

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 March 12, 2014.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory
Leg. Jay H. Schneiderman, Chair
Leg. Kara Hahn, Vice Chair
Leg. Thomas Cilmi
Leg. William J. Lindsay III
Leg. Kevin J. McCaffrey

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. Robert Calarco, 7th Legislative District
George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Sarah Simpson, Assistant Counsel to the Legislature
Renee Ortiz, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Greg Dawson, Commissioner/Parks Department
Nick Gibbons, Parks Department
Bob Doering, Budget Review Office
Jason Hann, Aide to Leg. Schneiderman
Lance Reinheimer, Director/Vanderbilt Museum
Rick Brand, Newsday
Mark Elf
Traci Walsh
Kim Trink
James Serra
Beth Rottner
Virginia Frati
Richard J. White, Jr.
Stephen Jones, Maritime Museum
Daniel J. Murphy, Sea Cadets
Vince Calrosa, Sea Cadets
Bryan Mastrangelo, Sea Cadets
Forrest Woodward, Sea Cadets
Gary Vertichio, Sea Cadets
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

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THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:43 PM

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can all Legislators for the Parks Committee please report to the horseshoe.

Okay. I'd like to call this meeting of the Parks Committee to order on this 12th day of March 2014. Please rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Bill Lindsay.

SALUTATION

PUBLIC PORTION

You may be seated. We do have a presentation this morning. I'd like to do the Public Portion. I'm not sure, though, whether some of these cards in the Public Portion are part of the presentation we'll be doing. So if I call you and you're part of that presentation, if you'll just pass and we'll move onto the next person. And after we finish with those cards, we'll do the presentation.

So first one is Mark Eef? Elf, okay. Mark, you have three minutes to make your comments now.

MR. ELF:

Okay, I guess I'm up. Well, first of all, I'd like to thank you all, ladies and gentlemen, for allowing me to speak. I'm a Nassau County resident. I am a hunter; I'm a bow hunter. I started hunting only about three years ago, so I'm kind of an old guy at this but I do my best.

I'm here to ask you to please consider opening up Suffolk County Parks to Nassau County residents. We have a serious deer problem here as everyone knows. We've got farmers' fields being destroyed. We've got residential properties being destroyed. Some towns have gone to the length of hiring sharpshooters to shoot within 150 feet of residents at night with rounds that can go over a mile. This just doesn't have to be. If the seasons were opened up longer by the Department of Environmental Conservation and the Town would allow us to go in and do this in a safe manner, then we can certainly make a pretty good dent in the deer population. I know you don't have the jurisdiction -- or the legislative authority to extend regulations by the DEC, but most states allow baiting, which will allow hunters to draw deer in. And even if you're an animal lover, these animals are starving, they're suffering and they're destroying property. I think a longer season and allowing us to come in and help us with the situation would certainly benefit Suffolk County residents.

Like I said, I've only been hunting for a brief period of time. And I enjoy the sport. It gets me out of the house and keeps me physically fit, so -- and I think there are a lot of others like me who feel the same way. I hope you'll consider this -- seriously think about it. It certainly beats what's going on right now with these sharpshooters coming in. And allowing us to hunt these parks would benefit everyone. Thanks a lot. Thanks for your time.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can I ask you a question?

MR. ELF:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

This is an issue I'm interested in. I got a letter on this issue. I thought it was well done; though I am also getting some Suffolk County bow hunters who are concerned about this. I'm getting some, you know, "please don't do this."

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MR. ELF:

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Now, you're in Nassau; correct?

MR. ELF:

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And does Nassau allow Suffolk to come into their parks and do bow hunting?

MR. ELF:

Well, there's no hunting in Nassau County.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There are no parks to bow hunt in?

MR. ELF:

No, sir. No, there's no -- it's too -- there's too many -- there's too many -- it's too tight. It's not safe to hunt in Nassau County. There is no hunting in Nassau County.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And how many -- I mean you're not looking for an unlimited number of non-Suffolk County residents with bow arrows?

MR. ELF:

No, sir. What I'm proposing here, and what I would suggest is since Nassau County is the closest county to Suffolk County, and there are a number of -- quite a number of bow hunters in Nassau County, that you just consider us.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Just Nassau County?

MR. ELF:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, we do have other shared service agreements with Nassau, so there is a strong relationship between the two Counties. But just Nassau or even just a limited number of Nassau residents? I mean, it could be done potentially as a pilot program where we gave 100 permits at a particular cost to -- to only to Nassau, but I still -- I need to hear from the Suffolk hunting community before, you know, I bring anything forward.

MR. ELF:

Okay, well, I would just say that I think that's a really good start if you offer a 100, say, permits to allow --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Have you had any conversations with anyone from Suffolk in the bow hunting communities? Is there an association?

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MR. ELF:

Well, I'm actually a member. I just became a member of the Suffolk Archers -- the Suffolk Archers Club, which is basically an archery club. And we have a 20-acre course where we shoot -- we practice bow hunting, you know, practice our --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, it would certainly help your cause if you could get support from the Suffolk County bow hunters.

MR. ELF:

Well, I'm going to go back and I'm going to sit at the meeting and we're gonna certainly get that done. But I think that -- all that being said, I think that the thought of even a 100 permits is certainly going to help. And just if --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Again, it's just a thought. And what you said about the deer is very true. And, you know, both East Hampton and Southampton have stopped their, you know, the sharpshooting efforts there. And, you know, if this helps reduce the deer population, it could be a good way to reduce a lot of traffic accidents and a lot of Lyme Disease incidents; it could be a very positive thing so I appreciate -- I appreciate your comments.

MR. ELF:

I appreciate your taking that into consideration. Thank you for the time.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. My next speaker is Steve Jones.

MR. JONES:

I'll pass.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. That's -- because it has to do with the Sea Cadets; correct? Okay. Traci Walsh.

MS. WALSH:

Hi. My name is Traci Walsh and I'd like to read you a letter written by my husband regarding the Suffolk County Department Reservation System. Excuse me; I'm a little nervous.

"On March 3rd, I was notified by the Suffolk County Department of Parks that a decision was made to cancel my family's camping reservation made two days prior. The reservation was made using a Suffolk County telephone reservation system on March 1st for an arrival date of June 29th, a full 120 days prior. Without any comments, the Parks Department decided that due to an error in the County Reservation System, which allowed sites to be booked prior to the seven PM timeframe, our family reservation was to be canceled. My reservation was booked around six PM. Upon receiving a call from the Parks Department, I immediately called Mr. Dawson's office and also called my County Legislator Mr. Cilmi. Within an hour Mr. Cilmi contacted me and stated that he agreed that the residents of Suffolk County should not be hurt because of a glitch in the reservation system. Since I first reported my concerns to Mr. Cilmi, he has called me twice. He's responded to my e-mail and spoke to me at our civic meeting. However, to my disappointment, my inquiries to Mr. Dawson, including a phone message I left with his assistant March 3rd and an e-mail later sent that afternoon have been completely ignored. Nine days have passed since I reached out to the Commissioner of Parks and still no response. There is nothing worse in my mind that a decision is made to cancel my family's reservation" -- excuse me -- "vacation and then the decision maker hides behind his office door. I am extremely disappointed that my family vacation to Smith Point

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has been cancelled by Suffolk County Parks. No words can console my four children that the beach vacation that was confirmed, paid for, two days later was taken away. The camping reservation system has been a problem for years. Cancelling our reservation that had been confirmed and paid for and not responding to inquiries is unacceptable. And I urge you to take action to fix this situation." Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right, don't -- stay there for a second. Any questions for this individual? Okay. Later when the Commissioner comes forward, I'll ask if there's any additional information as to why this happened. So what's the status? You still don't have a reservation?

MS. WALSH:

Our reservations have been cancelled. There are nine families in total that this has affected. Some -- one family I know has received a credit. I know others have not even received a refund for their payment, but each one of us has an e-mail with a confirmation number that our campsite had been booked. We've done this for years.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. So, you know, I don't have the details. I imagine there was some kind of computer glitch that made the computer think the space was opened; it turned out it was not opened so you were given a reservation for a space that wasn't available; and then later, two days later, told that there was a mistake of some kind. Those things do happen. And it's unfortunate. You certainly should get your refund of any money that you've paid. That's -- that's -- goes without question. But maybe we can find out why this happened and see if there is any accommodation that can be made. And certainly I apologize for what happened. I don't know why it happened yet; so hopefully I can find that out.

MS. WALSH:

I would appreciate it, but I do want to emphasize that according to the information on the grid, those sites were available. It was indicated to us that those sites were available, but the system allowed us to book it before it should have. And so because the system allowed us to do that, unbeknownst to us, they're cancelling it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And has somebody else taken those spots now?

MS. WALSH:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Well, I'll get information, if the Commissioner has that information.

MS. WALSH:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

But thank you for your comments.

MS. WALSH:

Thank you.

LEG. CILMI:

Mr. Chair, I have questions.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Oh, I'm sorry. Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Thanks for coming down to testify. I wanted to talk to you about your experience in trying to rebook the reservation that was cancelled. So how did that go? Because if I recall correctly, correct me if I'm wrong, what happened was you called. There's a phone number that residents can call in Suffolk County to book reservations for campsites; or you can go online and book reservations.

MS. WALSH:

That's right.

LEG. CILMI:

My understanding of what happened was, anyone who called during, you know, this weekend or whatever, was allowed to make a reservation through the phone system, but that folks who went on line were prevented from making those reservations. I looked online myself at the system. There's nothing that's clear and obvious to a user that, you know, that reservations aren't open until a certain time or date. So when you then -- after you found out that the -- that your reservation had been cancelled, and you still haven't found out from the Parks Department why that reservation -- I mean, you heard from me obviously, but you haven't gotten any notification from the Department itself as to what happened and --

MS. WALSH:

I can answer that question in two ways. My family, we have not received a response, but another family received a response. And the words they were told is "seems like something's fishy here." And that is documented in another letter that I can submit to you.

LEG. CILMI:

Wait. They received that -- well, you know what, I don't want to talk about something that somebody else received that we don't have in front of us, so.

MS. WALSH:

No, to date my family has not received a response.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. But if you could get whoever that is --

MS. WALSH:

I have that for you.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So when you -- when you found out, though, that the reservations were being cancelled, not too long after that was the opening time that you could, according to the Department, make the reservations, what happened at that point?

MS. WALSH:

We log onto the system at seven o'clock. And if you're familiar with this system, you log on, you put your information in, you click on your site and the system freezes. You cannot move forward; you can't move back. If you go back, you'll cancel yourself out. So you're frozen and you just simply have to wait 'til system refreshes. Once it refreshes, the sites are gone. It's in an instant. It's less than an instant. And this is a repetitive thing, night after night trying to reserve a campsite.

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LEG. CILMI:

So this is a -- this is operated through a subcontractor for the County, this system, which at some point we'll have to talk to the Parks Department about. I would recommend through -- to the Chairman, I would recommend -- there are a great many people who utilize this system on a regular basis, who have some good experience to share with us in terms of how dysfunctional it is. I would suggest almost having a Public Hearing maybe in the evening where some of those folks who work during the day can come down and describe some of those deficiencies to us so that we could work -- however that may be, we can work to make them -- to make them better. You said you've been using this for years; right?

MS. WALSH:

Yes, that's correct.

LEG. CILMI:

What led you to -- is there any -- is there any timeframe that you kind of have in your head as to when you're supposed to, you know, go on and make these reservations?

MS. WALSH:

You have to do it a full 120 days prior to the date you'd like to check into the park.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. And that's --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Because -- just because we have a full schedule, and this can go on quite sometime, I like your idea, maybe not a separate Public Hearing, but inviting maybe some of the people here to the committee specifically to do -- we have a different presentation that's on for today.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

But maybe at the next committee --

LEG. CILMI:

Fair enough.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

-- we could, you know, we could examine some of the issues and see if we can find some solutions for it. You know, I appreciate your time to come out. At least you've made us aware of some of the basic problems. And hopefully we can hear from some of the other users so we can make it a better system.

LEG. CILMI:

And our Parks Commissioner is in the room. So maybe if you hang around for a little while, the two of you can get together.

MS. WALSH:

That would be great. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I appreciate that. Thank you, Legislator Cilmi, as well. Our next speaker is Kim Trunk.

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MS. TRINK:

Hello. My name is Kim Trink. And I'm here on the same subject. I'm one of the nine families that were affected. So I have a couple of letters here to give you from some of the other families that couldn't attend. But I would just like to read out part of one of them that explains exactly what happened.

"I decided to call into the phone system to refresh my memory on exactly what I needed to have on hand. I knew we need our green key number, but I couldn't remember what else. That night prior to seven, close to 6:20, I called into the phone system. I got the usual recording, which said something along the lines of 'welcome to the Suffolk County Reservation system.' The prompts continued. And, again, just so that I would be better prepared when I called back in a few minutes, I decided to go along and input exactly what the system asked me for.

"After putting in the dates, the system then asked for my credit card number. I grabbed my credit card and put the information in just as asked. It then gave me a confirmation number and said our credit card had been billed. I thought, *wow, I guess things have changed again.* This was exactly the 120 days prior to the date that I was booking. Maybe they opened up the phone system a few minutes earlier and we just didn't know about it this year. Naturally since I had been texting back and forth with all of our friends, I let them know that I was able to book a site by calling in. It was easier than doing it online. So nonetheless everyone was happy and went on and got their sites. So we all got our sites. If I told you we were all excited that we would all be camping together on the same dates and that our kids could celebrate their first week out of school together, that would be an extreme understatement.

"The rest of the night went by. Monday came and went and then we all got phone calls. I personally got a phone call and the person said 'your registration is being cancelled.' I said 'I don't understand why. I booked for 15 years and I've never had a site cancelled.' And she said 'you booked prior to 7:00 when you were supposed to.' I said 'yes, I booked at 6:50. That's what the phone system -- that's when it was working, that's when it let us book it.' She said 'well, I'm just telling you that it's cancelled.' I said 'why?' And she said 'I'm just telling you it's cancelled. That's what I was told to do; call everybody and tell them it was cancelled.' "

So this person was calling Greg Dawson and said -- and she wrote "he apologized for his staff giving him the wrong information, saying that we had booked two days prior," which was not true, and basically said unfortunately we are out of luck. We asked him to try to somewhat make up for had been done and at least see if we can all get a date together sometime around mid-August so we could all camp together at Smiths Point. He said he would see what he could do, but then getting back to me he said there was no possible way they could do that.

Since then I've left several messages with Barbara, Greg Dawson's office, and nobody else has called me back. So we are basically all just looking to see why that was allowed to happen to us. It affects nine families and we aren't really even given any answers other than the phone system messed up, which shouldn't penalize us. It's not our fault that the phone system was allowing that.

Last year there was a whole big change also in the system so we didn't know if something else had changed and maybe now you could do it at 6:30 or 6:00. We just went ahead and booked our sites like we were told.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So now the current status is you have no reservation, right?

MS. TRINK:

None of us have any reservation.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So the long and short of it is you booked it 10 minutes before you were supposed to?

MS. TRINK:

I personally did. She's saying she booked at 6:20. Between 6:20 and I guess --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. So you just basically called in wondering maybe -- maybe you can do it and it took the reservation.

MS. TRINK:

(Inaudible) Maybe it's doing it earlier, yeah.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right.

MS. TRINK:

If it's saying that we can do it, then do it. Because it's going to be easier than doing it on line.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So you would have just kept calling back until 7:00 if that's what you knew -- if you knew that's what you had to do.

MS. TRINK:

Or go online at seven or whatever, right, so.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right, right. So once you thought you had it, then you didn't do anything. And then two days later --

MS. TRINK:

Well, once you have a site, you can't do anything.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. No.

MS. TRINK:

Right. So we couldn't go on and book.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You weren't going to book a second one once you had it.

MS. TRINK:

Right. You're not allowed, yeah, once you have it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right, okay.

MS. TRINK:

So we just --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So then other people then booked this site after 7?

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MS. TRINK:

Right. Once they cancelled ours, I guess other people booked. Because all nine of us went on that following night after we were cancelled and not one of us got a site.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Where were you trying to book at, what park?

MS. TRINK:

Smiths Point.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Smiths Point.

MS. TRINK:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you.

MS. TRINK:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And sorry to you as well. We'll see what we can do, if there's anything. Next James Serra.

MR. SERRA:

Good afternoon. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak to you. I'll be very brief because I just met Mark and basically he touched on the same subject that I'm here to talk about, the bow hunting in the parks. I myself am a Nassau County resident. And I've been a bow hunter for 40 years. I've always wanted the opportunity to hunt in certain places in Suffolk County, especially the parks.

And the other things I just wanted to touch on is that as the season progresses, it starts October 1st. A few weeks into the season, a lot of the spots are underutilized. You can go -- drive through these parks at any time during the week and you'll see a lot of available parking spaces at these parks. And it's not only the parks, too. And I know it's not the exact subject right now, but a lot of the towns throughout Suffolk County allow bow hunting. And let's just take, for instance, East Hampton, not only do you have to be a Suffolk resident, you have to be a Town of East Hampton resident to hunt on their properties. At a time now when the deer population is exploding in Suffolk County, and every town and every community's looking for ways to control the deer, I think the only way to really attack this problem is to allow more hunters -- bow hunters into the parks and onto the properties to harvest the deer. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You know, I'm not that familiar to be honest with you, but isn't there some restrictions in terms of how many bow hunters can be allowed on a particular piece of property? Just because it's dangerous, right, you don't want to have a hunter in an area where there's another hunter, they could hit each other.

MR. SERRA:

Well, bow hunting is an extremely safe sport. You can't -- you cannot compare it to shotgun or rifle hunting. Probably 90% of bow hunters utilize a tree stand. So the trajectory of the arrows are on a downward angle.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

MR. SERRA:

Most shots are within 30 yards. And any ethical bow hunter wouldn't take a shot beyond that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

No. Are there state restrictions in terms of how many people per acre or something can be hunting at the same time?

MR. SERRA:

I don't believe there is any restrictions on that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. And how many of these people in Nassau do you think would take advantage of it if we did allow just Nassau County to bow hunt in Suffolk? Are we talking about 10 guys, 20 guys, 50 guys, 100 guys?

MR. SERRA:

Probably 100.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Thank you.

MR. SERRA:

I would also like to thank you for considering the proposal and the idea of at least allowing it on a pilot basis.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, have you also asked this question before, have you had any conversations with Suffolk County bow hunters?

MR. SERRA:

A few. And they have no objections to it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I mean I've gotten some objections already in my office. So I would just -- I believe it would help your cause if you could get the Suffolk County bow hunting community endorsing this idea of a limited number, at least, you know, during this period where we have such a problem with deer population. It might be something that doesn't exist in the future, in which case we wouldn't consider this; not that we're considering it now, but do you follow?

MR. SERRA:

Oh, exactly. But that would be a longtime in the future. The only way to attack this is to have hunting on a steady basis, not just a one-shot deal and -- a one-shot deal when the population explodes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. I just think if the Suffolk County bow hunting community is against this, you're going to have a tough time convincing this Legislature that represents Suffolk to expand.

MR. SERRA:

Understandable. No one likes someone else playing in their backyard.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. Thank you, sir. Okay, next is Virginia Frati.

MS. FRATI:

Hi. My name is Virginia Frati. I'm the Executive Director of the Wildlife Rescue Center. We're at Munn's Pond County Park. I'm here to discuss IR 1171-14 to clarify our license agreement with the Wildlife Rescue Center. First off, I wanted to thank the County and the Commissioner in particular for allowing us to use the park. We have a license agreement that started in the year 2000. We use the park as a wildlife hospital. And we take in all injured animals, most animals that have been affected by humans in some way. We do rescue transport. We take the animals in. We give them first aid, medical care, release them back into the wild. We also give education programs to schools and civic groups, teaching people how injuries to wildlife can be avoided. We have a few ambassador birds of prey we bring into classrooms and we like to teach people how to make responsible -- environmentally responsible choices in their lives.

The purpose of the Introductory Resolution, I was hoping, would be to clarify the supporting resolution to our agreement. Our original agreement says that we take in birds, waterfowl and small mammals. And actually that's redundant because waterfowl are birds. And we also take in Eastern Box Turtles. We wanted this change to read birds, reptiles and mammals. And our license agreement doesn't specify what types of animals we take in, but there are some people that -- or Park Department employees that seem to have a problem with us rehabilitating deer in particular. You know, I didn't want this to be an argument. I just heard the folks talking about overpopulation of deer and whether there is -- this certainly is not an argument about any overpopulation of deer. It's not an argument about whether a {culsh} should take place in certain townships. That's not what our center does.

What we do is we take in animals that have been injured in some way, like horribly injured sometimes and we feel that deserve a second chance at life. We also feel that the public that finds these animals need somebody to help. The animals that we take in, we're simply replacing the animals that were already out there. We're not breeding; we're not adding to deer populations; we don't have a deer farm. We're taking animals that were there already, some have been hung up in soccer nets, some of them, you know, hit fences and some of them are hung up on fences, really horrible things; fall down a window well. And we're there to help.

The Southampton Police, Town Police love us. They love us. They don't like to shoot deer in, you know, lots of time in a residential neighborhood. Many times it doesn't go well with the handguns they use. They call us at all hours of the night to come and help the deer. Realistically we're only able to release maybe one in every ten deer that we get. In the past few years, that's worked out to be between 13 18 animals a year. Considering the whole entire deer population in Suffolk County, that's point 08 percent of the populations in Suffolk County; it's not making any difference at all in the populations.

We are licensed by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, which ironically issues hunting licenses; and then they issue licenses for us to rehabilitate deer. They even have a tip sheet that they give us from the DEC. Tips on rehabilitating white tail deer fawns. They recognize that by us going out and helping these animals, we're doing a service to the public in that if people find injured wildlife, in particular a young baby or young fawn and we're not there to help, they're going to try and take it in. They're going to try and help it, maybe feed it something inappropriate, tame it, which then you have a worse problem. You have deer following people around. DEC recognizes the need for wildlife rehabilitation to take this out of untrained hands and get it into professionals that have been trained how to raise them properly.

Also the DEC Officers have brought us in fawns. They've come walking in carrying orphaned fawns.

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One thing has nothing to do with the other. I really wanted to, you know, make that clear. We are there strictly to help animals that have been impacted in some way.

Since New York State DEC does the regulating, I suggest that we let them do the regulating of what species we can and we can't do. There are species we can't do. We're not allowed to do bats, raccoons, skunks because they're rabies vector species. They're right on top of this. The USDA, we're licensed by the USDA. Let them do their job of the regulating. I don't think another bureau -- another municipal agency should say what we should rehabilitate and what not.

Also some Parks employees or other employees or future Legislator might have squirrels in their attic one day and then decide that we can't do squirrels. Or how about Canada Geese? Maybe we shouldn't do those either. We take in all injured native wildlife from the osprey right down to the chipmunk. Seeing an animal in distress touches people very deeply. We would feel as uncomfortable turning away an injured animal that a hospital would be in turning away a person of a certain ethnic group.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Could you wrap up, Virginia? This came about when you had applied to the Parks Department to build a lean-to for rehabilitating the deer, right?

MS. FRATI:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And they said you're allowed to be rehabilitating deer. You've been rehabilitating deer for a number of years now.

MS. FRATI:

Yes, because basically you don't need a structure. You need a fence to rehabilitate deer.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And now in terms of releasing -- you can't keep these animals. Once -- if they are rehabilitated, you -- you don't have a license to keep them on the property, right?

MS. FRATI:

No, we're not allowed to. We either have to release or euthanize. The majority of them do end up getting euthanized, they're so badly, you know, injured that we just humanely euthanize them.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

The other concern that a follow Legislator brought up was that if you medicate these animals and then you release them to the public and somebody hunts them and then ingests the meat, are you putting them at risk? Are there procedures in place? How do you deal with a situation like that?

MS. FRATI:

We actually are -- our very next speaker is our veterinarian, our staff veterinarian, Dr. Beth Rottner. And she's right on top of that. There are regulations pertaining to the use of drugs in free range and wildlife. And she's right on top of that and she'll speak next and address those concerns.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. And, again, most of the animals that are coming to you are being brought to you by Southampton Town Police; is that correct?

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MS. FRATI:

Yeah, we basically handle the South Fork. Southold doesn't call us. And it's probably because I know they have a big problem there. I know they have the cull going on and they probably instructed their police not to call us.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right.

MS. FRATI:

But Southampton Town does. East Hampton Village calls us. But East Hampton Town does not call us either. They usually just dispatch them but --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. Let me see if there's any other questions for you. Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

I don't know how best to phrase this and I don't know if I'm using the appropriate terminology for the species that we are discussing. If you're going to release a deer, are you willing to spay or neuter them?

MS. FRATI:

Currently we're not allowed to. Our veterinarian will talk about that, too. We're not allowed to band any animals, tattoo them, mark them in any way. But they're not our animals. They're actually the State's animals. If they didn't have a problem -- I don't know how feasible it is. Dr. Beth Rottner will talk about that later. I don't know, but currently we wouldn't be permitted to do that.

LEG. HAHN:

Okay. So it's a permission thing; not a willingness if --

MS. FRATI:

Exactly.

LEG. HAHN:

If we got the permission. Okay.

MS. FRATI:

Exactly.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any other questions? Seeing none, thank you, Virginia.

MS. FRATI:

Thank you very much. I do want to say that firemen go out and rescue deer caught in ice, fall through ice. Why do they do it? Not because there's a shortage of deer but because we can do it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right, I understand. It's a human compassion issue. Thank you, Virginia.

MS. FRATI:

Thank you very much.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

The next speaker is Beth Rattner. Rottner, also from the Wildlife Rescue Center.

MS. ROTTNER:

So to address any concerns about using, you know, potentially consuming the meat of these animals, we treat these animals as essentially livestock, as food animals. This is regulated by the FDA under AMDUCA, or the Animal Medicinal Drug Use Clarification Act. In wildlife we are permitted to use drugs in what's called an extra label fashion, which means use of a drug at a different dose, frequency, route or in a species other than which that drug is approved for. This extra label use is permissible when the health of the animal is threatened or suffering or death may occur. There's a very limited number of drugs that are actually labeled for use in wildlife. So most of what we do in rehab is considered extra label.

As I said before, we treat these animals as food. Anything with a hunting season is treated as livestock and may potentially enter the human food chain. So when these animals come in, this includes deer, this includes waterfowl, the Canada Geese, they're not given any drugs specifically prohibited for use in a food animal under AMDUCA. We only give drugs when medically necessary. And we also observe what's called a withdrawal time. Essentially what this is in an animal, if they receive a drug, you have to wait X number of days or weeks before that meat or milk or whatever product from that animal can enter the food chain. When we're doing extra label use, we extend that withdrawal period significantly. So in many veterinary drugs, the withdrawal period's anywhere from zero to 60 days. We will hold an animal through its hunting season; therefore, we've extended that withdrawal from days or weeks to months, far beyond what you may get at your grocery store. So these animals, we do feel, are fit for human consumption. And we are abiding by the rules of AMDUCA.

If there are concerns about the ticks on deer, when we get a deer into our facility, we treat them with a topical solution that is approved for use in livestock. This eliminates their deer -- their endo and ectoparasite loads. So when we release these animals, they are free of a tick burden. They do not have ticks on them.

As Ginny mentioned before, the animals that we release on a conservative estimate are point zero eight percent of the population. Most of the animals that come into us are euthanized or die in care. To put it in a rather blunt manner, in the past two years, I have euthanized more deer than most hunters will take in a lifetime. We see this as a public service to people, to officers and the community.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Let me ask you one quick question. You're not the only wildlife rehabilitation center; correct? There's others?

MS. ROTTNER:

There are others on the Island, yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And would they typically take deer or is that an unusual thing?

MS. ROTTNER:

A few will, but I think nowadays fewer and fewer are.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. So there's not a lot of places for them to go, but it is -- it's not uncommon for a rehabilitation center to treat deer.

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MS. ROTTNER:

Right. Elsewhere in the State it's not uncommon. I've lectured Upstate Conference on --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So this is really arising out of the fact that you're on County-owned land?

MS. ROTTNER:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And the County could if it wants to impose a condition that would prevent you from handling deer.

MS. ROTTNER:

Possibly.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes, okay. So Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

Are you able to -- I know with our 4-poster system that we have -- it coats the deer's neck with a repellent for the ticks. Are you able to apply that after you remove the ticks or is that what you're saying?

MS. ROTTNER:

That's essentially what we're doing. One of the products is called {Cidectin}, or {Moxidectin} is the actual drug name. They have experimented use with that particular drug for -- with the 4-poster system on deer. And that's what we are using.

LEG. HAHN:

Okay. So it not only helps remove the existing ticks, but prevents them from attach --

MS. ROTTNER:

Beyond -- beyond its applied date, it does have effect.

LEG. HAHN:

Okay. And then I was hoping you could answer the other question I had about spaying and neutering deer.

MS. ROTTNER:

Right now we are not permitted to spay or neuter. There is a problem with castration of adult male deer. Their antler growth is hormonally dependent. So if you castrate an adult male, his antlers will be forever in velvet. They'll be growing. They'll be normal. They'll be very large and cumbersome. He'll be more prone to injury. Brain abscess is actually a cause of mortality in male deer. And that usually comes about when they have an injury to their antler. So I think you'd be doing more harm than good by castrating the males.

There is some question as well, if you have a sick or an injured animal and then you are putting it through an elective procedure, is that medically ethical? If it is already sick and injured and then you're doing a procedure to further potentially cause harm to it, deer are very prone to stress in what's called capture myopathy. They die in captivity from basically human contact. So it's something that we have to be very wary of. So we may be injuring more animals than we're helping. Currently the State, with our permits and our licensing, essentially deer are our State resource. We are not free to do with them as we please. So that goes beyond what we are

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permitted to do.

In terms of contraceptive use in deer, that's something that we have to get approval from the DEC and the EPA for; because these drugs are classified as pesticides. So there's huge regulatory hurdles; there's cost involved; there's training involved. And for a small non-profit, such as ourselves, it's not entirely feasible. And then if we're spaying -- if we're only releasing less than 20 deer, again, maybe point zero eight of the population, how much of an effect is that really going to be having? Is that an effective use of funding?

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you. Okay, so that's the last speaker card. Let me just ask, other than the presentation we have, is there anyone else who wishes to be heard by the Committee on any other issues? Okay. Great.

SLIDE SHOW PRESENTATION

We're going to move onto the presentation, but we will be discussing this bill so if the Wildlife Rehabilitation people could stick around for that, because there may be some questions that come up, and, you know, I will ask the Commissioner some questions about the reservation system, if you want to stay, those people who spoke on that issue. But I do at this point want to move onto a presentation. And for the purposes of an introduction, I'd like to turn Legislator Bill Spencer to introduce the presentation. I'm sorry. Too many Bills. Bill Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At this time I want to introduce and ask our presenters to come forward. The Michael Murphy Division of the Sea Cadets, which works out of West Sayville at the Maritime Museum, just for the education of my fellow Committee members here, I asked the Sea Cadets to come in this morning to make a presentation. I've had the pleasure of meeting with them and seeing the work that they do. If you're not familiar with the Sea Cadets, it's for boys and girls ages 11 to 17. And they do training for them; they do mentoring to them. And it's a terrific organization. And I ask that you give them your attention during the presentation.

At this time if Gary Vertichio, the Commanding Officer, and Bryan Mastrangelo, the Executive Officer could come forward. Thank you.

MR. MASTRANGELO:

Bryan Mastrangelo with the Sea Cadet Corps. Lieutenant Michael Murphy Division.

MR. VERTICHIO:

My name is Gary Vertichio. I'm current Commanding Officer of the Michael Murphy Division, US Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

MR. MASTRANGELO:

First of all, I'd like to thank you all for giving us the opportunity to come down. My name is Bryan Mastrangelo. I'm with the Suffolk County Police Department. I'm also with the Coast Guard, which got me -- led me to be involved with the Sea Cadets being the Naval Sea Cadets.

We're here today just to kind of give you an idea and a quick brief, I'm going to go through a few pictures, show you what we are, what we do and what we'd like your support for going -- moving forward into what we're looking to -- for a long and short and term plan.

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With us today is also, I just want to introduce, we have Dan Murphy. He's Lieutenant Michael Murphy's father. He's also a prior District Attorney for Suffolk County; Vince Calvosa with the Calvosa Organization. He's one of our builders. And his son is also a Cadet. With us Tom Haskell is an instructor with our Division. His son is also a Cadet. We have Salvatore Coco. He's our architect. And Steve Jones, the Museum Director, Long Island Maritime Museum Director, which is where we run the program. And Forrest Woodward behind me. He's the Regional Director in charge of the whole region -- Northeast Region of the Sea Cadets.

Okay, so I'll run down -- all right. So we were commissioned the 25th of August in 2012 at the Long Island Maritime Museum. And we -- our website consists now of a Facebook page, which is up here. That's a picture of us at the Museum. Our Unit shrank. Currently we have 32 Cadets. We have a current capacity of 35 Cadets just due to room, you know, space constraints. We have increased adult involvement. We have continuous Naval and Coast Guard support. We have a lot of community contacts and corporate contacts. We're a non-profit, 501 (c) (3) organization, which we just got approved. And we are sponsored and supported by the Sayville American Legion, the United States Navy League, Coast Guard Chief's Association and the Murphy family's very involved.

Our training, it's very similar to a military reserve department where we do one week in a month, two weeks out of the year; and then the Cadets get sent around the country for whatever they can go to for certain trainings. And we train them just like general mandated training in the military. The topics are, you know, leadership; we focus on hazing, drug and alcohol awareness, self-defense, swimming certification, First Aid certification, gun -- you know, we take them to the range, boating safety certifications, physical training. They're out there doing PT and rifle drill team where we do a lot of honor guards, color guards for any kind of organization, whoever requests us.

The kids, you know, they wear uniforms, they get ribbons and awards. And they come to drill very proud. These are all the local Coast Guard stations on Long Island that are very willing. And they take the Cadets because a lot of them were Cadets. And I'll send them there for a week at a time as a prerequisite for our Sea Cadets to go through the ranks and get advanced, which their ultimate goal is to make Chief. You make a Chief in a Sea Cadet, it's like making Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts. We're very -- we're similar also. We are a national organization. We have -- we have -- it's about 3,000 cadets, is that right? 300 units with 3,000 Cadets all around the country. So we're a national organization, like I said, similar to the Boy Scouts except better. And I'm just saying that to be bias.

Okay, here's us at the ship commissioning, the USS Michael Murphy Commissioning; us at the Commander Croci's -- Tom Croci's the Islip Supervisor. He wanted us down for his promotion ceremony, which he had before he went over to Afghanistan. Here's us at his last board meeting. He's actually signed in as one of our instructors and he's come down as much as he can to help out, being a good role model as a Navy Commander. Another picture of us at the -- at the Museum. Us with the Police Department. And we had a forward operating base camp-out for the weekend and we had the Canine come down and they do a demonstration. And this is them as well. This is us, we did a weekend trip out to Montauk with the Coast Guard Cutter Ridley. And they took us out for a ride and we spent, you know, camped out at the Coast Guard Station out there. During one of Suffolk County Police Aviation's Patrols, we were able to get them to land quick for a quick status display and show us what they're about.

This is us at the Veterans Weekend Football Game at the Stony Brook University. And our Cadets went out there for the Color Guard, Color Presentation, another great public event. Us at -- this would be Memorial Day weekend at Lieutenant Michael Murphy's gravesite. Every year we go out there and we have Cadets posted out there for hours on, just posting a guard at his gravesite. This is a fundraiser for -- it's a garage sale fundraiser. And that's our gliding day. We took the Cadets to gliding. One of the parents are involved in the Flying Club at the Brookhaven Airport.

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Applebee's Fundraiser. We were close to \$4,000 we raised here. We were serving veterans for breakfast.

All right, so what we have is the -- you know, the Museum Director is great with us and he's always trying to make room for us, but it's a tight area. We have usage of the classroom, which can get a little crowded. It's a small classroom but it works for our training and presentations. That's -- other than the classroom, that's our space. It's an open area with, you know, unfortunately that's what we have, people walk through, but it's few racks and it's just not enough -- we're a little pressed for space.

So what we are looking for as a short term goal is -- repaired at our own expense would be -- and this has been offered before, there's an estate building. We are hoping -- different things that we can ask for and work with. There's an estate building here that's -- I believe just being used for storage. And that can be a project for our Cadets to come in and redo the roof and clean it up at our expense. And we can use it for our offices and just -- an extra -- extra space. That's the back end of it. There's also -- there was talk about the container storage there, bringing in a small container storage. I mean, it's just a matter of, you know, can we do it?

Now going into a longer term goal, I'm going to pass the microphone to Gary Vertichio. You actually want to come here? Because you have to hold that.

MR. VERTICHIO:

Okay. Thank you, gentlemen, for -- and ladies for having us here today to make this presentation. I will say that the program itself is probably the best use program that is in this country today. It takes our youngsters in those age categories and it teaches them all the ideals that we hope to -- our future leaders will possess. And this country is in a constant need of great leaders.

So what's happening with this program is that it's time-sensitive. The kids that come to us, they have a window of opportunity during those age brackets, that they either get in or they don't. What's happened with this Division is that it's grown immensely. We have turned away in a year's time probably 90 Cadets. I'm constantly referring families that are trying to get into this Division because of its location in Suffolk County. The other two units are closer to Nassau and they are both right now to their capacity of about 60 Cadets each. Because of our limited space, our Regional Director took it upon himself to open up a new Cadet unit out at the East Moriches Coast Guard Station. So he's a dedicated career -- he was 30 years as a CID Army Investigator. He was in Afghanistan and he was a former Sea Cadet when he was a kid and loved the program, saw how much it helped his career; and then took on that responsibility as Regional Director.

How I got involved was through our work with the American Legion. We -- about nine years ago, I sat before Bill Lindsay Senior. And he used to have a round table discussion with his constituents and he offered us to come in, and any projects that we might be interested in starting. That was a great meeting that first night because he basically said "how can we help you, Gary? What do you have in mind?" Well, it was to save that old American Legion Post that sits in Sayville. And it was there for 80 something years. It fell into despair. It had limited members. And we decided to save it.

Well, Bill was the first guy that -- first elected official that came out with a \$20,000 grant and actually helped us all through that process. And why is that important? It's because here we are now full circle, because of our involvement for saving that Legion Post, we were able to be there when we lost our native son Michael Murphy and we were there to honor his passing. We were there through all the ceremonies that honored his memory. And here we are now almost 10 years later, 9 years later, we have formed a new Naval Sea Cadet unit in his memory. For me, I can't think of anything greater in my life at my age. And I actually had to get a waiver to serve as the

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Commanding Officer. I'm actually too old and only because we were lucky to find Bryan, who is also a member of the American Legion, stepped up. And he has done a phenomenal job in taking these young people and teaching them these skills.

As citizens and stewards of this organization -- and actually thanks to Commissioner Dawson and Steve Jones allowing us to house this unit in the present location, we have to remember that this area is a great gift to the parks. It has a golf course. And who is that benefactor? It was Frederick Bourne. He was a yachtsman actually and became the Commodore of New York Yacht Club. His son-in-law, Ralph Straussberger, was also a Navy person. And interestingly enough, Frederick Bourne, his first job was in a submarine wrecking company. So why am I going there? It's just to feel that there's a connection to the past. And I would say that if Frederick Bourne was sitting here today, that he would endorse what we're proposing.

What we are proposing is this first location that you see, we would like to add onto that and create a facility to be able to house more Cadets. Okay. That's actually the present building. That's the small craft building on the grounds. And then you can see that space, it's not being utilized. It serves as kind of a parking area when the Maritime Museum has their events. This is what I feel would work in that spot. What it does is it creates a classroom space above and the Maritime Museum will actually have use of the lower space for more of their displays. And what we hope to do is provide a Navy SEAL exhibit. There is no such exhibit here in New York. The closest one is down in Florida. And the other one is on the West Coast. So that, we feel, will help the Maritime Museum in attracting more visitors. It actually will give a place to house all the memory and honors of Michael Murphy and former Navy SEALs and our present SEALs to honor their service to this country. We feel that would be an exciting addition to the Maritime Museum.

Thanks to Sal Coco, his architectural firm stepped up and did these locations for us, these plan views. This is another scheme that we feel could work. By the way, this was all reviewed by our Executive Director of the Maritime Museum, Steve Jones. A year ago we met with Greg Dawson, the Commissioner, told him of our plans. We felt that we would help him in the decision process by putting the plan out before this body and hopefully try to get this thing going. This scheme actually was Steve Jones -- I don't want to put him on the spot, but this was his first choice. The sketch I showed you first was kind of my original drawing. I put it in a place where it was obscured. But -- in this location puts us kind of center stage of all that's going on in the Maritime Museum. And it gives the museum a porched area that when they do their activities, it's a helpful set up.

So that, we feel, is a doable project. This was not going to cost the County a penny. It is going to improve the use of the parks for our youth. And this is where we can go. This is a rendering by the firm BHC. That's the architectural firm, Sal Coco's firm. And as you see, there's an upstairs loft area with dormers. There could be classrooms up there, a conference area. And down below would be an open space that would house the Museum, the Naval Museum; and also give the Maritime Museum additional space. It would give us a usable space for the winter. Right now we borrow the West Sayville Firehouse to do our trainings. That's like an Act of Congress, to get that space, to try and book it a couple a months ahead. By having our own facility like that, that would give us the ability through the wintertime to do our drilling and so on.

Why I had mentioned, like I say, Commodore Bourne, is that my feeling is that this would be in the same idea of preserving the Maritime Museum's use for the community. It would create a great feature for Suffolk County Parks to have such a great youth program. And the funding, like I say, is going to be done -- right now we have an army of contractors, trades people that have stepped up that will not charge a dime to do this work. My former boss JC Steel has offered his cranes, all his equipment. We have an engineer right now Bill Fisher, who has met with Walter Hilbert out at Wastewater Management. We have -- there are no reasons based on Walter Hilbert's analysis to stop us from putting a septic system. Bill Fisher, the engineer, has signed on to help us like Sal

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Coco is designing a system, be the state -- a state of the art system, filtration system, or whatever will work to protect the environment. So it is a doable project.

I'm hoping that we leave here today with your support, because we cannot move forward in the fundraising efforts without this first step. Yes, go ahead.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. So I think we're going to have a number of questions. Let me turn it first over to Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

Well, first and foremost I think we would certainly be remiss if we didn't recognize Mr. Murphy and the Murphy family, you know, for their sacrifice. We can't say it enough. We can't recognize you enough, you and Gold Star Families across this country for your loss. And he was absolutely a true American hero. So, you know, we thank you for your presence here today and for your sacrifice.

I -- this is just a fabulous vision and plan. Can you -- and I think the idea of a Navy SEAL exhibit is, you know, an extraordinary idea. And you're right, probably a true attraction here on the Island. And I think that's a fabulous idea. Can you go back -- did you have a good aerial that really described like in relation to the actual Maritime Museum? Does it zoom out at all?

MR. VERTICHIO:

I'm not sure if we have -- I have a plan view with me that shows --

LEG. HAHN:

Okay. I just want to have an understanding where the --

MR. VERTICHIO:

Yeah, the vision that you see here is along West Avenue right alongside the Marina. It's next to Bill Hart's, you know, Marina there.

LEG. HAHN:

So where is the Museum?

MR. VERTICHIO:

And the Museum from here is north.

LEG. HAHN:

North.

MR. MASTRANGELO:

-- water is to the right.

MR. VERTICHIO:

Yeah, if you see the boats there and so on, that's the waterfront. And the Bay is to the south of that location. And then going behind north of the Bay is the Maritime Museum.

LEG. HAHN:

Okay. Because my question is I know that the Museum has plans for the boathouse.

MR. VERTICHIO:

Yes. The boathouse would be directly across from this view. What you're seeing here is the most easterly elevation.

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LEG. HAHN:

And at CEQ -- I serve on CEQ, the Council of Environmental Quality where we review these plans. And will the aesthetic -- I can't remember the boathouse look and feel, like did you take into consideration the architectural detail to match -- not match exactly, but to complement the boathouse and the actual Museum, etcetera?

MR. VERTICHIO:

Yes, we stayed in that -- what I should do is I'm going to refer this to Sal Coco, the architect. He can describe our --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can I just point out, too, you know, should this move forward, there's all kinds of agencies, you know, CEQ, Park Trustees, the Committees, etcetera, you know, the designs obviously are not finalized. First you need to get some sort of lease from the County that you're satisfied with -- that would cause you to go and spend the money to do this.

LEG. HAHN:

I think it's premature to talk about that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yeah, I mean, it may be early to talk about the specifics in the design, first a concept of how --

LEG. HAHN:

It's beautiful. I'm not --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

-- the museum in that area, I think, is the hurdle we need to come -- overcome first. You know, there might be wastewater issues. There might be DEC concerns, who knows what other permits are going to be needed at this point.

LEG. HAHN:

Well, we certainly have -- our Health Department has an understanding of the priority areas along our coast ways, along the bays. This is on the Great South Bay; correct?

MR. VERTICHIO:

That's correct.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes.

LEG. HAHN:

And so working with Walter Hilbert was the way to go in terms of preparing for what we hope you will include if you're talking about a green facility, the alternatives septic systems that are -- bring you to less than two parts per million in nitrogen because you're in what is a real priority zone, being close to our endangered Bay. And we know that you just as much as anyone or maybe more so than others want to protect the Bay the same way we all do, so.

MR. VERTICHIO:

Yes, we intend -- you know, the kids train. We have water activities in the Bay. And myself am a distance swimmer. I swim in the Bay. So that is paramount in our scheme, is to protect that environment. The water that'll come out of that system will be clean. That's why we were able to -- we're fortunate to have a great engineer working on this project. And we've been in touch with Long Island Precast. I understand that he just put in a very futures system at his home. So

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this is all in the early stages, but what we present will be acceptable. We wouldn't have it any other way because that's -- that's an asset that -- for all of us has to be protected.

MR. MASTRANGELO:

Mrs. Hahn, this is -- we were able to get up a full picture of the Museum for you so now you could see where the actual building is and --

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Sorry. Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Just for the benefit of my colleagues just to maybe highlight a couple of points here, as they've mentioned, there wouldn't be any County funds that they're asking for, the ask at this point is just for permission to move forward and plan to try and build this building. I think it's important to note in one of the pictures that we flipped through there, aesthetically it's kind of an eyesore. It comes from the street. There's residents in the north -- northeast corner there, the photo. So the residents are not terribly excited about what they're staring at every day right now. And the building, as you saw in the renderings, would not only make for a nicer view from the street there, but I think it would also enhance the view from throughout the Museum property and only add to what, I think, is a great asset that we have here in the County.

So at this point we would like to -- or I would like to possibly introduce legislation to give them permission to utilize this. It's also important to note what our Chair had stated, that we have to come up with some kind of mechanism that provides them with a lease so that they feel comfortable in spending the money to build this project and not simply have the County take it away from them at some point in the near future. So I think it's not only an issue that is unique to this particular parcel, but throughout a lot of our County parks where we have private organizations that want to invest private money in those properties and to enhance the aesthetics of them, but we don't have a mechanism of allowing them to do that without fear of the County taking ownership of it.

So I would urge my colleagues to go out and take a look at the property for yourself. It's beautiful space. The museum itself is a terrific asset to the County. And I think if we move forward with this project and allow these folk to do what they're trying to do, to accomplish, it will only further enhance the museum and the aesthetics of it.

MR. MASTRANGELO:

Thank you, Mr. Lindsay. And if you don't mind, I think Mr. Murphy wanted to come up and say a few words.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Absolutely. We'd be honored.

MR. VERTICHIO:

Yeah, I was looking for one feature that I was proud of, was the lighthouse. And that's going to be a solar-powered lighthouse that we'll actually -- when talking to Bryan being in the Coast Guard would become a navigational aid. It'll be know as Murph's light. So, that's a feature that I think is another great concept. And here's Dan Murphy.

MR. MURPHY:

Good afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to talk to you. I'm here to provide some moral

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support to these wonderful gentlemen who want to not only help our children, but honor Michael at the same time. As has already been pointed out to you, the Michael Murphy Division has become extremely popular in Suffolk County. And they've had to turn away Cadets, and they continue to turn away Cadets. Gary could tell you some interesting stories as could Forrest when they do their yearly review of Cadets that most of them want to attach themselves to Michael Murphy. For those of you unaware, Michael Murphy Cadets are also attached to the USS Michael Murphy. They have a symbiotic relationship where the ship and its crew also support and deal with the Cadets that attach to the Division.

I would assume that most of you know about Michael's story so -- and how he received a Medal of Honor; and the fact that his story has been encapsulated in the most recent movie "Lone Survivor", Marcus Luttrell's book, Michael's biography SEAL of Honor. He's also the subject of leadership courses in the US Navy. And the Navy has honored him and our family in many ways with various monuments including the Lieutenant Michael Murphy Combat Pool Facility for officers up in Newport, Rhode Island. They need more space.

Michael's favorite term was to -- and he used to tell his men all the time was to -- as far as Navy SEALS -- to improvise, adapt, overcome. And it's real easy to say no. You don't need an excuse. It's always difficult to say yes or make things happen. What I would hope is that when it comes time to vote, and when you have to review these things, that you remember Michael's words: Adapt, improvise, overcome. Find a reason to make something happen as opposed to finding a reason not to make something happen. And if you do that, then you will have not only enhanced Michael's legacy, but also your own in this building. So thank you.

MR. MASTRANGELO:

I have a hard copy of the presentation. Should I just leave it with the Clerk?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes. Thank you, Mr. Murphy. To echo Legislator Hahn, and I'm sure the sentiments of Legislator Lindsay and the whole Legislature, thank you for coming here today. Thank you for your personal sacrifices and thank you for your son and all that he did for our country.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I just have one more question for Gary and Bryan. And I know the answer so for the education of the members of the Committee. Can you speak to -- after your Cadets go through the program, they age out at 17 or 18, what percentage of them then go onto to -- go into the Navy or other military armed forces?

MR. MASTRANGELO:

Just last year, which was our first year, we had three Cadets make it into academies: One to Kings Point; one to the Coast Guard Academy; and one to the Naval Academy. So I mean that's -- from one Division, that's a pretty -- pretty high rate of members. And then now we have a few that are applying to academies; have about three or four. And one has already got his foot into the Coast Guard, enlisted, at boot camp. So, I mean, it's going well so far being that we're around for a year and we have, you know, three that made it into academies already and probably another three or four this year. But that's with a small unit of only 32 members.

MR. VERTICHIO:

I would add to that, that I believe Forrest has the actual stats on that. But from what I remember, it's 1% of ROTC Cadets go into the Navy. And the Cadet Program, I believe, is 6%, Forrest?

MR. WOODWARD:

No, it's 12% of our Cadets.

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MR. VERTICHIO:

Twelve percent wind up in the academy. So that's a pretty good record. I think the Navy should start funding us a little better than -- it's all volunteer. The great part about it is that it brings together former military. It brings the police, firefighters, veterans, parents -- it's a cross section of talent based on their life experience. And for myself I was 40 years an ironworker. And I was an Army paratrooper. What am I doing in a Navy uniform? I have to take a lot of abuse about that, but I wear it proudly because of what it stands for, who it represents. So I can't say enough about the program, how it helps not only our youth but the community. And it would be a great asset to the Suffolk County Parks, something that would be, I would say, a highlight.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Sounds like a great vision. Thank you for coming out today. Thank you for presenting. And we look forward to working with you. Hopefully we can figure out how to make this happen.

MR. VERTICHIO:

Thank you. Thanks for having us.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Thank you very much.

AGENDA

Okay, we're going to move onto the agenda. I'm going to ask Commissioner Dawson to step forward.

So, Commissioner, before we start the resolution, there was some commentary earlier, things that were not actually resolutions today. Maybe we could get some quick comment. There was the bow hunting issue and there was the reservation issue.

Let's start with the reservation issue. Can you help us understand what happened to these nine or so families? And what steps are being taken to aid or prevent it? And also to correct, reimburse, etcetera these families?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes, first and foremost, let me apologize to Mrs. Walsh. It was never my intent to duck an issue or hide behind a desk or a telephone or a secretary. I think those who know me on the Committee, you know, I'm willing to take my lumps when they come up.

What happened with the reservation system is, as it was stated, you can make reservations 120 days in advance. The sites become available at seven o'clock at night. In this particular instance, the computer reservation system was blocking the sites out, but the phone reservation system was not. Some people, I guess, went online. They were able to make the reservation. It's more than the nine that we spoke about earlier. I think the number was 36, people who were allowed to make reservations.

When we came in on Monday, we had a large number of phone calls and e-mails from constituents who were just as upset when they saw that these sites were not available to them because they were booked prior to when -- prior to when they went on sale. So a difficult decision needed to be made. It needed to be made quickly. To put everybody on a level playing field, we pulled those reservations. I instructed the staff to try to reach out by phone and by e-mail to the 36 people to let them know that we pulled the reservations and to let them know that at seven o'clock that night, that Monday night, they would again become available. It'd be a clean and open playing field. And they had every opportunity, as everybody else did -- and it's understandable there are few sites at Smiths Point -- I mean it's mostly Smiths Point and Cupsogue, those are the ones that are in high

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demand, especially around the summertime, everybody went onto the system. And some got and some did not. It's an unfortunate situation.

We had the conversation multiple times at this Committee that the reservation system, we have had our -- we have had our issues with it. The contract with that firm is up at the end of this year. We're actually -- we're in the process of -- we're in the RFP process right now. Bids will be coming back in. It was a difficult decision. It wasn't one that I made lightly. It wasn't one that I enjoy doing, but we did get just as -- I should clarify. We got more complaints that the system was open prior to when it was allowed to be open. I mean, I can show you e-mails pretty much accusing us of opening up the phone system and then letting our friends and family know that it was open. I mean, I can share those e-mails with you. I can share those Facebook comments with you. It was a difficult decision. The reservation system put us in a position where we had to do something. So that explains it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Have those or will all those -- what did you say, 36 families, have they all been reimbursed their deposits at this point?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I'd have to double check. It takes a number of --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Will they be?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Oh, absolutely.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No question. There is no --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is there anything we can do for those 36 groups that -- I mean -- so I take it basically on any particular night, and these particular nights, we can't meet demand. We have more people who want to stay at these parks than we can possibly provide, right?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's correct. And for those particular sites in Smiths Point and Cupsogue, they do -- as soon as the 120-day clock ticks, you have thousands of people hitting the system. And those sites get reserved. And for me to -- and I had a conversation with one -- trust me, I had a number of conversations with a number of angry constituents. It was suggested that for this particular group of eight or nine, you know, that if I could make accommodations some time in August, and, you know, they were talking about the four or five spots, then I said, "well, then how do I decide which four or five that I, you know, that I would do that for?" We've never done it in the past. I kind of wanted to give it some thought, you know. I thought about it; talked about it with some staff. I said if we do that, then what do we do for the other 30 some odd people? And, again, the people who hit the system at seven o'clock 120 days in advance, it would take those sites off -- off of the reservation system, so.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is there anything we can offer to these 36? Not just the nine, the 36 who thought they -- you

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know, they got their credit cards charged, thought they had something. I mean, is there a time period that we can block out?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Out of the 36, let's -- some of those people did make reservations.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

They did. They called back and they got in.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Oh, absolutely. I think the number was eight, which is a pretty high percentage when you think 36. Because in the scheme of things, those 36 people, had they gone, hit the system at seven o'clock, only a percentage of them were going to get reservations regardless. And it's unfortunate. I know, you know, I've spoken to a number of the patrons. They were thrilled that they had gotten these reservations. Their friends were all going to be at the same campsite at the same time.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Are there openings at Shinnecock?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

There are openings at Indian Island. There are openings at most of our campsites. It's the ones -- the ones that are on the beach are the ones that are so hard.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right, well, it's --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It's not like you can't camp. You can still camp at Indian Island, Cedar Point, all those sites, I mean because they're not in --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Shinnecocks? Shinnecock East is also on the --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Shinnecock East is on the reservation system. I'm assuming it's booked for 4th of July. I can't -- I can't tell you right now.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We can give it some thought -- some more thought, but I can't make any commitments.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, let me hear from the rest of the Committee. As long as you're sitting down with these people and seeing what we can do to -- it's an unusual circumstance. And I understand they booked prior to when they were supposed to book in some cases. And perhaps they should have known that, but believing that they had a reservation they didn't continue -- you know, I think they would have called right back at seven o'clock, but they thought they got it.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I understand.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So somebody else got in there. So they're being penalized by being a little too early. And I think we have kind of an obligation to do whatever we can to see if we can either find another time, another place, something for these individuals. Other Legislators? Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Commissioner, thank you for that. And I know you and I have had a couple of conversations about this. Appreciate your apology to Mrs. Walsh. I had no idea that you hadn't gotten back to her. We hadn't really talked about that, she and I. And I think she was one of the ones that I had assured that you would get back to her. So while I'm sorry that didn't happen, hopefully now you'll be able to have a conversation.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

My apologies to you and to her.

LEG. CILMI:

By all means. And I was really surprised to hear her say that. Because I know you, and it's really out of character for that to happen for you. So, you know that I disagree with the decision that the Department made.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I do.

LEG. CILMI:

I certainly understand the dilemma that you were faced with. You were sort of like, you know, it was a no-win situation, really. You were going to have some people angry at you, one way or the other.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Pretty much.

LEG. CILMI:

So to the extent to which the County can work with this group of nine, and to the extent that any of the other 30, however many it was, have asked for some sort of accommodations, to the extent that we can do that for them, I suggest that we do whatever we can to help them. I was surprised when I went online to the registration site how obscure it is -- you really can't even find where it says anything about "reservations will only be accepted 120 days prior to." So that's something that maybe we should address right away.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It is in the regulations. I mean, if we need to make that more prominent --

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah, I think that should -- I mean, I understand that we all -- you know, some of us say, well, you know, they've been doing it for years, they should know. But I fully appreciate -- I forget the last name exactly, the young lady who spoke, who read testimony of somebody going on, we've all done that. We've all gone -- made phone calls. I'm not sure that it's an 800 number, or whatever, but we've all made those phone calls to see what we need to do. And if you're prompted to leave a, you know, to put your credit card number in and make a reservation, you're not going to say, "well, I'm not supposed to do that until seven o'clock so I'm going to not do it." So, you know, there certainly should be some accountability on the part of this vendor, I suppose.

And the other question I have is the -- would you be able to look back over the years and determine

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who have been repeat customers for that week in particular? I guess that's really -- that week is a key week, isn't it?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It is. And I'll tell you there are some people say -- and we get accused of this all the -- we have e-mails that say such and such family has been there -- and I think what happens is, and to the detriment of the system, people sit down and they sit down with their telephones, they sit there with their iPad, they sit down with their laptop, and they sit down with their PC and they all hit the system at the same time, which causes these issues with the credit cards and too much data coming in at one time and crashing. And I think there are people that know that they go on right at seven o'clock and they have all these devices and they hit it -- and could that happen, yeah?

LEG. CILMI:

One of the things that has been shared with me in terms of deficiencies in the system is that if somebody goes on and they're ready to make a reservation, and they place their reservation in the shopping cart, that there's no restriction on multiple registrations for that same time and date being placed in people's shopping carts. So ten people could have this in their shopping cart at the same time, when really you can only have one reservation. So it's whoever clicks pay and is quick enough to enter their credit card information, I suppose, who would ultimately end up getting it.

A number of things are going through my head in terms of what we could -- different ways we can improve the system. I wonder if it makes sense to allow for reservations further in advance than 120 days at some point; so, for example, if the Walshe's didn't get the reservation this year, maybe they could reserve now for the following year. Although I suppose you'd get into something where somebody could reserve perpetually.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

There's a reason we did that. And it has to do with the credit card reimbursements. We have a number of people who make reservations and cancel them, which is a problem in itself. And in order to give -- the system, as it stands now, can only hold a credit card information for up to 120 days. So if somebody makes their reservation on 170, 180 -- 180 days in advance, when we need to give the refund and we give out hundreds of them a year, we have to go back and look at stuff by hand.

LEG. CILMI:

Is that the only reason for that policy?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah, that's the main reason. Now we can make reimbursements in a more timely fashion. And it saves hours and hours and hours of staff time.

LEG. CILMI:

Because that -- I mean that seems like sort of a silly, administrative glitch that should be able to be fixed. If that's the only reason why you wouldn't permit somebody to reserve more than a 120 days in advance -- you could say to people, for example, no refunds. I mean it could be as simple as that. Or it could be as, you know, maybe as complicated as saying to whoever that -- credit card -- or maybe you say cash only if you reserve greater than 120 days.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I think our system has a number of rules and regulations. And they were put in place to stop -- and not this one in particular, but how many days you can book in advance, how many days you can consecutively need to book, how many you're allowed in a certain timeframe to stop abuse, and to stop people from manipulating the system. So hopefully under the new -- and I can't speak

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because we don't have the pitch back yet, that we can address a lot of these issues with a new system.

LEG. CILMI:

Right. But certainly we're never going to be able to address the issue if there is not enough spaces for --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

For those particular facilities, that's correct. I mean we have 250 -- 275 spaces at Smiths Point Park, you know. I think 80 of them are full hookups and the other -- the other, I mean, have water and electric. But they all get booked within minutes of when they become available. During the peak time, you know, from Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Mother's Day, Father's Day, you know, the major holidays, they tend to book up.

LEG. CILMI:

Right.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

But, you know, we do still have camping sites available throughout the system.

LEG. CILMI:

Uh-huh. Not to be petty about it, but how many phone calls and/or e-mails do you think you received from people who were upset that reservations were already taken prior to them being able to make them online at the required time?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

The phones -- I mean, I couldn't tell you, but I could tell you that my staff was receiving phone calls off the hook on Monday morning.

LEG. CILMI:

Well, I mean, 30 phone calls would be off the hook to me.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

You say there were demonstrably more that were upset about not having access to reservations?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I don't know how many phone calls.

LEG. CILMI:

You don't know.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

This could go on and on.

LEG. CILMI:

Yeah, I know.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And I encourage the additional dialogue, Legislator Cilmi, working with the Commissioner and trying to come up with something that's satisfactory. You know, I think they're going to leave today not feeling satisfied.

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LEG. CILMI:

Right.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Although, they've certainly been hurt. So, you know, I would just, you know, I'd like to be in the loop, too. And I think we need to try to figure out a way to do something here. It's nobody's particular error. It was whatever. It was a computer glitch, or whatever it is. And these people clearly got left out of something that they normally do every year with their families because of it. And if there's something we can do, I think we ought to try. I just don't know what that something is yet. And we can't create more camp spaces that don't exist. Maybe one day we'll expand some of these places if there's room for it. But meanwhile, if you have a creative solution, Legislator Cilmi, discuss it with the Commissioner and we'll continue the conversation.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Can I ask a question?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yeah, Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. CILMI:

I guess I was done. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, just to -- Legislator Lindsay, you can go on, if you wish.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Commissioner, would it be possible to offer -- I know we don't usually do it this far in advance, but offer them to make a reservation next year at the timing -- time of their choosing?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And that was the suggestion from one of the callers. I don't want to commit to that. What we'll be doing is we'll be taking -- we'll be taking those valuable campsites off the reservation system and people will be upset about that.

LEG. LINDSAY:

I understand that and sympathize with them. You know, and I know it doesn't help them this year for their vacation, and trust me no one -- to me vacation is sacred, especially when you're with kids and family involved and so forth, but if they could -- if that could be made as an accomodation I think the circumstances warrant an exception at this time. So that's my only recommendation.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay. Legislator Cilmi?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Legislator Cilmi, was there more you wanted to say?

LEG. CILMI:

No, that's okay.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

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COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I can send you some of the e-mails that were received, if that would be helpful.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

LEG. HAHN:

I have a quick question.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay, Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

How long did it take to tell them that they couldn't have their vacation that they booked?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We did it that day. We came and we made the decision around noon.

LEG. HAHN:

If it was two days, that was the most?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

What's that?

LEG. HAHN:

If it was two days for some, that was the most?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah.

LEG. HAHN:

It wasn't that long. It wasn't that long. Okay, yeah I don't -- I don't know if that warrants an exception. I mean what it sounds to me is that people got on there looking for information, knew that they were getting an exception early when they booked it, and knew that it was wrong because it was supposed to start at seven o'clock and they were getting it early. And, I mean, it's really disappointing. It's really disappointing. And we're sorry that that happened, but I just don't know that that warrants a special exception category for future bookings. And I mean that's a policy decision maybe but --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Again, I'm not sure what the right response is.

LEG. HAHN:

Right.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You know, it's not their fault.

LEG. HAHN:

No, it's not.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It may not be our fault. It's just an unfortunate situation. I think if the Commissioner can find

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something, great; but if not, I mean there's only so much you can do. It is unfortunate what happened.

Okay. On the bow hunting issue, any thoughts there? We had some commentary on opening up County park lands to Nassau County bow hunters. Is that something you considered?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, I think first and foremost, our responsibility is to the -- and you alluded to it earlier, is to the Suffolk County hunters, and, you know, we talked to about 50, 100. I think whatever we open to the Nassau County, we could certainly sell that to Suffolk County residents. I think it'd be a tough sale. I mean our primary responsibility is to our own, our own taxpayers, our own residents. So I think that might be a bit of a tough sale.

We have increased a number of permits that we've issued throughout the last couple of years. I think we're up to 500 now that we issued in 2013. And we discussed at the last Committee meeting, it's more about the amount of space that's available for hunting in Suffolk County Parks than anything else.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay, so I'm trying to read into that, would you --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We would not be in favor.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You would not be in favor of opening it up to -- even on a limited basis or a limited time?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's correct. I mean if we did, I think we're going to have Suffolk County residents not happy about that. And if we thought that we had the space to open it up to another 25, 50, 100, we should probably do that for Suffolk County residents.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So do we have more Suffolk County residents? We have a list of people who are being locked out who want to bow hunt that can't?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I couldn't answer that. There's a waiting list. I can't answer that question.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Maybe you can find out.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. I'd appreciate that. All right. Any other questions for the Commissioner on this issue or anything off the agenda before we get into the agenda?

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Quick question about the bow hunting again, Mr. Commissioner. At the last meeting, you said you were going to give us some parameters as to how many bow hunters can be in a certain area, something like that, and when is it oversaturated?

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COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Sure. Nick Gibbons is here. He's our Senior Environment Analyst. He has those figures for you of how many sites we have, how many cars we allow in and whatnot, so if you'd like that.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

But we're not sure if we're using all the people that -- all the people that want to get it just in Suffolk County are utilizing it. We're not sure about that either?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, I think there's a certain saturation point. And in the high peak areas, those facilities are all full, yeah, even on a Tuesday morning. But I'll let Nick expand on that a little bit.

MR. GIBBONS:

I just want to clarify something the Commissioner said. We don't limit the number of permits that we sell. It's just been going up about 25 to 30% annually for the past three years. We're up to -- we just happened to sell 500 on the nose this past season.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Do you have a sense -- because we do have this seemingly explosive deer population. Do we have the lands available? Do we have the need? I mean, would it be beneficial to have another 50 bow hunters out there whether they're from Nassau or Suffolk? Can we handle it?

MR. GIBBONS:

What I do is every year -- as you know, we acquire new properties every year. So I take a close look at those to see which ones we could add to the program on an annual basis. This coming season we'll be adding a couple more properties. Currently we're up to about 19 properties in the program. And that's up from about six properties ten years ago. But to give you an idea we have a total of 13 parking spots within Brookhaven township; we have 17 parking spots in East Hampton Town; 33 in Southampton; 7 in Southold and 1 in Riverhead. So it doesn't take much for one of these properties to be locked up for the day, or multiple days in a row.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is it possible that people could park nearby and walk on -- street parking, that kind of thing?

MR. GIBBONS:

No. What I do is, I use the parking spaces as a way to force distribution of hunting parties and so that we know when people are out on the property lawfully hunting the property. Some other municipalities do have a much more informal scenario where you just kind of pull over on the side of the road. For a lot of these properties, they're surrounded by residential areas for the most part. It's not an appropriate way, in my mind, to manage these properties.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. So parking aside for a second, because potentially parking could be added, although I'm sure there's a lengthy procedure for that, in terms of the need, because of the deer population, do we need more bow hunters out there? Does this -- is this an idea that makes sense?

MR. GIBBONS:

I don't feel so on these properties only because I maximize to the greatest extent possible with still having safe hunting conditions and a positive hunting experience for the park user. So while you physically could fit more hunters on a property maybe, it'd be to the detriment of the experience and perhaps to the safety of those parties.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. So you would also not be in favor of this?

MR. GIBBONS:

Well, I'm in favor of adding more properties and we do that every year. So we're trying to maximize --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

But not opening it up outside of Suffolk County residents.

MR. GIBBONS:

I'd feel like -- my recommendation to the Commissioner is that that would displace Suffolk residents.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay, thank you, Mr. Gibbons. All right. We're going to go to the agenda.

TABLED RESOLUTIONS

So **IR 1002-14, Authorizing an agreement to revitalize Cedar Island Lighthouse (Schneiderman)**

LEG. LINDSAY:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You want to make a motion to approve?

LEG. LINDSAY:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to approve. I've still been waiting --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I thought we were having a meeting on that, Legislator, before we approve that? You want to table?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I'm still waiting for Mr. {Layhe}.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And we have a meeting scheduled for first week in April.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. This is an issue, again, where it will come down to the lease. I have a group that wants to rebuild the lighthouse at a cost of roughly a million and a half dollars and use it in part as a bed and breakfast, but they need a lease that will not only allow that construction but also allow them to stay there regardless, as long as they're acting in conformance to the contract, for that lease period of whatever it is, 20 years or so. And you had some questions.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We do. And we actually --

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

But that issue's going to come up again when we discuss the presentation that was earlier. It's very difficult to get a group to do that kind of significant fundraising and construction without some kind of level of comfort that they're going to be there. So we're going to work on that, right? That's --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We are, but we do have those agreements in place currently with the Maritime Museum. But we're going to meet at the end -- at the beginning of April to discuss it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. I'll make a motion to table. Second -- you want to withdraw the motion to approve and make a second on the tabling motion?

LEG. LINDSAY:

Yes, withdraw.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1094-14. To waive fee for use of the County Showmobile for the Amagansett Fire Department's parade (Schneiderman) Do I have a motion? Motion to table by Legislator Hahn; second by Legislator Lindsay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Opposed. So it's tabled. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1171-14, Amending Resolution No. 1013-1999 to clarify license agreement with Wildlife Rescue Center (Schneiderman) This one I would like to see approved. I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. HAHN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second by Legislator Hahn. On the motion? Tom? Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I thought we agreed at the last meeting we were going to have a meeting with you to discuss the issues.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I have the Wildlife Center here. I don't understand what issues there could possibly do. It's so minor. If you have issues, if we could -- if we could vet them here, I just -- these people, to me, are providing a tremendous service to us by doing the work that they're doing. And I personally don't want to tell them which animals they can or can't help. It's like telling a doctor which patients they can and cannot see. They answered my questions about the medications.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

They answered my questions about being able to keep the animals on the property, which they can't. They answered questions about spay and neutering. This is something that they have been doing for years. And it really only came up when they asked for that lean-to. And I know some

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people don't like deer. It's really not a question of whether you want deer or you don't want deer. We do have an issue with deer population but the -- East -- Southampton Police are relying on them to take these deer and 90% of the time euthanize them. And I think this is something that should move forward, Commissioner. Tom, you want to be heard on this?

MR. VAUGHN:

Yes, thank you very much, Legislator. We would -- I don't have anything against deer either, but I would like to have a conversation with DEC. And that's who we were waiting on to have them weigh in on this matter.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

They're licensed by DEC; correct? To handle wildlife including deer.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I'm not so -- you know, I don't know if they're licensed by DEC to rehabilitate deer at that facility. That question I can't answer.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can I get somebody from the rehabilitation center to step forward to clarify this point?

MS. FRATI:

Yes, we do have a license to -- oh, I'm sorry, Virginia Frati, again, from the -- Executive Director of the Wildlife Rescue Center. Normally we do have permission and a permit from New York State DEC and US Fish & Wildlife. They also came and inspected our deer facilities back some years ago -- our fencing, rather. We don't really have a facility for deer. At that time we were just using a stockade fence that was around the property anyway. Because really pretty much all you need is fencing.

And on or about 2004, 2005 the DEC did come down. They were inspecting all rehabilitators that had facilities for deer because they were concerned of chronic wasting disease, which was happening Upstate at that time. And there are sections Upstate that are not allowed to rehabilitate deer because of chronic wasting disease. So they came around and inspected the whole entire facility. I can find out exactly when, if you want. And gave the okay. They looked at our records where we were releasing the deer and everything was fine at that time.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Mr. Vaughn?

MR. VAUGHN:

No. And I certainly understand that, but 2004 and five, while it doesn't predate my employment with the County, it certainly predates my current position. And I think it also predates Commissioner Dawson as being Parks Commissioner. I don't think it's -- we would both like to have a conversation with DEC before this moves forward.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can you have that conversation before Tuesday when it's in front of the full Legislature?

MR. VAUGHN:

We could certainly do our best to have that conversation before Tuesday.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. I'll amend my motion to -- to a motion to discharge without recommendation.

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MS. FRATI:

If you look at our -- the license, if you look at our -- the list of wildlife rehabilitators, it says right on it, it's from New York State DEC. It says large mammals. Large mammals, small mammals, passerines, birds, waterfowl, reptiles. It has LM on there.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Your wildlife rehabilitation center, I mean to my knowledge it was wildlife or whatever that might be.

MS. FRATI:

Any native wildlife that's injured, right.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It wasn't a selective process. It was wildlife.

MS. FRATI:

Right.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I wasn't aware until this came up --

MS. FRATI:

Right.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

-- that there was some limitation on small mammals. I always thought you could --

MS. FRATI:

We thought we could, too, until we asked for this lean-to structure. And it was pointed out that it was in the -- it's not in our licensed agreement. It doesn't specify. But in the supporting resolution it says small mammals. And I think that was some type of a clerical error back in 2000 when that was made up or 1999.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I know there's been multiple situations where deer had been, you know, hit on the side of the road. And people have seen the police shoot those animals and have been -- they found that traumatic, so. I think that this is -- you may be serving actually a real beneficial function by being there and handling it away from the public. And I understand that 90% of the cases that is what's happening. You guys are euthanizing these animals so -- and I learned today about -- that they're being released tick-free, which I think is also an additional benefit. But there was a motion and a second. I amended mine to a discharge without recommendation. Legislator Hahn as well.

LEG. HAHN:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any other discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay, so it will go to the floor. There may be questions on the floor on Tuesday regarding this. So if you can have somebody present to answer those questions.

MS. FRATI:

Sure.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It's going to be -- it'd be very difficult to tell you exactly what time it will happen, but I will ask it be taken out of -- it's a night meeting. I will ask the Presiding Officer if I could take it out of order and then maybe we can not make you have to stay there all night, but it would be helpful.

MS. FRATI:

This is such a unique situation. We're the only wildlife center -- most of them work out of their homes. We are the only one that has a full staffed hospital veterinarian so it is a unique situation, I understand. But most people are licensed to, you know, to do any mammal that they have to cage them for.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. I appreciate it. And thank you for the work that you do. I think it's very important.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Legislator, just one point. The contract, while it does predate me, when they negotiated this contract, I think they precluded deer. And there's been -- there's been dialogue, phone conversations and written documents in the Wildlife Rehabilitation Center asking that they not do this. So I'm surprised that there are, you know --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Do you know why they precluded deer?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It had to do with the size of the facility, the structures, the DEC regulations. And, again, we want to get that clarified. I didn't realize we were going to have a discussion about it because I thought we were going to table it until we had our meeting, so.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I'm just trying to -- I thought we were going to have a meeting prior to today.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We tried.

MS. FRATI:

We got a letter saying it was because of deer populations from the Parks Department.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Because of the -- because a high number of deer, is that it?

MS. FRATI:

Yes, it was from Colleen Hoffmeister. *All deer are considered large mammals. Any harboring or rehabilitation of any size deer is considered a violation. In its standpoint the deer populations are far too high on Long Island and pose not only an environmental hazard but a public nuisance as well.*

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. All right. All right. Thank you. So we called the vote on this, correct, Renee? Okay. So it was discharged without recommendation. Okay.

INTRODUCTORY PRIME:

IR 1173-14 -- this is now moving onto prime -- Introductory Prime Resolutions -- **Authorizing use**

of Blydenburgh County Park by New York Blood Center. (Kennedy)

LEG. CILMI:
Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Motion by?

LEG. CILMI:
That was me.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Legislator Cilmi. Is there a second?

LEG. McCAFFREY:
Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Second by Legislator McCaffrey. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Approved. **(VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1174-14 Authorizing use of Smith Point County Park for Mercy Center Ministries 5k Race. (Browning)

LEG. HAHN:
Motion.

LEG. CILMI:
Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Motion by Legislator Hahn; second by Legislator Cilmi. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1203-14 Authorizing use of Smith Point County Park property by Mastic Beach Fire Department, Inc. For Public Safety Services fund drive. (Browning)

LEG. HAHN:
Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
Motion by Legislator Hahn. Second by --

LEG. LINDSAY:
Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:
-- Legislator Lindsay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1204-14, Authorizing use of Southaven County Park for the Kara's Hope 5K Run/Walk. (Browning)

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LEG. HAHN:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion by Kara, who has a daughter named Hope. Motion by Legislator Hahn; second by Legislator Lindsay. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1205-14, Reappointing Richard F. White, Junior -- who's in our audience patiently for our meeting -- **as a member of the Suffolk County Board of Trustees of Parks, Recreation and Conservation. (Pres. Off.)** I will make the motion.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Seconded by Legislator Lindsay. Mr. White, do you want to come forward? We don't usually make reappointments come to the Committee, but while you're here, I'd like at least the opportunity to thank you for your many years of service. Should I dare ask how many years you have been a Park Trustee? I know during when I was Supervisor you were a Park Trustee and you had already been for some time.

MR. WHITE:

My first appointment was signed by Mr. Dennison in 1970. And I think I was probably before some of you were born, but I wanted to thank Supervisor --

(*Laughter*)

Supervisor Campo for recommending me. And I'd like to thank my County Legislator and my Montauk neighbor for bringing it up and offering it. I really appreciate it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I certainly thank you for the work you've been doing with the Parks, but also with the Montauk Historical Society and within the community. And we owe you a debt of gratitude.

MR. WHITE:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

A very distinguished service. And I'm pleased that you're willing to continue on.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And if I might, I'd just like it stated Dick on the Trustees is a tremendous asset. I mean, historical knowledge, it's invaluable to us.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

With the Fire Department as well, where you've been a volunteer --

MR. WHITE:

Forty-nine years there.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Forty-nine years with the Fire Department. So thank you for your continued service.

MR. WHITE:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

IR 1209, Authorizing use of Blydenburgh County Park by the Care Center for its Annual Walkathon Fundraiser. (Co. Exec.) Motion by --

LEG. CILMI:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

-- Legislator Cilmi. Second by?

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Legislator McCaffrey. Any discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

1223-14, Authorizing use of Blydenburgh County Park and showmobile by the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation for its Great Strides Walkathon. (Co. Exec.)

LEG. LINDSAY:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion by Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. CILMI:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second by Legislator Cilmi. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

PROCEDURAL MOTION

And we have one **Procedural Motion PM No. 6-2014 - To renew agreement with PFM Asset Management, LLC. (Presiding Officer)** I need a motion.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion by Legislator Lindsay. Do I have a second? I'll make a second for purposes of discussion.

LEG. CILMI:

On the motion.

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CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

On the motion, we'll start with Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Just, can anyone give us some background on PFM Asset Management?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes.

MR. DOERING:

I'm sorry, I missed the question.

LEG. CILMI:

I was asking if anyone can give us some background on PFM Asset Management. I don't know --

MR. DOERING:

PFM Asset Management is the investment advisor to the Vanderbilt Endowment Fund. They've served since 2010; we initially had selected them there. This would allow us to extend the second 1-year option on their contract to continue the services.

LEG. CILMI:

So obviously we're satisfied with the work that they're doing?

MR. DOERING:

They were actually here before the Budget & Finance Committee yesterday to do a presentation. And they have been beating the benchmark as far as performance.

LEG. CILMI:

Are they a Suffolk County company just out of curiosity?

MR. DOERING:

They do have an office in Bohemia, yes.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. All right. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Again, I don't know whether Lance wants to comment on this, Lance Reinheimer, who's Executive Director of Vanderbilt. But Legislator McCaffrey.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Yeah, just a quick question. What are their fees involved with that?

MR. DOERING:

I'm sorry?

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Their fees involved with the asset management portion?

MR. DOERING:

I think the fees in total that -- we actually paid fees to a custodian of the funds, it's a bank, a separate bank; and I think in total the fees were approximately \$38,000 for 2013.

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LEG. McCAFFREY:

On how much money?

MR. DOERING:

The endowment's value at the end of December, as of the close December 31st, was 11.1 million.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Lance? I mean, I don't know whether they're doing a good job or a bad job. I know you have certain --

MR. REINHEIMER:

Well, I really --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There are certain guidelines on the management of this portfolio. You know, the stock market over the last five years, I think, is up 150 percent. This is not in anyway -- I look at the endowment, and it's unfortunate that was once a -- I think, an \$18 million endowment is now 11. I know there's an explanation; perhaps you want to explain it. I think when it hit a certain level, you were forced to sell stock; is that correct?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes, just a very brief history. Before 2001 it was somewhere between 17 and 18 million. I don't think it quite hit 18 million. After 9/11 the market took a hit. After 9/11 the endowment was around 12 million -- 12 million for several years. The museum withdrew \$1.2 million out each year, which is a 10% distribution. And then what happened in 2008 with a crash of the market, it did go down to the corpus of the fund, which was 8.2 million. In response to that, I was with Budget Review at that point in time. The funds were taken out and put into cash to protect the corpus. For a year the Legislature has the authority and oversees this fund. I'm a little uncomfortable speaking about the fund today because it's not the Vanderbilt's responsibility. We are hands off with this fund. It's administered through Suffolk County Legislature. However, I was at the meeting yesterday so I'm really answering these questions to fill you in. And my understanding was PFM couldn't make it here so that's why they were here yesterday.

But in short, the fund took a hit in 2008. It was in cash. PFM was the investment advisor that was selected after that crash. And they've been managing it ever since. They did provide the Legislature with these. I'm sure Budget Review has some that they can distribute to the Committee. And they have beat the benchmarks.

And last year the fund returned 12.7 percent, which -- it's a 50/50 fund. So there were some areas, bonds that held the fund down. But overall since PFM had it in their report, since they've had the -- since they've been managing, they've returned, I think, over -- since the inception date, which was 2010, they've returned 10.61%.

All I can say is on individual basis, I'm also not speaking for the Vanderbilt Board, but on an individual basis, the fund, you know, did well considering the investment objective. At the meeting yesterday there was some discussion about giving PFM a little bit more latitude to be able to react to changing markets, which means to allow them to go more into equities. Right now it's 50/50. What that ratio is wasn't discussed.

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As the Director of the Vanderbilt Museum, and my knowledge of investments, I think that's a -- it's wise to look at the investment objective to broaden it so that the PFM can respond to changing markets. And I think that would be beneficial to the fund.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Mr. Chairman, can I ask a follow-up question?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Sure. Legislator McCaffrey.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Using Legislator Cilmi's quick math here, that comes out to, like, a 3% charge for investing (inaudible) --

MR. REINHEIMER:

I think it's -- yeah, it's -- actually -- no, it would be less than 3%. On almost a \$12 million fund -- or \$11 million fund, \$30,000 is -- Bobby will do it on a spread sheet -- is what?

LEG. CILMI:

Point three four five.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

So it's a point three. So that's what we're paying for the -- he's the investment consultant and he oversees investment managers and those other fees that you were speaking about are the ones that are not included in that 38,000; correct?

MR. DOERING:

The 38,000 includes the custodial fees and the investment advisory fees.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Okay, but not the fees that are charged by the actual investment managers who are actually managing the money? Not the consultant?

MR. DOERING:

No. Those fees are inclusive of the fees from the investment advisor and the custodian of the funds.

LEG. McCAFFREY:

Okay. Thank you. That's a good deal.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Anyone else? Okay. Thank you, Mr. Reinheimer.

MR. REINHEIMER:

You're welcome. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay, so we had a motion and a second. So I'll call the vote. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 6-0-0-0 - Including Presiding Officer Gregory)**

Okay, that concludes our agenda. Is there any other business? Seeing none, we are adjourned.

(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:44 PM)

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{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY