

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

of the

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on Wednesday, January 28, 2015 at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Deputy Presiding Officer Jay Schneiderman - Chairman
Legislator Kara Hahn - Vice-Chair
Legislator Tom Cilmi
Legislator Bill Lindsay III
Legislator Kevin McCaffrey

Also in Attendance:

George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Jason Hann - Aide to Deputy Presiding Officer Schneiderman
Michael Pitcher - Aide to Presiding Officer Gregory
Alyssa Turano - Aide to Legislator Hahn
Jason Richberg - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Benny Pernice - Budget Review Office
Greg Dawson - Commissioner/Suffolk County Department of Parks
Tom Vaughn - County Executive Assistant
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken & Transcribed By:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

(*The meeting was called to order at 12:33 p.m.*)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Good afternoon. I'd like to call this meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee to order this 28 day of January 2015. All rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Tom Cilmi.

(*Salutation*)

Please be seated. Okay. We have no presentations scheduled. Did the Clerk's office receive any yellow speaker cards?

MR. RICHBERG:

No cards.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. If anybody wishes to be heard, please identify yourself at this moment. Okay. Seeing none, we'll go right to the agenda.

This is under tabled resolutions. **IR 2175, Amending Resolution No. 613-2014, "Establishing the North Fork Preserve County Park Advisory Committee" (Krupski).** Is there a motion?

LEG. CILMI:

I'll make a motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There's a motion to approve --

LEG. CILMI:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

-- by Legislator Cilmi. I'll second. Any discussion? Commissioner, we're just adding one member of the park trustees, right?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes. This is actually at our request. We had asked the sponsor if he could add one of the members of the park trustees to the committee and he graciously agreed.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any further comments? All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **IR 2175 is approved. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)**

2177, Adopting Local Law No. -2015, A Local Law to provide further protection for County parkland (Hahn). This has to be tabled for public hearing. Legislator Hahn, want to make that motion?

LEG. HAHN:

Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Motion to table by the sponsor. I'll second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **2177 is**

tabled. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)

1028, Amending Resolution No. 50-2007 regarding fees for veterans (County Executive).
I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Second by Legislator Lindsay. Commissioner, is this helpful to you? I know there's been some issues in the past between active -- those veterans who served in -- active duty veterans versus not or those in time of conflict.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

This doesn't address the active duty versus non-active duty. What this addresses is actual veterans. Right now, we request that they bring in a DD214 every time they renew their green key card. This will allow us -- the resolution says we have to take their DD214. This will give us the ability to just use the driver's license that already lists them as veterans, so once they're in --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So it makes it easier for you?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Much easier, yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Makes it easier for the veterans?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Does it qualify, though, some individuals for discounts that weren't before getting discounts?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, there's no financial impact.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So it's just an administrative? It just basically allows you guys to do your job a little bit more easily and allows the veterans to be approved by the parks' workers more easily as well.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah. It streamlines the process for us, and it makes it easier on the veterans.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Any questions? All right. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **IR 1028 is approved.**
(VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)

I don't have any introductory resolutions.

MR. NOLAN:

Those were all introductory.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

That was it. Oh, that's right. Those were all introductory so no tabled. Okay. That's all I have on the agenda. Commissioner, how are you making out with the snow?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Actually, we did very well. We sent over a number of employees and some of our assets over to Department of Public Works, which our primary issue is safety to the public. We've been opening up the Parks since yesterday, so we're in relatively good shape. We didn't have any major -- no reports of any lodged trees down due to the wind and erosion seems to be minor at this stage of the game.

LEG. CILMI:

I have a question.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Question from Legislator Cilmi.

LEG. CILMI:

Commissioner, hi. How are you? If I'm not mistaken, we rolled out our parks' reservation system under a new vendor recently; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We did. We rolled it out last Tuesday.

LEG. CILMI:

How did that go?

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

Well, it had a couple of bumps and bruises to it, but all in all, it seems to be moving along quite nicely. We're supposed to open it at 10:30 in the morning. I think we opened it up at 2:00. We're allowing people to make reservations 90 days in advance now as opposed to 120 because we really didn't want Memorial Day Weekend in that mix in the initial rollout, so we're still reviewing that, but we're in a 90-day process right now. People are able to make reservations. We had some bumps with the people signing in and logging in, some issues with some e-mail addresses, but we're working through those.

LEG. CILMI:

Were those bumps brought to your attention by constituents who called?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

A little bit of both. As the constituents called, we were addressing the issues kind of one by one.

LEG. CILMI:

Nothing significant that we might get a phone call about at one of our offices? I haven't gotten any phone calls but...

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We opened it up.

LEG. CILMI:

You know, I have in the past.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I got our phones -- you know, our phones were lit up pretty well. We worked pretty late into the night on Tuesday night when we opened it up. Through the end of last week, the calls seemed to be slowing down, so I would imagine if it was kind of major to be reaching out to you guys and then you reaching out to us. I mean, we'll see.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

The issue we had last year with, I guess, the phone lines had opened prior to the computer system or whatever it was. Some people thought they had reservations; turned out they didn't, and we had a mess on our hands. Has that been resolved for this year?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That was the IVR system where people were able to make reservations through phone and through the internet. Now you can only make reservations through the internet and not the phone lines anymore so...

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

And it's the same thing, it's just that at a certain window of time it opens up?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Opens up -- normally it's 120 days in advance. We backed it up to 90 day so that Memorial Day didn't coincide with opening. In case we had any major problems, we didn't want to have the same issues we had with 4th of July weekend last year. So we don't see that as a problem this year.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

LEG. CILMI:

Are there provisions for folks who may not use the internet? Let's say I'm -- you know, let's say I just don't use the internet. I'm either not computer savvy or I'm incapable for one reason or another. Can those people -- you know, do those people have access to our system to make reservations and how?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, the golf courses --

LEG. CILMI:

They can.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

The online reservation system, they are going to need the internet. They can't reserve. They can show up at a park and make a reservation, but it has to be done through a computer.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. So it's on the computer or onsite. Do they necessarily have to go to the location that they're making reservations for in order to make those reservations? Could somebody go to, say, Timber Point Country Club to make reservations for Smiths Point?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes, I believe so.

LEG. CILMI:

Okay. Thanks.

LEG. HAHN:

Is there phones?

LEG. CILMI:

No more phones.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any other questions? How are we making out -- people probably aren't thinking too much about the summer with all this, you know, snow covering everything, but where we had the fire at Cupsogue, how are we making out there?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We've had some very productive meetings with Department of Public Works. We're in the planning stages now of getting temporary structures in place in time for the season. Temporary restroom facilities and temporary -- I would call them "catering facilities," someplace for the concessionaire to make some food to make available to the public.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

We have a follow-up question from Legislator Hahn.

LEG. HAHN:

The plans for the new facility, what's the timeline on that?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

The new facility --

LEG. HAHN:

That's going to replace what we're doing.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

-- we're looking at either two to three years to have that facility completely rebuilt, so we're looking at temporary structures for at least the next two summers, possibly three.

LEG. HAHN:

And when we do plan for the kitchen facilities there, I'm hoping that we can plan to upgrade the space that they have in order to, you know, to make options fresh, you know, fresh food options, something that the concessionaires can deliver for us with ease and that things will be upgraded beyond what had been there previously.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, it'll be a brand new kitchen facility.

LEG. HAHN:

And hopefully it's space -- that you're thinking space-wise as well.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Are you working on a capital budget request now for that?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We are currently working to get funding for that for planning and actual construction.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any idea yet what it's going to cost to rebuild?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No. I'm going defer that to Commissioner Anderson.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Fair enough. All right. Anybody else? Seeing none --

LEG. HAHN:

I do have one question, other question that's not about that facility.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You have another question?

LEG. HAHN:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. Legislator Hahn has a different question.

LEG. HAHN:

Different route. Now with all the snow, do we make any kind of equipment rentals available, or do we work with outside vendors when there is big snowfalls like this? Can people cross-country ski and/or snowshoe through our parks?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

They can. They do it. As a matter of fact, before I left, I saw somebody cross-country skiing at the West Sayville Golf Course. You're asking if we have concessionaires to rent out skis; no, we do not.

LEG. HAHN:

Have we have ever thought about, you know, cross-country skiing, you know, like getting vendors that may be able to provide that in some locations?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We have not, but generally when there's a need, they'll usually approach us if they see that there's a market for that kind of activity. You know, I'm sure somebody will approach us. We haven't necessarily put out any RFPs or any RFEIs to them.

LEG. CILMI:

Action sports.

LEG. HAHN:

Yeah, I would just imagine that -- well, who knows? With the changing weather patterns, this may be more the norm rather than unusual.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

(Inaudible) it is kind of a specialized area, and usually the people that embark in those endeavors have to have the equipment already.

LEG. HAHN:

It's about extreme weather events, and it doesn't have to do with warming. It has to do with the extremities of the events that we're seeing which have been dumping much more snow and may make cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing and things like that something that people want to come out and do out here.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Understood.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Anyone else? Seeing none, we are adjourned. Thank you, Commissioner.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 12:44 p.m.*)