

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE**

**OF THE**

**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislature Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on May 2, 2012.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Chairwoman  
Leg. Ricardo Montano, Vice Chair  
Leg. Kara Hahn  
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley  
Leg. Steven H. Stern

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

George Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature  
Alicia Howard, Legislative Aide  
Jill Moss, Budget Review Office  
Ben Zwirn, County Executive's Office  
Tom Vaugh, County Executive's Office  
Gregory Dawson, Commissioner/Parks Department  
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Nowick  
Deborah Harris, Aide to Leg. Stern  
Bob Martinez, Aide to Leg. Montano  
Paul Perillie, Aide to Leg. Gregory  
Ali Nazir, Aide to Leg. Kennedy

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

**THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 1:05 PM**

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Okay. We're starting the meeting with the Pledge to the flag led by Legislator Stern.

**SALUTATION**

Good afternoon and welcome to the Parks and Recreation Committee. I do not see any cards. Commissioner, do you want to address us for any reason? Do you want to speak on any of the legislation?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

I think I'll wait as they come up, if that's okay.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Okay, fine, if you have something. Okay. So we'll go into Table Resolutions.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

If I may?

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Who said that?

**LEG. MONTANO:**

I did. Yeah, I -- this morning we dealt with bill 1132, which was authorizing the transfer of certain properties to the County of -- County Parks Department. And I think, Commissioner, you're not -- you're not really up on that at this moment in terms of what we're doing and why here? Because these properties that were discussed earlier, we tabled the bill; am I correct? We tabled the bill.

**LEG. STERN:**

Yes.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

We had some questions. And I don't want to catch you cold, but one of the issues was why are they going into Parks, Recreation, Conservation? Do you know anything about this bill? The one I'm talking about, 1132?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

I'm vaguely familiar with it. I know that Nick Gibbons, our Senior Environmental Analyst met with --

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Can you speak -- I'm sorry, say --

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

I'm sorry. I'm vaguely familiar with the bill. I know that our Senior Environmentalist, Nick Gibbons, had met with Planning and went over a list of sites and decided which ones would be appropriate to turn into Parkland and which ones weren't. And I think that's what you're referring to?

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Yeah.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Site-by-site. I couldn't -- I really couldn't give you any information.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

The question that I had, since you're here, I'm going to take advantage of it, and what criteria was used to determine which properties would go into Parks. And the reason that it came up is that it's my understanding that once a property goes into the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, it's sort of like tucked away forever. And, you know, in order to -- if these properties, let's say, we took a property that was developable, you could put a house on there or whatever, and we put it in Parks, we would, you know, forever alienate that property, never be able to get it back, or at least getting it back for any kind of development would be a, you know, a really difficult process. Am I correct in that?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

You're absolutely correct in that. It needs to go -- it goes first before the County Legislature. Then it needs to be approved by both the Senate and the Assembly. It's very difficult to alienate Parkland. It very rarely happens.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Exactly. So before we put something in Parks, we want to make sure that we don't, you know, we're never going to have an intended other use for it. That's why I was asking if you knew about these particular parcels and what criteria led to them being, you know, identified to go into your Department?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Well, generally they abut another piece of property that we have. It can be used for either active or passive recreation: Hiking trails, fishing, hunting, whatever. Again, I can't speak individually, but I have the utmost confidence in Nick Gibbons, you know, used that criteria to draw the lines.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Right. No, and I understand that. And my only comment on that is that simply because it's adjacent "to" doesn't mean that we have to add it "to". Do you follow what I'm saying?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

That's correct.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Yeah. You know, if that's the only criteria or whatever then, you know, I need to know that. But I would assume that there's more criteria simply than it abuts, you know, it abuts the Parkland.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Absolutely. It needs to have a valid recreational use.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

And also other alternative uses that could be applied either now or in the future.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

That's correct.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Okay. All right, so we'll take this up further. We might be in contact with you before the next Ways and Means Committee.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Okay. And if you need myself or Nick Gibbons to come testify before that Committee, we'll be happy to do so.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Thanks. I appreciate it.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

You're welcome.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

You might as well stay where you are. You thought you were going to get away.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

I thought so.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Okay, we're going to go to Table Resolutions.

**TABLED RESOLUTIONS**

**Resolution 1001, Appropriating funds in connection with building for Wildlife Rescue and Education, Marine Science Center, Southold (CP 1766) (Romaine)** Do I have a motion? I'll make a motion to table, second by Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? **1001 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

**1018, Amending Resolution No. 918-2011, establishing A Historic Structure Pilot Program and directing the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation to issue a Request For Proposals. (Gregory)** I'll make a motion to table, second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? **1018 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

**INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

**Introductory Resolution (1360) To facilitate the development of Smith Point Marina, Shirley (Browning)** Can I get an explanation? Does that involve money?

**MR. NOLAN:**

Well, it's directed at the Department to issue an RFEI, to get Expressions of Interest from developers, to -- essentially Legislator Browning is trying to elicit proposals to construct and operate boat slips, a snack stand, a restaurant catering hall to determine how much interest there is from private entities to do development at the Marina.

**MS. MOSS:**

There is no Fiscal Impact to do an RFEI.

**MR. NOLAN:**

I don't know what's there now.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Commissioner, tell me what exactly is there now and how this would affect the area.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Well, it's -- just to give you a brief idea, it's the southern terminus of William Floyd Parkway, just north of the Smith Point Bridge. It's a 90-acre site, 30 acres of which are developable. It's on a

canal, 1500 feet of bulkhead. What's there now, there's no boat slips there, but there is a boat launch for people to access the water. That's pretty much what's there. It's a big parking lot with two boat launch ramps.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

When you say 30 acres are developable --

**LEG. MONTANO:**

We can't hear that well. It might be the mic. Maybe you can raise it or something?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

I always seem to have a problem with this thing.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

We had a problem this morning, so I don't think it's you.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

All right. It's a 90-acre site, 30 acres of which are already disturbed. The other 60 acres are wetlands. I'm not sure how developable they are.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

When you say disturbed, it's 90-acres of County property, but 30 acres -- when you say disturbed or developed, what did you mean?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

A little of both. There's a parking lot on there. So, it's developed and disturbed.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

All right. But not with houses or -- okay.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

No, there's nothing really there except, again, except for a couple hundred parking spots and a boat, two ramps.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

I have a question.

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Yeah, Legislator Montano.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Yeah, this is more to BRO. Hi. You said there's no fiscal impact. And I understand that. But in light of -- you know, in light of the layoffs, in light of the things that we have heard with respect to the, you know, less employees per department, when you say there is no fiscal impact, I gather what you mean is that it's not costing us anything. But at the same time, anything we do involves County employees. And anything that we ask a County employee to do on one item takes away from their ability to do on another item.

So, number one, County employees, just like anybody else, are paid so there's a time factor involved in that. And, you know, I guess you don't quantify that in terms of an action like this; am I correct?

**MS. MOSS:**

You're correct, Legislator Montano. What it is is there's no fiscal --

**LEG. MONTANO:**

What you mean is there's no out-of-pocket cost other than what we're doing to pay our employees; am I correct?

**MS. MOSS:**

There's no fiscal impact, but there is an opportunity cost.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

What's the opportunity cost? I'm sorry.

**MS. MOSS:**

What you just -- just described.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

That's what you call an opportunity cost?

**MS. MOSS:**

The employees involved in this process would be doing this in lieu of other job duties.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Exactly. So do you --

**MS. MOSS:**

So, that's the opportunity cost.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Do you measure the opportunity cost on a given bill?

**MS. MOSS:**

No.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Okay. Then let me ask you this, Commissioner. And without knowing, I mean who's going to do -- how much work is involved in preparing the -- what do you call it, RFEI, you said?

**MR. NOLAN:**

Yes.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Request for Expression of Interest, right? That's what we call it?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

That's correct. I couldn't give you the exact number of hours that -- Colleen Hofmeister, she's our Contracts Coordinator who's going to develop this RFEI, is going to expend on it. But I will say that it's in the resolution that we have until December 31st to do it because we are in the middle of three other important RFEI's. So, we expressed that to Legislator Browning and she acknowledged that. So, we have until December 31st and we're very confident we'll have it done by then.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Okay. And then my question, though, is how much is involved -- because we do this a lot. It's easy to say, "well, let's do an RFP, let's do an RFEI, let's do this, let's do that." But every time we do that, *let's do planning steps*, we are using County employees to handle that when in fact they could, particularly in this day and age, they should be doing what their -- they could be doing other functions. So, my question is how much time -- you have to prepare the RFEI. You have to

publish it. You have to then get the RFEI's, you have to review them and you have to make a decision as to whether or not, you know, once they come in and you've analyzed it, you'll be interested.

So, for something like this, how many man or woman or person hours are we dealing with? How much -- is there a cost value to that, the opportunity cost? Why is that not -- by the way, let me switch gears, why is the opportunity cost not included in the Fiscal Impact Statement?

**MS. MOSS:**

It is in the Fiscal Impact Statement. It says it's an opportunity cost.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

And does it have a dollar amount?

**MS. MOSS:**

It does not have a dollar amount. Because there wouldn't be a dollar amount to this to impact the County. Employees would be already paid.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Right. But if I were working in a law firm, I'd have to indicate how many hours it would take me to do a particular job. And I'd be able to quantify the amount of time that it would take to do this in a financial context. And you're not doing that. You're just saying it's, *well, we got County employees*. It's not like they're sitting around doing nothing. They're sitting around doing other work presumably. So now we're taking them from one assignment to another. I'm just trying to get a handle on how much time is involved and whether or not we can quantify that into dollars.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

At this stage of the game, I couldn't quantify it into dollars. What I will say is that we do have a Contract Administrator; this is her job, is to prepare contracts and RFEI's. And any department, you have your short term goals and your long term goals. And we plan this out so that we can get it done by December 31st.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Right. What I'm trying to prevent is really overburdening a particular department with what seems like, you know, seemingly it's -- seemingly, you know, easy projects, which take a lot of hours. And I'm just trying to quantify the number of hours and then, you know, at some point when you quantify the number of hours, you can quantify the number of dollars that we're expending on something that we may or may not be willing -- you know, we got to set our priorities. I'm just curious about that. All right. But you don't know. The bottom line is you don't have an answer to that right now?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Correct.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Thank you.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

But I will say that even though the RFEI is time consuming and people have to do it, if something like this did come to fruition, and I might be wrong, it sounds to me like a very good economic development type of thing. People will be coming in, from what I'm hearing; sounds like people will be coming into the area whether it be to sit around the beach or the harbor, to have a piece of pizza -- depending on what the developer does there.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Yeah. In some cases, we issue these RFP's and RFEI's, we don't even get a response.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Well, I think that's the whole point to having the RFEI, to see if there's any interest.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Right.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

So the RFEI is a lot less time consuming than the RFP process.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

I didn't mean to interrupt, but don't get me wrong, I agree with you. But what I'm saying is that, you know, this may be a good idea. But I think we have to be judicious in how many of these we give you. Because if I gave you one every week, you're going to say "well, I can't get my job done, can't cut the grass because we're working on 15, you know, RFEI's that may be a good idea." So, that's the other point I'm making.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

And we do appreciate that.

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Commissioner, what's your feeling on this? Are you in favor of this?

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Yeah, we're in favor of it.

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Is there -- there's not a motion?

**LEG. HAHN:**

Motion to approve.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Okay, there's a motion to approve, second by Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? **1360 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

**1392, Authorizing use of Meschutt County Park by the Suffolk Bicycle Riders Association for its Bicycle Rally Fundraiser. (Co. Exec.) Motion.**

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Second.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

I'll make a motion, second by Legislator Montano. All in favor? Opposed? **1392 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Okay, **(1399) Authorizing use of Smith Point County Park for Mercy Center Ministries 5K Race (Browning)** How about same motion, same second. All in favor? Opposed? **1399 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)** And I assume that the fee that comes with it has been -- okay.

**1402, Authorizing use of Smith Point County Park property in 2012 by the Mastics-Moriches-Shirley Community Library's Family Literacy Project. (Browning)** Same

motion, same second. All in favor? Opposed? **1402 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

**1451, Renaming the County Park in Montauk and designating the Third House. (Schneiderman)** Okay. Renaming it to what?

**MR. NOLAN:**

I think it's back to Montauk County Park. Right now it's Theodore Roosevelt Park and this would --

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Why are we doing that?

**MR. NOLAN:**

I'm told that the Historic Society out there has requested it. Beyond that I -- it's the original name of the Park. You know, the Park Trustees have asked for it. They are myriad reasons. What's that? I've never been out there.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

That needs to be tabled. I assume that goes to the -- Legislator Stern's Committee, right?

**LEG. STERN:**

Yes.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Right? Okay. So motion by Legislator Stern to table, second by Legislator Horsley. All in favor? Opposed? **1451 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

**D.P.O. HORSLEY:**

Was it Legislator Schneiderman's idea we're going to rename it? I'm sorry, may I be recognized? I thought you were done.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

It was renamed, but it was always Montauk County Park. It was renamed back in 1998 on the 100th anniversary of the Spanish-American War. I guess in 1998 they thought it would be a good idea to drum some business out there and have this idea to rename it Teddy Roosevelt County Park. The Concerned Citizens of Montauk and the Historical -- local Historical Society thought that the --

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

A period in history and --

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Yeah, they'd rather -- I don't want to disparage the --

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Was this location the location where Theodore Roosevelt's troops disembarked the Rough Riders at that time or --

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Actually it's not. And that's part of their -- that's part of the reasoning, I think -- I think the Rough Riders were more down in Ditch Plains. And there is the -- I don't want to say rumor, but I think Teddy Roosevelt's wife might have spent some time up by Third House and he might have visited for the two-month period that they were quarantined, but that's really the historic significance. It's not that great.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

If I may?

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Legislator Montano, want to add?

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Yeah, if I may add, Legislator Horsley, the second Whereas Clause says that the Native American Montauk Tribe were the original settlers of the East End on Long Island. So I presume that's why -- ah, see, you read the bill, it's enlightening. The second Whereas says the American Native Montauk Tribe were the original settlers of the East End of Long Island, so -- yeah, I think that's -- didn't we have something at the College where they came in?

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

Yes.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

All right. And I guess what -- well, I'm not going to venture. It's tabled, right? Are we going to vote to table it?

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Legislator Stern, has it gone to your Committee yet?

**LEG. STERN:**

Not yet.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

Not yet.

**LEG. MONTANO:**

Okay.

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Okay, so, you'll enlighten us when the time comes and we find out the reason why they want to do that. Okay.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

Well, I think like -- Dick White's a Trustee -- one of the Suffolk County Parks Trustees. I'm sure he'd be more than happy to come in and discuss the merits of it, if you'd like.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

I guess we'll learn further when it comes out of your renaming committee.

**LEG. HORSLEY:**

By going back to Montauk, it's going back to its Indian --

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

I actually was out there the other day. I passed it for the first time. I saw a lot of horses.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

It's a beautiful park. It's over a thousand acres. It's got Reeds Pond, freshwater fishing. It's got the Shagwong Beach outerbeach camping.

**CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:**

There's a lot going on there when I passed.

**COMMISSIONER DAWSON:**

And as you indicated, there's horseback riding out there. It's quite -- Ferry House is out there. It's quite a big park.

**CHAIRPERSON NOWICK:**

Okay. Is there anything else for this Committee? If not, I will adjourn.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:24 PM  
{ }DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**