

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, April 6, 2015 at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Legislator Bill Lindsay III - Chairman

Legislator Kara Hahn - Vice-Chair

Legislator Leslie Kennedy

Legislator Kevin McCaffrey

Legislator Steve Stern

Also in Attendance:

Amy Ellis - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature

Alyssa Turano - Aide to the Majority Leader

Ali Nazir - Aide to Legislator Kennedy

Benny Pernice - 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 12:27 p.m.)

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Good afternoon. Welcome to the Parks and Recreation Committee hearing. If you could all please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Kennedy.

Salutation

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Madam Clerk, do we have any comment cards?

MS. ELLIS:

No, we do not.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

If there's anyone in the public that would like to speak during the public portion? Not seeing anyone. We'll close the public portion of the committee meeting. We don't have any meeting presentations today, so we'll move right on, and no tabled resolutions, so we'll move right on to introductory resolutions.

We'll start with **1263, Authorizing use of Cedar Beach for Cornell Cooperative Extension's Back to the Bay 5K Run (Krupski)**. I'll make a motion to approve. Second by Legislator Kennedy. Commissioner Dawson, can you just give us the thumbs up, let us know we're okay on that one?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Fine. We're good.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? The motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)**

Introductory Resolution 1265, Authorizing a Municipal Cooperative License Agreement with Town of Babylon for Van Bourgondien County Park, West Babylon (County Executive).

How are you this morning, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Good, Legislator. Good afternoon. Yeah. This is an agreement that we already have in place with the Town of Babylon to operate and maintain that park. The contract's expired. We're looking to go into a new agreements. Terms and conditions will be the same as the prior.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. There's no money or anything changing hands?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

No.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. I'll make a motion to approve. Second by Legislator Kennedy. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)**

Before I go any further, I want to mention Legislator McCaffrey has an excused absence, for the record. Thank you.

Introductory Resolution 1277, Authorizing use of Manorville Hills County Park by Paniagua Cycling, Inc. for its Head for the Hills Fundraiser (County Executive). We're okay there as well?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

All the fees are in place. Application's on file. Motion by Legislator Stern. Second by Legislator Hahn. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)**

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

IR 1278, Authorizing use of Meadow Croft County Park by Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities for its Country House Benefit Event (County Executive). Motion to approve by Legislator Kennedy. Second by Legislator Stern. Okay there as well?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

We are. It's a fundraiser for SPLIA.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey)**

Introductory Resolution 1279, Authorizing use of Cupsogue Beach County Park by the Moriches Paquatuck Squaws, Inc. For its Inlet Ride Fundraiser (County Executive). Same thing there, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Correct. We're good on the fees.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Motion by Legislator Hahn, second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey).**

IR 1290, Appropriating funds in connection with improvements to County Golf Courses (CP 7166) (County Executive). Commissioner, give us a little bit of information on that, please.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Sure. We have \$200,000 appropriated in 2016 for this fund. It's for general improvements to our golf courses. We don't have any funding in 2017, so this money has to actually hold us through two years. We're looking to do just general improvements, and, the courses, as you're aware, it's one of our biggest revenue producers, and we need to keep up. We need to keep the courses up. I think we generate about \$3.1 million in revenue, not including what we bring in for the restaurant and concession stands, which rely heavily upon the conditions of the course, so that's what it's going to be used for. I'd also like to point out that a lot of the work that we do on those courses, we do with in-house forces, so we try to make the money last as -- make it go as far as we can. If you have any questions.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Legislator Hahn has a question for you.

LEG. HAHN:

Just remind me, do we use best management practices from the environmental perspective on the golf courses?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Regarding our phaseout program and whatnot?

LEG. HAHN:

Correct, and regarding fertilizers.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Absolutely. We work very closely with Cornell Cooperative, and we take out guidance and direction from them, and obviously there is a number of laws in place that we have to comply with: when we put fertilizers down, at what rate, how much. We work closely with Cornell and make sure we stay under those guidelines.

LEG. HAHN:

I remember I was asked about it, and I couldn't remember if there was a written report or something that -- maybe someone can come next time and just explain to what extent our golf courses, you know, just how green we are in terms of nitrogen, fertilizer, et cetera.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I mean, there is a report and there is a best management practice. We can get you a copy of that.

LEG. HAHN:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

You're welcome.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Legislator Kennedy has a question as well.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Good afternoon, Greg. How are you?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Good afternoon.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Just a couple of questions. One is for Budget Review, and I don't expect you to have an answer right now to look it up. Since some of what is written in the backup information states work on greens, what's the PPU for dirt? I ask the same question about sand. I have a couple of questions, and I think it's probably just the way the bill itself is written. I know we've taken a heck of a lot of money from our golf courses that go into the general fund. Greg, from these three gold courses, do you know approximately how much we take in?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Yeah, between greens fees and revenue generated by the golf pros, it's between \$3.1- and \$3.2 million for the three golf courses. We actually have four. One is operated private concession. We get the additional revenues now, but the three that we're talking about, West Sayville to Mill Pond, Indian Island, it's roughly 3.1 million. Again, there's another component where we generate I think it's about \$400,000 from restaurant concessionaires, which are kind of dependent on the views of

the golf course, so they're a very big revenue producer for us.

Regarding PPU of the dirt, we're actually building tee boxes and sand traps, and they will last. They outlive the PPU. We're not necessarily buying dirt. We're actually building components on the golf course for the public to use, which they've asked for. Again, if we don't keep up the golf courses, rounds will be down and revenue will be as well.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. How long do one of those boxes last; what is your guess?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Well, once it's there, it lasts forever. And you're absolutely right; we do maintain it with our operating expenses. They need to be seeded and aerated and fertilized every year. We'll do that, but the actual build, the actual construction of it, you know, we use our capital funds to do that. And, you know, just to point out again, we do these things with our in-house forces. I mean, to build a T-box, it's probably around \$12,000. We hire a private contractor. We do it for the cost of material, which is roughly \$4,000, so we do try to make our capital funds go as far as they can.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I know that. The irrigation systems, the irrigation controls and the wells are covered, just tell me -- you told me what you're going to do with the tee boxes. What are you doing where the greens and the bunkers?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Again, the tee boxes, we're looking to construct about six tee boxes on each of the courses. Again, this is over two years. We're going to do this in the off season. We don't really have any money in 2017. We're going to be constructing tee boxes for -- they're called ladies tees and seniors tees because that's one of the requests that we've gotten from the public. Regarding, the sand traps, over the years, rocks and whatnot percolate up through the sand and golfers tend to complain, they wreck their clubs on it and whatnot, so what we do is we excavate out all of the sand, put in new drainage, put in new sand, and like some kind of weed fabric to keep the rocks from percolating up. And again, these are projects that we we're going to take on provided we don't have any emergency repairs that we need to do. If a well pump goes down, it could cost us in the neighborhood of 25,000. When Sandy came through, we had a tremendous amount of work to do on the golf course at Timber Point. Again, we do a lot of work in house. We had some erosion on Indian Island, so these are projects we have planned planned for the next two years provided we don't have any emergencies.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. You said you excavate the sand that's there already, put in new sand. Am I not understanding?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That is correct.

LEG. KENNEDY:

What do you do with the old sand?

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Or we could sift it and they'll reuse what they can, but sometimes you can't use it. There's rocks and grass and whatnot.

LEG. KENNEDY:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

I agree: You have to keep it up, otherwise the quality of play goes down, and then certainly revenue goes down as a result of that. Did I understand correctly? You're not reconstructing existing boxes; you're constructing new boxes that are going to play up a little bit for ladies tees, seniors tees, so it's not just reworking what's existing, you're actually going to be creating new boxes that play a little further up.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's correct. On some of the courses, we have one tee box. We try to fit the championship tees, the ladies' tees, the seniors tees, and all that kind of stuff. It's been requested that we put the additional tee boxes in for the ladies and the seniors. And again we're only going to do probably five or six on each course over the course of probably two years.

LEG. STERN:

All right. Thanks.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

So we have a motion and a second. We don't have a motion.

MS. ELLIS:

No.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

I'll make a motion. Legislator Stern will second that motion. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey).**

IR 1293, Bond Resolution of the County of Suffolk, New York, authorizing the issuance of \$250,000 Bonds to finance the cost of improvements and lighting at County Parks (CP 7079.111 and .312) (County Executive). Before we go on a motion and a second, Commissioner, if could you give us a little brief overview of that as well.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Sure. This is actually 2015 money. The appropriating resolution was passed back in March of 2015, but the bond did not get the necessary 12 votes. I guess the new law states it needs to be back through committee before it goes back to the Leg. I'd like to point out that we do not have any funds allocated for 2016 in the capital program for that. When we budgeted in 2015, we just assumed it would last us for the two years and we didn't quite get it, so these funds are going to be used in 2016 to make general improvements to our parks. Again, this is kind of our catch-all account where we make improvements and repairs out of. We consolidated a number of capital accounts that we had in years past. We had energy efficiency, utilities, newly-acquired lines. We let those lines expire, and we're encompassing all the funds into this one thing because it gives us kind of more latitude to make repairs. You know, we use it for things like parking lot improvements, and, again, we require a new piece of property. If we want to put trails in, we need to do clearing of trees and whatnot, these are the funds that we take it from.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

So at this point you don't have specific needs or specific direction on where the money would go. It's more of this is a general fund to use between all the parks so it's split equally.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

That's correct. We do have some capital funds earmarked for some certain specific parks like historic houses and, let's say, Blydenburgh, but this encompasses all the parks that don't fall into those neat packages. We probably have about 50 other capital lines, but this is specific to -- this is general all the parks across the board. And, you know, we have the number of things that we need to do. We need to have the parking lots that we need to have repaired. We use it when we want to open up new hunting areas, we'll put parking lots in for that.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

I'm inclined to pass it today, Commissioner, but my recommendation, if it does get passed through committee today and it goes to a vote amongst the entire legislature, is if you could provide a list for all the legislators of where exactly the money will go and what your needs are and where you're looking to spend the funds once you receive them.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay. I think our needs are kind of across the county, and I could give you --

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

If you could, because if memory serves me correctly, that might have been some of the contention with it in the past was that it appears or sounded like it was just going into a bucket, waiting to be spent, and I think that's where some of my colleagues were uncomfortable with it. So I think if we had more of a list of what exactly the money's going to be spent on, I think that would help in terms of getting support for it.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Okay. Yeah, I can assure you we do have plenty of projects.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

I'm sure you do.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Cherry Avenue is one, parking lots at McAllister.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

And I think that's what will help get everybody more comfortable with it, because we're all getting those complaint calls into our district offices, so to know that, okay, if I support this measure, some of those needs are going to be met and some of those issues are going to be addressed, I think it will definitely be helpful.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Very good.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

Any other questions? I'll make a motion to approve. Second by Legislator Stern. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Not Present: McCaffrey).**

HR02, Requesting the State of New York to discontinue use of certain land for park purposes (Senate Bill S.06873 and Assembly Bill A.02223) (Stern). Motion by Legislator Stern. I'll make the second. On the motion, Legislator Kennedy.

LEG. KENNEDY:

I just would like to ask Steve or Greg when the school district takes over this piece of property, are

they going to restore it to historic standards?

CHAIRMAN STERN:

To the question, this is a better known as the "little red schoolhouse," which has been an ongoing conversation for years. It is considered part of our county parks system. It's an historic structure, but it is dilapidated. It is unusable, and there are, at our level at this point, no plans to go forward in any significant way to restore it.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

Exactly.

LEG. STERN:

But there is an interest on the part of the Elwood Library District that would like to take over the property, that would like to go through a process of restoring it to much of its original splendor in accordance of what would be applicable guidelines to maintain its historic nature while at the same time bringing it up to date, utilizing it for library purposes. It can be one of those examples where levels of government can cooperate with each other and satisfy a need and do something positive for the community, and this is something that is most welcome by the community. There has been a formal resolution adopted by the trustees for the library requesting this transfer. And so -- and maybe, George, just correct me if I'm wrong -- but procedurally this initiative is passed here in support of the state senate bill and the state assembly bill that that are pending in Albany waiting for us to take this step. It would then go before Albany for their action. It would come back to us to determine how and best to proceed. But at this point, it has been a formal request made on the part of the trustees of the library district. It is a win-win really for various levels of government, but certainly for the community that's most interested, this would be a first step.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

And if I could -- I'm sorry, George. Did you want to --

MR. NOLAN:

I was just going to say, George, a lot has to happen for this to happen. You have to get the state legislature to act on this because this is a historic trust property. Under our charter, it has to be subject to a voter referendum. Whether or not we will convey the property to this school district, the school district under the state legislation has to give us fair market value for the property, and in addition, we have to find another property to offset the loss of the parkland. And I think a couple years ago, Legislator Stern, when this was originally proposed, I think I recall the Department of Law had worked with Parks and some others to identify and offsetting parcels, so that's going to have to happen, but this is a step in that process.

COMMISSIONER DAWSON:

I would just add the reason this came up is because a bill presented by Legislator Horsley a number of years ago, we put out an RFP looking for groups to enter into a public/private partnership, and I think the Elwood library was the only response we had gotten, and we thought it was good use of the property. They would update it, they would bring it back to its historical splendor, and be able to utilize it as well. If we do convey the property, it would come with deeds and restrictions on what they could and could not do.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

So we have a motion and a second, right?

PK 4/6/16

MS. ELLIS:

Right, yes.

CHAIRMAN LINDSAY:

All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. That concludes our agenda, so I will make a motion to close.

(The meeting was adjourned at 12:49 p.m.)