

LABOR, WORKFORCE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Labor, Workforce and Affordable Housing 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 September 13, 2006.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Kate M. Browning, Chairperson
Leg. Jack Eddington, Vice•Chairman
Leg. Vivian Vilorio•Fisher
Leg. Thomas F. Barraga
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Ian Barry, Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Lance Reinheimer, Assistant Director of Budget Review Office
Jill Moss, BRO
Richard Baker, Deputy Clerk
Jim Dahroug, County Executive's Office
Richard Koubek, Chair of Welfare to Work Commission
Catherine Liguori, Vice Chair of Welfare to Work, Tutor Time
George Gatta, Workforce Development Project, HVACR

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Alison Mahoney, Court Stenographer

Transcribed by:

Diana Kraus, Court Stenographer

(THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 2:45 PM)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Good afternoon everyone. We're about to begin Labor, Workforce & Affordable Housing. We'll start with the pledge led by Legislator Eddington.

SALUTATION

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And I will ask everyone to continue standing for a minute for a moment of

silence. This is our first Committee meeting after the fifth anniversary of 9 •11 so we'd like to honor the 9•11 victims and people who are continuing to die from the effects of 9•11.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Okay. We have presentations. Okay.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

We're going to go a little out of order today. And we have one introductory resolution. And that is **IR 2065, amending the Suffolk County classification and salary plan in connection with new position titles in the Department of Health Services, Pharmacist I, Pharmacist II, Director of Medical Services.** And do I have a motion? Okay. I guess I need the motion to take it out of order. Do I have a motion?

LEG. BARRAGA:

Yes, second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. The motion was Legislator Barraga, second by Legislator Eddington. All approved? Abstentions? Okay. Motion carries.

Introductory resolution 2065 amending the Suffolk County classification and salary plan in connection with new position titles in the Department of Health Services, Pharmacist I, Pharmacist II, Director of Medical Services. Do I have a motion?

LEG. BARRAGA:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Barraga makes the motion, second Legislator Eddington. All in favor? Any questions? Okay. No questions. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. Motion carries. **(Vote: 5•0)**

PUBLIC PORTION

Okay. We have two cards. We shall call Kevin Rooney from the Suffolk County Community College.

THE AUDIENCE:

Kevin had to leave for another meeting.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Then George, I guess, you're next. George Gatta, Suffolk County Community College.

MR. GATTA:

Thank you very much. I do have a copy of Kevin Rooney's statement that he had made at the Economic Development, Higher Ed and Energy Committee regarding his industry's support for the HVAC project that has been planned for six years at our western campus. And for the members who weren't in attendance, if you'd like a copy, I could supply it to the clerk.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. You have three minutes.

MR. GATTA:

And I don't want •• thank you. Obviously I'm not going to take up a lot of time with •• for the members that weren't here at the prior meeting, I know Chairwoman Eddington •• I'm sorry.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Chairwoman?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Browning.

MR. GATTA:

Browning. Yeah. I'm so accustomed to introducing Pat. The project that had been before the other committee back in June and the resolution that had been tabled was for an HVAC facility. Again, it's been in planning for six years, curriculum approved in '02, included in the County Capital Program in '02, included in the state capital program through SUNY in '03. Began program in '03. Last year the Legislature appropriated funds to design the facility. That design is proceeding. We're now at a point where our state funds are in jeopardy if the funds for the construction are not appropriated.

At both the meeting on June 7th and again today, I think, the Committee heard very strong industry support from a variety of different companies. Over the past two years the college has broadened its partnerships, not just with companies within the HVAC and R industries, heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration industries, but we've expanded greatly in our service to the manufacturing companies within the County and within the region. And you also heard from companies that are involved in manufacturing and from associations who represent hundreds of companies that are involved in manufacturing. We do plan to include a manufacturing laboratory in this new facility.

The purpose of being here today is really •• I think this project is of interest to you not just as Legislators, but this Committee which does focus on workforce and, therefore, workforce development issues; this project should be of interest. It is in direct response to the needs of industry. The Oil Heat Institute over a ten•year period through its members will contribute \$500,000 in support of student scholarships. They've already provided all of the equipment, both the installation and the cost of the equipment that's in the temporary laboratory that is situated at our western campus about two miles from here. And we will work with them in the new facility in terms of additional contributions from both the Oil Heat Institute, their member

companies and from national companies who want to donate equipment for the six different laboratories in this new building.

We had asked for the resolution to be re•introduced so it could be considered before the SUNY deadline. And that's the reason I'm here today. And I thank you for your time. And I'd be glad to respond to any questions should you have any.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Thank you. Yes. Legislator Viloría•Fisher has a question.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Thanks for being here, George. And I just wanted to put something on the record regarding what you just said. Just anecdotally my husband's Vice President of operations at St. Barnabus Hospital in the Bronx. And he has said, you know, when we've talked about this HVAC facility and the need for people trained in this area is tremendous. He finds it very difficult to find people who have the kind of training that he's looking for for the operation of a major facility. And HVAC is becoming more and more complex and we really need to pass this and have a training facility. I think it'll be good for our economic development here in Suffolk County.

MR. GATTA:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I have one quick question. As you know I come from that labor background. And I do •• I see the point of the union and what they're trying to get at; but, however, I do have a constituent who called me because her son wants to get into the program at the Community College. I mean, are they intending to even try and start a program out here in Suffolk County?

MR. GATTA:

No. They operate a training facility for their apprentices in Long Island City. And they've operated it for a number of years. But it's limited just to their apprentices; not to the general public. Our program is an educational program. It is open for anyone. And as you •• if you were here for the prior

presentations, a number of the business leaders that were here are 638 employers. They hire both 638 and 638 B, both. And the 638 B which are the service technicians don't have a hiring hall. So they hire anyone they can find with any skills to fill those jobs; and then they send them for training. And if it goes to 638 those individuals go to the 638 school in Long Island City. They do it during their non•peak times, but they commute from here virtually into Manhattan to take those courses. And that would continue. We're not looking to displace any of that.

We're just •• you know, our program is a much broader program. It provides •• if you were here and heard Dr. { Kanif} , it is a two•year associates degree with both technical and other general education requirements including communication skills, obviously English, social sciences, liberal arts courses to give the student a grounding in all those skills including some business skills. So this is an entry level degree so that someone can launch their career within this field. And hopefully go on for and achieve possibly a bachelor's degree in an area where they have infinity within that industry.

We heard from the reps at the past meeting that they are dying for qualified people. Even if they can't find qualified people, they'll take anyone and just to get them into a program where they can train so they can go out with the company to meet the tremendous demands; not just of the business community to service facilities like we're sitting in today, but we all as homeowners or renters all have heating and many of us have air conditioning systems within our individual homes. Those are the same technicians and the same field service people and companies that service our homes. So the more we can respond to that, the better we are as a community, the better we are as consumers.

The industry projects four to five hundred retirements within the next few years. And we're already in a position where they can't attract enough. Legislator Viloría•Fisher just attested to the fact that they can't find enough existing. And if we're facing the retirements like we are in nursing and so many other fields, we feel that our program is being very responsive to local needs across the board.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes. Hi. Just for your information, Legislator Viloría•Fisher, we did go through all of this and all of the speakers in the last meeting of EEE, but your comment was we need to get this passed. But just so you know, there's nothing right now to pass because it was withdrawn.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I know.

LEG. NOWICK:

We •• the Chair of EEE absolutely promises the college and the representatives that were here that we are going to try to get through this jam. What did he call it? A ••

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

A logjam.

LEG. NOWICK:

A logjam, yes. And see if we can move it along. So just so you know there isn't anything right now to approve. It was withdrawn.

MR. GATTA:

If I can just make one additional comment?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Sure.

MR. GATTA:

The reason that I'm here is, is that the funds are in jeopardy because SUNY has moved up their borrowing schedule this year. The SUNY Board of Trustees will meet on September 26th. And if we don't have an appropriating resolution for the construction component of this project, it will be delayed at least a year. And if we don't secure the County appropriating resolution sometime this year, we could lose •• we will definitely lose the

funding within the County program because the County funding •• the County funding evaporates; goes away. It's not carried over.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

So I'm confused then. I'm not in Economic Development. So are we talking about perhaps a CN on this on Tuesday?

MR. GATTA:

Yes. I've requested •• I've requested a CN from the County Executive's Office.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay.

MR. GATTA:

And, you know, I've sent many documents, background information to the members of the Higher Ed Committee. I'd be glad to send those same documents •• as a matter of fact I have a series of letters and communications between myself ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

And I have seen some of the correspondence in the past regarding this issue. And, you know, some of the controversy behind it, but I'm hoping that that can all be settled so that it could move forward because there is such a great need. And we don't want to lose state dollars. You're talking be a CN now.

MR. GATTA:

Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah. Or anything. But, George, just as a question, if I may through the Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Go ahead.

LEG. NOWICK:

Just as a question. You said if we don't have an appropriating resolution by September 26th, does that mean laid on the table appropriating resolution or ••

MR. GATTA:

No, no. That means •• that means approved. Approved appropriating resolution.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay. Thank you.

MR. GATTA:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. Hopefully we'll have some good news next week.

MR. GATTA:

Thank you very much, Legislator Browning.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. We do have a presentation. We have Richard Koubek from the Welfare to Work Commission. He's Chair of that Commission. And he's going to do a brief presentation.

MR. KOUBEK:

And the Vice Chair.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Oh, my apologies. Okay. I apologize that we held you up longer than expected. Also we have •• welcome Cathy Liguori, who is from Tutor Time? And you're a Vice Chair; right?

MS. LIGUORI:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

MR. KOUBEK:

Good afternoon. My name is Richard Koubek. I'm the Chair of the Welfare to Work Commission of the Suffolk County Legislature. We were created by a resolution of the Legislature in the Year 2003. Our charge is to provide recommendations to the Legislature regarding policies •• existing policies and new policies in the area of welfare reform. The Commission has been meeting monthly since 2003. And our •• we view our mission as beyond simply the folks on welfare. We're really raising questions about what happens to people as they transition off welfare to work. So we've taken as our mission the condition of the working poor on Long Island especially those who have transitioned off of welfare and are earning what is typically \$10 an hour. And we're raising questions, I suppose, that are running counter to the current celebrations of the tenth anniversary of welfare reform and is being celebrated as a victory because 60% of the cases have been closed nationwide and here on Long Island. And our question is what is happening to those folks?

So you have received a packet with some of the things we've been doing in the last three years. You can see that we've looked at areas of concern to folks on welfare and leaving welfare and off welfare such as child care and education and training. And today we're here to talk to you about something we're going to do in the area of housing.

Specifically this year we're looking at some of the implications of the Suffolk County Living Wage Law on the child care industry. We're planning two public hearings on housing which we'll be addressing in a few moments. We have just proposed an education and training pilot program that we finished up after a year of study. And we have gone forward with the Presiding Officer and the Chair of Health and Human Services. It's a \$29,000 five hundred pilot project that we're hoping the County will fund. And it kind of illustrates our work.

Essentially what we would like to do is take the folks on welfare who have

been assigned to vocational training programs but lack the inner confidence, the skills, the basics to succeed in those programs and provide them with a mentor or a guidance counselor to get them into the program, give them the skills to succeed in the program and complete the program. The current drop out rate is about 43%. It's very high. And we're hoping to reduce that. So we brought in consultants. We worked on this for a year. We completed this proposal. And it is going to be coming before the Legislature fairly soon.

I'm here today to talk about something very, very relevant to your Committee and that's housing. And I know you're familiar with the housing crisis on Long Island. But let me frame it perhaps in a way that's pertinent to our committee •• our Commission. We had a two hour meeting with the Commissioner of Social Services Janet DeMarzo back in May. And she was running through some of the issues that she's facing as a Commissioner. And as she concluded her presentation to us, she said the lack of affordable housing is one of the most burdensome issues facing our folks. And it makes sense because what we're hearing now as the term workforce or next generation housing catches on and takes off on Long Island is that we're talking about housing for folks earning between 80 and 120% of the area median. So you're talking about families earning between 71,000 and roughly \$110,000 a year. And those folks need assistance. And the federal government allows for different kinds of programs to assist them.

The question our commission is raising is what happens to folks earning less than \$71,000 a year? What happens to the people who have left welfare for work at \$10 an hour who are earning \$19,000 a year? Where do they live and who's going to provide the housing? So after Commissioner DeMarzo made her presentation, we formed a committee to look at the possibility of holding a housing hearing. Our Legislative charge calls us to sponsor occasional hearings from time to time. And we thought this would be something we ought to take on to look at the issues of essentially what's happening to people who leave welfare, go out earn \$10 an hour, \$20 an hour even or \$30 an hour and still can't get housing.

So we will be sponsoring on November 2nd here in Hauppauge in this room, and again on November 6th in the Riverhead Legislative chamber, a public

hearing, the title of which is Affordable for Home Creating Housing for Low and Moderate Income People in Suffolk County. And Legislator Browning asks that I spend a few minutes telling you what we're planning to do because it is one of the major issues that your committee faces. Although you're also facing the labor issue of the folks leaving welfare to work. I know that's another one of your charges.

Essentially we know there's been a lot of public discussion about affordable housing. We also know that the public discussion is going something like this. We need affordable housing. 70% of the people polled in Nassau and Suffolk County now say, yes, we need affordable housing. When the question is raised do you want it in your neighborhood, there's a very different response. So the Commission feels that we need to keep the public conversation going because the crisis for these folks is very, very serious. And particularly those who are low income. It's almost a hopeless situation.

So as we go forward with our hearing, just to give you a sense of who we'll be looking at, let's just take a typical person leaving welfare at \$10 an hour. That person is earning \$19,200 a year as I said earlier. With a bedroom •• typically two bedroom apartment running rental at \$1200 a month, that person would have to spend about 70% of their monthly income just on the rental of the housing. That's impossible. Absolutely impossible.

If they were earning 200% of median, that is if they were earning roughly \$20,000 a year, they would still be spending about 40% of their monthly income on rent. And this is why my day job, so to speak, I'm a volunteer as the Commission Chair •• my day job is to work for the Catholic Charities. What we are seeing at Catholic Charities is more and more requests at parishes for food. We just did a Catholic Charity study and found it is the most requested service every month at parish outreach centers. Food. 11,000 requests are serviced every month in just 64 parishes for food. The Long Island Cares' study this year found 259,000 Long Islanders who are going hungry everyday.

And, again, it's because people have to choose between rent and food. They pay their rent to avoid eviction. They go to parish outreach or a food pantry to be fed. This can't go on. And even when you go higher on the scale of

working class people, when you get up to the 50 and \$60,000 range, these folks can't afford to buy a home. They may be able to rent if they can find a rental because our rental numbers are so low. We only have about 18% of our stock that's rental. We're an ownership community as you know. So even if they could find a rental, they're better off if you're earning 60,000 •• they'll never be able to afford a home.

So what we would like to do with our hearing is to continue the public conversation to take a look at the extent of the shortages which I'm sure you're aware of; the public may not be particularly in terms of rentals. We would like to look at solutions. And we're going to particularly focus on two studies that came out within the last several years. One is the Suffolk County Joint Task Force on Homelessness Action Plans, a really fine study. It was released in 2002 •• in December of 2002. Some very fine recommendations. We're going to use that to frame some of the questions we'll be asking in terms of which of these recommendations have implemented.

The other study we would like to use to frame our hearing is the Suffolk County Workforce Housing Commission Accomplishments and Recommendations Report; some excellent recommendations in there.

So, again, we're moving forward with public discourse in two sites. We're going to be inviting agencies that deal with the homeless, agencies that deal with people who are struggling with the housing shortage and people themselves who are struggling to come forward and give testimony at the hearing. We hope to put forward specific recommendations including looking at those recommendations that were made and not implemented. And we're hoping to report to the Legislature either in a joint session of this Committee and Health and Human Services or perhaps the full Legislature in January what our recommendations would be.

We will lead off on November 2nd with some very fine experts. We've already lined them up to testify. Pearl {Camer} from the Long Island Association has done wonderful research in the area of the housing shortage. We also secured yesterday Dr. David {Mutchnick} who did the AF of LCIO, brilliant study on the shortage of affordable housing for workers on

Long Island. And we'll be having some other folks come forward, too. Commissioners come forward, elected officials come forward. And again the people who need the housing or the agencies who are serving the people who need the housing so we can sort of continue this public discourse so people recognize the terrible crisis, particularly for low and moderate income people. So that's who we are and be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Legislator Viloría•Fisher has a question.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Hello.

MR. KOUBEK:

Hello.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

I have actually three questions. And I'm asking for short answers because it's late in the day.

MR. KOUBEK:

You got it.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

In your questions, in your queries to the public regarding affordable housing and the placement, when you ask "do you want it in your neighborhood," do you ever follow that up with "giving first preference to people from your neighborhood"? Because we have found that people are more apt to accept affordable housing in their school district, let's say, if you say you give first preference to people from the school district or from the area. I was just wondering has that ever been part of the colloquy?

MR. KOUBEK:

Yeah, you have to be careful, Legislator Fisher, with that because if the housing is federally funded, you're not allowed to do that. So it depends on the funding stream. But, yes, wherever possible we do that.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

But we're talking about a general questionnaire. And I'm not saying about writing it into a contract, but I think that it helps to develop the public's sense that it is our problem, not their problem. That it's our own kids who have no place to go.

And with regards to the people coming to the public hearing, as you were speaking I was thinking of agencies who came before the Affordable Housing Commission such as the CDC who provide products for solutions for homeownership. And so •• because you know you're talking about people who analyze the problem and have given us the indices for the problems and people who are victims of the problems, but maybe it would be really good to have people who have answers. And I know that the CDC would provide wonderful products for us to look at in affordable housing to help put packages together for young people who were looking to buy homes. In fact one of the members of our commission, a young man went to the CDC and he did buy a home.

MR. KOUBEK:

We formed a committee and brought in consultants to help us plan the hearing. And among them is that Long Island Housing Partnership CDC, {LICAR}. So, yeah, they're on board.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. So you have agencies that are providing answers.

MR. KOUBEK:

Yep.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Thank you.

MR. KOUBEK:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you for that presentation. And yes, you're right, you know, we do know the shortage of workforce housing or next generation housing, affordable housing, whatever the buzz words are. And we understand and I understand that there's really not a lot out there. But my question is, as I look around, and I could only relate to my own town because I see a lot of new buildings going up and a lot of new condos; and then the sign says 55 or older. Well, you know that's not going to be affordable housing. And then you see the McMansions. Well, you know they're not renting out the bottom floor of their apartment. Is the intent here for more rentals or to have people purchase maybe first homes? What would you say that the intent •• what do we look towards in this •• on these committees and Task force? Task forces?

MR. KOUBEK:

Both. I would say for the population that is the focus of our Commission, it's rentals. And I was really pleased at the Suffolk Community Council breakfast last Thursday when County Executive Levy gave an overview of what he's been doing in the area of human services, he ended with a •• kind of arousing statement about the need for more rental housing. So when you're looking at people earning 20, 30 \$40,000 a year, its got to be rentals. And we really have a shortage. Above that affordable ownership.

LEG. NOWICK:

I would agree with that. But how do you get into an established • you go into an established town. And, again, I could only think of the town I live in because I'm not familiar with the other towns. So you go into an established town. Everybody owns their home. You're not allowed to rent out portions of your home because most of the time it goes against code. So you would have to depend on somebody leaving the area, not selling their home and choosing to rent. Is that •• or are you thinking more in terms of building new units and renting new units? Because I don't see a lot of rental units. Nobody seems to want to build rental units.

MR. KOUBEK:

No. Part of the problem is the prejudice against renters. You know, there's

a sense that renters are transients and they don't fit the Long Island model.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes, yes. Right.

MR. KOUBEK:

One of the things we hope to do, Legislator Nowick, is to have experts come forward to talk about how you get rental units a) to look acceptable to a community. And there are ways of doing this.

LEG. NOWICK:

Of course.

MR. KOUBEK:

And b) what are the politics of getting them into communities? One of the answers •• there are two that I know are going to come up because I know some of the folks who are going to testify. One of them is legalizing accessory apartments. Legalizing them to get rid of that entire area of the illegal apartments that are ••

LEG. NOWICK:

But wouldn't that be a town?

MR. KOUBEK:

Oh, yeah. Each town supervisor will be invited to testify.

LEG. NOWICK:

But now you say something very interesting also about rental units. Maybe sometimes not conforming with with the other beautiful condos that are going up •• and you probably have a point there also. Because I keep trying to think how can you get more rentals out there? Certainly people cannot buy their own homes. Maybe they can afford to buy their own homes. Maybe they can •• I always say I can give my daughter my house, but you're not going to be able to pay those taxes or that LIPA bill or that fuel bill. So affordable •• affordable has got to be rental I'm thinking.

MR. KOUBEK:

It does. It does.

LEG. NOWICK:

And how do you get people to build more rental units?

MR. KOUBEK:

There are ways to do it if towns and counties work together to see this as a priority. And there are counties like Columbia, Maryland that have done it. And the way is to do density so you have complexes; rental complexes. And then you mix incomes so that you have units for •• that are market rate mixed in and looking exactly like the units that are for the lower income people.

LEG. NOWICK:

But all rentals? You mix ••

MR. KOUBEK:

Well, the better way is to do a mix of rentals and ownership.

LEG. NOWICK:

If you can.

MR. KOUBEK:

If you can. That takes political will at the town level.

LEG. NOWICK:

And it also •• a lot of people are hesitant. That always takes a business man who's going to say do I take a chance, does anybody want to buy a home in the same complex as maybe a transient you would call them. They would get nervous about that. So it's very difficult.

MR. KOUBEK:

Yeah. By the way, I didn't call them transients. They're perceived as being transients.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yes, you're exactly right. People do perceive them as transients.

MR. KOUBEK:

Yeah. Most people who own a home were once renters. And it's interesting when I've done educational programs ••

LEG. NOWICK:

We probably all were at one time.

MR. KOUBEK:

Yeah. Most have been and would not want to be called transients, but they're perceived that way. Yeah, I hope when we have our hearings either here in Riverhead that some of the builders will come forward.

LEG. NOWICK:

Yeah, right.

MR. KOUBEK:

They will be invited because it's happening.

LEG. NOWICK:

Well, thank you for the good work.

MR. KOUBEK:

Yeah. So that's what we're going to hope to do and return to you in January with specific recommendations.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Getting to the affordable housing because I know in my district we have had a couple of section eight home buying. And I know we have talked about my district. And there's a saturation of some problems. However, you know, we have •• Habitat for Humanity has been building. And there's also a plan to do section eight homeownership rather than rental. And I think for

anybody, the bottom line is everybody wants •• you know, you're going to have to rent at some point; but the best thing for everybody and for a community is homeownership. Are you familiar with the section eight homeownership?

LEG. NOWICK:

We'll I've heard, of course, the section eight homeownership. But one of the questions is that's subsidized of course.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Uh•huh.

LEG. NOWICK:

Are there •• and this might be foolish to ask but are there any property taxes on an ownership like that?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

There is, isn't there?

LEG. NOWICK:

Is it regular ••

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

They pay the property taxes; correct?

MR. KOUBEK:

Oh, sure.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

There's property taxes.

LEG. NOWICK:

There's property taxes. So they pay all of the other expenses. There's the problem again, property taxes.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

It depends on where you go.

LEG. NOWICK:

Well, that's exactly right. I know what our property taxes are.

MR. KOUBEK:

If I can comment, Legislator Browning, on the concentration of rental units in certain communities. In towns •• at least in my township, which is Huntington that has a legalized accessory apartment statute, we actually •• or the town did an analysis of where the legalized accessory apartments landed. And this was recently presented to the Town of North Hempstead which is considering a similar statute. And I understand they were quite amazed to see that when you legalize the accessory apartments, they're scattered all over the town. They're in Dix Hills where I live, they're in East Northport, they're in Northport Village. So by legalizing, you tend to satisfy the needs of lots of people. There are senior citizens who need the rental income, who are delighted to be able to build the apartment. But what's astounding is you do see the spread all over the town. It's not just in Huntington Station. It's not just in one community.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Do you have a question on that?

LEG. NOWICK:

No. But what you were saying is, and it make sense in a way also, if they were legal, then, it wouldn't be a matter of the town looking for illegal apartments. They're are a lot of legal apartments. And wouldn't they be assessed on that value?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

So then the town in essence ••

MR. KOUBEK:

Makes money.

LEG. NOWICK:

Your school taxes make •• do a little bit better because they're not illegal and they're not hidden.

MR. KOUBEK:

They do a lot better.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Isn't that the reason why they have illegal apartments; is because then they're assessed and the property taxes are going to go up.

LEG. NOWICK:

That's one of the reasons.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Is there some kind of a plan to maybe work with the times to kind of do an amnesty or that they're not going to be heavily burdened with higher property taxes because of that apartment?

MR. KOUBEK:

I believe there's ••

LEG. NOWICK:

I think they're illegal because the town doesn't allow. A lot of the situations the town just doesn't allow. In my town they just don't allow unless it's a mother/daughter.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

But property tax ••

LEG. NOWICK:

I don't know if that's why the town doesn't ••

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

But what the Chair is saying even if you have it in the statute some of them

will be illegal. People will not report them because ••

LEG. NOWICK:

They will always be illegal.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

•• if you're 70 years old and you're trying to pay your taxes on a fixed income, you don't want your taxes to go up because you have a rental; so people will just not report them. Madam Chair, am I representing your comments correctly?

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, yeah.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

But so I think that that's part of the package to see how people can have kind of amnesty and not crush them. If they're over a certain age, you know.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And also if they're dealing with their own kids; that they want •• the kids are still living at home but they want to make an apartment for them that they can work something out for them. Legislator Eddington has a question.

LEG. EDDINGTON:

Yeah, I'd be very interested to see if they could happen in the Patchogue •Medford area. Because I know exactly where I live the principal told me a number of years ago that there were 520 students in this elementary building. And within ten years there were 720. And he said all those kids come from illegal apartments. He said I've been in this building for 30 years. I know they're single family homes. And he said now they're multiple. And I have sometimes three families. There's a garage and a basement. And this was, if you can remember, this was right before the tax revolt. He predicted that. He said you wait and see. I have to hire five more teachers. Taxes are going to have to go up, but the same people are paying it. There's going to be a revolt. And I went (indicating). So any help like that could definitely help the school districts, I'm sure. So I'd

support that.

MR. KOUBEK:

Will, indeed.

MS. LIGUORI:

To bring the ideas together.

MR. KOUBEK:

The pattern, though, in Huntington is that the legalized accessory apartments •• I think they did a study •• I'm working from memory now •• 1400 units produced maybe 200 kids. Accessory apartments don't tend to generate lots of children because they're usually one bedroom. And it's usually either a young married couple or it's an empty nester couple. So I don't know what happened in the case of this principal, but the research I've seen both in my own town of Huntington and nationwide is that those apartments don't really generate lots of kids. But these are the kinds of things that we hope will come out of our report that will come back to you in January. These are the kinds of issues we hope to tackle. We're very, very concerned and interested in getting the town supervisors to come in; the 13 supervisors as part of our process.

LEG. NOWICK:

Mine will be I'm sure.

MR. KOUBEK:

Yours will be there. Look forward to that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

I have a child care question. It's saying there was a training provided by the Child Care Council. And about half of the 25 centers are currently not pay Living Wage. Aren't they supposed to be paying Living Wage if they're receiving any kind of funding?

MR. KOUBEK:

I'm sorry. I missed the first part of what you said.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

The Child Care Council is probably your question, right, Cathy? It's saying there was a training •• oh, should be provided by the Child Care Council. Sorry.

MR. KOUBEK:

Oh they were •• yeah.

MS. LIGUORI:

And the training was provided.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

It's saying about half of them are not paying Living Wage; half of the 25 child care centers. Am I correct? There was a training held in November and was attended by about half of the 25 child care centers.

MS. LIGUORI:

But they were not contracted with the County.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So, they're all private?

MS. LIGUORI:

Right. Informal providers.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And they're not receiving any kind of funding so that's why they don't have to pay the Living Wage?

MR. KOUBEK:

Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Okay.

MR. KOUBEK:

That training was held.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Well, I thank you for taking your time to come and talk with us.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Madam Chair, can I just mention something because it is five years since 9/11 and some of the subsequent actions that have happened. Last year I attended a provider dinner with the Child Care Council. And Cathy Liguori's Center, Tutor Time, I believe, did a lot of work for the children of military people who were deployed?

MS. LIGUORI:

Yes, {DENECEA} Organization.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Can you just quickly say what you did because I think that it was incredible what your center did.

MS. LIGUORI:

Well •• I don't know if this is on. Okay. We were engaged with a family that was a military family. And part of being a {NYSEA} accredited center, which is a self•study rigorous voluntary program for the National Association for the Education of Young Children, we became accredited. And the Department of Defense has a fund put together that helps assist the military and subsidize their tuition for child care. And being that we were one of the only centers within the County that offered it, we were able to bring that opportunity to many of the military families serving in our area. So they received subsidy for that and found child care solutions.

There are not many child care centers that are {NYSEA} accredited in Suffolk County. And I believe that that will be part of our longer term vision for the Welfare to Work Commission; is to bring more quality positive solutions for child care to put Suffolk where we need to be. And child care will also be part of the affordable housing component because while people are both going to work to afford their homes, child care rates are very, very excessive and make it very difficult. The child care as an economy also is •• it's an expensive proposition when there are so many mandates and

regulations and things to adhere to. So that I think will be part of this hearing as well so.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you. I'd like a list of that because I actually have quite a few service members in my district from the 106th and also from McArthur. So I know that maybe that list could come in handy for me.

MS. LIGUORI:

Sure. And a funny part of it •• well, not funny part, but we serve children of many of the US Coast Guard families. And they are not part of this funding stream simply because they are not Department of Defense. They Department of Homeland Security. And managing our coasts are just as vital as managing our borders and things.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. Thank you.

MS. LIGUORI:

So they're not entitled.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Oh, wow. That doesn't seem fair especially with Homeland Security. Wow.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, thank you for coming today and we appreciate it and we'll be in touch.

MR. KOUBEK:

Thank you for the opportunity. We look forward to reporting back to you. Thanks.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. And we have no more work. Motion to adjourn.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

We done. We're out of here.

**(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 3:27 PM)
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**