

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 October 1, 2007.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Presiding Officer William J. Lindsay
Leg. Kate M. Browning, Chairperson
Leg. Ricardo Montano, Vice-Chairman
Leg. John M. Kennedy, Jr. (Not present)
Leg. Daniel Losquadro

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Alicia Howard, Legislative Aide
Lance Reinheimer, Assistant Director of Budget Review Office
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Kevin Duffy, Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn, Assistant Deputy County Executive
Jimmy Dahroug, County Executive's Office
Jill Rosen-Nikoloff, Director of Affordable Housing
Linda Bay, Aide to Minority Leader
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
Debra Alloncius, Legislative Rep for AME
Lori Murphy, Aide to Leg. Losquadro
All other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Kraus, Court Stenographer

(THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 11:40 AM)

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Good morning. We will begin the Labor, Workforce and Affordable Housing meeting. Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Montano.

SALUTATION

We have no cards. We can move right along. Okay, we have no cards. One card?

LEG. MONTANO:

No.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

No, there's no cards. Okay, we have no cards. We have no presentations today. And we shall move ahead with the agenda, I guess. Jill? We have the Director of Workforce and Affordable Housing. Do you have anything you need to say on anything before we start?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

No. These are all -- on here is 72-H transfers for affordable housing that were approved by my office.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Use the mike.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

There were two resolutions, though --

MR. NOLAN:

Please sit down, Jill.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah, you might as well sit.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Yeah. As I said these are all 72-H's transfers which have been approved by our office. I just noted that the IR 1896 and 1897, I think, were approved at the prior session according to my records so I'm not sure that they require another vote. You might want to check into that.

MR. NOLAN:

Are you talking about -- I'll check.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I don't recall any CN's on those.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

I have IR 1852. Resolution 929, that this was approved by this Committee on 9-20-07.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

1552?

MR. ZWIRN:

These are 1896, 1897.

P.O. LINDSAY:

We don't have 52.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

We don't have 52.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

It seems to me that they were introduced under a prior IR. That's what I'm seeing here from my records. You could always re-vote on it but -- it could have just been, you know, administratively they're being refiled. But I do believe that they were previously past.

MR. ZWIRN:

We'll double check. But if that's true, then it's our error because they're County Exec bills so we'll double check.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. But if they're similar to what we currently have -- I mean which one does it match up to? Because there's no 1852 here.

MR. NOLAN:

Right. What's the other one, Jill?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

1897.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

It's the same as --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay. For the purposes of proceeding, though, should we approve them or do you want to table these until you research?

MR. NOLAN:

I think what we should probably do is approve them. And if there is a duplicate you withdraw them before the General Meeting.

P.O. LINDSAY:

That makes since.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

We can do that. Sounds good to me. Okay, Legislator Montano has a question.

LEG. MONTANO:

Jill, just with respect to the 72-H's there are two on the agenda that I believe one is in my district. What is the process for having this thing -- you know, having these approved? Because I'm not aware or at least I wasn't aware before the resolution was introduced about this property. What's the process and what do you look at? Do you get notified by the town? How does it work?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

A couple of ways.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Speak close to the microphone, please.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Yeah, it's a couple of ways. Sometimes the town will do their own research and come to me and say can you find out if this property is available from the County. And then I make my inquiries with the Department of Real Estate. Or Real Estate will simply offer properties to me that are in their inventory and that they want to move out. And they offer them to me first choice for affordable housing.

What I then do is I do some due diligence on them. I take a look at them. I see if they're buildable, what the size is, what the acreage is around it, whether they're improved, whether they're unimproved. And what the town's general requirements are. For example, Islip Town, they almost never want to see anything that's under 7500 square feet unless in it's a particular area with smaller lots and they think they can get a variance.

But at some point when I think it meets all the criteria, I will go to the townships and say we have this property available, are you interested? Then they must notify me within a certain period of time. I then tell Real Estate to hold it pending receipt of resolutions from the townships. Once we get the resolution from the townships, we go forward with the legislative process.

Chris Kent will prepare the resolutions which go before you. And once you approve them, we then prepare the deeds. They then have three years to build on them. I may give them two extensions of two years each.

LEG. MONTANO:

So that would be seven years.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

If I do approve them.

LEG. MONTANO:

Right. Well, would it be onerous at some point in the process to notify like if -- there are properties in my district that are up for -- let me ask another question before I ask that. Is it only for housing? I mean could these properties be used for, let's say, a not-for-profit corporation to build a center on or is this law simply for housing purposes?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

72-H has two components. One is municipal. One is for affordable housing. My office deals strictly with affordable housing. There have been some transfers for municipal purposes meaning parks, parking lots, things that the town might need.

LEG. MONTANO:

So municipal would mean governmental?

MS. ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Yes.

LEG. MONTANO:

As opposed to not-for-profit?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Although I will say that the difference between the two is when we transfer properties for affordable housing, because of the purpose of it, the taxes are waived. I do not believe that that's the case when it's transferred generally for municipal purposes. The town has to pay what the County has invested.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

That's the primary difference.

LEG. MONTANO:

All right. We'll talk another time. I really would like to just get an idea of what process or what role we as a Legislature can have in terms of looking at these properties, you know, just so that we're notified that they're on -- you know, they're available and what's going to happen with them; whether it comes from the town or whether it comes from the County, you know, that's really my concern. Thank you.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

I can certainly jointly notify you and the town.

LEG. MONTANO:

Would you have a problem doing that?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Absolutely. And you know we do that on the projects, the developments we're working on. But I can certainly do that on these as well.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. Thanks. I appreciate that.

MR. ZWIRN:

We do that with open space acquisitions. We could certainly do it for this as well. It's a good idea.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

And I will say there are quite a few properties in the north Bellport area and in the Mastic Shirley area, which I wanted to ask you about, there was a number of properties. We took a right along; went and looked at some those homes. Do you have any -- is there any progress on any of those at this time?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

No, but as you know, we've presented your request and that of the town to analyze and possibly pull from the auction list some of those properties that correspond. And that's under consideration.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

And I will absolutely keep you advised about that.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. What about the other ones that we looked at, that are not necessarily county-owned? You don't have anything yet on those?

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

It's hard to -- I've identified some of the owners. They're not county-owned the ones I have identified. Now I have to sort of find those people and locate them and say a) are you interested in selling them? And then go through the process and see what the price is and that type of thing. So that's a little more difficult.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Yeah.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Because I have to track down the owners.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Well, we'll keep working on it.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

We will.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

But thank you. Thank you for all your help.

DIRECTOR ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Ben, do you have any comments?

MR. ZWIRN:

I do but they're not relevant to anything in particular so -- those damn Mets. That's all I can --

MS. ROSEN-NIKOLOFF:

Oh, yeah.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Sorry. Should have been more specific.

MR. ZWIRN:

They make me forget about Michigan they're so bad.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So we'll move ahead with the agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

IR 1791, amending the Suffolk County classification and salary plan in Connection with the new position title in the Department of Environment and Energy. (County Executive Levy) I believe the County Executive, we're going to table?

MR. ZWIRN:

We're going to ask this be tabled again.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. MONTANO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWN:

Second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's table. **(Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)**

1818, amending the Suffolk County classification and salary plan in connection with the new position title in the County Clerk's Office, Special Services Coordinator. (County Executive Levy) Again motion to table. Second?

LEG. MONTANO:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Second Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion's tabled. **(Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)**

1845, to expand the Suffolk County Apprenticeship Training Program. (Kennedy) I guess -- any comments? Motion to table.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Counsel, if could you just give a brief explanation of what this would change and maybe if the executive branch has taken a look at it, if they have any thoughts on it.

MR. NOLAN:

Well, the biggest change is, it's in terms of the apprenticeship training requirements on county contracts; reduces the amount -- presently it's \$250,000 and up. It's required -- this will reduce it that amount at \$20,000. In terms of the definition of construction contract that's covered, it also changes the definition somewhat to include design, maintenance, repair, furnishing and equipment of building facilities or physical structures.

MR. ZWIRN:

As for the County Executive Office, we're concerned about lowering the threshold to this level. Could have a negative impact on awarding contracts. And we're not sure exactly what full impact will be. So we're still trying to take a look at it. We've asked the sponsor to go along with a tabling. And I think he's been cooperative trying to find out exactly where this will take us from a practical point of view. I know that when we did the County Center out in Riverhead, we had some difficulty getting contractors -- bidders to respond. And partially it was because of the requirements that we have in the law. So if we reduce it, it just could make it more difficult; even though it's well intentioned, I'm sure, but it's just -- the impact would be quite negative on the County.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Okay. So with that, we do have a motion to table by Legislator Montano. I'll second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It's tabled. **(Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

IR 1894, authorizing the sale of County-owned real property pursuant to Section 72-H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Islip for affordable housing purposes. (County Executive Levy)

LEG. MONTANO:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON BROWNING:

Motion to approve Legislator Montano. I'll second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **(Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)**

1895, authorizing the sale of County-owned real property pursuant to Section 72-H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Islip for affordable housing purposes. (County Executive Levy) Same motion, same second, same vote. Thank you. (Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)

1896, authorizing the sale of County-owned real property pursuant to Section 72-H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Babylon for affordable housing purposes. (County Executive Levy) Same motion, same second, same vote. (Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)

1897, authorizing the sale of County-owned real property pursuant to Section 72-H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Babylon for affordable housing purposes. (County Executive Levy) Same motion, same second, same vote. (Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)

1898, authorizing the sale of County-owned real property pursuant to Section 72-H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Babylon for affordable housing purposes. (County Executive Levy) Same motion, same second, same vote. (Vote: 3-0-0-2. Legislators Lindsay and Kennedy not present)

Okay. We have no memorializing resolutions. And I guess I'll take a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? We're done.

**(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 11:53 AM)
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**