

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 November 16, 2011.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Chairperson
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley, Vice Chair
Leg. Thomas Barraga (excused absence)
Leg. Ricardo Montano
Leg. Steven H. Stern

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Alicia Howard, Legislative Aide
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office
Joe Montuori, Commissioner of Parks Department
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Nowick
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano
Richard Meyer, AME Legislative Representative
Marge Acevedo, Presiding Officer Aide
William Shilling, Aide to Sarah Anker
Eric A. Kopp, County Executive's Office
Tom Vaughn, County Executive's Office
Jack Caffey, Aide to Presiding Officer
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 2:05 PM

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Everybody stand for the Pledge.

SALUTATION

Good afternoon and welcome to the Parks and Recreation Committee. I do not see any yellow cards from the public so we'll go right to the agenda.

First of all, Legislator Barraga is not with us today. He has an excused absence, just for the record.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

Okay. We'll go right to table resolution, **1782, Adopting Local Law No. -2011, A Local Law to establish a reporting requirement for registered sex offenders in County Parks. (Lindsay)** Has this gone through public hearing? It has. I have not heard from the sponsor on this.

1322 is stricken.

Has anybody heard from the sponsor on this whether they want this out of Committee or not?

LEG. MONTANO:

I have heard nothing. And also I have a question mark on this. So, does somebody want to give an explanation; maybe the Commissioner or --

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

We're going to find out. Just give us a minute.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay. In the interim can Counsel give an explanation?

MR. NOLAN:

The law imposes a requirement on registered sex offender levels two and three that if they reserve space or stay overnight in a Suffolk County Park Campground, they'll report their status to the Suffolk County Park Police prior to their stay or arrival at the campground.

LEG. MONTANO:

So it's that simple.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay.

MR. NOLAN:

It is.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

All right. So the sponsor does want to move forward on it. The public hearing is closed so I'll make a motion to approve, second by Legislator Horsley. All in favor? Opposed? **1782 is approved. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1. LEG. BARRAGA NOT PRESENT)**

1785, Amending the 2011 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with improvements to campgrounds (CP 7009). (Romaine) I have not -- Counsel, could you tell me the amount this is and where this is coming from?

MR. NOLAN:

It's \$40,000. The money's coming from the Legislature's offset account 1755 in the Capital Program.

LEG. MONTANO:

If I may, this is not -- this is not in the Capital Program. This is an amendment; correct?

MR. NOLAN:

Right. They're moving money from one project to another.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

All right, so I'll make a motion, second by Legislator Stern.

LEG. MONTANO:

Motion to what? Table?

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

No, I'll make a motion to move it out of Committee.

LEG. MONTANO:

All right.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

And if the sponsor wants to do something different on Tuesday, that's fine, too. Do I have a second? Maybe not.

LEG. MONTANO:

Well, what is it that it's going to do?

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Improve campgrounds.

LEG. MONTANO:

Right. But what is -- is there a specific project here? This is not a project in existence, is it?

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Counsel? Commissioner? 1785.

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Okay. What this is for, it's the erosion on the buff that we have. And what it is, is a -- we want to stop the erosion for safety reasons up there, also. And also it's like a burial ground for Native American artifacts, too. So what we're trying to do is take care of this as soon as possible. I believe maybe three or four years ago, we had a problem, a lot of stuff was uncovered. So we need this extra funding to take care of this due to --

LEG. MONTANO:

This wasn't included in the recommended capital budget, and it's not introduced by the County Executive. It's introduced sort of as a, what I would call, a district specific item?

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Yeah. You just said for the erosion on a specific park; correct?

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Right.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Which park?

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Indian Island.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

And, Commissioner, you feel that this is something, as you just said, that you want to stop it now before it costs more money in the long run; is that --

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Correct. Also what it is, it's near a roadway. And, again, I think our main concern is that, again, it's Native American, has burial remains there and artifacts. So we're concerned about them. We don't want them to be exposed as it was, I believe, in the past.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

There is a motion by myself. Is there a second? Second?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Second by Legislator Horsley. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. MONTANO:

Abstain.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

1785 is approved. (VOTE: 3-0-1-1. LEG. BARRAGA NOT PRESENT. LEG. MONTANO ABSTAIN)

1814, Directing the Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium Board of Trustees to prepare a ten-year master plan for the Museum. (Muratore) I'm going to make a motion to table at the request of sponsor, second by Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? **1814 is tabled. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1. LEG. BARRAGA NOT PRESENT)**

1815, Establishing a Historic Structure Restoration Pilot Program and directing the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation to issue a Request For Proposals. (Horsley) Legislator Horsley, would you like to make a motion on that?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yes, I would. But before I do that, Legislator Stern is requesting a quick conference with George Nolan over the language in one of the Whereas's.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

A conference or a -- do you want to make a motion?

LEG. HORSLEY:

A two-minute time out?

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Oh, you want a time-out?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Time-out, yes.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay, so do we have to put this on the record?

LEG. HORSLEY:

No.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay, we're just going to have a two-minute time-out.

(SIDEBAR DISCUSSION)

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay, we're back on the record and we are up to resolution 1815. I'm not going to read that again.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Okay.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

We have a motion.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Motion by Legislator Horsley, second by Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Yes, and on the motion.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

On the motion, Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you, Madam Chair. Let me just say thank you to the sponsor Legislator Horsley who worked together with my office, and I know he worked long and hard with our Commissioner and others who are interested in seeing not only the restoration of these important landmarks, but appropriate use by our residents and perhaps local businesses and other entities as well. I won't go through all the changes here made to the original version, but thank you to the Chairman -- to Legislator Horsley for ensuring that as a part of this process, there would be reasonable and appropriate access and use by the public as well. And that is an important element as we go forward in these efforts. So, thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Legislator Horsley --

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yes, I'd like to --

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

-- you want to explain this just a little bit, just for the record again.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Sure, I would be glad to. This hopefully is the beginning of saving our historic homes and houses and places of business that have come often times with properties that we have acquired for land preservation. And, unfortunately, and the genesis of this was the book that was produced several years ago, which had over 240 of the top homes, historic homes and locations that we do not have money, frankly, to fix them up, and they are just deteriorating and literally from holes in the roof to holes in the front porch. They are falling apart, being vandalized and the like. And what they need is somebody to come in and take care of them. And we cannot put people in these homes until they have had some work done to them.

And so what this is about is, it's a pilot program. We picked out five very needy locations that are in our historic homes and structures, a list. And what we're going to do is we're going to have private citizens, possibly businesses, working with our Parks Department as well as Public Works that will come in, renovate the homes and then have free use of the homes or structures for a leased period, which would be -- who knows, maybe up to 25 years or 30 years. It is a program that has been looked at in other states. I have been working with our historic peoples, Rich Martin in particular, who has been very helpful and also have an assistant who's volunteered his time, Mr. Joel Snodgrass, who is a professional historian and preservationist as well as the Commissioner.

And we've been working on this to put together a program that makes sense. And we've actually even included an inclusion of -- if someone is a veteran, to have a veteran of foreign wars, that they would have a preference, if they have the abilities to fix up the home. And, so we're looking at this as the beginning of bringing back our historic structures that we unfortunately have mis-tended. And I'd like to thank the Commissioner. And maybe the Commissioner might want to have some comment on this?

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Sure. Again, I think this a great partnership that we can have and start. And, you know, to do something like this, as we all know, funds, the next couple of years is going to be very, very tight. And to watch some of these buildings deteriorate as much as we try to, you know, make them watertight and everything else, I think it's a great program. And I'm hoping that we can really expand on it. And, again, I want to thank you, Legislator Horsley, for working with you and coming up with the idea. I appreciate it. Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Legislator Montano, you have questions?

LEG. MONTANO:

Yeah, I have two quick questions. The Parks are listed -- I mean the structure listed here, can you just tell me where they're located, if you know?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Joe, you want to go through them? Maybe -- I can probably --

LEG. MONTANO:

And the other question I had is -- if you don't have it, it's not --

LEG. HORSLEY:

Do I have a list? No, I do. Okay, let's go through them. The County Parks -- the Elwood Schoolhouse, which is in Huntington, which is in Legislator Stern's district, it is a location that maybe we're looking at a possibility of putting an architect, a lawyers' group, somebody's -- it's going to cost upwards of a million dollars to renovate this. Oh, yes. It is a large structure. Joe, you want to tell them about it? You know, and it's a mess.

LEG. MONTANO:

I don't need to know more than that.

LEG. HORSLEY:

The Commerdinger House is a historic home that's in Smithtown, Legislator Kennedy's district, that unfortunately has major shifts, not only in the foundation, but in the structure of the house itself and will fall apart in the very near future if not taken care of.

The Robinson Duck Farm is out in Flanders, I believe. And it is one house within a large complex. And this house may not need as much work as some of the other ones we've looked at. And lastly -- not lastly, the fourth one would be the Black Duck Lodge, which is -- where would that be, in Riverhead?

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

I would say definitely. It's off 111.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It is in the deep woods. And it is an area that was a hunting lodge for what was -- one of the giants in the industry -- it's escaping me -- but anyway, it is on the outside. We put monies into repairing the outside, but it actually has false windows. They're made out of wood and painted with -- and painted to look like there's actually glass in them, but inside it has been totally vandalized. It is -- it doesn't have one iota of the inside. It's totally -- and we're hoping that this will be put together, maybe, by a business group, maybe --

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Bed and breakfast.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, bed and breakfast. The Flanders Men's Club. So, that's in Flanders as well, then. So, anyway, it is -- it is a beautiful location.

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Yes.

LEG. HORSLEY:

But it's in the deep woods. And the Robert Cushman Murphy Davis House is where, Joe? That is -- I know we saw it, but it's right around the same area. I can presume it's in Flanders, Riverhead area.

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Riverhead.

LEG. HORSLEY:

And it's a house that needs repair, serious repair.

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

Yes.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Are you good with that, Legislator Montano?

LEG. MONTANO:

Yeah. The other question I had was the -- once the RFP's come in, is this going to come back to the Legislature or does it go --

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Do we have an RFP Committee?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yes.

LEG. MONTANO:

That's what I'm asking, it's subject to our approval? Okay.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It is subject to our approval, subject to our approval, subject to -- CEO's going to be looking at them as well. CEO has signed off on this, by the way.

LEG. MONTANO:

Okay.

LEG. HORSLEY:

And will provide a letter to us with their approvals.

LEG. MONTANO:

And the last comment, it's not costing the County any money because you're looking for private investors to come in and do it?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Private investors, that's correct.

LEG. MONTANO:

Thank you.

LEG. HORSLEY:

It's privatizing our historic homes.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

I know we had a motion and a second. Did we pass it? Okay, all in favor? Opposed? **1815 is approved. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1. LEG. BARRAGA NOT PRESENT)** Good job, Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Thank you.

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

Okay, **introductory resolution 1920, Amending the 2011 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with improvements to County Golf Courses Indian**

Island (CP 7166). (Co. Exec.) I'll make a motion, second by Legislator Horsley. All in favor? Opposed?

LEG. MONTANO:

Abstention.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

1920 is approved **(VOTE: 3-0-1-1. LEG BARRAGA NOT PRESENT. LEG. MONTANO ABSTAIN)**

Commissioner, did you have anything else for the Committee or --

COMMISSIONER MONTUORI:

No, I wish everybody a Happy Thanksgiving.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Yes, and to you as well. Okay. Motion to -- I'll make a motion to adjourn, second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? We're adjourned.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 2:22 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**