --

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

But it's all of 2012.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

It's all of 2012.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes. And the total on that grant is 325,000.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

And what else does it cover?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

There are some other positions that it covers as well.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

In your department?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Okay.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

So there are a couple of other positions. The Principal Planner position is responsible for updating the economic and demographic information for the County's bond rating agency. It's also responsible -- and the position actually sits on the Department of Downtown Revitalization Committee, the Department of Economic Development's Downtown Revitalization Committee, the Memorial Siting Committee as well as, most importantly, as part of the County's Comprehensive Plan effort. This position is actually 50% funded through a New York Metropolitan Transportation Council, NYMTC is the acronym, grant for the County's Comprehensive Plan. And, again, that's fourth quarter of 2011 and all of 2012.

This position is also responsible for research and analysis of information concerning the County's demographics, housing market and development trends. So if this position is eliminated, and we're really hoping that these positions are not eliminated, that they're -- that they'll be some negotiations with the unions and they'll be worked out. So our hope -- my hope is to make sure that we keep intact all of these positions. So if the worst case scenario were to occur, I anticipate that we would have to outsource the County's Comprehensive Plan Update.

Of course, what we're trying to do right now is --

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

We would lose that NYMTC funding?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

We wouldn't lose it. We'd have to go back to them and ask that we -- resubmit a budget and take the money that's allocated towards the Planning Department staff and allocate it towards consultants, which, you know, then we'd have to go through an RFP process. And we're hoping that we can finish a lot of the work for the Comprehensive Plan this year, but it's a pretty large undertaking. And in order to do it effectively, we'd also want to couple the research with an outreach strategy so that we're engaging the residents and the decision makers in Suffolk County, especially our town and village partners, so that it becomes a plan that's dynamic; not one that just sits on a shelf and collects dust.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Right.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

So the next position is the Planner position. It's noted in the budget and also in the Budget Review Office's report that this is under -- that this is under the Zoning and Subdivision category. I just want to note that that position earlier this year was moved to the Farmland and Open Space Division. So when I'm about to give you a description, it's going to be in regards to the current responsibilities for that particular position.

So right now that position reviews all of the potential farmland development rights purchases as well as all of the permits that are required under Chapter 8, the County's Administrative Code. That position prepares all of the staff reports and evaluation for the County's Farmland Committee's review and action.

So -- and there's been a lot of discussion about increasing the frequency of that Farmland Committee meeting so as to expedite the permits for the farmers so that we're not creating a burden for the farmers. If eliminated, I -- you know, and we're hoping again that none of these positions are eliminated, is that the mandated responsibilities under the Chapter 8 would be transferred to the other position, the other planner position in the department. And that the non-mandated activities, like pursuing grants for County reimbursement of funds of the purchase of Development Rights Program and the Planning Department, has been actually quite successful in receiving State and Federal funds, although there's been delays of several years; nonetheless there's been several millions of dollars that have been committed to reimbursing the County for their efforts in purchasing development rights. We would not have the resources or the staff time available to pursue those grants to generate revenue for the County. Again, we're hoping that these positions are not eliminated.

The next position is the Environmental --

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

On the grants page, this is part of that 4.9 million that you referred to on that page?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Those are the grants.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

So it's a substantial amount of money.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

It is. And it -- you know, I believe that the County's Planning Department's budget as a whole is approximately 1.9 million. So you can see that we're offsetting our costs a little bit.

The Environmental Planner position assists senior staff in the Department with important Department of Planning capital projects like the important Mud Creek Watershed Ecosystem Restoration Project, which is the rehabilitation of an important parcel to protect surface and drinking water quality in the South Shore. So -- and as well as assist people in the Division with open space rating forms that go before the EPA Committee of the Legislature. So without that, the Mud Creek

Project would be delayed because of lack of staffing, as well as there would just be additional burden placed on existing staff.

Most importantly there would be a loss of institutional memory of approximately 50 years, which is so important to protect the integrity and the consistency of decisions made by the Department as well as the consistency of planning decisions made by the County. Thank you.

That's the overview of the review. And, again, we're hoping that none of these cuts have to go through. And that we're trying to fast track the comprehensive plan so that we can get as much work done on that plan this year.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

I saw how ambitious the 2035 presentation was that you did, and I know your Department worked very, very hard on that. It's a beautiful piece of work. I don't know whether --

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes, and that was a multiyear effort.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Yes.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

And I want to give credit to the former Planning Director, Tom Isles, for initiating that with the County Executive and members of the --

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

-- and the Planning Council.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

-- Planning Commission.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

I don't know, Sarah, whether you would answer this or Commissioner Culhane, I noticed in the budget that there are two positions that have been moved to 477 out of the General Fund. I think -- well, I don't think it was in your Department. It wasn't in your Department. I'm just speaking in general terms. And I know, Commissioner, that you work as the Chair of the Water Quality Review Commission.

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

Right.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Committee, rather. And in -- given that we have such difficult decisions to make in the Water Quality Review Committee, I'd like you -- if you don't have those positions, you know, at your fingertips now, I'd like for you to look at those two positions with me and see whether it's appropriate to move them into that fund. Because you and I know that we have to say no or have projects pared down so that our budget could absorb them. And given that information I think carrying two salary positions in that account, which is just supposed to be programmatic and not for salaried lines, I think we should take a good look at that if you haven't already.

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

Yeah, and I'm not familiar with the two positions that you're talking about. I'd like to work with you on that. I do not like the idea that over the past years we've had to move positions into the 477 Fund. It's diminished the amount of money that's available in the fund for doing wetlands projects

and the other kind of things that we do with that money. 477 Fund really supports a lot of very worthwhile projects in the County. Going forward, I'd like to try to find a way that we could start getting some of these positions back into the General Fund.

But I understand the position that the County's in now. And I believe I said to you that, you know, given the chance -- choice between funding a project and saving somebody's position, I would hate to see somebody lose their position; just the same as all of these other layoff positions that are in budget.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Thank you. Would you like to address us?

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

Sure. And being new here I guess I wasn't quite sure what to expect today so I didn't come in with a prepared presentation. So my remarks will be brief. But I did want to address some of the issues that were raised in the budget. And to go straight to the 800-pound gorilla in the room, one of the recommendations is to eliminate the Department. For obvious reasons, I would not agree with that recommendation. But I believe there's --

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

I'm so happy. There is warm blood running through your veins.

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

Well, the -- yeah, I believe the Department has done good work since it's been created and does it very efficiently. No, you know, no new positions were created with the creation of this Department. The, you know, all of the staffing that are there, those were staff that were already in place in other departments. And the recommendation here basically is *send them back to the departments that they were in*. But I think there are, you know, gains that we have made through this synergy of having these people being able to work across other departments so that -- we all knew what we're doing on environmental projects rather than the Health Department's doing something over here and DPW doing something over there. One of the strengths of the Department is working across with other departments, with Planning -- Planning, Real Estate, DPW, the Health Department, Parks, all of us working together and being more aware of what we're doing.

The report states that the Energy Department is vacant. I can assure you that it is not vacant. And one of the things that our acting Energy Director has done has worked very closely with the Planning Department on a SunShot solar grant that would streamline permitting for solar projects throughout all of the Towns in the County.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Is that Lisa Broughton?

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

Well, that's Lisa's position, which is, you know, this -- Budget Review states that that position is vacant. And what happened is a couple of years ago my predecessor, Carrie, tried to move Lisa's position into DEE and was unsuccessful. So Lisa remains in Economic Development and she works on energy projects for me. So, Lisa, in practical terms she reports to myself and to Yves Michel on everything that she's doing. And you'll see physical evidence of that work rising in your parking lot in the next coming weeks. If you've been across to the Dennison Building you've seen the solar carports going on. That's all work that's been coordinated through Environment and Energy. There are revenues that have come in -- if I can let go of the button here for a second here.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Only until you start talking again.

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

I didn't bring the revenue page. But Lisa has pursued -- she pursued grants that funded conservation in the County. So a lot of the reductions in our energy costs came through grants that Lisa sought out and brought to the County for more efficient lighting. These are things that are saving the County money in the long run. She also brought in grant money that trained 37 County employees, and they received their LEED accreditation through that program. So that's -- and that's a benefit to the County. These are people now who are trained to look for energy savings when they -- when County projects are undertaken. So that position certainly is not vacant.

The administration in the Department is pretty lean. I don't have a deputy. I don't have an assistant. I had an assistant for one month when I first started. And when that assistant left, that position was eliminated. I have the secretary through the Real Estate Department. I don't really seek to have any big administration built up. Any funding for that was eliminated and I can live with that. You know, we can run a pretty lean department.

And, I guess, basically that's pretty much all I want to say as far as my position on eliminating the Department. I did want to talk about the positions that are slated for layoffs. The Real Estate Department has lost quite a few positions in recent years. And we're slated to lose three filled positions; one is land management specialist II in the abstracts division. We have one person that does all of the title searches for the County and other agencies. They also do title searches for Suffolk County Water Authority, for example. There used to be -- there used to be at least two people that did this. Now we're down to one and that one is proposed to be eliminated.

In rental inventory we have -- that position is somebody who takes care of the properties that the County ends up owning. We expect that in the coming years we're going to have more properties coming into our inventory, and we need people that can take care of them, make sure the lawns are mowed, make sure the windows are boarded up if they're vacant, you know, when trees fall on them. Somebody's got to go out and make sure that they are removed. The budget for that kind of work has been slashed and we're supposed to lose a position there as well. So that's going to be very difficult for us to work around if we really lose that position.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

And, Brian, with that stalled legislation on the auctions, I'm sure your -- you have some homes that have been empty now.

**COMMISSIONER CULHANE:**

Well, that's right. As we're, you know, as we carry homes over from auction to auction, they just remain in inventory, and sitting there empty doesn't, you know, doesn't contribute to the well-being of the inventory. They get worse. The roofs leak. The cesspools collapse. We have a lot of problems with these properties. We would like to be able to get these things back in public hands quicker, but our hands are tied in that regard so we have to maintain them. In practical terms for you, when you guys call us up and say you've got a neighbor calling you saying, "well, the lawn hasn't been mowed, the property looks bad," these are the people who have to respond to that. And we are going to be less able to respond to that in the future.

The last one that's on here is auction and direct sales. The person who does that, he does the closings for the County. It's a valuable position. We have auctions. We have properties that need to be closed on and it's a skilled position. We really -- I really hope that the County is able to find a way that we're able to keep these people working for the County and, you know, come to some kind of agreement where these positions aren't lost.

I guess I'll leave it at that. And if you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer them.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

I think you were very clear. Thank you, Brian. Did you have any questions, Tom?

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

With reference to the Planning Department, I see you would go from 28 to 23 full-time employees. So that's roughly, what, an 18% reduction in your employees?

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Yes, that's correct. And actually the presentation that I handed you shows that actually at one time there was an all time high of approximately --

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Thirty-seven, yeah.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Well, and even the good old days, some of my staff there was 49 positions. We actually looked at the phone list yesterday.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Well, just one or two comments I'd like to make. I really feel there'll be no -- absolutely no layoffs, none whatsoever as far as that 462 go. The other 250 for John J. Foley, I'm not going to give any guarantees there. I think that we've done everything we possibly can to help those individuals. Now, you know, the chips will fall where they may. But as far as the 462, I don't foresee any layoffs, all right, because when an elected official gets to that point, where they're advocating layoffs, that's a failure of themselves. It's a failure in leadership. And we are not to that point. There are many alternatives we can go to. I mean, we're talking about reserve funds, we're talking about lag payroll. We have some assets that we can take a look at. Tobacco securitization. Every one of those entities bring in 30, \$32 million, each one, to give us another 100, \$120 million. We are not -- our backs are not to the wall.

Even at the State level, I don't know Andrew Cuomo, I met him years ago when he worked for his father when his father was governor, but certainly, certainly, he doesn't want to lay off 3500 people. That's a failure in his leadership and he knows it. That's why they went back to the negotiating table, tweaked that proposal. The Executive Board approved it and they're going to go for a second vote. And there's a high probability those workers now having gotten the notices and seeing that their 3500 jobs are at stake and all the bumping that goes with that, they will go along with this proposal. And Cuomo wants that, because he doesn't want to have to terminate those people. And this Legislature will not terminate 462 people. I mean, I fully understand the Executive budget. The option given here, it's either 462 people or you contribute to your health plan, that is not going to fly. This Legislature I am convinced will go down and look at several of the other viable alternatives and implement them. We have to.

So I certainly have empathy for commissioners coming up, one after the other and painting a doom and gloom picture and using the Executive's proposal as a reference with reference to contributing to one's health plan. That is not going to fly. And the 462 people are not going to be fired because that will be an utter failure of leadership around this horseshoe. Thank you.

**DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Well, they're smiling now, Tom.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

They should be.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

But there are no guarantees. It's a very tough budget with a lot of holes and we're doing our best. But I'll be going back down to the basement in a minute to keep working on it.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

That sounds bad. The basement.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

I know, but, you know, it's the dungeon, it's the torture chamber. Budget Review has us strapped down there showing us, you know, the screen.

**LEG. BARRAGA:**

Vivian has expressed those three terms exactly how I feel about downstairs, you know, in terms of, you know, it's -- I've never liked the concept, some of you know that. I like something to be open and transparent. I just, I never -- I experienced that in Albany and it didn't work and it doesn't work here, where the general public doesn't see what's going on, The press isn't allowed in. There's something inherently wrong with that system. This is where the action should be up here.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Is there anybody else here who would like to speak to the -- regarding the Planning or Environment or Real Estate Departments, Divisions? Okay. Thank you very much. I'm going to be going back downstairs and I will send up -- are you calling Lynne? Legislator Nowick will come up to talk about Parks.

There's Lisa now and I know that Lisa can tell us about some of the revenue that she's helped bring in. Lisa Broughton, I'm talking about you. Can you just come up a minute? Because the Commissioner was talking about you, Lisa.

We're not going to hold you to the penny, but it's important when we're talking about a position that has been called to be a non-existing position, that the person who I know has been working so hard there because you and I run into each other all the time because of my interest in energy issues, and I know how hard you're working. If you could just, while we're waiting for Legislator Nowick to come up, if you could just tell us some of the revenue that you've helped to generate coming into the County because of the good work that you've done.

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

Thank you, Legislator. I think the solar carports are a source of revenue that you're asking about. At this time about a third of the project will be built in early 2012. And we expect about \$165,000 in revenue. And we're actually hopeful that during 2012 as more of the project gets built out, we would get closer to the number that we're expecting annually for 20 years. And that number is \$470,000 per year for 20 years.

So there were some small delays in the project, but as my Commissioner did mention, it is in fact getting built and you will see it very soon here in the North County Complex. And apologies in advance for any inconveniences.

The other revenue that I've --

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Wait a minute. Before you go to that, Budget Review, what was the revenue for that in the budget? Because I know sometimes revenues were overstated in this budget.

**MS. HALLORAN:**

I will need to check it, but I am not sure if that is -- is that revenue in the EVE budget, Lisa?

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

Yes, it is.

**MS. HALLORAN:**

Yes. I will get back to you in a few minutes.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Okay, thank you.

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

Also, I've been administering a \$732,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Energy. And when that money was being disbursed to counties, cities and towns throughout the nation, one of the things the priorities was that it go to a Department of Energy or Division of Energy if such a division existed. Many of our towns at the time had a bit of a mishmash, right, their Planning Departments or their Engineering Departments or Highway Departments ended up being recipients. And since that time many of them have now designated somebody specifically to work on energy projects both for their municipal facilities, like I work on for our County, and for residential and commercial programs.

So one of the strengths that I've brought to this position is working with companies in my economic development hat and then working specifically with them on energy efficiency in our commercial and industrial sectors.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Lisa, that 732, that came into your Department for specifically -- is it being used for salaries or for a program?

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

Sure, that's five different programs. Because it was multiyear, there was a determination to make that a -- to bring that revenue in from the federal government through our Capital Budget. So it's through Capital, I want to say 1664, specifically because it was multiyear.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Okay.

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

And the contract with the U.S. Department of Energy is -- it began in late 2009 and it goes through December of 2012. So the programing, Brian already mentioned the training of LEED accredited professionals who now can make every County project either energy efficient, water efficient, using materials that are recycled. There's, you know, a whole cadre of ideas that go behind LEED and that's how the County's programing will go forward in the future.

There was an energy study through the Advanced Energy Center. There was two -- there were two lighting projects. And then we have two energy engineers that are being fully funded through this grant for two years to work on more energy efficient projects for the County because we have been funding that through Capital Budget, and of course is a very good investment to go with energy efficiency for our older buildings stock.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Of those two engineers, what department are they in? In DPW?

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

They're in DPW and they're in Facilities Management, yes, they're working.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Facilities Management and -- okay. They're not on the chopping block, are they?

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

No.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Did you say they're fully funded?

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

They are through this ARRA grant.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

Now you're talking about a different grant, not that DOE grant. You're talking about --

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

No, that's the same grant.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

That was an ARRA grant.

**MS. BROUGHTON:**

We administer it. We do all the federal reporting. We make sure that we have their hours and their projects and we host it.

**CO-CHAIR VILORIA-FISHER:**

ARRA fund. Okay, yes. Well, I see that Legislator Nowick came up so my time is up and I'm going back down. She is going to go to Parks. Thank you.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

Good afternoon and please excuse us for not being here for the meeting before. We are in a Operating Budget Committee. Commissioner, did you want to address the committee?

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Yes, thank you. I just want to go over something that Legislator Barraga was just talking about. I do have concerns about losing positions, people being laid off. It's something that I'm not happy with the positions that are proposed. I understand why the County Exec did what he did, but it would be something where I would have to review it with a committee because my number one goal in Parks when I took this position was to make sure our parks are safe. So that's something I would -- definitely would have to -- I would like to review. That's one of my main concerns.

Another thing I would like to say also is just going through it, I'm not happy really with privatizing the marinas. I just feel that if we do some adjustment with fees that we could break even. We also have a depth service down there that we have to take care of. So that's another thing I think we should seriously look into.

In Parks I have a great staff. We are doing more with less. Looking at the positions that are cut, we're going to have to move people around. We're going to have to possibly -- one thing I do not like to use this word in my vocabulary is say that we have to close down facilities or parks. But working for State Parks for 40 years, I've learned how to make cuts without hurting the public. As I

was always taught by Robert Moses, parks are for people. And that's something I take very serious.

I do have some ideas that if my funding is cut, some things that we can do. We can bring more volunteers into the parks like we did at Gardner Park in Bay Shore. We have -- National Grid came down, they did a complete cleanup, donated benches, trees and things like that. That's what we're going to have to do. We may have to in the springtime, maybe we can talk to the Sheriff's Department, get some -- the prisoners to come in and help us. This is things that we may have to do. We may have to delay openings a little bit.

So these are things I looked at. I'm prepared for it. Again, whatever budget I get, I will work with. And I always, you know, again, I thank the support from the Parks Committee.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

Commissioner, let me just say one thing. It's very refreshing to hear you come up here and -- not just you, but a Commissioner to come up here and rather than say "I can't live without it," to say just what you've been saying to us, "we're thinking of ways to raise revenue." And that's very refreshing and I commend you on that.

Just quickly, and I'll let the Committee ask questions, but when you talked about benches and parks and things like that, do we have a program, I thought we did at one time but I don't know if it carried through, where a business could own a bench? I don't mean with a gaudy sign on it, but in a classy way. Do we have anything like that?

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

What you can do now is you can purchase a memorial bench. I think this year alone we did about six of them in our parks.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

Is that just for benches or are there other things? I mean, can they purchase a lifeguard stand?

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Once again, we can expand on anything. Yes, yes.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

You know, third hole over at the blue course.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

We talked about sponsorship at the holes. And also what we could do is we could take playgrounds and dedicate them to somebody if they want to donate a playground.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

Well, when you say you talked about it, do you have to advertise it -- for it or does it -- does there have to be more legislation of a different sort to do that? I would like to talk to you about that if we could.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Okay. Like I said we were looking --

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

And, again, I would think in a very classy way, not signs hanging all over. But there are ways to do it. I know they do it in other counties in other states.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Next time I come to the Committee meeting, I'll bring in one of the sample signs that we were looking into for the golf course.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

But I would like to work with you on that. I think there are golf professionals, golf stores that would like to maybe sponsor a hole. Not just golf, because that's -- but beach, anything that we can think of to help support the parks and the maintenance. And, again, also I wanted to say that your staff did a wonderful job, from what I understand, after the hurricane. And, again, I commend you on that.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Thank you.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

On the signs -- in other words, they're like standard little plaques. I mean, we don't want to go neon, I know that you're only joking. But they're all the same, basic little three by seven plaque that says Mr. and Mrs. Smith.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Correct.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Okay.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

So we'll talk about that.

**COMMISSIONER MONTOURI:**

Yes. Like I said, we're looking for ways and also I'm working with Legislator Horsley on something too. We're trying to think outside the box.

**CO-CHAIR NOWICK:**

Thank you. Anybody else have any questions? Anybody else want to address the Parks Committee? Now we can go back downstairs.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:15 PM  
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**