

11/22/13 Parks & Rec Committee

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 November 22, 2013.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Lynne C. Nowick, Chairwoman
Leg. Lou D'Amaro, Vice Chair
Leg. Kara Hahn
Leg. Wayne R. Horsley
Leg. Steven H. Stern

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Greg Dawson, Commissioner/Parks Department
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Robert Doering, Budget Review Office
Greg Moran, Aide to Leg. Nowick
Justin Littell, Aide to Leg. D'Amaro
Thomas Vaughn, County Executive's Office
Marie Berkoski, Aide to County Executive
Paul Perillie, Aide to Leg. Gregory
Lance Reinheimer, Vanderbilt Museum
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:15 PM

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay. We'll start with the Salute to the Flag led by Legislator Hahn.

SALUTATION

Welcome to the Parks and Recreation Committee. And we do have one card, Lance Reinheimer.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you for seeing me today. And I'm here in reference to IR 1992, which amends the 2013 Capital Program and transfers funds that were allocated for the Planetarium, planning funds, and moves them to another Vanderbilt project for wiring. So it does amend the Capital Program, but it's within the Vanderbilt capital projects. It's \$75,000. And the plan is to use this for construction to rewire Normandy Manor when the tenants leave next -- in 2014.

Normandy Manor was built in 1917. It was in private ownership until the County bought it in 2001. There has been some work done there. The County put in new heating --- new heating and air conditioning system. And the wiring is kind of a mixture of old original wiring, wiring that was done when it was in private hands and upgrades of wiring associated with the HVAC system.

So the license agreement with the tenants is up in March. The last time I spoke to them they're planning, if they can, to stay possibly to next August. They're having a house built. And I thought this is a perfect opportunity while that's empty to upgrade the wiring.

Next year's Capital Program for all of the museum projects, there's \$200,000 next year for waterproofing. Of course, waterproofing in the museum is an ongoing battle. And in some cases we're losing; and a few cases we are winning. So we need to continue to fund waterproofing on a -- on an annual basis. These buildings are 90 to 100 years-old, so it's crucial that we keep on top of them. But I think to take this money that was allocated for the planetarium that was not used, was not appropriated, it was planning funds to transfer it over to improving an upgrade of electrical wiring in historic buildings for construction is prudent use for these funds.

I'd be happy to answer any of your questions.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Any questions? Yes.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Yeah. Hi, Lance. Just quickly, the Normandy building itself, I've toured it and I know it pretty well. What is our long-range plans for the Normandy building? I know you probably said this a million times, I just couldn't remember.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Currently it's leased or licensed as a private residence.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Uh-hmm.

MR. REINHEIMER:

It provides us \$5500 a month plus utilities are paid by the tenants. So in terms of financial benefit to the museum, it's a \$70,000 benefit, provides revenue for our operating funds.

I haven't talked to the board about long-term plans. My feeling is that it's worked well as private residence. To use that building for museum purposes there's a couple of challenges there. First of all, it's across the street from the museum, so you would have people crossing Little Neck Road.

11/22/13 Parks & Rec Committee

We do have signs there to mark the crosswalk and so there are -- it's well marked. But the other challenge is, when I spoke to Public Works a year-and-a-half, two years ago, before we licensed the building, to have that building for public assembly, it can hold legally somewhere around 10 or 12 people. So we can't use it for conferences. We can't use it for meetings. We can't really use for public assembly. I think over the years there was some talk about using it for a welcome center. Again, it's across the street. It's out of the flow of the museum property. My feeling is the best use for it is to maintain it, and to use it as a revenue-generating facility for the museum; and to generate \$70,000 I think is good.

So the long answer and the short answer is if the board is still agreeable, the museum board, I'd like to still see it rented out or licensed out after these tenants leave and after the work is done. And that's my concern, too, it's -- we are using this as -- as a residence. We have an opportunity to upgrade the wiring while it's empty rather than disrupting tenants.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Fifty-five hundred a month, huh?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Does that include utilities?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No, they're paying utilities also.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Wow.

MR. REINHEIMER:

So that's what I'm -- 5500 with the utilities comes to about 70,000 a year. So it's -- that's money.

P.O. HORSLEY:

That's --

MR. REINHEIMER:

On a \$2 million budget, 70,000 is -- is material. We do maintain the property. We do do the snow removal and we do maintenance on it. So we -- we're doing that. But we'd have to do that whether it was rented out or not.

P.O. HORSLEY:

Okay, thanks.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Lance, we do landscaping and cleaning up the leaves and doing -- we do all that.

MR. REINHEIMER:

We do all that. And my feeling is when we leased it out, or licensed it out, that it gives us control over the property, maintenance over the property. We also have -- our master gardeners have a vegetable garden over there, which they use and they donate food to various food pantries in the area. So they have, you know, it's a license agreement so the tenants don't have exclusive rights to the property. It's still public property. We still have rights to use that property and -- and we do. So it makes sense that we maintain it.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Well, I think that the nice part about us maintaining it is that we make -- we're sure we make good

11/22/13 Parks & Rec Committee

neighbors. Maybe that's a little far out there but at least we make good neighbors where everything looks nice all the time. But -- and just curious, the people that live there, is it a large family?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. It's a couple actually. Their -- their children are grown. And not only that it's -- they're rarely there. They own several homes and so it's -- they probably spend less than 60 nights there a year. And no pets. So they have no pets. So it's low-impact for us. It's really been the ideal tenants. I tried to convince their architect to slow down on building their house, keep them there as long as we can, but I don't know if they're there for that.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

So they're going to leave in March?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, last I spoke to them, which was several months ago, they wanted to stay if they could until August of next year. That's their target date, they're having their house that they're building done.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Before they were there did we have anybody else there paying 5500 a month?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. Before -- and that's -- actually I failed to mention that. We've used it for executive offices. That was probably out of the ten years that we owned the building, most of that time was used for the offices. When I started at the museum the offices were there. It's not an ideal situation. The -- it turned into an "us" and "them" mentality, you know, the administration was across the street, that's "them"; and the rest of the employees were over on the Vanderbilt side. And it wasn't a good situation. It isn't good for supervision. It isn't good for, actually, the morale of the staff. We're better off in the middle of the property. We're accessible, we're there, so our offices are what's in the powerhouse, it's called the powerhouse, which is right next to the planetarium.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

You think it's going to be hard to find other people to come in and lease for that much money?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No. It's surprising, I've had people approach me. We found it through a realtor. We list it through a realtor. And even a year ago the tenants indicated that even some of their friends were interested. There's a lot of people that are interested in that house it appears. So I don't think we'll have a problem. I think we have to revisit, you know, and see what the market is at that point in time, what we can charge in terms of rent. But I don't think we'll have a problem continuing to license that facility out as a residence.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay. Thank you. Anybody else have questions? Okay. Thanks, Lance.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Okay. I do not see any other cards. You're looking at me saying, *no, please, don't call me up*. Do you have anything for us? No comments?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

(Shaking head no)

11/22/13 Parks & Rec Committee

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Does anybody have anything for Greg? Okay, then we'll go onto Tabled Resolutions.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

1430, Appropriating funds in connection with the Historic Restoration and Preservation Fund (CP 7510) (Browning) Is there a --

LEG. D'AMARO:

Motion to table.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Motion to table by Legislator D'Amaro, second by myself. All in favor? Opposed? **1430 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

1603, Directing the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation to develop a plan for the care and use of the Hilda Lindley House in Montauk County Park. (Schneiderman)

LEG. D'AMARO:

Motion to table.

CHAIRWOMAN NOWICK:

Motion to table by Legislator D'Amaro; second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? **1603 is tabled. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS

1992 - Amending the 2013 Capital Budget and Program and appropriating funds in connection with rewiring of historic buildings at Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum (CP 7445) (Spencer) I'll make the motion; second by Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? **1992 is approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

That's another great meeting.

**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:26 PM
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**