

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee and the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on May 16, 2012 to discuss the matter of the Capital Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Kara Hahn, Chairwoman of Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee/member of Parks & Recreation Committee
Leg. Lou D'Amaro, Vice Chair of Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Leg. Anker, member of Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Leg. DuWayne Gregory, member of Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley, member of Parks & Recreation Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. Kate M. Browning, Third Legislative District
Greg Dawson, Commissioner/Parks & Recreation
Terry Maccarrone, Parks & Recreation
Karen Summers-Solinas, Parks & Recreation
Jill Moss, Legislative Analyst/Budget Review Office
Laura Halloran, Legislative Technician/Budget Review Office
Benny Pernice, Assistant Legislative Analyst I/Budget Review Office
Lance Reinheimer, Director/Vanderbilt Museum
Vito Minei, Executor Director/Cornell Extension of Suffolk County
Christopher P. Colahan, Managing Director/Peconic Dune 4-H Camp
William Shilling, Aide to Leg. Anker
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern
Thomas Ryan, Aide to Leg. Hahn

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:57 PM

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Hello everybody. Welcome to the joint Capital Committee on Environment, Planning and Agriculture and Parks. Let's all please stand for the Pledge led by Legislator D'Amaro.

SALUTATION

I guess we're going to start with Parks.

MR. MACCARRONE:

We kind of usurped the table.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

We do have two cards. So, we're going to go with the cards first. Lance Reinheimer.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you very much. I'm Lance Reinheimer. I'm the Director of the Vanderbilt Museum. I just have two projects that I want to speak about, but I want to frame my comments before I speak on them. I understand the situation the County's going through; laying off people is certainly difficult. And when you're making choices between people's lives and buildings at the Vanderbilt, I understand the perspective you have. So, if you can just -- from my world, I'm looking to do the best to preserve the buildings and to keep the Planetarium and Museum going.

The two projects I'm talking about are improvements to the Planetarium, Capital Program, we asked for \$750,000 in 2013. This money is for possible replacement of the 40-year old septic systems. We do have problems with it. It needs to be pumped out a couple times a year. With increased attendance, this is going to be a greater problem. It's kind of dealing with the problems of success. And I think it's important to include funds -- to advance the funds the County Executive included in 2014 to 2013 so that we can address those problems when they arise. We do agree with Budget Review's request. They suggested putting \$75,000 for the planning in 2013 followed by construction in 2014. But to expedite the project, we'd like to see all the money in 2013.

The second project is waterproofing roof drainage at the Vanderbilt. And this money is for roofs. And as we all know with buildings, if you don't take care of the roofs, the rest of the building is in danger of additional damage and rotting and all the things that go with that. We requested \$100,000 in 2013. The Capital Program put the money in 2014. We'd like to see that money advanced. Again, that's for the stall wing and the Hall of Fishes.

We only have three projects in the Capital Program. One of them has the million dollars in subsequent years. So, the impact of advancing money in 2013 is \$850,000; that's scheduled in 2014. So, we're not increasing the overall three-year Capital Program.

Do you have any questions? Okay. Thank you for your attention and I hope we can things work out. Thank you.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thank you, Lance. Your request, do you have them in written form?

MR. REINHEIMER:

I can provide that.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah, could you do that? I have -- you know, send me an e-mail, if you would.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Absolutely, with bullets -- and summarize what we're requesting.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. And you may want to also send that to the Capital Budget Working Group members; okay?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay.

LEG. D'AMARO:

But send it to me as well.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Absolutely. Thank you very much.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Thanks, Lance.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Sarah. Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

I want to thank you for the work you've been doing. I was previously on the Vanderbilt Board and I know we struggled quite a bit to even keep the doors open a couple years ago. And you're doing a great job. I know the Capital Projects are important, of course, but we're in a really fiscal crisis right now. And, again, if there is any way that you can think of as far as increasing the revenue -- I know Vanderbilt has been very proactive in searching out catering facilities and other programs that will increase revenue. The status of the projector? When will the doors be open to have it available to increase the revenue at the Vanderbilt?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Right now we're looking at October of 2012, this year. We're on schedule. And I want to thank Public Works on the record for the dedication, the amount of resources that they're providing for this project and how fast it's progressing. We have the HVAC equipment. The Legislature approved a resolution for \$320,000. That equipment's been delivered and is starting to be put in place. So, that's pretty fast. In all my years with the County, I don't think I've ever seen anything move that fast. So, I want to thank the Legislature. You did provide \$300,000 for -- and that was in the Capital Program for the HVAC. And it's extremely necessary and will make it a better visitor experience.

LEG. ANKER:

Again, for other projects, pertaining to Capital Projects, are you looking further as far as public/private partnerships, or, you know, building naming, find other sources of funding?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, as you know, we're still working on a contract for a caterer. That's been going on for a couple of years. We're getting closer and closer with that. And we do have a number of things going on to increase revenue this year. We're doing a clambake on July 14th. It's a fundraiser, but it's a fun fundraiser. Music, lobsters, clams; can't get any better than that. Overlooking Northport Bay.

We also have four music festivals. I spoke to a dance company on Monday. We're looking to do

Thursday night dance lessons at the Vanderbilt Ballroom and other popular dances Thursday nights in the tent overlooking the Harbor. So, we're doing a number of things. I'm scrambling to look for revenue wherever I can.

LEG. ANKER:

Thank you, again, for your services.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Legislator Gregory.

LEG. GREGORY:

Hi, Lance. Are you still charging -- I know at one time you were charging a site fee to -- is that still in effect or --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Absolutely. And if you look on our website, all the site fees are listed. There's site fee for photography. We have a lot of wedding photos taken there. Site fee use for the tent, for the courtyard, for the Rose Garden, birthday parties. We still -- yes, we still try to raise funds through site fees.

LEG. GREGORY:

Okay. All right.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Vito, would you mind holding off until after Parks? Since I'm giving you a little extra time. Thank you. And then you can come sit at the table when they vacate. Thank you. Okay. Parks. Department of Parks.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the Committee. Obviously we're here to discuss the Capital Budget for 2013/2015 Capital Cycle. Just want to say that in Parks we are keenly aware of the County's economic situation. So, we've pared down our requests quite dramatically. In the past we've asked for \$10 million. We're only asking for a fraction of that. We think that the requests are reasonable. And, I guess, according to the BRO Report and the County Executive Report, I think they agree with us because most of our requests have been granted. We'd appreciate your support with these projects. And if you have any questions, Terry and I and Karen, we'd be happy to answer.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Anyone?

LEG. ANKER:

I guess I'll ask one question.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay. Again, you know me, I'm hoping that we can find additional sources of revenue. Do you have ideas as far as -- you know, these are very valuable properties that we have. And it's a wonderful resource, too, but as far as activities at the marinas, something that will increase revenue flow?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Actually, our revenues are in the neighborhood of about \$10 million a year, so we're pretty revenue-driven already. I've spent the last couple of weeks meeting -- me and my staff to try to float some ideas on how we can expand on our revenue, to ask answer your question.

LEG. ANKER:

Again, I think what we need to do is, you know, think out of the box, maybe how we can partnership with other corporations, even other municipalities and putting on events and maybe incorporating with the Tourism Board in bringing these people -- to come to the Parks, to celebrate, to make an awareness of invaluable vacations, locations that we have here. And there was a term that Brookhaven Town called stay-cation. And it was trying to keep the local, you know -- most of the people are having difficult times getting away with the economy being so low. But again, is this -- what partners are you working with in trying to find other resources?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, it's it's funny you should mention that. Actually I met with Moke McGowan about two weeks ago just on that topic. He was talking about doing things with our golf courses, maybe bringing something like the NCA tournament, (inaudible), some surfing tournaments. I know we're working with Legislator Browning to bring the Battle on the Bay Boat Race over here. I think Vito's going to get up and do a presentation on our Peconic Dunes and how we can forge those relationships. So, we're moving in that direction.

LEG. ANKER:

That's good to hear. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

You're welcome.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Anything you can tell me about the RV Park that came before CEQ? Is that not happening? I just heard a rumor today.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

You're talking about Meschutt Beach? Yeah, we went -- speaking of revenue again, DPW just did a large scale project, a drainage project out on both the east and west side parking lots. And that's going to net us an additional 50 to 60 parking spaces. Unfortunately, we eliminated ten campers sites, but we're actually picking up 50 daily spots so that's going to increase revenue dramatically. We wanted to take the RV's and move them to the canal side of the -- of the facility. CEQ wasn't crazy about the idea. They've asked us to come back with a different plan. And we're currently working on that with our Park maintenance guys and Nick Gibbons, so.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Okay. The rumor, though, going through CEQ today was that you guys were just discarding it altogether. But you're still -- you're just updating the plan?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We're updating the plan, correct. I mean I wasn't at CEQ this morning. I don't know what they testified to but --

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

No, Nick wasn't there.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay. No, I mean, they'd asked us to review it. I think their objection was we will -- we would --

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

We don't need to go through that all again.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay, very good. Thanks.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

(Laughter) Good, I'm just glad to hear it's still going to happen. And you didn't cancel all those reservations?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, we did cancel for the year. We canceled for the year, but we offered the campers the option to go out to Smiths Point or Southaven. And because we canceled them, I wouldn't say the last minute, two months ago before the season, we were going to agree to waive the electric and water fees. But I'd say two-thirds of them opted not to do it. I think they're more concerned that we're going to -- we have the opportunity to allow them to camp there next year. And I'm not-- I'm not committing to that, but we are looking -- we are looking to see if we can make that happen and have CEQ happy as well.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Okay. Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

My suggestion as far as looking into addressing issues within the Parks and also trying to increase revenue, I guess there is violators and different park issues. They pay a certain fee. Have you looked into raising those fees? Again, I'm not quite sure what, you know, maybe illegal parking, illegal fires, illegal hunting, all of those activities. Have you looked into maybe upping the ante on those fees?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, our Park Police are very aggressive in their enforcement activities there. They're always issuing summonses for things that you had mentioned. But I believe the penalties imposed are -- they go before the Leg so I think that -- we count on you guys.

LEG. ANKER:

Again, my concern is that unfortunately we're laying off County employees. And I'm sure you're experiencing that.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We are.

LEG. ANKER:

And, again, I apologize for the entire Legislature for having to do that. But, again, my concern is to make sure that our Parks are safe. And it's got to be difficult when you have less people hired to do that.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It is. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you. Anyone else? Okay. Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Thank you.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Okay. Vito Minei.

MR. MINEI:

I'm uncomfortable displacing these guys. I need their help. Okay, thank you.

Good afternoon, Legislator Hahn and members of the Joint Committee. I'm Vito Minei. I'm Executive Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County. Today I'm joined by one of my colleagues, Chris Colahan, who's the Director of Peconic Dunes Camp out at Peconic Dunes County Park.

We just distributed a folder of materials. So I'm going to try to go through in a reasonable amount of time, but we have three projects. If you would please just open the folders. In the left-hand sleeve, there's our overall brochure that describes our three-part mission strengthening families and communities, preserving the environment and fostering economic development. Also, there is an overview of the three projects. And right behind that overview is the summary of the BRO recommendations for these three projects.

And if I can quickly just turn to the right-hand sleeve, the first project is CP 1796. And that's improvements to the Suffolk County Farm. We've had an ongoing Capital Program for a number of years. And that's been very helpful. And I know several of you have been to the County Farm so you know the needs out there. And we continue to work with DPW, and at times with the Parks Department, to make improvements at the County Farm at exit 67 of the Expressway, which should be a show piece for the County. And we continue to work there.

So, you'll see a discussion not only in this informational package, but also in BRO of carrying out those renovations to the hog house, roofs on the buildings. And we continue to work with DPW. I think you all know they've been great for a number of years coming to our aid there at the County Farm. We're trying to get the roads resurfaced. They were kind of in tough disrepair for Baby Animal Day. 1200 people arrived and a lot of young families trying to maneuver around major puddles. Little boys enjoyed it, but the mothers didn't. So, we're working with DPW to improve that.

But the centerpiece of this presentation on 1796 is our request to replace the offices. I purposely end all tours at the farm in the offices to leave you with that lasting thought. And, again, I'm going to borrow a quote from my friend, Legislator Horsley, who called it a dump. And I think you all would agree that they're pretty shabby. And if you look at some of the graphics towards the end of the package, that's sort of a montage of photos we took that show you that the walls are coming in, the ceilings are coming down, the floors are coming up. Other than that, it's a fun place to work and receive visitors. And, again, it's literally thousands of people come to the farm.

So, we've been asking for -- during my tenure, the last two years, to replace those 1960's vintage modular homes with something more appropriate for these times and for the County. You'll see a graphic at the end; one of the architects, Kevin Fallon of DPW, gave us a rendering. We're hoping to have a state of the art fully energy efficient as well as environmental preservation building closer to Yaphank Avenue. And over time the operating expenses of running those buildings will drop dramatically.

BRO agrees with us that the building should be replaced. They're not -- again in recognition of these dire economic times, they've asked us to forego the construction monies right now. And we're okay with that, as long as we keep intact the planning funds. We have, I believe, about 35,000. We've asked for about 85,000. And the rule of thumb, DPW usually give us, -- about 10% of construction costs should be devoted to planning. So if you think of 1.2 to 1.5 million, we're asking for something close to 125,000 of planning funds.

At Public Works this morning, there was a lot of discussion, could we do some quick repairs of the building and forego replacing the buildings? I would just be very concerned of the County, again, in these economic times in drawing our friends from DPW and their staff over to do these quickie repairs. The buildings really just need to be replaced.

So, I'm asking for the planning funds here, so we can quickly come back to you and give you a full evaluation of all alternatives that would include immediate repairs, that would include looking at replacement in kind on the site where those buildings are. And then, hopefully, to evaluate this more dramatic change that, I think, will truly be a showcase for Suffolk County and be welcoming to the residents. So, really we're asking for planning money to be enhanced.

LEG. ANKER:

I have a question.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Again, thank you, Vito, for your service to create these wonderful programs for our kids and also for adults to learn about agriculture and farming. I think it's created a substantial awareness on how Long Island is truly an agricultural area. And it also contributes to our economy with the tourism. People will travel out east and attend your programs. I know my family has. It's wonderful programs. When I was touring, I think you had showed me the house that you wanted to move into. Does the County own that house?

MR. MINEI:

That was the Schrader House. And we've located project SOAR there, Stewards of America's Resources. That's the Juvenile Data Point Center under a contract with Probation Department. We haven't -- I'd invite you back to see what a fabulous job. Again, the inmates under the direction of DPW did a lot of the work. But we're rounding up the juvenile delinquents from all over the school districts. And instead of trying to educate them in those really terrible trailers, we now have a nice facility thanks to a number of you people here in the Legislature. Legislator Browning led the request first. And I've thanked her a number of times. It's just a great facility. So, you should come out and see it.

LEG. ANKER:

I wasn't sure if you could use that building, because I don't think they were there when I toured a couple -- last year. Would you consider being able to move it -- so the County owns that building? Would you be able to move from the rundown trailer that you're in now where -- I guess your administration goes --

MR. MINEI:

Yeah, it's the reception area as well as a lot of the staff. There's actually two trailers there. One for administration of the Farm and then the adjoining trailer is some of the staff. But, again, it rains on the staff sometimes indoors.

LEG. ANKER:

Right. But as I said, could the staff -- could you find space over in the Shrader House?

MR. MINEI:

We're fully utilizing that house. Probation has one or two offices there. And we're using all of them. It was really set up for classrooms originally. And I believe at one time juvenile delinquents were actually housed there, but it's really fully utilized now for nine months of the year.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay, just an idea. I'm trying to figure out how we can at least relocate you to a better place, but unfortunately we don't have a lot of funding to move that forward.

MR. MINEI:

We understand, we understand.

LEG. ANKER:

But, again, thank you so much for the services that you -- have you checked into, you know, public/private partnership?

MR. MINEI:

We're starting to do that. I know that's a key for you and we really are trying to look at that. I have, you know, a relationship with a number of contractors and things like that. But, again, it's a little difficult. We're a tenant on County property. And getting some of those services sometimes gets us embroiled in some of the concerns that you might have about those relationships as a private entity I could enter more freely. So, yes, we are looking at that. And I thank you again for your concern.

LEG. ANKER:

You're welcome. If the County, whether the Executive or the Legislature, can write letters or can make contact or calls to help facilitate -- either donations or sponsorships, please don't hesitate to ask us because we're all very supportive of what you do there.

MR. MINEI:

Okay. Again, I appreciate it. Thank you.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

I have to admit I have not been there in several years. So, I'm just going to say that from the outside. I do have to come out.

MR. MINEI:

Well, we do conduct a number of tours during the summer for Legislators specifically. A number of people have come out and we appreciate your attention to our --

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

I'm going to try to take us out of our silos, no pun intended here.

MR. MINEI:

Well, I'd like you to come out with your daughter now. I forget how old she is.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Yeah. Five.

MR. MINEI:

She'd have a ball.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

She would. And I will. But I wanted to ask about this -- I preface that with me not having been there in a while, because you may already be doing all this. How much -- I'm thinking from an economic development perspective, I'm thinking from a tourism/promotion perspective, how much does the Suffolk County Farm act as a generator for our agritourism? You know, like I can almost see it being like a welcome house, you know, for those going further east to a lot of our agritourism and maybe, you know, being the central place with maps about all the different, you know, different vineyards and all the different agritourism opportunities. And I understand you do have an -- you know, a very educational focus on farming and practices and animals and the environment. But do you also serve as that kind of tourism promotion vehicle as well?

MR. MINEI:

Yes. I know a lot of you know Dale Moyer, who heads our Agriculture Program, he does a lot of work there. Also, I want to -- please, all mark your calendars for Friday, August 13th. I think it's the 13th -- or is it the 17th? August 17th, I think. That'll be the second annual Suffolk County Farm Day that we're going to have there Grown on Long Island. We had a great Farmers Market there last year. It's going to be bigger and better this year. I believe I had the date wrong. I think it's the 17th. It's the 17th. So, please mark your calendars. You're all welcome.

And that goes directly to the heart of your question. We're trying to link it so people sort of make that connection between the County Farm and agriculture in Suffolk County and Economic Development. And the timing is also good for us because the Governor's coming out with his second round of economic development projects. And I share two sub work groups: One for agriculture and one for marine industries. And we're going to go full board. We were lucky. We got two projects on the first round, one for the Bay scallops Project, which you'll see next week; and also for an agricultural enterprise facility out in Riverhead to help the farmers.

So, we're going to go even harder this time for stewardship, agritourism, marketing in Suffolk County Agriculture on the second time around. It's all in line with strategies. We got into the strategic plan for the Long Island Regional Development Council, Economic Development Council. So your point is well taken and we're going to try to follow up on that.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Good. And I just even mean -- because I think it's a really great location right off the LIE, right?

MR. MINEI:

Exit 67.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Yeah. And fairly convenient from the --

MR. MINEI:

Sunrise Highway?

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Sunrise Highway.

MR. MINEI:

It's 57 on Sunrise Highway. And we did not illegally divert traffic going out to the Hamptons last time to go to the Farm. (Laughter) Those people came willingly and they had a ball. It was very successful, excellent weather. And we had all our programs there, 4-H, Family Health and Wellness and Nutrition and the Ag people.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

But if you move forward on something like this, and I, you know, which year, I'm not sure, but I would love to see really written into the planning that kind of, like, tourist stop, you know, real kind of assistance for promoting tourism on the East End. And something to help visitors find what they need, whatever piece of agricultural tourism and wherever it is on the East End, it would just make sense that that be kind of like -- also serve as a Visitors, sort of, Center --

MR. MINEI:

Right.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

And a direction, you know. And I know it's coming out of your silo a little bit, but it sounds like you're already thinking about that, so,

MR. MINEI:

Yeah, it's already coming together slowly. You know, our goals at the Farm for the last few years have been rather modest with regard -- because of the condition of the facilities there. It's hard to tout this as really a warm and welcoming reception area when we really have these substandard buildings to bring people to, but still they come; the parents, the grandparents with the children. But we do want to link it to the agritourism. We're working very closely with the Long Island Farm Bureau and we're working with other people as well.

So, there's a lot that can be rolled up in that. The whole concept of stewardship and being good stewards of the land as well. So, yes, it's going to be a full education facility. So that building you're looking at, is not only the reception area, it will be an education area, it will be a display area as well as offices for the staff.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Like Legislator Hahn was suggesting, you know, connecting with the tourism, you know, you got Tanger and you've got -- it's the pathway to the -- for the people who go out east. Is there a sign, is there a billboard that is there that shows as people are traveling, to take that route south for -- it's ten minutes off Sunrise, right? Or not even. Five minutes off Sunrise.

MR. MINEI:

It's five minutes off Sunrise and about two minutes off the Expressway. Yes, there's a sign right out on the Service Road facing the eastbound lanes going -- we were actually thinking of also getting involved in the Adopt-A-Sign Program as well. But, yes, there is a -- there's a large thing, sort of on a wagon. And it was vandalized a year or so ago, but we've cleaned it up thanks to the help of DPW, and, again, the inmates. The inmates do a lot of work there. All that fencing that was put around there under the supervision of DPW and the Sheriff, they did a tremendous job.

So now we have the cattle in rotational open grazing, things I know Jay Schneiderman and others are very concerned about. So, it's coming along, the fences and the roofs on the buildings. Again, DPW as they can, they got material to fix the roads, they want to regrade the roads. But, yes, there's big sign there. We're getting newer signs from DPW made so there'll be more advertising. We do more advertising on the radio as well.

LEG. ANKER:

I just had an idea.

MR. MINEI:

Would you like a job at the Farm?

LEG. ANKER:

That is my job. My job is to make sure you get what you need.

MR. MINEI:

Very good.

LEG. ANKER:

And I'm very supportive. Can the sign -- is it a big billboard sign that you can see from the --

MR. MINEI:

Yes.

LEG. ANKER:

Is there one also on the Expressway?

MR. MINEI:

It's on the Service Road to the Expressway. If you were coming off -- if you're heading east, the Service Road for exit 67, it's sitting right along our fence line oriented so you could see it as you head east.

LEG. ANKER:

I just want to make sure it's visible.

MR. MINEI:

It's a large sign.

LEG. ANKER:

Do you have something called -- you know, I was talking to Lance about the Vanderbilt and how, you know, there's a corporate sponsorship for buildings and chairs and things. Do you have like Adopt-A-Goat, you know, Adopt-A-Chicken, Adopt -- you know, in Mt. Sinai at Heritage Park we have, you know, Adopt-A-Brick. You can get your name -- of course we don't want names on our livestock. But, you know, do you have something like that just to bring in resources?

MR. MINEI:

We have similar programs. I wish Vicky Flemming, Director of the Farm and 4-H was here, she's attending to some family matters today, but she can better speak to that issue. But we do have similar programs like that. And we certainly bring the animals to schools and things like that. So it's a -- we track where the families are coming from. And they literally come from all 18 Legislative Districts. It's a very popular facility. And my last three years in the County, I look back at it, and I pledged I would fix those roads, because that's all the young mothers struggling with umbrella strollers, trying to get around in there. And Baby Animal Day was a bit of a disappointment -- 1200 people showed up after a week of rain. And it was pretty rugged getting around those roads.

LEG. ANKER:

I apologize. I'm sure all of us are disappointed that we can't facilitate a change that's needed to get the roads where they need to be, but it's good to hear that 1200 people came out. That's great. It's great news.

MR. MINEI:

It wasn't a great day, but, again, I thank you. But we're trying to be in full recognition of the economic situation. So, we're only asking for the planning money so we can come back to you and

report thoroughly on all the alternatives, again, going from the quick fix of the existing buildings, which would be a travesty in my mind, to replacing in kind on the site, to really going bolder with some sort of a totally energy-efficient and environmental conservation building.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you. Were there any other questions on this project? Okay. Next.

MR. MINEI:

Okay, thank you. Going from one bold vision to another, Commissioner Dawson referred to the work we're going to try to do out at Peconic Dunes. That's the next package in the right-hand sleeve, CP 7050, improvements to Peconic Dunes County Park. We have, again, an ongoing Capital Program with some money remaining -- appropriated for that for ongoing repairs, but we have a bold vision for Peconic Dunes. My colleague here, Chris Colahan, struck a relationship with a Professor, John Nastasi, who's a visiting Professor at Harvard, his alma mata. He's a licensed architect in New York and many other states. He's internationally renown for his vision. He's done buildings for the Beijing Olympics and in the Middle East and throughout the United States. He just so happened to have a summerhouse right at the entrance to Peconic Dunes. So, it was convenient for Christ to meet him.

But if you go through the graphics towards the back end there, again, you'll see first the current conditions of the Dining Hall and the kitchen there. It's a 1930's vintage building. Then in 2001 the Parks Department did a thorough review of all the buildings and they said this building should be demolished and replaced.

So eleven years later we're still using it. I was concerned, as a licensed engineer. I asked Chris to secure the services of an independent engineering evaluation. And, again, the report was that it is, indeed, in bad shape. We can use it for a while, but it really is long overdue to be replaced. And as you move back through the graphics from that montage to the vision of Professor Nastasi, you'll see sort of another montage of a building that -- and, again, this is part of Chris's vision, that you go from a summer camp to a year-round facility so other agencies, other groups in Suffolk County could use this building year-round. And if you kind of get the theme here, is that little girl's running around the deck. In the summertime, it'll be open. And in the fall and winter, it would be closed in and be heated.

And if you move back a little further, these are newer images that Dr. Nastasi gave us. And you'll see it's solar and also has a green roof combination. And I know everyone knows the parlance about LEEDS, Leadership and Energy and Environmental Design, he considers that mediocre. He goes well beyond that.

So, our point here, as it would be with the farm building, would be to have one of a kind -- this would be the first in the nation, an overnight camp that was built to be totally energy sufficient on its own, off the grid, as well as providing for a fabulous, you know, experience for the children in a camp; and also serve as an adult facility year-round.

We -- again, in recognition of the economy, we've pledged to provide the \$150,000 necessary for the planning out of the fees that Chris and his staff generate. And then we want to pay-as-you-go with the construction. We estimate about a million and a half dollars. The math was provided to me by staff that says it's about \$120,000 a year. We would be willing to commit \$80,000 a year to the twenty-year life of that bond so the County would be responsible for 40,000.

One of the constraints right now is we're operating that camp for the last eight years -- Chris has

been there six -- under a waiver. We ask Parks -- and I had a brief conversation with the Commissioner of Parks just before, that an RFP be allowed so we can respond. So, we iron out these, you know, this arrangement so that we can have a long-term engagement at the Park and also go forward with these bold plans and the vision for this fantastic camp.

When we made the presentation to two Committees last fall, the directive we received was to set up a formal arrangement with Professor Nastasi and Stevens and now Harvard. So, we have to provide you with a resolution and hopefully you'll give us the directive to actually enter into a Memo Of Understanding with Parks, Public Works, Cooperative Extension and either Stevens Institute in New Jersey or Harvard University.

So, we have some homework to do as we move forward. But we're just bringing this to your attention. We hope to do the plan, but we need a long-term engagement with the County as a result of Requests For Proposals.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Okay. Do you have any questions on that one, Legislator Anker?

LEG. ANKER:

No.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

We'll be meeting soon with Parks and DPW to bring them up-to-date and talk about the resolutions and the RFP. The last project --

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

I wish I was a kid going to that Camp.

MR. MINEI:

What's that?

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

I wish I was a kid going to that camp.

MR. MINEI:

Well, Chris is a little bit more modest than I am. He's a visionary in his own right. Some of the progressive programs, he's been rated the number one camp by Dan's Paper several years in a row so we're very proud of the work here. We just want to make it a long-term formal arrangement with the County.

The last one --

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI,

-- Legislator Hahn, you'll see next week on your visit, is the Suffolk County Marine Environmental Learning Center.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Hopefully it won't be snowing when we go (laughter).

MR. MINEI:

No, it won't be snowing. This is a building that was constructed back, I believe, in 2006 originally for wildlife rescue. But over the years it's evolved. The building was indeed constructed, I think, to the cost of around a quarter of a million dollars. But the inside infrastructure was never completed. So, we're asking again -- right now we're asking for about 175,000 in construction. You will have a resolution before you for the \$25,000 for planning. I believe it's Introductory Resolution 1001 of 2012. We ask you to act positively on that on so we can move forward with the planning to do the infrastructure.

The BRO -- we diverge a little bit with our colleagues and friends at BRO in that they understand the value of the building. But we already have classrooms and research facilities in the main building, which, again, was part of the Suffolk County Community College 20 years ago. Cooperative Extension had it for about that long. But this building changes our direction. It would expand our capabilities. And I think as our research moves moves forward, you'll be hearing more and more about what the value is of this facility to certainly the East End, but also to Suffolk County in general.

The research helps all the Bay men around the County and all the fisherman as well, commercial and recreational. And the facility would really help us out to continue our endeavors to not only help with economic development, but, again, thousands of children come -- you have to see these kids when they first get off the bus, first complaining about "are we getting credit?" And five minutes later really getting into the touch tanks, really enjoying themselves.

And the subtle point I try to get through is learning about the value of natural resources in Suffolk County. Yes, we have to make it economical for the children to stay here, but we also want them to enjoy and understand the natural resources, why they would stay in Suffolk County. So, there's a lot of subtle messages we send with facilities like that.

Again, we're just asking you to vote for the planning money when the resolution comes and we'll work on convincing you for the construction money. I'm thinking the dollars will come down. We're learning more and more about what we actually need as part of the infrastructure.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

This facility is located in Southold?

MR. MINEI:

Yes, it's at Hog's Neck and Cedar beach. It's County property that we occupy; again, it used to be part of Suffolk County Community College. But they abandoned it because they couldn't attract students that far east in Suffolk County. But it's on a peninsula that juts out into the Peconic Bay System.

LEG. ANKER:

Is there a partner with other organizations, whether it's a college or environmental group or even Atlantis Aquarium?

MR. MINEI:

All the time. There are close working relationships with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, with Stony Brook, with Sea Grant, the programs there. We just put in a grant application with New York Sea Grant just this week. So, yes, a lot of organizations. And the thing I like is we're not only doing children's education, we're also educating adults. There's a lot of volunteers helping with repopulating shellfish out in the East End.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay, my question, too, since there's partnerships, is there -- can you receive money to help with some of the Capital Projects for this particular building with other partners?

MR. MINEI:

We're actually in dire need of supplemental funds for our operating funds. As you know, two of our programs are totally defunded. Our other programs -- the Marine Program was cut ten percent. Our ad program was cut 5 percent. We understand we are to expect another ten percent cut this year. The longer the County takes to implement that, the more devastating that's going to be because ten percent of the whole year, if implemented in July, is different than a ten percent cut in January. So, it would be devastating to us just off the bat, but as we move further into 2012, to incur another cut would really destroy some of our programs.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay.

MR. MINEI:

So operating is really our priority now rather than attracting donations for Capital at this point.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Talk a little bit more, maybe it's in this packet, but I hate the format of some of these pages. Talk a little bit more about a clear focus on what this building will do.

MR. MINEI:

Right.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Because in our group, it was kind of like, that's -- the purpose of the that building's changed, you know.

MR. MINEI:

Well, originally the impetus started in the early 2000's because of oil spills. Then you had the BP problem, you know, four or five years ago. And the concern was, there's a private firm called Miller Environmental. They do a lot of toxic chemical cleanups in Suffolk County. And they really were the -- initiating this project, saying, gee, if anything like this happened on Long Island, we have no facility to take wild fowl or birds, to clean them up and things like that. That was the original impetus for it.

As it's come -- over the years and since I've come on, I've been really trying to expand our marine environmental programs both in the research arm as well as the education arm. So, you'll see us suddenly change the language. And this unfortunately was probably confusing and I apologize, that it's more classrooms, offices, wildlife rescue. And unfortunately with no infrastructure, it's just become a large storeroom, so it has multi purposes.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Okay. Okay. Any questions? No.

MR. MINEI:

Okay, thank you very much.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Thank you.

MR. MINEI:

We look forward to your visit next week.

CO-CHAIR HAHN:

Okay. We have no other cards. Is there anyone else who would like to speak? Okay. So I'm going to make a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing. We're adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:43 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**