

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

OF THE

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

MINUTES

A special joint meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee and the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on May 19, 2015, to discuss the matter of the 2016-2018 Capital Budget.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

*Leg. Kara Hahn - Chairwoman of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee
Vice Chair of the Parks & Recreation Committee*

D.P.O Jay H. Schneiderman – Chairman/Parks & Recreation Committee

Leg. Al Krupski - Vice Chair/Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee

Leg. Sarah Anker - Member/Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee

Leg. Tom Muratore - Member/Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee

Leg. Thomas Cilmi - Member/Parks & Recreation Committee

Leg. William Lindsay - Member/Parks & Recreation Committee

Leg. Kevin J. McCaffrey - Member/Parks & Recreation Committee

MEMBER NOT PRESENT:

Leg. Thomas Barraga - Member/Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leg. Robert Calarco, 7th Legislative District

Leg. Robert Trotta, 13th Legislative District

Robert Lipp, Director/Budget Review's Office

Rosalind Gazes, Budget Review's Office

Massiel Fuentes, Budget Review's Office

Jill Moss, Budget Review's Office

Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office

Dennis Brown, County Attorney's Office

Greg Dawson, Commissioner/Suffolk County Parks Department

Terry Maccarrone - Suffolk County Parks Department

Lance Reinheimer, Executive Director/Vanderbilt Museum

Philip Berdolt - Deputy Commissioner/Department of Public Works

Bill Hillman - Suffolk County Department of Public Works

Sara Lansdale, Director/Suffolk County Planning Department

Christina Delisi, Aide to Chairman Schneiderman

Catherine Stark, Aide to Legislator Krupski

Deborah Harris, Aide to Legislator Stern

Alyssa Turano, Aide to Legislator Hahn

Greg Atherton, Aide to Legislator McCaffrey

Brian Sapp, Aide to Legislator Lindsay

Amy Ellis, Aide to Legislator Anker

Lisa Santeramo, County Executive's Office
Katie Horst, County Executive's Office
Morgan Shaffer, Intern/Legislator Stern's Office
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Alison Mahoney, Court Reporter

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Denise Weaver, Legislative Aide

(*The meeting was called to order at 3:25 P.M. *)

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

All right. If I could ask all Legislators to the horseshoe. Okay, if we could all rise for the Pledge led by Legislator Calarco.

Salutation

Okay, welcome. This is the joint Environment, Planning and Agriculture and Parks and Recreation Capital Budget hearing. Okay, welcome. We have one card at the moment, Lance Reinheimer.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you very much. Lance Reinheimer, Executive Director of the Vanderbilt Museum. I'll try to keep my remarks brief.

On the whole, you know, the museum did okay with the Capital Program through the County Executive. The County Executive, in total, reduced our request by \$4.6 million; but, you know, we understand the times that we're in, that's fine.

There's really three projects that I'd like to address, and the first one is modifications for compliance with ADA, Americans with Disabilities Act. Not looking for --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Do you have a number, a number on that one?

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes, that's 7450.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay.

MR. REINHEIMER:

You know, I read the Budget Review report specifically for this project and Budget Review recommends reducing funding and putting funding in for planning. With the appropriation balance that we have and funds scheduled for 2016, the only request I'm requesting is that public -- that we advance funding for planning into 2016 rather than Budget Review's recommendation of \$25,000 in '17, to advance that to '16. But we can certainly live with the reduction of funds that Budget Review recommends for '17 and '18. So not asking for an increase in funding, just have the planning advanced from what Budget Review recommends.

The second project, 7453, which is reconstruction of the Vanderbilt seawall, the proposed Capital Program's scheduled \$100,000 for planning in 2017. The museum had requested that funding in

2016. It's -- ideally, it would be nice to have the funding to start the permit process in the planning for restoration of the seawall, which is crumbling. It was damaged by Superstorm Sandy, it sustained additional damage this past year. A delay of that program is just going to delay and increase the cost of that project. So ideally, it would be nice to advance the \$100,000 from 2017 to '16 for planning with that project.

And then the last project I'd like to address is 7454, which is safety improvements at the Vanderbilt Museum, which is a new project this year. The County Executive included it as -- pretty much as requested. Budget Review's recommending that the construction money be delayed into 2017 to include the planning funds in 2016.

(Beeper Sounded)

I think it's a little misunderstanding of the intent of this project. The planning funds are for -- work in conjunction with construction and there are some safety issues concerned with that.

I see my time is over. If you have any questions, I'll be certainly happy to answer them.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Anyone have any questions for Lance? Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Good afternoon, Lance. How are you?

MR. REINHEIMER:

I'm fine, thank you.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Going back to the seawall. You know, I did take a look at that last year. I'm not -- I'm not sure why you would spend money on planning for it. I mean, if you got an estimate from a contractor, they can give you the -- they would be happy to do -- to give you plans. And the contractors also are very familiar with the -- with what the regulatory agencies are going to permit and what they're going to expect, so you wouldn't have to, like, hire someone to guess and then go to the regulators and then they would say, *Well, you know, this is permissible and this isn't or do it this way or that.* Normally, if you get a bid from a contractor or two, they would have a pretty good idea because they want the work and they know what's -- what's acceptable.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay. I'm working off of my counsel with Public Works and their Highways and Waterways. I depend on them for advice on this. So certainly, if that's the fact, that fine. I don't know, the County has to apply for the permits. I'm not sure if you appropriate funds for construction, that if there's planning in terms of -- the planning is for the surveying and for the permit process and for the modifying of plans as, I guess, DEC requires. Not so much, I guess, construction planning, but for the permit part of it. I don't know if when you hire somebody to do the construction, that if you don't have planning funds they can do that aspect, I'm not sure. That's something that we can check with Highways and Waterways in Public Works.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Sure. They're right outside.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yeah, I think Bill -- well, Bill Hillman is around.

UNKNOWN AUDIENCE MEMBER:

You want me to get him?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Yes, thank you, because he would be better equipped to answer that question.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

MR. REINHEIMER:

I admit, I don't know the ins and outs of that question.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So the question was on the seawall at the Vanderbilt. I'm not sure where the hundreds of thousands of dollars in planning would go. If you got estimates from contractors who builds -- who build or rebuild stone revetments of the coastline, that's what they do for a living and they would be able to give an estimate on what the cost would be. And they also know what the regulatory agencies are going to require them to do; how they're going to stage it and how they're going to complete it. And I don't know why -- what the money for planning -- I don't know what the planning part would be, you're armoring the shoreline with rock revetment. That seems to be the plan.

MR. HILLMAN:

Yeah, my understanding would be that it would be the repair of the seawall. Interesting thought, we never thought it in that light. We can always research that and see if that would be more expeditious and save money. Good idea.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

What was the recommendation?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

You would get a few estimates from marine contractors who do this, you know, all over Long Island. It's a repair of the existing rock revetment.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I mean, Al, cause you and I have had long conversations and sometimes disputes about hardened structures on our shoreline. I don't actually know what the seawall protects, I don't think anything. It's just a historic seawall, but normally we want these areas to revert back to natural shorelines.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, if you see, it is reverting back.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It is.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

By the nature of having the stone material on-site and it's gonna -- and I was -- I walked the beach last year to take a look at it, it is becoming unconsolidated at this point and it will still provide some storm protection because of the nature of the material. It won't be -- it won't look as nice as it did when it was built, but it would -- it would, as itself, provide protection. A contractor could also

come in and just kind of realign it for not a great deal of effort in order to kind of stack it up a little more to provide safer public access.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Out in Southold, weren't they kind of moving toward, you know, using natural materials to stabilize shorelines?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

In certain environments of lower wave energy you can get away with natural materials. In this area where it was already built, the shoreline's been hardened historically, you kind of -- you're starting from what it is. A contractor could easily use this and not try to recreate what was done historically, they could just use that material to armor it and in a very simple fashion, they wouldn't have to necessarily do it to historical standard. I don't think that's required here. It's just -- it's tow protection and I don't think you need to -- you need to recreate what you have.

DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BERDOLT:

Also, just so you know, I think historically we always get the permitting first before we even go out to bid. I don't know if we could go do it the other way around, because it may take up to two years sometimes to get permitting completed through DEC. That's my -- that would be my concern with that.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, reconstruction of an existing structure shouldn't be that -- I don't think that's that onerous of a permit process. You're on -- you're on an as-built shoreline.

MR. HILLMAN:

It's -- I mean, I've been involved with projects that have taken excessively long, I've been involved with others that have, you know, gone through quickly. It's an interesting concept. There's probably a thousand hurdles that, sitting here at this table, I'm not realizing, but it's something that can be explored, and we'll see where we go.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, there are two ways, right? You can reconstruct it the right way it was historically, or you could use the material on-site, and I wouldn't even say patch it because a lot of the revetment can be done in unconsolidated rock, it doesn't have to look like it did when it was built. So there's two options, and I don't see why the County couldn't -- couldn't bid it out. There's a lot of marine contractors on the Island who -- they do this, this is what they do.

MR. HILLMAN:

Yeah. I mean, constructing it in a different manner than what it was, not to the historical standard, would be a decision made by the Parks Department, not by -- not by DPW. We basically are the consultant to the Parks Department.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Isn't there a third option here that we're not discussing, which is basically to remove the rocks, plant the hillside and, you know, let it be a natural shoreline. Why do we -- why is this needed? I don't believe there's any upland structures that it's protecting. You know, from an environmental standpoint, wouldn't that be better?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, then you have to -- we didn't even get into the boat -- restoration of the boathouse discussion, so there's that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

This I don't believe protects the boathouse, but we can get some testimony. But I know there's some people who work with environmental issues in the room as well; has it been looked at? Because a natural shoreline provides certain habitat value, certain filtration of, you know, runoff before it reaches the water. There might be some real benefits to removing all these rocks.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Well, a natural shoreline's good enough here, it should be good enough for Montauk.

*(*Laughter*)*

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. So -- well, there you have structures that are in imminent danger of falling into the sea, and there you didn't want to build a hard structure.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So here you have no structures that are imminent -- in imminent danger, and you seem to be advocating for a hard structure; it seems inconsistent.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No, the structure's in place. I'm advocating for a different way of fixing it than reconstructing it in its historic structure.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So, I mean, it'd be very expensive to remove that stone off the beach.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Could I ask -- I don't know if maybe Sarah Lansdale could -- if anybody's taken a look at this issue for -- on the environment side rather than just the historic side? Or Commissioner Dawson, somebody to speak on whether that's -- this is advisable to keep this stonewall in this location.

MS. LANSDALE:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I actually have not taken a close look at this, but would be happy to work with the team to do so.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yeah, maybe the Office of Ecology or somewhere could take a look at it, or maybe -- I don't know if, Commissioner Dawson, this is something you've given any thought to?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I haven't looked at the project.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

No, you haven't looked at it. Okay.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I have taken a look at it, because this came up last year and we kind of deferred it off. So I went and walked the site, it does protect the total bluff, it's a steep, vegetative bluff. Unfortunately there's mature trees. If you lost the top in a severe storm event, you know, you could lose -- you could lose some of the upland there. Where it's already in place, though, I don't know why you would advocate moving that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Most the towns, including the Town of East Hampton, have policies on their books that don't allow the reconstruction of these type of structures, particularly on the north side, you know, in areas where you don't have severe erosion. So they've, you know, developed policies in accordance with the State, coastal erosion type of policies, local waterfront revitalization acts, and typically they would allow this thing to come apart the way it's coming apart and not be reconstructed.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

What town is this in?

MR. HILLMAN:

Huntington.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Huntington? Do they have an LWRP that they have to operate under?

MR. HILLMAN:

Not sure. If I could maybe make a recommendation. Maybe DPW, Parks, the Board for the museum and maybe Planning all get together and maybe do a site visit. Because anything that -- any variation from what's out there needs to be approved by the board. So maybe we can all do a site visit, come up with some alternatives on how to maybe reduce the overall scope and cost of the project and we can come back with something that's acceptable to all and maybe acceptable to the Legislators.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

One other piece of information that would help me make a decision is if this is deemed to be a historic structure, for some reason, that may change the way I look at it, because of when it was built, who built it, you know, whether it's eligible for listing on a National Historic Registry, those kinds of things, that could influence my decision here. So if we can get that information.

MR. REINHEIMER:

If I can for a moment. That whole site is listed on the Historic Register, that is the original seawall. I understand, you know, the concerns you have, and I'm certainly aware of funding. My concern really is the long-term effect of having this starting to crumble and fall. As Legislator Krupski said, it can cascade if it continues down this way. Public Works years ago put up a, for lack of a better term, plastic bulkhead, to the south of the seaplane hangar, and that wall, as it looks today, looks brand new and that was done probably ten, 12 years ago.

You know, from my perspective, you know, historic preservation, of course it's what we want to do. I don't set the policy for the Board, but my concern is -- is really erosion. An option, and I'm not saying this is the right option, is to do that type of bulkhead in front of this wall and then you can backfill behind it, so then you've got the bulkhead that will last, reinforced by this seawall that's behind it and you backfill. I don't make that policy. I think that's a budget decision, but I think that we're open to looking at what is best for the museum, what is best for the County and what is best going forward in protecting the shoreline. I'm not looking to spend money for the sake of spending money, but I think this is an important project that needs to be considered. I don't know

if we should put planning money in there, so that if the agreement of the parties is, *Okay, we should do something*, what exactly is the best way to go? With no planning and no construction funds, nothing's been appropriated for this project, it was new last year, it's not going to go anywhere until that point in time.

We can have discussions and plan on for, you know, next year's Capital Program and where to go from there. You know, this isn't going to collapse, I don't think, this year, I'm not an engineer, but this is a long-term problem and it's, you know, a year, it'll still be something like it is today.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

You're not wrong to try to address it today, that's for sure.

MR. REINHEIMER:

But one way -- then, you know, we would need -- you know, we may need funds in 2016, whether it's planning our construction, I don't know.

One way to address this is to put planning funds in 2016 to get started. You could change the funding source to construction when you appropriate those funds if at that time you can do it with construction and not need planning.

It's really -- I'm kind of throwing the ball back into your court as to what we should do, and I appreciate the discussion and the different points of view. I'm really --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I think we need to move on here, right? Sorry. Thank you, Lance.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you very much.

LEG. ANKER:

Can I just ask one question?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Anker, quick.

LEG. ANKER:

One quick question, Lance.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oh, Lance, I'm sorry.

LEG. ANKER:

I'm looking at Google maps at the Earth view; have you worked with the Centerport Yacht Club? It's close by, just as a partner, perhaps, in working with the situation?

MR. REINHEIMER:

No, I haven't. I had somebody who's across at the Northport Yacht Club comment on the -- the state of our shoreline, and not in a positive way. So, I mean, the neighbors and boaters are aware of the condition of -- I think it's more important -- you know, we're the policymakers, Suffolk County, the museum, Public Works. I think it's -- at this point, we should develop an idea of what it is we want to do and go in that direction. You know, we should be able to figure out policy to include neighbors. I mean, the neighbors are in support of the museum, but I think the expertise is here to make the decision as to what direction to go.

LEG. ANKER:

Okay. And, also, I'll run this by -- I have the North Shore Coastal Erosion Task Force and this is, again, maybe something we can look into in working on this. But Thank you.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Thank you, folks from DPW.

Environment, Planning & Agriculture Capital Budget

All right. Director Lansdale, if you would like to come forward. And we have -- do we still have Dennis Brown here; is he still here? In case we had any questions about --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I see him out there.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Dennis, if you want to come in from out in the lobby? He probably can't hear me.

MR. REINHEIMER:

You want me to get him?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yeah, yeah, if you want to come up, they'll pull him out.

MR. REINHEIMER:

Okay.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Good afternoon. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your patience. Sorry about the delay caused by the other committee's long-windedness.

*(*Laughter*)*

DIRECTOR LANSDALE:

No problem.

LEG. CALARCO:

I had 14 speakers.

LEG. HAHN:

I'm teasing you. Economic development is a very important issue.

LEG. CILMI:

Just because we're popular.

LEG. CALARCO:

Yeah.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I don't know how after that.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Economic development is a very important issue. As is land preservation.

So if you can give us a little -- a little update on where we are on this and what we need to know, that'd be helpful.

And while you're pulling your stuff together; Dr. Lipp, I was wondering from the review where it mentions the 6.6 million that remains for future purchases, is that before or after our most recent Procedural Motion? Because we just --

MR. LIPP:

It probably doesn't. I believe it was March 31st that we took our numbers from.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. Thank you.

MS. LANSDALE:

So, thank you. We are excited about the opportunity to continue our Land Preservation Program with the infusion of an additional \$20 million. As well as the -- continue to expand our 477 Program with 4.7 million as well as an additional 4.7 million for sewer infrastructure programs to continue the County Executive and County's Reclaim Our Water Initiative.

We have as, you know, completed the Master List update at the -- really at Legislator Hahn's initiative and we have canvassed the top properties, the highest ranking properties, that have scored 50 points or above, and there is interest. So of the 371 property owners that have points 50 or above, there are currently 131 people who are interested in selling their property to us for open space preservation. So there is a demand and we look forward to using this money to acquire the most sensitive properties and highest environmentally rated properties.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Excellent. Does anyone have any questions? And particularly, I know we have Dennis Brown here, our County Attorney, if you'd like to come forward? No, no, no. If anyone had any questions about the recent referendum and the implications for our program. My question for you, did the referendum language or any of the agreements in court, whatever may have happened, restrict us from spending this prior to 2016?

MR. BROWN:

Yes. In fact, prior to 2016, spending it before?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes.

MR. BROWN:

No, not prior -- not before 2016. So it had to be appropriated by December 31st, 2015, and also that, I believe that the outside date, don't hold me to it, was like 2020 or 2021.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

So the \$20 million we could spend -- I'm sorry.

MR. BROWN:

Twenty.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Twenty million dollars from the referendum that we put in the -- that we were required to put in the 2016 Capital Budget; is there a way we can bring it forward and spend it in 2015? I'm not sure -- I was confused by your answer.

MR. BROWN:

I don't think so, no.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay.

MR. BROWN:

Because you'd be adopting the budget for the upcoming year.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right. Thank you.

LEG. CALARCO:

Good question.

MR. BROWN:

You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I tried. So we could bond against future revenue in the other case to prevent stuff from -- to prevent losing land to development, but we can't spend this in the year prior to 2016 because of some silly technicality; great. Did I see a hand to my right?

LEG. CILMI:

Not me.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. So -- and we also have for the 477, you said, there was 4.7 million --

MS. LANSDALE:

That's right.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

-- for the projects that are done via application?

MS. LANSDALE:

That's right. So what we're looking to do is we've recently set a spending grant limit of 125,000 over the past two years so that we could fund projects -- a diversity of projects. And what we'd like to do is potentially increase that limit to 200,000, 225,000, so that we can look to fund perhaps larger scale projects. Because there is an interest in continuing to advance the Water Quality Program and we have been -- unfortunately, turned away a number of projects that we'd like to fund.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

And those have to -- can't be spent. Wasn't there going to be a second round this year for 477?

MS. LANSDALE:

Yes, that's -- what we'd like to do is tee up the funding and have the -- use this year as the opportunity to have the applications, have a call for applications, so that we can have the contracts in place to spend down the money the first part of next year.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay, excellent. Are you able to talk at all -- and I know, I'm sorry, this is a little bit outside of your silo. Are you able to talk at all about Department of Environmental Quality in the Health Department -- the Health's Department's Division of Environmental Quality Capital Projects and any capital spending there that you may be able to speak to from an environmental perspective?

MS. LANSDALE:

I'm sorry, I didn't brief myself on those programs.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay, no worries. I just wanted to -- I don't think I'll be in that -- that committee, and if you had any suggestions for us on that, we would have appreciated that. Too often those two silos, I feel, shouldn't be kept so separate -- separated. Anyone else have questions for Director Lansdale? Oh, Legislator Krupski.

*(*Legislator McCaffrey entered the meeting at 3:54 P.M. *)*

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. So the County spent millions of dollars in the past decades on open space and farmland preservation, but at the last round of hearings here this afternoon, I heard how there was no return on that investment. And I just wondered if you could -- because we keep making this investment and to many of us it's very important and it's not -- it provides, I think, residents with a place to go, a place where nature can act like nature and a place where people can go to enjoy nature and they have a quiet place. There's also the element of access to -- public access to water, forgetting about the benefits of groundwater recharge there. And open space does -- I think because of the recreation it provides, there is a tangible investment that it -- it gives back, and it's an investment, I think, that we should keep, you know, we should keep making. Do you have any thoughts on that?

MS. LANSDALE:

Yes, I agree with your statements. That key to our economic future is the preservation of land, both for open space purposes, that that's integral to our tourism and recreational economy and could promote further expansion of opportunities, like Legislator Trotta has been a huge proponent of, which is adventure tourism. And in order to do that, you need to make sure that we continue to preserve our open space and also invest in the current facilities.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yeah, I remember seeing our tourism, you know, estimates for our tourism. I mean, it's just so central to all of that income from -- and it comes from elsewhere, revenue from folks who come here from elsewhere, for the most part.

LEG. TROTTA:

An amusement park.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes, Legislator Trotta, again, wants to talk about the Great Wolf Lodge coming to Kings Park (*laughter*).

LEG. TROTTA:

I'll be dead.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Thank you, Director Lansdale. Any other questions for Director Lansdale or our County Attorney who's here still, if we have any questions? No. Okay. Thank you very much. Thank you, Dennis.

MR. BROWN:

Thank you.

Parks & Recreation Capital Budget

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

We have Parks. I believe Legislator Schneiderman -- I'm the Vice-Chair, so I'll bring it forward.

LEG. CILMI:

Go for it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yeah, we're going to keep moving us along here. If you want to give us a summary and highlights to start us off, that would be very helpful.

(Brief Pause)

Go ahead. If you want to give us an overview and a summary of highlights, that would be very helpful.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

As you can see by BRO's report, Parks and Rec has about 23 Capital Projects. For the most part, we're in agreement with the County Executive's recommendation and Budget Review's recommendation, but there are about three or four individual items I'd like to -- I'd like to speak about, unless you want to go project by project, it's really at your discretion.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No, give us your highlights and then we'll ask questions. Just what page is this on in the review, Robert? I'm sorry.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah, we start on page --

MR. LIPP:

I'm not sure which project he wants to talk about.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay, so there's not a Parks section. Okay, go ahead.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, it starts on page -- yeah, it starts on page 368, that's the first one; it's 7009.

MR. MACCARRONE:

Seven.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you.

MR. LIPP:

That project's up on the screen, too.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

The first project I'd like to talk about -- again, we don't have any disagreements with BRO's recommendation on 7007.

7009, however, is improvements to campgrounds. While the County Executive removed some of the funding from 2016 and a little bit from outlying years, BRO recommended eliminating all the funding from 2016 and 2017. We're using those funds to advance the Master Plan, or we'll be using those funds to advance the Master Plan at Cathedral Pines. Camping is one of our main revenue generators in the County. We have eleven campgrounds, we generate about \$1.8 million in revenue from those and making improvements to that infrastructure is very important to us. So we'd like to, you know -- I'd like to see if that money could be restored.

*(*Legislator Lindsay entered the meeting at 3:59 P.M. *)*

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Are you increasing the number of campsites?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

In Cathedral Pines we'll be realigning the campsites. We may -- we may get some additional sites out of it, but more importantly, we're going to be looking to upgrade the electrical systems, the -- all the amenities, the electrical system, the water and whatnot, to try to get maximum usage of the park. I mean, right now we don't have any problems filling the sites up on Memorial Day and Labor Day and Fourth of July, but, you know, we've got additional room to put additional campers and we think by increasing the amenities out there we could attract more, more campers.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Questions on this project? Legislator Krupski, were you raising your hand there?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No? I'm sorry. Okay. That was one of three or four?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's one of them. Yeah, I'll jump right to 7079, that's the -- it's our catch-all Capital Project. I know it says lighting, but, I mean, that's kind of a misnomer. We use that to make improvements to all of our -- all of our County parks. In the last couple of years we've been trying to eliminate some capital lines, we brought that down from --

MR. MACCARRONE:

7184, 7085, 7145.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Do you want to -- I'll let Terry jump in on that one.

MR. MACCARRONE:

We've been trying to conflate some of the number of Capital Programs that we have, so -- because 7079 is a general improvement's line, we've taken away some of the specificity of some of the smaller projects -- like 7184, which is improvements to water supply systems, and 7145, which is improvements to newly acquired -- and brought them into this program, expanded it a little bit. It gives the department and the County more flexibility in being able to appropriate those funds as they are needed to address situations as they arise. So we're actually -- by doing so, we're actually kind of decreasing the bottom number. Because normally those other projects that we have -- programs that we've gotten rid of would usually get funded this 50, 75, \$100,000 a year and we're eliminating those and bringing them down to the 7079 number, so the overall aggregate number of all those is being decreased. So we'd like to see that 7079 program really be maintained so that we don't really lose that ability to address these problems when they come through.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And we do have existing funds in that account. And the County Executive recommended taking \$250,000 out from 2016, but BRO made the additional recommendation of taking the \$250,000 out in 2017, and we think that going two cycles without any funding in that account would be detrimental. So we'd like to see at least the 20 -- the 2017 money restored.

MR. MACCARRONE:

And there is some misclarification -- misconception in the BRO report. The bottom line number, I believe, is mentioned at \$648,000 total available currently, but \$200,000 of that is grant monies that are specific to projects, one of which is almost completed. So that's \$86,000 remaining unobligated right now, so once that project's done, that money is gone. The other is \$125,000 for a State grant that the Assembly has since rescinded from their program, so that money, even though it's on our books, isn't currently available to us. So \$200,000 right off the bat, of that bottom line number, is not really there for us.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

The next project I'd like to talk about is 7189, that's the North Fork Preserve. We have funding in there for -- for planning money to develop a Master Plan for the park. As we discussed at a number of meetings, the County spent \$18 million acquiring a 300-acre parcel to develop it as actively passive parkland; we'd like to see the money restored. BRO's recommendation is almost to defund it and put \$200,000 into subsequent years for planning. The County Executive recommended taking the planning money out from 2016 and moving that -- moving out that line year's to 2018 and I can understand that, but to just eliminate the -- to eliminate the line completely, that's a little short-sighted. We'd like to -- we'd certainly like to develop that property. And again, camping is a very large revenue producer for the County, it's tens of thousands --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Can you repeat that budget number for the North Fork Preserve?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I'm sorry, which number?

MR. MACCARRONE:

7189.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

7189.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Again, we have very few recreational amenities out up on the North Fork. I think the furthest campsite we have out east would be Riverhead. So, again, we purchased the property specifically to build an active and passive recreation facility, so we'd like to see that money.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Do you have a budget line for equipment and equipment rentals? Like so -- so things like bicycles and row boats?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, you generally can't use capital money for rentals, that would have to come out of the Operating, it would have to come out of the Operating fund. If you would purchase that equipment, that may or may not qualify for -- for capital expenditure. I guess it depends on the life expectancy of the --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Right. So if it's with things like canoes or kayaks or bicycles or -- you know, I could gone go with all kinds of things that could be rented in the parks.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It would fall under -- I think that would fall under the 7169, improvement to park -- I'm sorry, 7111, that's heavy vehicles, heavy equipment. I mean, theoretically you could buy it out of that, but the life expectancy --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I don't see that line, 71 --

MR. MACCARRONE:

Legislator Hahn, it's -- the Commissioner is referring to 7011 --

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oh, I'm sorry.

MR. MACCARRONE:

-- which is the heavy and other equipment line.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Oh, yes. Okay.

MR. MACCARRONE:

But are you inquiring as to whether the County Parks Department would purchase bicycles and then rent them to participants?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Well, not just bicycles, but things like kayaks and, you know, paddle boats.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We do -- well, we do have a kayak vendor up on the Nissequogue, but we do we have rowboat rentals at both Sears Bellows and at Blydenburgh Park. So --

MR. MACCARRONE:

Wait, so -- yes. But where --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We don't have any bicycles.

LEG. HAHN:

What line would something like that be done out of?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Depending on the amount you'd want to purchase, it would probably come out of the Operating, but if you wanted to use -- if you wanted to use Capital funds -- and again, depending on the life expectancy of it -- we would take it out of 7011.

MR. MACCARRONE:

I'm not sure that those particular items would qualify for -- as a Capital investment. I don't know if you guys can speak to that.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Unless it was -- unless you were buying, you know, a lot of them.

MR. MACCARRONE:

I'm just not sure about the life expectancy aspect of it.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I don't know. That I don't know. Legislator Krupski?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

A question on the North Fork Preserve.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Sure.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

So there's a couple of things. And one, do you agree with the County Executive's proposed budget of pushing that planning money off?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We do. We have \$100,000 in planning money now. And as you know, we have the committee that we're working on -- who is working on a Master Plan.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

But we're going to need additional funds to do additional planning based on the recommendations of that -- of that committee.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

And the second thing on that, the County bought 50 acres of preserved farmland with a County easement adjacent to the preserve --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Correct.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

-- for the purpose of an equestrian center. Under the County's Chapter 8 Law, that has to be farmed every two years. Have you made provision for that to take place so the County will be in compliance?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We have not made that as part of our capital commitment, no.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

As a part of a management plan.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We're working on it with Nick.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay. I've been told that we are really cutting into our Working Group time, so unless there's a real pressing issue for the Commissioner, if we don't mind that we --

LEG. KRUPSKI:

There is a capital item on here that we didn't get to on the Working Group papers that I'd like to ask the Commissioner, since he's here?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

It's a million dollars to construct a seawall at Indian Island.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah, I was not -- I was on 7191, connect trails, Suffolk County trails. That -- you guys alluded to it a little bit earlier, you know, all the tens of thousands acres of that parkland that we're purchasing. The County Executive put forward \$100,000 in planning to put trails together to connect some of these parks to each other, some are trails-to-trails, some are trails to downtown, downtown areas for economic development and whatnot. So we'd also like to see that.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

No, the 7192, the seawall.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, I know, but we were -- that's next. We went to 7191, so I'm just --

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Oh, okay.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And seawall is the last thing.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Build up to it, okay.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

7192, it's the seawall at Indian Island Bluff, is what you're referring to, I'm assuming?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes. We had a million dollars in -- requested for 2016. We're not ready for the -- we don't have the plans as of yet, so it was recommended to push that out to 2017 and we agree with that recommendation. Terry?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Okay, thank you. And also, last year, one more question; last year, very quickly, you bought an excavator?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We did purchase an excavator, correct.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

And you were going to take down that house at Cedar Beach?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We are going to take down that house.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

And there's another -- there's a Sandy-damaged house also adjacent to it, the little ranch house?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's correct.

MR. MACCARRONE:

That's not coming down.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah, we're refurbishing that to put that back into the rental unit program.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Does that pay to do that, or would it make more sense to take that down? And when you refurbish, wouldn't you have to raise it up to meet FEMA standards -- or elevate it, rather, to meet FEMA standards?

MR. MACCARRONE:

FEMA actually is reevaluating the project worksheet, the award to the County for that; we are awaiting at the moment. So once we see what their award's going to be, we can make that evaluation. As of right now, they would pay us for costs, I guess 90%, on the Sandy awards of the cost to restore the building and the full amount to raise it to the base flood elevation. But they -- it's stuck in queue with FEMA, they haven't gotten back to me. I check in with them every month or so and it's just still in review with them.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

I just wonder why we would, I hate to say bother, but why we would bother making that investment. You've got so much other infrastructure that is currently being used, the public, you know, the employees use it. Why you wouldn't put all that effort into forgetting that -- forget that

house and just put your effort into the existing infrastructure that you need to maintain.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, we do a cost benefit analysis and we look at what we bring in on the rentals on those properties. We have 42 properties within our rental program, we get upwards of 1,500, \$2,000 a month, and you'd be quite surprised at the amount of work that my crew, my maintenance crew gets done in-house for a small amount of money; are you familiar with red house?

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Uh-huh.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

If we can refurbish it for, you know, 20, \$30,000, we're going to receive -- we're going to recoup that within the first two years, we think it's worth it. So, I mean, that's what we're looking at now.

Getting back to the Helen Keller House, we're still waiting for the permit from the DEC. They declared that a major project, but we don't -- we put in the permit, they declared it a major project, they had to put it out for public review and public comment; they did that and the public comment closed, I want to say, 30 days ago, 45 days ago, they have 90 days to issue us the permit, and once we get the permit we'll proceed --

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you, because that is dangerous.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

-- to take that down. Yes.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Are there any other questions on any other Capital Projects?

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

No? Okay, thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Move to adjourn. We are adjourned.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 4:12 PM*)*

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