

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
Minutes

A regular meeting of 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 June 3, 2009.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Vivian Vilorio-Fisher, Chairperson
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley, Vice Chair
Leg. Cameron Alden
Leg. Lynne C. Nowick
Leg. Steven H. Stern

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Ben Zwirn, Deputy County Executive
Barbara LoMoriello, Clerk
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
John W. Pavacic, Commissioner of Parks
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
Linda Bay, Aide to Minority Leader
Thomas Ryan, Aide to Leg. Vilorio-Fisher
Debra Alloncius, Legislative Rep for AME
Kathryn Larson
Donald B. McKay, appointee for the Vanderbilt Museum
William Shilling, Aide to Presiding Officer
Thomas P. Jones, Suffolk Committee for Camping
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Kraus, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:06 PM

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

We've had special meetings and executive sessions but we are on time. So please join us in Pledge led by Legislator Cameron Alden.

SALUTATION

PUBLIC PORTION

Thank you. We have one card today. And we also have some correspondence that Tom will be distributing to the Committee. Kathy Larsen, if you could come up, please.

MS. LARSEN:

Thank you for allowing me to speak at today's meeting about the pending changes to the entrance of Cupsogue Park. My name is Kathryn Larsen. I'm a long-term Suffolk County resident.

Cupsogue is a wonderful park and truly deserving of the Committee's support. I became aware of the project referred to by the Village of Westhampton Dunes as the Widgeon Way Cupsogue Project in the early part of February of this year. I was very happy to see the construction was delayed from Suffolk County -- by Suffolk County from its intended completion date, which was originally scheduled to be done prior to the season.

The project in question is on Suffolk County property in the Town of Brookhaven and involves the redesign of the park entrance, addition of new lanes as well as the placement of a turnabout in the seaside dune.

The Village of Westhampton Dune has been identified as a LEED agency by Suffolk County. The village hired the engineering firm to develop the plans and applied for the DEC permit. The permit associated with the plans was a tidal wetland permit designated as SEQRA Type II. There were no formal public meetings, notice or discussions in or outside the Village of Westhampton Dunes. And I don't believe there were various government entities that normally would be included in the discussions consulted.

The project was not reviewed by the Suffolk County Council for Environmental Quality. The DEC permit indicate it as a coastal management area and subject to the Water Revitalization and Coastal Resource Act.

Additionally, the United States Eastern District Court stipulation of settlement and consent judgement established a 25 foot conservation buffer from the northern toehold to the primary dune. Based on the plans the turnabout will be placed in a position that will most likely conflict with the state Coastal Policy Law regarding encroaching on a primary dune and/or building structures on a primary dune and may be in direct contradiction with the settlement agreement.

I have spoken with many residents, beach goers and others over the past few months regarding the traffic. The traffic issue is the underlying reason for these plans. The addition of the booth and the placement of a sign at the end of Jessup Bridge appear to have minimized the traffic issues experienced on Dune Road. According to the folks I have spoken with traffic backing up onto Dune Road has not been as much of an issue over the past two summers; it's been troublesome for a couple of hours six to ten times a season.

The current plans call for a booth to be moved -- the booths to be moved, actually forward onto

Dune Road by 75 feet effectively making almost like a dead end type appearance. And also it's limiting the number of lanes that can enter Dune into the Cuspsogue Park to just two. The park is used 12 months out of the year. Traffic will now come down to the end of Dune Road regardless of whether or not the booths are open or not and come down to a real esthetic dead end.

Over the past two weekends I have spent about six to eight hours observing the traffic entering the park. While not scientific, it appears that the current lane activity could accommodate 225 to 300 cars per hour if both booths are open. Although their plans appear to allow 25 to 30 cars to park on the additional hard road surface, the plans themselves may exasperate the parking issues within the park. The plans also don't address pedestrian bicycle traffic coming into the park on a regular basis.

Other current concerns regarding the plans included the esthetic appearance, the size of the turnabout, flooding, and the effect of the additional hard road surface will have on stormwater runoff, the ultimate elevation of the road and its impact on both sides at Widgeon Way to the park entrance, whether or not any peer review was done of the plans to ensure all material elements on the plans were addressed, and what alternative plans were presented to Suffolk County.

I'm respectfully requesting that Suffolk County with its depth and breadth and knowledge of environmental law, traffic study and engineering analysis become the lead agency and effectively start the project planning over ensuring the public, federal, state, County and town government, have an opportunity to formally comment on the plans including the US Army Corps of Engineers and the New York State Department of State Consistency Review unit.

In this manner, Suffolk will be assured that all possible alternatives and possible concerns are vetted and the ultimate project is done consistent with the laws and policies of New York State and Suffolk County and addresses the underlying environmental and traffic concerns. And thank you for your time.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you very much, Miss Larsen. Are there any questions for Miss Larsen? Okay. Because I have questions regarding some of the issues that Miss Larsen raised for the Commissioner so that we can understand this better. If this is County property, why are we not the lead agency? I'm confused about that.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

This project actually began about 2005/2006. That's when it was first conceived. Traffic problems were identified back then. And in fact some capital funds were appropriated for traffic improvements at Cuspsogue. This project started before I got here, but my understanding is that the Village -- based on understandings with the County, the Village was going to undertake the process of developing the plans and actually applying for regulatory permits for those.

The Village of Westhampton Dunes applied to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, I believe, in 2007 for a tidal wetlands permit. And then that permit was received at the beginning of 2008. Copies of the approved permit and approved plans were then sent over to County Parks, which were then distributed to DPW as well.

The project -- the Village of Westhampton Dunes in its SEQRA review of the project declared this to be a Type II Action. When an entity declares a project to be a Type II Action, no further SEQRA review is required and no coordinated review occurs. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation also considered this to be a Type II Action and they documented that in their paperwork when they issued the permit.

When we in County Park's and in DPW received the plans and engaged in discussions on this, we looked at the SEQRA review and we've been in contact with the liaison to CEQ in the Planning Department to ascertain whether or not this would truly be classified as a Type II Action or should it at a minimum be an unlisted action. We have not made a final determination in that regard at this

point but we are proceeding.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

So is it going before CEQ to make that determination or just the liaison?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

We haven't made a full determination on that yet but -- and just because another potentially involved agency such as DEC or the Village declares something to be a Type II, does not necessarily mean that any other involved agencies such as the County needs to concur with that. So the County at this point if we decided to declare it to be a non-Type II Action, at a minimum an unlisted, at this point just the County and the Town of Brookhaven would be potentially involved agencies because DEC and the Village of Westhampton Dunes have taken themselves out by declaring to be a Type II.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. So would we then suggest to Miss Larsen to bring her concerns to the CEQ?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Well, I can tell you that we have received several letters from Ms. Larsen. We've been having discussions internally in the County. We've gone out in the field to look at the site and we're going to be having further discussions including with the County Attorney's Office and DPW. DPW has taken a preliminary look at the plans. At this point we haven't made any final determination as to where we're at with the project. It was -- traffic improvements were identified as a need because of traffic backing up.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Well, I have been stuck there waiting to get into the park.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Right. And in regard to -- so in regard to Miss Larsen's determination that the County designate the Village of Westhampton Dunes as lead agency, that's not really accurate. In this case no coordinated review under SEQRA was conducted. So there was never any assent to the village being lead agency.

In regard to the coastal erosion hazard area, a coastal erosion hazard area, that's a program that is regulated by the -- that's a New York State DEC regulatory program. DEC delegates that to local municipalities. They offer it first to a local municipality, either a village or a town. And if that village or town refuses, it's then offered to a county. If a county refuses then DEC retains control of the program.

In the location of Cuspogue, within the boundaries of the Village of Westhampton Dunes, the Village of Westhampton Dunes took over the CEHA Program, as we call it for shorthand. So they are responsible for enforcing the coastal erosion hazard area regulations of New York State. They determined that at least for the portion of the project within village boundaries, it is outside the coastal erosion hazard boundary. Coastal erosion hazard boundary in the vicinity of the project there within the village, the boundary line is basically east/west line that lies south of Dune Road.

Within the Cuspogue County Park is completely within the Town of Brookhaven, however, and Brookhaven -- I know it gets a little confusing -- Brookhaven has also taken over the Coastal Erosion Hazard Area Program within its boundaries. We've been in contact with the Town of Brookhaven and we are going to be meeting with them in the field to further discuss the location of the coastal erosion hazard area boundary.

However, just looking at aerial photographs and looking at the boundary line and also having field inspected the site, it appears right now that the structure -- the natural feature that is closest to the turnaround area is a secondary dune, not a primary dune. There's another dune that is actually seaward closer to the Atlantic Ocean than the existing -- the existing dune that's closest to the

turnaround that Ms. Larsen had talked about.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. When you go to do the site inspection, can you let me know? I'd like to come along.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Sure.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

So that I could see this physically.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Sure.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

You're welcome.

MS. LARSON:

Can I just add one other thing, that you also have to take in consideration that US Eastern District Court settlement agreement and the 25 foot conservation boundary when looking at the coastal erosion hazard line.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

If I could just respond to that.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Ms. Larsen, basically the coastal erosion hazard area boundary was adjusted after the settlement to incorporate the 25 foot boundary. She is referring to the -- both the federal and state lawsuit when there was a breach, as many folks know, there was a breach of the barrier island, that's Westhampton Island, back in the early nineties after we had the server storms, nor'easters, one of which became famous as the *perfect storm* and the movie was made out of that.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Right.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

There are significant breaches, two breaches, from what I remember that went through that area of what is now Westhampton Dunes. A lawsuit was brought by several property owners against the federal government, the state government and the County. There was a settlement of that dispute that resulted in a major beach nourishment project known as the Westhampton Interim Project. Basically it's a 30 year project for which the federal government, the Army Corps of Engineers and the New York State DEC pump sand onto the beach within the Village of Westhampton Dunes periodically, every several years. And that is to be continued for a period of 30 years. And I think we have at least another 20 years to go within that project timeframe. And the coastal erosion hazard area line was adjusted to accommodate the newly reconstructed dunes that were created that had been created after the original natural dunes were washed away.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

So the traffic circle is within that boundary or --

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

We're not certain at this point. It may be either touching on the boundary or may be actually just outside the boundary. As I said, the Town of Brookhaven administers that program with oversight from New York State DEC. We're going to be meeting with the Town of Brookhaven to further discuss the boundary and to seek a determination from the town as to whether or not the project site is located within the coastal erosion hazard area boundary.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. This is very complex.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Yes.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

I was very confused when I read Miss Larsen's letter and that's why I asked her to come here so that you could answer the question so that the whole Committee could hear these issues because it's very complex and confusing.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

I can also address one of the other comments Ms. Larsen made had to do with the New York State Department of State's Coastal Consistency Program and Army Corps jurisdiction. US Army Corps of Engineers, they have a regulatory branch. They have several branches. One is a regulatory branch, which issues its own regulatory permits. Basically though they have jurisdiction only from the high tide line seaward. Anything landward or above, higher than a high tide line is outside their jurisdiction.

The New York State Department of State's Coastal Consistency Program only kicks in when there's a federal permit involved. So if there's no Army Corps permit involved, in which case -- and this is the case here where the Army Corps has no jurisdiction over this project, the Department of State would not have any jurisdiction as well.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Even as a result of that lawsuit, that conservation boundary lawsuit?

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Yes. DOS was not a party to that. Where it gets a little more complicated is that DOS, the New York State Department of State, has been delegated by the federal government the Coastal Management Zone Program. DOS put into effect a series of policies, which are codified in state regulation but they're not regulations; they're policies. Basically, any federal permit because DOS, even though it's a state agency, because DOS has been delegated that federal Coastal Management Zone Program, any federal permit that affects the waterways and wetlands, such as an Army Corps permit, the Army Corps has to send that permit application to the New York State Department of State for review. And the New York State Department of State then determines whether or not that particular application is consistent or conflicts with the Coastal Zone policies that is put into effect.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Seems like we need a flowchart.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Right. It's very complicated.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Legislator Stern, did you have a question? I thought I saw your hand up.

LEG. STERN:

No. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Are there any questions from other members of the Committee? Okay. Thank you for coming, Miss Larsen. It helped to clarify some of the -- or at least it helped make us aware of some of the complications of this project. And, Commissioner, you and I will continue this conversation perhaps even at a Trustees' meeting --

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Certainly.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

-- where we can feel that -- we could have more of a conversation, look at the plans and again look at the different jurisdictions --

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Sure. I'd welcome that.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

-- so that it's clarified. Thank you very much. Thank you, Miss Larsen. Okay.

We're going to go to the agenda.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Okay. We're going to -- Don McKay, I believe is here and so I will make a motion to take IR 1434 out of order.

(IR 1434, Appointing Donald B. McKay as a member for the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission, Trustee No. 13) (Cooper)

LEG. NOWICK:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Seconded by Legislator Nowick. All in favor? Opposed? Mr. McKay, can you please come forward? You can have a seat right next to the Commissioner. You didn't have to leave, Commissioner. It's a short agenda so we don't want you to jump up and down.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

Thank you, I appreciate that.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And thank you so much for addressing all of those concerns that Miss Larsen brought forward.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Hello, Mr. McKay.

MR. McKAY:

Hi.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you for coming down. You have to press the button in order for us to hear you.

MR. McKAY:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Just a little warning. IR 1434 is before us. Mr. McKay, I'd like you to just tell us a little bit about yourself and what you feel you would bring to membership on the Board of Trustees of the Vanderbilt Museum.

MR. McKAY:

Sure. I am a lifelong resident of the Town of Huntington. I was born and raised in Huntington. I actually grew up on Eaton's Neck, which is where the crow flies, about a mile from the Vanderbilt. And as a child I spent some time at the Vanderbilt growing up. And for a brief time I actually volunteered at the Museum doing some landscaping and work and so forth several years ago. I am now -- I've been working for the Town of Huntington for about 11 years now and I am now the Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town. It is with that experience --

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Coindre Hall?

MR. McKAY:

Excuse me? Coindre Hall, no. And as Director I oversee a budget of roughly 6.7 million in the summertime. My 17 employees grow to about 450. Lifeguards, we have eight beaches, a Dix Hills pool complex, two golf courses, which I have oversight over. So as, you know, Director of Parks with that experience, number one, management experience, administrative experience, I think I could be helpful to the Trustees and the Museum as a whole.

And number two, for obviously fundraising. The Trustees -- probably one of the most important aspects of being a Trustee is to generate private funds to help operational expenses and so forth, capital, and not rely solely on taxpayer money. I do have some fundraising experience. I'm going on my fifth year, I run a golf tournament every year for my son who is a cancer survivor. And this year, actually in three weeks will be our 5th annual golf outing, which my family runs for a not-for-profit up in Chappaqua, which helps, you know, families stricken with pediatric cancer.

So I do have some experience. It's a large undertaking, the outing. It's a lot of work, six, seven, months of, you know, putting together. So I do have some. Do I have as much as other people? Probably not, but I'm a quick learner. I have a lot of energy. And the real reason -- my interest -- Legislator Cooper, we were discussing is, you know, I just view the Vanderbilt as a -- it's a jewel. And it's probably one of the best pieces of properties in Suffolk County. It's historic. Mr. Vanderbilt, if you -- what's he's done for, you know, back then is preserving his property, passing it on for the residents to enjoy. His background in maritime and protecting the environment and so forth, it's in institution and a property that we just cannot let fail.

And obviously it's gone through some difficult times as other museums have gone through difficult times across this country. But I feel that I can be -- whatever assistance I can provide with, you know, growing up in Huntington with my contacts. I'm a former newspaper person. I still have relationships with, you know, local press and so forth so I feel that I could help the Museum publicize events and generate some positive news for the Museum. And I'd obviously be willing to do whatever I can to help with that.

So that's really it. I just, you know, whatever I can do to help, I just feel it's, you know, it's very

important for people to volunteer and do what they can to help. And I just feel this is just a continuation of my public service for Huntington.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Well, we certainly appreciate your coming forward. Are there any questions from the Committee? Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

First obvious question is, do you have the time to put into the Vanderbilt?

MR. McKAY:

I do. I spoke to a staff member at Legislator Cooper's Office and he explained to me about the meeting and so forth. And I believe I do have ample time. Obviously right now, it's summertime and as a Parks Director summertime is our season. And we're jamming right now with the beaches opening up and so forth.

I do have some night meetings here and there, but my schedule, I believe, that, you know, I'm available. I work obviously in Town Hall, which is a short drive to the Museum. In the event that I'm needed there for a meeting or whatever, I believe I'll have ample time. I have spoken with my bosses, you know, if there's obviously and -- make sure they're okay and they've given me that, you know, they're supportive of it.

LEG. ALDEN:

Your bosses are who?

MR. McKAY:

I answer directly to the Town Board, so it'd be Supervisor Petrone and the four members of Town Board.

LEG. ALDEN:

And they're okay with a little bit of a division of your time?

MR. McKAY:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

Now, just a couple questions about the Vanderbilt, because if you've grown up there and you're as involved in government, and I believe you are, I'm not real familiar with Huntington, but should that Museum be subsidized by government?

MR. McKAY:

To an extent, yes, it should be, I believe. It's an institution like our parks systems and everything else, it should be to an extent supported. But whereas most possible in the Town of Huntington what we've done with our parks, our golf course and recreational facilities, we try to do the best we can, you know, rely on user fees and be self-sustaining. Sometimes that does not, you know, especially in this economic climate, it doesn't work out.

Mr. Vanderbilt left his Museum to the County as a gift. And I believe that we as a society have a responsibility to carry that on. And to an extent. But we should do and as Trustees are responsible for is, to the best that we can is to generate private dollars to support operations along with capital. Obviously the Museum does need some capital help as well. The Legislature has been fantastic in recent years with capital improvements, but obviously there's more to be done.

LEG. ALDEN:

A golf course is an example where in the private entity or private business you do have business

plans where they actually run and make money. So the golf course, even if it's owned by a county or by a town, that really should be able to sustain itself. But almost any other recreational -- like a park or any other recreational facility that I could think of, is a -- it's a negative as far as the amount of money that's going to come in compared to the amount of money it's going to take to operate that facility. Is that not a correct statement?

MR. McKAY:

It is. But it's -- and I use the analogy of it's -- hopefully a golf course obviously should be self-sustaining, green fees and so forth. When you're operating the golf course, it should sustain operations. At Huntington we actually went out and hired, which was my responsibility several years ago, we hired a management company and it's based out of Chicago, KemperSports, to actually run the Crab Meadow facility. So I'm the liaison with KemperSports for management of Crab Meadow Golf Course and Dix Hills facilities and that has worked out well.

What other -- we also -- I also oversee the Dix Hills Ice Rink, which right now is undergoing a massive expansion in Dix Hills Park. So, yes, it is -- that is the goal and should be the goal of government with these recreational facilities to be self-sustaining and so forth.

But one can also discuss about a -- as a, you know, a government providing services for its people, a senior center. And obviously we need to provide services for our senior citizens. We need to provide services for our veterans and we need to provide services for our children with disabilities and so forth. Are those programs self-sustaining? Absolutely not. But as a government, I believe that we do have -- that's one of our basic principals of government is to provide services for its people: Housing, safety and welfare.

LEG. ALDEN:

We're on the same page there.

Now the next question, to what extent do you think the Vanderbilt can be become self-sustaining on their operating budget? And I'm not talking about capital budget because we've pretty much picked up the load on that, but their operating budget.

MR. McKAY:

You know, again, I should have -- in the beginning, I should have -- there will be for me -- to be on the Board of the Trustees, there'll be a learning curve for me, obviously. I do need to learn quite a bit about the Museum and I'm looking forward to that as far as operational expenses. But along with, you know, with expenses comes, I mean, can we possibly do better by cutting some things and so forth. And that needs to be looked at as well. Overall operations, can we do some things better to reduce expenditures? It's not just always generating revenue, but you got to look at the other side, which is expenses, to see what we can possibly do better.

When I'm saying cutting service, I'm not saying, you know, eliminating stuff and then reducing activities at the Museum, but can we actually do things better on that. So it's a constant challenge. It's a challenge for me at Town Hall. That's always what we're looking to strive to do. But as far as operating totally self-sustaining, obviously that's the number one goal, obviously to not rely on Suffolk County taxpayers to operate this Museum to cover expenses.

LEG. ALDEN:

Was it under your watch that you brought in a management company to run the golf course?

MR. McKAY:

We brought in a -- the Crab Meadow Golf Course is a -- was built roughly and opened 1965. For years the town ran the operation as a independent operator, came and ran the golf course, paid the town a small fee for the use of the golf facility. Six years ago, the Town Board directed, you know, which I was a point person for, is going in a different direction, hiring a management company. And we sent out -- did an RFP, and we received interest from three major golf course companies: Arnold

Palmer, Billy Casper and Kemper. Kemper now has evolved to one of the biggest golf course management companies in the country. So, yes, I was the point person for an RFP and then the selection process and so forth. So I was responsible for a bulk of that work with -- obviously working with other people in town hall, but yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

Does the Town of Huntington, and I'm just going under your, you know, your duties or your responsibilities, do they have catering facilities on any of the other town properties?

MR. McKAY:

We have catering facilities at the Crab Meadow Golf Course, which is run by Kemper as well. They oversee the Pro Shop, the golf carts driving range and the restaurant snack bar and actual bar. The maintenance of the course is maintained by the Town of Huntington employees. That's union labor. That never changed. But as far as catering, that's our biggest catering operation at the golf -- Crab Meadow.

Then we also have a -- we hired again through an RFP, a gentleman by the name of John Parks who does the snack concessions. We have a snack concession at Dix Hills Ice Rink, Dix Hills pool. And he also does the beverage, soda machines. So the town gets a -- and also the Good Humor trucks. We encompass that into one RFP and the Town of Huntington gets a percentage of his revenue and so forth.

LEG. ALDEN:

Does Huntington also have a Friends of the Park, so like a not-for-profit that would just donate to try to take some of the burden off of the town?

MR. McKAY:

We do not. And actually I should have mentioned that before too, I just drafted a marketing/sponsorship plan for the Town of Huntington. And one of those aspects in that plan is to have a Friends of the -- Friends of the -- like a Huntington Heritage Trust or something like that that people would be able to donate funds, receive a tax benefit. That money would be used to obviously offset or reduce the tax burden to cover operational stuff in the parks, whether it be a capital improvement. But, no, we do not have one now. But the Town Board is -- we're looking at that.

LEG. ALDEN:

So any of the stuff that you're going to do is -- it's not going to be proprietary, right, you can bring it over to Suffolk County for no cost?

MR. McKAY:

Absolutely not. No, absolutely not. I'm a member of the National and New York State Parks Society so everyday I get several e-mails about, you know, initiatives nationwide that other governments, other towns, villages, counties are doing across this country and it's -- I'm a big believer in borrowing/copying other programs, not reinventing the wheel, that we can, you know, take a project from Arizona that they're doing and just, you know, massage it so it fits in at the Vanderbilt and it could work.

LEG. ALDEN:

And to be fair, the rest of the questions I'm not going to ask you at this point, I will in a month or so after you're confirmed and you get to a couple of meetings, but they're all specific so I'm, you know, picking your brain on how we can go forward, how we can improve things at the Vanderbilt. But you haven't had a chance to actually get into the operations over there, then, it's unfair to ask you at this point. So, thank you for your answers.

MR. McKAY:

Okay, okay.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Thank you, Legislator Alden. Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Hi, Don. How are you?

MR. McKAY:

Good. How are you?

LEG. HORSLEY:

It's always a pleasure. I first want to state that I've known Don for a number of years in -- over in his work in Huntington and he's certainly a very -- he's an example of an exemplary public employee and I want to congratulate you on offering to help us because we could use a little help.

I had a quick question. It's much a statement because you may not know that this is going to be coming down the near road, we are looking at forming a committee with Suffolk Community College to look, see if there are synergies, if there is a -- I wouldn't say takeover because I think that'd be too strong a term, but, you know, a relationship both academically as well as physically with the Vanderbilt Museum. Do you have any thoughts on that? Is that something that would make sense to you? Could you work with it as a Trustee working alongside another set of Trustees whom by which might be the Suffolk Community College? Do you have any thoughts on that?

MR. McKAY:

Absolutely. I mean I think it's a -- I guess one of the cornerstones of Mr. Vanderbilt, if you read his biographies, the key of the Vanderbilt was education. So any way that we could enhance bringing in education and help the Museum and strengthen it, obviously be a great move.

And along those lines was, I'm not sure what happened, I wasn't privy to it, but they did have the Cornell Cooperative Extension. Several years ago the town actually helped out the Vanderbilt by obtaining money from across -- I think it was across Sound fiberoptic cable or something that was put in and we were able to -- the company made a donation to the town and we transferred that over to the Vanderbilt of with -- to do some work on the beach -- the beach house -- the boathouse. And Cornell was in there for quite sometime doing some education. I'm not sure what happened there, but I believe that Cornell is now actually -- but I'm not sure, but actually Cornell now is being --

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

No, actually with the -- with the activities that Cornell was doing there, it put too much stress on the building.

MR. McKAY:

Okay. Well that's -- well, Cornell is actually coming over to Fuchs Pond in Northport, which Suffolk County helped the Town of Huntington acquire a couple of years ago. So they'll be coming over to Fuchs mansion in a couple -- this summer, I believe.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So you're open to the suggestion and the possibility of working together with the College?

MR. McKAY:

I think I'm open to anything. Absolutely.

LEG. HORSLEY:

There you go.

And lastly, but just as a comment as an aside, I remember a couple of years ago, early times in my life, talking about the Heritage Trust, when the state put that together going back a number of years

ago, the National Heritage Trust and for the state and you sound just like the initial talks.

MR. McKAY:

And it's successful.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It's a great -- yeah, absolutely. Yeah, and it's good stuff, so.

MR. McKAY:

It just enables people to, you know, loved ones pass away and so forth, they can make a contribution.

LEG. HORSLEY:

That, grants, all sorts of things went along with it.

MR. McKAY:

Right.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So it becomes a management issue, a tool in itself at some point. So good luck to you on that, that sounds great.

MR. McKAY:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Well, thank you again for being here. Is there a motion?

LEG. STERN:

Madam Chair, and welcome to Mr. McKay. His background experience is directly on point and exactly what it is that the Vanderbilt needs in looking towards the future. So we welcome him and thank him in advance for all the great things that he's going to do for the Vanderbilt and for the people of Suffolk County. So it is really a pleasure to offer my motion to approve.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Seconded by Legislator Horsley. We're going to give Legislator Nowick a second to come back in. I just sent someone out to get her. Maybe not. Okay. She's on her way in? Okay. We'll just give her an opportunity to vote on the motion.

We have a motion to approve and a second on 1434. And all in favor? Opposed? **Approved (Vote: 5-0)** Thank you very much for being here. This will be before the -- motion carries.

MR. McKAY:

Thank you. And for what it's worth, a side note just to the Legislature, thank you very much for your support of the Town of Huntington with our open space acquisitions and our athletic program. We're just -- we're doing some really good things.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Good, good. Yes, that -- it begins with a B, the Benjamin property, right? Isn't that coming along beautifully?

MR. McKAY:

That's the vets property. The veterans property. Yes, in fact, Friday we will be having our first -- the middle -- two middle schools from Northport School District will be playing the lacrosse game there. So the fields are completed. They put the asphalt --

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

It looks great. I was over there.

MR. McKAY:

It's beautiful.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

It looks terrific. For the people who came after, we voted on that, the Benjamin -- it's quite a large piece of property. What, 26 acres?

MR. McKAY:

About 60 total.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

60 acres.

MR. McKAY:

And about 20 developed.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

But some of it is preserved, right? Not all of it is active.

MR. McKAY:

The vast majority. Two-thirds of it's preserved.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Right.

MR. McKAY:

Forever wild, hiking trails. But it'll be -- in addition to the synthetic fields, it'll be a concrete bowl skate park and probably to me most importantly is a -- called a balance playground, which will be a playground for children with disabilities play alongside able-bodied children. So that's in the final stages as well and that'll be going up this summer.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And there's use for the veterans also. Right?

MR. McKAY:

There'll be a -- in the entrance to the park there'll be a memorial -- not a memorial but a, you know, a garden for the veterans in honor, it's Veterans Park.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Right, right.

MR. McKAY:

So that's what -- that's also being done as we speak.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Well, thank you for bringing us up-to-date on that.

MR. McKAY:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. Did I call the vote? Oh, yes, Mr, McKay, I was about to say to you that this will be before the full Legislature next Tuesday, but you don't have to attend that meeting.

MR. McKAY:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay, thank you.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Back to the tabled resolutions. **1115, Authorizing transfer of property to Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation and creating a new Suffolk County Park. (SCTM No. 0200-538.00-05.00-001.005). (Beedenbender)** I believe that at the request of the sponsor we are to table this.

LEG. STERN:

Motion to table.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Motion to table by Legislator Stern, seconded by myself. All in favor? Opposed? Abstain? **Motion stands tabled. (Vote: 5-0)**

IR 1203, Modifying the investment objective for the Vanderbilt Museum Endowment Trust Fund to preserve the \$8.2 million corpus while maximizing income to provide for the future revenue needs of the museum. (Lindsay) I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. STERN:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Seconded by Legislator Stern. All in -- I thought he was going to withdraw that. Okay. So there's a motion to table and a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **1203 is tabled. (Vote: 5-0)**

IR 1273, Adopting Local Law No. -2009, A Charter Law to clarify powers and duties of Board of Trustees of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. (Browning) I'll make a motion to table.

LEG. STERN:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Seconded by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **IR 1273 stands tabled. (Vote: 5-0)**

IR 1289, Authorizing use of Smith Point County Beach property by the American Cancer Society, for the Amazedness Kite Fly. (Eddington) And I believe that that has to be amended. Is that correct?

MR. NOLAN:

(Indicating yes)

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. So I'll make a motion to table, seconded by Legislator Horsley. Yes.

MR. NOLAN:

It's in September.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

All in favor? Opposed? **IR 1289 stands tabled. (Vote: 5-0)**

IR 1354, To clarify the recent increase in parks fees authorized under Resolution No.

33-2009. (Romaine) We discussed this at length at the last meeting. I will make a motion to table, seconded by Legislator Stern.

LEG. ALDEN:

On the motion.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

On the motion, Legislator Alden.

LEG. ALDEN:

Are we going to schedule in a full -- and I'm going to say investigation or discussion on the Vanderbilt, its viability going forward and what the plan should be or what the plans will be, what our policy's going to be and when can we look forward to that?

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. That's a good question. And I asked my staff to request that Carol Hart come to the next meeting with a budget. And the Oversight Committee will have some recommendations for us as well. I certainly listened very carefully as you suggested at another meeting that we look at a broader plan, a ten year plan on how with can deal with the budgetary issues vis-à-vis the Vanderbilt.

I think that we can probably formulate a better plan when we know what's happening with the hotel/motel tax on the state level so that we know what kind of income we'll be realizing from that. But you certainly have put forth a very good suggestion, which is to look at a longer term plan.

But next month Carol Hart will be coming to our meeting to give us her budget.

LEG. ALDEN:

When's our next -- our next meeting is in June and then July we're off.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes.

LEG. ALDEN:

So you're talking about August or you're talking about --

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

June 17th. She's coming June 17th.

LEG. ALDEN:

And some representatives from the Board of Trustees would be here also, do you think?

MS. HART:

Yes, I do.

LEG. ALDEN:

Good. Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. So we're on it, Cameron.

LEG. ALDEN:

I can see.

LEG. STERN:

Madam Chair, we have the Oversight Committee.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Yes.

LEG. STERN:

And they are doing their overseeing. I don't recall, was there a requirement that they issue any type of a periodic report? Are there supposed to be periodic updates for them to come back and report back on the kinds of things that they're learning and ideas that they have or is it really just when we ask them to come back?

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Well, actually my representative on that committee, Barbara LoMoriello, has been keeping me up-to-date on what has been going on at the meetings. But is there a date certain when you have to do a report, Barbara? I can't remember.

MS. LOMORIELLO:

No, there isn't at this time. No.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

So it's an ongoing Oversight Committee.

MS. LOMORIELLO:

Yes, it is ongoing.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

Okay. But I think based on what you just heard me say, I would like to look at having a more long-term budgetary outlook. But as I said before, I think we need to see whether we're going to get that hotel/motel tax, okay.

So we have a motion to table and a second. All in favor? Opposed? **IR 1354 stands tabled. (VOTE: 5-0).**

And we voted on 1434.

Commissioner, I made you sit there all this time and we didn't have any questions for you other than from our public portion, but thank you.

COMMISSIONER PAVACIC:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON VILORIA-FISHER:

And if there are no further questions or issues the meeting is adjourned.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:49 PM

{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY