

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, September 2, 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

Christina DeLisi - 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

Laura Halloran - Budget Review Office

Greg Dawson - Commissioner/Suffolk County Department of Parks

Katie Horst - County Executive Assistant

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken & Transcribed By:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

(The meeting was called to order at 12:39 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Good afternoon. I'd like to call this meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee to order this second day of September 2015. Please rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator McCaffrey.

(Salutation)

All right. We'll start with public portion. I see no yellow cards. Have we received any yellow cards?

MR. RICHBERG:

No cards, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Anybody from the public who wishes to be heard, please make yourself known. Seeing none; all right, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes, sir.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

So busy summer for our parks, no?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It has been a very busy summer. The weather's very, very cooperative. We're doing quite well, especially camping.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Do we have some numbers in terms of -- is there more people using the parks than prior years?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It seems that, I mean, golf is down a little bit because I mean it's a cumulative number, and we had a very lousy spring, but camping numbers seem to be up and beach numbers seem to be up. I don't have any specifics. If you'd like, I can bring you something for the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, actually, we make more revenue from the golfing.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We do, but unfortunately, golfing has been trending down for the last couple years.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Overall, are we coming in on budget in terms of what we anticipated?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I believe that we're going to meet our budget goals.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Did we get some of the issues at Smiths Point resolved? I know in prior meetings, there's been some complaints about Smiths Point and the conditions of the restrooms there.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

In my mind, we have, but the true test is in the number of complaints that we get. I have not received any, so my assumption is that we seem to be doing quite well. We're doing something a little different. We put some signs up on all the restrooms directing the people that have any particular issues in between the times that the restrooms are maintained, because they probably only get seen every two, two and a half hours, to immediately call the east booth. The east booth has somebody on duty there between 9:00 in the morning and 10:00 at night. Like I said, we haven't really gotten any complaints so I'm assuming things are going well.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any particular issues that we need to be aware of as a committee with the parks from this summer?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, I think you have been apprised of, you know, through letters and complaints, any issues that have come up.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

The first resolution we're going to get to has to do with the intermunicipal agreement. What is this with the Flanders Fire Department? And we have had a record draught; it's very dry out there.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We've decided -- we were at the meeting in Flanders the other day. I had a conversation with Phil Berdolt, the deputy commissioner over at Department of Public Works. We decided that we're probably going to just do it in-house. It's probably easier to get those trails cleaned up. I don't think we've come to any consensus on --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

When?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

At the end of this month. Phil has offered his assistance in heavy equipment. Nick said he will oversee it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Because, you know, we're at the 20 anniversary this months, or, actually, I guess in August, last month, of the Pine Barrens fires. I have been asking for now quite some time to get these fire lanes cleared, you know, for fear that we'd see a major fire with all the residences that surround that area. I know this was a community meeting with Pavacic from the Pine Barrens Commission. There was a lot of concern about their plan. The fire department did not -- it wasn't the area that they were primarily concerned about, either, so they, I think, very much would like to see these fire lanes cleared still. I mean, I was ready to approve this today. If you tell me that by the end of September this will be done in-house, I will make a motion to table it.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I'm telling you that we're -- I'm not sure how long it's going to take to get done, but we are going to get into it in the third week in September. In conversations with the fire department, I think they were more interested in creating new trails, which we were not enthusiastic about, so we want to clear the existing trails that are there, and we think that we can do that again with the in-house -- using the Department of Public Works in-house loaders and whatnot so.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

When you say "trails," I mean, we're talking about --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Fire lanes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Fire lanes.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Fire lanes, correct. I think they would like additional fire lanes installed, and we're not committed to doing that. We are committed to taking down the trees that have fallen over the existing fire lanes and getting those out of the way.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. By the end of September?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes. Okay. So let's go to the agenda.

1441, Authorizing Inter-Municipal Agreement with Flanders Fire District to maintain fire lanes in County parks (Schneiderman). In good faith, we will make a motion to table. Do I have a second second? Second by Legislator McCaffrey. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).**

If no work gets done, though, Greg, I'm going to ask that this be moved at the October meeting.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay. That's fine.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I hope that we don't get to that point. I hope it is done in-house because it really is a county function.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

It is.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I don't even like asking the fire department to do it when it's really our job to maintain our own parks.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And there's a difference of opinion on what work actually needs to be done and we know it needs to be done and the Pine Barrens kind of knows what need to be done too.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Did I say "all in favor?" All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? So it's **tabled**, 1441. **Tabled (VOTE: 5-0-0-0).**

1600, Authorizing use of Indian Island County Park by Birthright of Peconic, Inc., for a Fundraising Walkathon (Krupski). Commissioner, this is good to go?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

All good to go.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right. Can I get a motion? I'll take a motion by Legislator Lindsay. Second by Legislator Cilmi. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved. (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: Hahn).**

1628, Authorizing the transfer of a landscaping utility trailer to the Long Island Native Plant Initiative (Krupski). I'll make a motion. Seconded by Legislator Hahn. Commissioner, this is a surplus piece of equipment we have?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

This was a piece of equipment that was purchased off of a grant specifically for the Long Island Native Plant Initiative. It's almost like a pass-through. We purchased it through a grant. There was a \$60,000 grant issued to this organization for equipment, seed, training, and whatnot. One of the things on the list was a trailer. It was purchased. Unfortunately, they can't use it because it's registered in Suffolk County, so in order for them to use it, it needs to be put into their holdings.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. So there's a motion and second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved. (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**

Before we adjourn, Commissioner, you got a CN coming our way, right?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We do have a CN; I just wanted to bring that to your attention. The Barrier Beach Preservation Association is looking to do a fundraiser at Cupsogue Beach in September. Unfortunately, they didn't get the application in in time. We do have the application now. We didn't have time to bring it before this body, so we'll be bringing it as a CN at Tuesday's meeting, but everything's in order. It's a standard fundraiser.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Anybody have a question about that? What about Cupsogue in general? Did we get through the summer okay? I know we have one more week to go, but did we get through the summer with the temporary facilities.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We did.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It worked out okay?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

They held up very nicely, and there was really no interruption in service. I mean, it was opened up in time for Memorial Day Weekend.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I know it was packed at Cupsogue again this season. A lot of people got turned away who wanted to go out there.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Unfortunately, there is a capacity for the parking lot, and if you're not there early on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday morning, you probably will get turned around. But, you know, in order to

alleviate some of the problems, we do have that sign up at the bridge, "Five miles to the --" off the bridge, alerting people that the parking lot is full. But I think most people know if you're not down there by 9:30, 10:00, it's going to be difficult.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. And what's the status of the new building that we're going to construct there?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We have the planning money. Department of Public Works is in the process of putting a plan together to see what we're going to put in over there, and once we have that, we'll probably come back looking for funding for construction, but we're probably at least two years out, I mean before you see a finished product.

COMMISSIONER ANDERSON:

And on Third House, I know we have money in the budget -- we're going to do sprinklers and --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We do. I have the report from Department of Public Works. They sent it to me, actually, a couple weeks ago. I just have to act on it. I have to send them a memo outlining the work I would like to see them do, so that's on the agenda for --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can we get that done --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Absolutely.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

-- before I leave office hopefully.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yes.

MR. BRAND:

Which office?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

What about Cedar Island Lighthouse? We have money, I believe, for the roof repairs.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We have --

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

It's within a \$400,000 capital bond.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah, I think it's a \$500,000 capital budget for 2015. We haven't come to you guys for the appropriation for that. We're still sitting on the 300,000 from 2014. We're going to be bringing that forward very shortly. The full legislative body wanted a detailed plan on how that \$300,000 was going to spend at the Homan-Gerard House, if you recall. We now have that plan in place.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

300 for that --

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Homan-Gerard.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Homeward house, is that?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Homan-Gerard up in Yaphank; and then next we're going to appropriate the \$500,000 for 2015, which we'll do some work inclusive of -- we're looking to do the roof at Cedar Island Lighthouse.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Do we have a number on what the roof's going to cost?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I'd venture to say 2- to \$300,000, I'm sure.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I thought it was much less than that.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And I could be wrong, but I'd rather tell you high.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

You know, if you don't appropriate the money, you don't get the money, even though it's in the capital budget, so it has to be appropriated before the end of the year.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We will, but I'd be hard-pressed to come in and try to get money appropriated for 2015 when we didn't get the 2014 money appropriated, which we're looking to do early fall, so then we'll come back here for the 2015 money.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Or at least, I guess, it's authorized.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Right, which we'll spend in 2016.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. All right. Any other questions? Legislator McCaffrey.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

Commissioner, how are you? Just going to back to Comsewogue again -- Cupsogue. Not used to those Indian names on the west end of the district. We don't have that many.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

What about Connetquot?

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

Copiague.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Wyandanch. That's an Indian name.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

And I did grow up in Massapequa.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Hauppauge. We're in Hauppauge.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

I still have trouble spelling that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I think it means "sweet water" in native -- whatever it was.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

So, anyway, that beach in Westhampton that we're talking about, what is the proposed cost for that again?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I think it's in the neighborhood of \$2 million.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

\$2 million.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Like I said, we haven't had the plans back yet. I would rather wait to get, you know, a better -- I'm not an engineer. I'd rather have the professionals come and tell you.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

Okay. And is there any plans -- because it sounds like you're running out of parking there. That's your biggest need. Is there any plans to expand the parking there or it doesn't make sense?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON

We really can't. We're surrounded by water on three sides. There's really not a whole lot of room. I think we've already looked at the parking spaces and maximized them as best we can. I know we may be coming back in a year so to look for -- to put a turnaround in over there to be able to stage more cards so we're not turning as many people away. We can kind of put them in the holding pattern until people leave until 1:00 in the afternoon, but that's further down the road. We had plans in place two or three years ago, but there was some easement issues because of the traffic congestion that we're causing in the village now. The major has kind of agreed to help us get the easements that we're going to need to be able to put this thing in place.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

That's revenue we're turning away, right?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's correct. We have, I think, 770 parking space in there, and they're full by, I would say, 10:00, 10:30 in the morning on Saturday and Sunday.

LEG. MCCAFFREY:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Any other questions for the commissioner? Seeing none, Commissioner, do you have any other business for us?

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COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No, just have a good Labor Day Weekend.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Same to you. All right. We are adjourned.

(The meeting was adjourned at 12:52 p.m.)