

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Parks and 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 November 28, 2007.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Chairperson
Leg. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Vice-Chairperson
Leg. Kate M. Browning
Leg. Lou D'Amaro
Leg. Edward P. Romaine

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

William J. Lindsay, Presiding Officer of the Legislature
George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Lance Reinheimer, Assistant Director of Budget Review Office
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Steve Gittelman, Vanderbilt Museum
Carol Ghiorso Hart, Vanderbilt Museum
Laurie Farber, Starflower Experiences
Justin Littell, Aide for Leg. D'Amaro
Brendan Chamberlain, County Executive Aide
Jimmy Dahrough, County Executive Aide
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Nowick
Debra Alloncius, AME Legislative Director
Kara Hahn, Director of Communications
Ray Corwin, Park Trustee
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Kraus, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

(THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 1:09 PM)

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Can I ask the Legislators who are on the Parks Committee to come to the horseshoe. Can all Legislators come to the Parks Committee please? All right. We're going to start with the Pledge to the flag led by Legislator Browning.

SALUTATION

Good afternoon everybody and welcome. We have three cards today; part of the public portion. Laurie Farber. Hi, Laurie.

PUBLIC PORTION

MS. FARBER:

I'm Laurie Farber.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. You have three minutes.

MS. FARBER:

Okay. I'm with Starflower Experiences. We've been the park stewards for Berkeley Jackson County Park in Huntington for quite a few years now. And we're taking this responsibility very seriously. We've been asking for all of that time, everybody we could think of about resurveying and fencing part of the boundary.

If you look at the aerial photos that I've passed -- one is coming around right now, and I believe you were given a black and white copy, you'll notice that on the north side off of Bunker Hill as well as a section on the south side, the boundary of the park is peoples' backyards. And we have some serious problems along those boundaries, one of which is dumping of landscaping waste, yard waste, right into the park. People have made their own special private walkways, trails, gateways, whatever into the park.

On the north side there's a trail running along right inside right -- feet possibly from those backyards. We can't tell where the park boundary is, so we don't really know how close the trail really runs to the park boundary, whether the homeowners have encroached into the park or not. They are, however, dumping yard waste on the trail, over the trail, on both sides of the trail. It's actually kind of disgusting sometimes to try and take a group walking along there. So we have some serious problems. And that's part of why we have been asking for quite a few years for fencing those boundaries that borders those backyards to try and prevent that problem.

There's also a section on the north where the park makes sort of a corner and some -- one of the homeowners there has created a huge treehouse like structure. We don't know if it's on private property or park property. I've been out there with several park staff; none of us can quite tell because all we have is tiny little aerials and it doesn't really tell you when you're on the ground exactly what the picture is. And that's why I want to emphasize to you, I know the resolution was tabled last time because of questions about the funding, but I wanted to urge you to find a way to fund that because protecting this park is really critical. And knowing where the boundary is, at least on that north side or at least behind the homes is very, very important.

The western boundary does not need to be fenced because it -- it is backing up to partly Manor Farm, which is a Town of Huntington park. And a couple of backyards from Manor Road where we -- again we don't really know where the boundaries are, but I would love to see the County acquire the

back parts of those properties rather than fence them off separately.

Part of the southern boundaries, the Mediavilla property, that is a big problem with ATV access right now. I'm not really sure what the best way is to handle that, but we're certainly looking for ways to keep the ATV's out. Several of the dead end entrances around that park have been blocked thanks to park staff. Now that Manor Farm has people at it, living on it with the construction, it's no longer an entry. So we're urging you to find a way to move forward with that.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Well, thank you very much, Laurie.

MS. FARBER:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

We have two other speakers. I'm thinking that you might want to come up together, Steve Gittelman, Carol Hart. If you don't want to, that's okay, too, but it's up to you. If you want to do it separately or --

DR. GITTELMAN:

We can come up if you're ready.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

You can come sit here. You'd prefer waiting 'til we get to the bill, Steve? Well, that's going to come up real soon. Okay. So why don't you sit down and --

DR. GITTELMAN:

We're next.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. So, why don't you address us?

DR. GITTELMAN:

Every year we come before you to at least answer your questions in reference to the renewal of the cash flow from the endowment, which is -- has been set for at least in recent years at \$1.2 million or a \$100,000 a month for the museum. We do not seek an increase in that annual cash flow. In fact, we believe very strongly that if the capital projects, for example, the waterfront were to move forward in the planned fashion that they had originally been thought of, we would be able to be less reliant on these funds because those projects should be revenue generators. But if you have any questions, that's why we're here.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Well, as I recall we do this every year.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Every year.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

And it's something that has to be done, so to speak.

DR. GITTELMAN:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

But if the Committee has any other questions, I know we've been doing this for six or seven years that I know of.

DR. GITTELMAN:

At least.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay.

LEG. BROWNING:

(Inaudible - not using the mike)

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay, so there you go, my knowledge is enough for Legislator Browning, which is scary. Okay. Just if you stay there for a few minutes, we're going to go to the agenda. But first I want to ask the Commissioner if you have anything that you want to address? Or if not --

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Just one of the items, I don't know if -- one of the resolutions when it comes up I'll address.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. So you'll signal me.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Having said that, we can go to the agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Tabled resolution 2013, appropriating funds in connection with fencing and surveying for County parks (CP 7007) (Co. Exec. Levy)

LEG. BROWNING:

We need them, the funding.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

I'm sorry?

LEG. BROWNING:

That's where we're going to need our Parks and maybe BRO?

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Well, I think we'll need BRO, too. Okay. The question -- it was tabled the last time.

LEG. BROWNING:

It was bonded.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Yes. It was tabled because it was a 5-2-5 capital project. And the question was why were we, and correct me if I'm wrong, why were we bonding 25,000? And BRO at the time, I think you said it was part of the larger picture. And this was just 25,000 that was coming out of a larger appropriation?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yeah, this is an ongoing project. It's 25,000. We suspended pay-as-you-go this year. The adopted 2007 budget included some money for pay-as-you-go. That closed out to fund balance. So it's a policy decision. This is a County Executive resolution. And it's a policy decision whether you want to use pay-as-you-go or bonding. It is certainly within your rights to bond this.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Would you please explain to us why you feel we are in our rights? Because I think we went over this the last time, but I'd like it for the record again.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Sure, that's fine. Pay-as-you-go, by definition this would normally be a pay-as-you-go project. But the Legislature has suspended pay-as-you-go requirements during 2007 so you can bond this. And it was a policy decision, you know, whether you have pay-as-you-go or bond.

What you were referring to, the larger picture, they're not going to go out and bond this as a separate project. They bundle capital projects. It's done twice a year, they go out, they bond for capital projects based upon cash flow and what they need for various projects. So this is not going to be a separate, you know, issuance of a bond. It will be bundled when the comptroller goes out and bonds for capital projects.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

And if we were to designate pay-as-you-go for the 25,000 as -- I think we discussed this the last time, there is plenty of money still in the pay-as-you-go?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, there is -- a little over \$2 million was in the adopted budget for pay-as-you-go. When we adopted the 2008 Operating Budget, just last week, that -- those funds were used or closed out to fund balance. There's many things that happen in the budget, you know, the estimated budget where we expect to end 2007, which of course is rolled into 2008. It's an estimate.

You could, you have the legal authority to use pay-as-you-go appropriations. They exist in the budget. Other things go up and down, you know. All things being equal, you know, the fund balance would be \$25,000 less. But other things change so the actual numbers, the actual fund balance, Budget Review feels would be greater than the 122 million that's in there now. But this is a County Executive resolution so it's up to the County Executive, I guess, to decide whether he --

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

How he --

MR. REINHEIMER:

-- wants to change the funding designation.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. All right, I'm understanding that. Does anybody have any questions?

LEG. D'AMARO:

I do.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

I want to give Legislator Vilorio-Fisher just a minute to catch her breath. Go ahead. Lou, did you have a question?

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Legislator D'Amaro.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Lance, the -- it's appropriating bonding of 25,000. Does that mean the bond will be for 25,000?

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

No.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Or is it part of a larger --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes, this is part of a larger issuance, right. We're not going to issue a separate bond, go out to the markets. They bundle capital projects. Public Works, which oversees a lot of capital projects, they'll borrow within projects, they'll provide the comptroller with their cash flow needs, what they need for various projects when they need it.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. REINHEIMER:

The comptroller goes out and borrows according to the needs within the immediate six months. So it's bundled.

LEG. D'AMARO:

The bond could be for --

MR. REINHEIMER:

The bond could be for --

LEG. D'AMARO:

-- ten million dollars for all we know.

MR. REINHEIMER:

-- probably more like 60 million.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. So this is --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Right. This is just one little component.

LEG. D'AMARO:

-- this is appropriating from the capital project.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

In effect, authorizing the funding through that bonding process.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Right.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. REINHEIMER:

The comptroller would be authorized to bond this. And when the comptroller is notified that the money will be needed for this, he'll bundle it in. You know, capital -- I would assume a capital project like this the needs for the money would be within the next six months. So it probably would be included in next bond issue.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right. So that's the first level. The next level, of course, then irrespective of the funding source, is -- does it make sense to borrow money to do this project or does it make sense to pay cash? And what you're saying, I believe, and correct me if I'm wrong is that, yes, we could pay cash for it now in '07, but that our budget for next year already anticipated a certain fund balance and that's already figured into the '08 budget. So to start changing that now after we passed the '08 budget could have an impact.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes, that's correct. In simple terms the '08 budget assumes that we would be not using pay-as-you-go in '07.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. REINHEIMER:

So this is simple terms.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. REINHEIMER:

So this is consistent with the adoption of the '08 budget.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And that was a policy decision that we made collectively early on --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

-- in one of the budget adjustments.

MR. REINHEIMER:

You and the County Executive collectively.

LEG. D'AMARO:

That we passed.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Yeah. So that leaves us facing as we've done throughout the year, relatively smaller amounts or projects that don't meet the criteria -- that do meet the criteria for pay-as-you-go funding, but we've been bonding those throughout the year because we anticipated no pay-go, especially when crafting the '08 budget.

MR. REINHEIMER:

That's correct. And just to refresh the Committee's memory, when we adopted pay-as-you-go last year, we said that -- we, meaning the Legislature put the \$2 million in there --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. REINHEIMER:

And said that they wouldn't use it unless sales tax came in.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

MR. REINHEIMER:

So we had a -- kind of waited until the end of the year to see if we wanted to use pay-as-you-go. We, meaning the Legislature.

LEG. D'AMARO:

And what came of that projection?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, when the County Executive released his recommended budget, he closed that out to fund balance. His fund balance assumed no pay-as-you-go funds would be used in general.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, we're passed his recommended budget. We now have a budget. And does the '08 budget anticipate that there is no pay-go in '07?

MR. REINHEIMER:

That's correct.

LEG. D'AMARO:

It does. Okay. Thank you, Lance, terrific.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Does anybody else in the Committee have other questions?

LEG. D'AMARO:

So, now what?

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

I don't believe we have a motion yet.

LEG. D'AMARO:

You're all right with that, Lynne?

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay, motion? I have a motion by Legislator D'Amaro, second by Legislator Browning. All in favor? Opposed? Introductory Resolution 2013 is approved. I'm sorry, that was a tabled resolution.

(VOTE: 4-0-0-1. Not Present: Legislator Romaine)

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Okay, **introductory resolution 2149, Extending the authorization to remit \$1.2 million from the Endowment Trust Fund to the Vanderbilt Museum. (Cooper)** I'll make a motion.

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Viloría-Fisher. All in favor? Opposed? **2149 is approved. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1. Not Present: Legislator Romaine)**

2190, Amending the 2007 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with improvements and lighting at County parks (CP 7079) (Co. Exec. Levy)

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

Motion.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Motion by Legislator Viloría-Fisher, second by Legislator D'Amaro. All in favor? Opposed? **2190 is approved. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1. Not Present: Legislator Romaine).**

I see the Commissioner coming up. Commissioner, we're going to be looking at 2191, **introductory resolution 2191 (appropriating funds in connection with improvements at County golf courses - West Sayville, Indian Island and Timber Point) (County Executive Levy)** And I believe you would like to address the Committee.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Yes, thank you, Chairman Nowick, and members of the committee. Our Budget Office recently asked if that could be tabled until the next meeting of the Parks Committee, if that is possible. It has to do with a separate -- there's a separate capital budget line item for Timber Point. And it was felt it would be more appropriate to perhaps split that off. I'm trying to get more information on that, but we'll just request at this point that be tabled. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

I don't see a problem because we're meeting again in two weeks and I'm thinking that we probably have time. So I'll make a motion to table.

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Viloría-Fisher. All in favor? Opposed?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

2191 is approved.

LEG. D'AMARO:

Tabled.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Tabled. Oh, excuse me, the tabling motion is approved. **(VOTE: 4-0-0-1. Not Present: Legislator Romaine)**

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

I distracted her. I distracted her. I was pointing out a Parks Trustee that I just saw hiding behind the podium. Ray?

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

We do have a Park trustee in the audience. And again, thank you for coming and thank you for showing such interest, Ray Corwin.

2192, Appropriating funds in connection with improvements to County campgrounds (CP 7009) (Co. Exec. Levy)

LEG. BROWNING:

Make a motion.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

There's a motion by Legislator Browning, second by myself. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. D'AMARO:

You know, before you call that vote.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Yes.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I just had a question. I don't know if it's fair to ask the Parks Commissioner, may not have the answer coming up to speed, but this is -- the title of this bill is appropriating funds in connection with improvements to County campgrounds. And the way I read it it's saying that we are spending or authorizing the issuance of \$1 million in serial bonds to cover these improvements. I'd like just some brief explanation as to what we're spending this million dollars on in our parks.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

I have some more detail information on that I can provide if -- Legislator D'Amaro, if you wish I can provide that right now.

LEG. D'AMARO:

I'm not saying we shouldn't do it but, you know, we have a lot of bonding going on especially with the jail being constructed. There's a big picture here. And I think as we go forward, we have to be a little more cautious in prioritizing what we're going to be spending funds on whether it's through bonding or whether it's directly cash expenditures. You know, either way the taxpayers are paying for it and we have to be little more mindful I think about our bonding and the interest expense for the bonding, which comes out of our Operating Budget.

So I'm not saying we shouldn't do this. You know, the flip side is that if you don't do the repairs and what's necessary it's going to cost you even more money in the long run. I understand that, but maybe just a little bit more of an explanation as to what we're spending the money on.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Legislator D'Amaro, if I may just interrupt for a second, I don't know if this is enough of information, but there was a letter to Ben Zwirn from Ronald Foley. And I think it might answer your question, but maybe you want it more detailed. The resolution requests funds for projects relating to storage facility enhancements and bay access at Cupsogue Beach County Park. Construction --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Right.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Is that not enough?

LEG. D'AMARO:

But we're not, well, you know, it's -- the short answer is it's really not enough information, you know. We have to make a value judgement. I'm not saying these repairs or these proposed expenditures are not justified, but I don't know that for sure. And I would like someone to explain to me why, you know, whatever it was in that letter construction of improvements to County campgrounds, relating to storage facility enhancements, I think someone needs to detail a little bit more sufficiently what the need is.

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

And actually when we -- it's in the Capital Budget and so it was probably more clearly defined and flushed out when we approved it to go into the Capital Budget. Budget Review, yes?

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well, the -- just through the Chair, that's a very valid point. But also the flip side of that is, you know, when we authorize in the Capital Budget, which is a planning document, we always get the additional oversight when we actually appropriate. So I don't see my vote on the Capital Budget as saying everything in there should just been approved because it's in the budget. So, and I know you agree with that.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Would you have a problem, Legislator D'Amaro, with passing this through the Committee? And I think that it sounds probably like you would like to talk to DPW and find out more of a -- I'm thinking you want an engineering explanation of why we would need construction of a new check-in station and electrical. Sounds to me like you need some experts to tell you what's wrong with the electrical service at West Hills County Park and why Meschutt Park needs sand replenishment, is that what you mean? You want to know from the experts --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Well.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

-- in our DPW that can say, well, we need more sand because, is that what you want to know?

LEG. D'AMARO:

I think, yes, you're right on. And I think it's not a function of me having a private discussion with DPW. I think that if we're going to spend a million dollars through bonding and ask taxpayers to foot the bill on interest, I think it should be a public discussion as to explain to us why these electrical upgrades or whatever it is are needed.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Our Presiding Officer would like to weigh in.

P.O. LINDSAY:

The only thing that I wanted to say was that the Commissioner said he has additional information that he could share with us now. Am I correct?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

That's correct.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So why don't you give it to us?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

I can give you, Legislator D'Amaro, some -- a little more detail. First of all in regard to West Hills County Park, I can tell you that just last week we had an underground electrical failure. And it took several days for our folks to try to locate that failure. Lights went out up in that park in around the campground area. And the underground infrastructure is aging up in that area. So I am aware anecdotally at least that there is a need to upgrade and replace some of the electrical infrastructure in West Hills.

In regard to Meschutt, when we got the tail end of tropical storm Noel earlier this month, Meschutt did experience some additional erosion. And my understanding is that although it's not in dire shape at this point, it is much more vulnerable if we get another storm that the infrastructure there, most seaward infrastructure, could be significantly damaged if we incurred more of a direct hit there. And I know that erosion at Meschutt has been an ongoing issue. So that one I am familiar with.

With the Smith Point, that is our premier beach. And I do know that we have been phasing in some additional campgrounds there. That area gets heavy, heavy use during the primary camping season.

And also at Cathedral Pines we have very limited electrical service there right now. And there are a number of people I do know there -- we've had in fact a number of handicapped folks who have utilized that and some who need to be, in fact, on respirators. And there's been a difficulty in providing sufficient camping area for folks with those kinds of needs due to the lack of electrical infrastructure there. I can provide more detail though, if you wish, by the next meeting. I will certainly get that to you.

LEG. D'AMARO:

No, I -- what I was looking for was precisely the explanation that you're giving us. And I just had asked for that before we called the vote. It wasn't that I need a detailed comprehensive analysis, but I would just like to know before I vote on bonding of that magnitude, you know, what's the justification, and what are the improvements. That's all. And by the way, you did a terrific job. And thank you; I appreciate that.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

So we have a motion by Legislator D'Amaro, second by myself. All in favor? Opposed? Okay. So, **2192 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0)**

2193, Amending the 2007 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with restoration of Smith Point County Park (CP 7162) (Co. Exec. Levy)

LEG. BROWNING:

Make a motion.

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

I'll second it.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Are you okay with that? Motion by Legislator Browning, second by Legislator Viloría-Fisher. Does anybody have any questions?

LEG. D'AMARO:

I think this is the same explanation that we just heard, so thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? **2193 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0)**

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

Madam Chair, if I may, I know that we've gone -- I apologize, I was at the Dennison Building for a meeting there on Workforce Housing. But I received a letter. And if I may I'd like to just read it into the record because I told the constituent that I would. It's long. I'll read it fast.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Do want to read it into the record or pass it out to us?

D.P.O. VILORIA-FISHER:

I'd like to read it because I'd like my colleagues to hear it.

"Dear Legislator Viloría-Fisher, please allow me to introduce myself, I am Yvonne Wong and I am a tenant to the Parks Department rental program. I have been the caretaker since 1999 at 181 Sweet Hollow Road in West Hills County Park. As you may know, my wonderful neighbor, Steve Gittelman, donated the home to the County back in the early 90's.

As Vice Chair for the Parks and Recreation Department" -- well, they don't always get the titles quite right -- "I know you are aware of the program and possibly our situation. We are really trying to stay, I mean no disrespect to you or to your position, but when my daughter cries to stay with her house, her school and her friends, I have to try, please pardon me for trying, I have to as a mother. I am asking for any consideration, can our rent be held at \$1904? I have reached out to many including Mr. Levy. He has not yet been able to keep the rent at \$1904 and is still asking for \$2600 plus all utilities on our unit, although the other units in West Hills County Park have been vacated and are sitting empty this winter due to the high asking price of rent and inherent challenges of living in a 250 plus year old home.

I had always known, as I had been told by the then Deputy Commissioner, Tracey Bellone, back in 2003 when the County took over the homes management from Friends for Long Islands Heritage, that I had been paying one of the higher end rents on my home (\$1208 at the time). I was told that after the appraisal that my house was considered a three bedroom, two and a half bath, albeit a farmhouse Circa 1720. Not considered were the living conditions of a home without insulation, which is a great hardship in the winter especially with the very high price of heating oil and all the labor and security we were required to provide.

I was shocked to learn after reading the Newsday articles called "It Paid to Know People" on January of '07, that others in larger homes, with more bedrooms and hundreds of years newer than my home, in areas with high ranked school districts and with insulation I might add were paying a few \$100 a month, nowhere near my then \$1208, which is now going up to 2600.

I do not believe the theory that the Newsday article proposes, that all the people in the Preservation Program that I joined in 1999, were politically connected. I know I was granted the position as "caretaker" via an open call in a Newsday article in December of 1997 offering the home to civilians. My husband's status as a New York City Police Officer and my desire to act as caretaker, I was told, was why I was chosen from all the thousands of entries received. My rent was initially over a \$1000 a month when I moved in in 1999 and the rent was increased to 1208 by 2003. I was told by Friends for Long Island Heritage that the rent was stabilized by HUD requirements and increases would be based on HUD. The County was not running the program to make money, but to maintain my home, which I was told they had to, because it is listed in the National Historic Landmark registry.

I have included a link to HUD's website regarding the "Officer Next Door" Program, also known as the "Good Neighbor Program", it demonstrates that the federal government has justified the giving of a 50% discount to certain occupations in purchasing homes from them."

I'm not going to read the rest of it because it is another full page. I will submit it to the Clerk for the record, but I just wanted to read this as I promised the person I would who wrote it to me. And ask the Commissioner of Parks to take a look at it. And I will also forward a copy to the County Executive's Office. Thank you for your indulgence.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

If I may, thank you, Legislator Vilorina-Fisher. I will certainly welcome receiving a copy of that and would like to look into the circumstances surrounding those concerns raised in that letter.

D.P.O. VILORINA-FISHER:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:

Okay. Thank you, Commissioner. If there is nothing else for the Parks Committee, I will make a motion to adjourn, second by Legislator Vilorina-Fisher. All in favor? Opposed? We're adjourned.

(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:41 PM)

{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY