

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Of the

Suffolk County Legislature

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Committee was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on April 17, 2008.

Members Present:

Legislator Jack Eddington - Chairman
Legislator Kate Browning - Vice-Chair
Legislator Wayne Horsley
Legislator Daniel Losquadro
Legislator Lynne Nowick

Also in Attendance:

Presiding Officer William Lindsay - District #8
Legislator Steven Stern - District #16
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Barbara LoMoriello - Deputy Clerk of the SC Legislature
Robert Calarco - Aide to Legislator Eddington
Linda Bay - Aide to Minority Leader Losquadro
Paul Perillie - Aide to Majority Leader Cooper
Greg Moran - Aide to Legislator Nowick
James Montalto - Aide to Legislator Losquadro
Bobby Knight - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Marge Acevedo - Aide to Presiding Officer Lindsay
Kara Hahn - Director of Communications/P.O. Lindsay's Office
Jim Maggio - Senior Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office
Ben Zwirn - Deputy County Executive
Thomas Vaughn - County Executive Assistant
Richard Dormer - Suffolk County Police Commissioner
Robert Moore - Chief-of-Department/Suffolk County Police Department
Aristedes Mojica - Inspector/Commissioner's Office/SCPD
Robert Ponzo - Chief of Patrol/Suffolk County Police Department
David Cole - Detective Lieutenant/Suffolk County Police Department
John A. Capute - Detective Sergeant/Suffolk County Police Department
Thomas Spota - Suffolk County District Attorney
Robert Kearon - Bureau Chief/District Attorney's Office
Michael Sharkey - Chief-of-Staff/Suffolk County Sheriff's Office
Joe Williams - Commissioner/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Warren Horst - Chief Fire Marshall/Fire, Rescue & Emergency Services
Laura Ahearn - Executive Director/Parents for Megan's Law
Jerry Gilmore - President/Superior Officer's Association
Hank Mulligan - Superior Officer's Association
Tim Morris - Superior Officer's Association
Russ McCormack - Suffolk Detective's Association
Matt Bogert - 1st Vice-President/SC Correction Officer's Association
Daniel delValle - Vice-President/SC Probation Officer's Association
Mike Rando - Suffolk County Deputy Sheriff's Police Benevolent Assoc.
Nancy Dwyer - Pax Christi of Long Island/Catholic Peace Movement
Sheila Croke - Pax Christi of Long Island/Catholic Peace Movement
Donna Napoli - Town of Brookhaven Youth Bureau

Kevin O'Hare - Smithtown Veterans Youth Program
Ray Hansen - Smithtown Veterans Youth Program
Kim Jama - Smithtown Veterans Youth Program
Patsy Hirschhorn - Smithtown Veterans Youth Program
Jenn Hutchins - Smithtown Veterans Youth Program
Roseann Miceli - Reach Community & Youth Agency
Charlotte Koons - Code Pink of Long Island
Kristofer Goldsmith - Former Army Sergeant/Iraq Veteran
Dan Andersen - Resident of Port Jefferson Station
Mario Mattera - Plumbing Contractor in Suffolk County
Debra Alloncius - Legislative Director/AME
Deborah McKee - 3rd Vice-President/AME
Hope Collazo - American Red Cross/Community Service Program
Krista Conte - Allstate Insurance/Safe Teen Drive Program
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Alison Mahoney & Diana Kraus - Court Stenographers

Minutes Transcribed By:

Alison Mahoney & Donna Catalano - Court Stenographers.

(*The following was Taken & Transcribed by Alison Mahoney*)

(*The meeting was called to order at 9:39 A.M. *)

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, if I could get everybody to stand for the Public Safety Committee Meeting, and Legislator Horsley will lead us in the pledge.

Salutation

And if you could please remain standing to honor the men and women that protect our country, whether it's domestically or overseas.

Moment of Silence Observed

Thank you. Okay, if the District Attorney could come forward, I know you wanted to make a brief presentation, and any staff members that you'd like.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I thought the Police Commissioner, yeah. I wanted to -- may I start?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, absolutely.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Thanks, by the way, for allowing me the opportunity and Commissioner Dormer the opportunity to address to you and with you some of our concerns about the state of our roadways insofar as reckless and aggressive driving behavior.

Notwithstanding all of the efforts by the Suffolk County Police Department, the New York State Police, and of course all of our outlying Police agencies, it is very clear in our mind that reckless and aggressive driving behavior is on the increase.

(*Legislator Losquadro entered the meeting at 9:41 A.M. *)

Just coming to work this morning when I'm coming westbound on Route 347, it's like a demolition derby out there. And we, the Commissioner and I and Major Heesch of the State Police have been meeting and we wanted to express to you some of our concerns and some of our thoughts as to what we will be doing to attack this problem.

In 2007 there were in Suffolk County 180 motor vehicle accident fatalities, 21 of them being teenagers between the ages of 16 and 20. On the Long Island Expressway alone, just in the Police District, I believe that there were 12 deaths, motor vehicle fatalities, and that's just the area that's patrolled by the Suffolk County Police Department. The Highway Patrol Bureau, in my view, has done a magnificent job in the number of arrests that they've made for DWI's, for speeding and for seat belt violations. But we come before you to address the concerns about these rising number of serious motor vehicle accidents and again stressing the fact the way that teen-agers are driving, they are accounting right now for approximately 12% of the fatalities that are occurring in Suffolk County.

As reflected in the statistics cited by Legislator Stern in his Introductory Resolution 1284 that's now before the Public Safety Committee today, too many of our teen-age drivers are engaging in reckless driving habits that endanger not only themselves but their friends and the motoring public in general. Commissioner Dormer, Major Heesch share my concerns and join with me to raise awareness to teen driving behavior. Last October, one mile from here, a teen-aged driver returning back to the Smithtown High School Campus during a break was traveling in excess of 85 miles an hour, he crossed over the double lines in the three --

(*Presiding Officer Lindsay entered the meeting at 9:44 A.M. *)

Crossed three lanes of traffic, crossed the double line into the eastern most of the eastbound lanes and struck another vehicle. Two of the teen passengers in the teen-ager's vehicle and one passenger who was 13 years of age in the other car were killed; the driver of the other car was very seriously injured as well. Major Heesch of the State Police -- who, as I said before, unfortunately could not be here with us today, but he certainly would have -- has told me that in January of this year he investigated an accident in which a Mustang, capable of obtaining a speed of 190 miles an hour, was traveling eastbound on the Northern State Parkway at a speed of approximately 141 miles an hour. That vehicle left the roadway and crashed killing the passenger; the driver, who survived, had both of his legs amputated.

April of last year the State Police investigated an accident where a 17 year old was operating his father's 2007 BMW at 138 miles an hour on the Northern State Parkway by the Deer Park exit. The car left the roadway, hit a tree, both the driver and the passenger were killed, both teen-agers. The State Police unfortunately had to get their trained dogs just to find the body parts.

Just a few more examples of the carnage that we in law enforcement are seeing. Very recently, April 4th, two weeks ago, a 20 year old driver struck a pedestrian in Bay Shore killing her. April 8th, nine days ago, a 19 year old turned his vehicle across incoming traffic -- oncoming traffic and caused a collision with a vehicle in the oncoming lanes, he had lost control of his car, he struck a pedestrian and killed her. Two days later, a young woman just over her teen-age years lost control of her vehicle, hit a tree causing her death. Two weeks ago, three teenagers returning to their high school campus in Hempstead at a high rate of speed crashed killing the two passengers in the car. Two days ago a motorcyclist was traveling, a car crossed over into the oncoming lanes of traffic, the driver of the car was impaired by drugs and he killed the motorcyclist.

For too many years Suffolk County has led New York State in automobile and pedestrian fatalities. In 2007, as I said before, there were 180 individuals who were killed in motor vehicle accidents; in the three months of this year, we have already had 49 fatalities. While alcohol and drug intoxication continue to be a leading cause of the carnage, increasingly we're seeing that reckless driving by

teen-agers is a contributing factor. As I said before, upwards of 12% of all the motor vehicle fatalities occur as a result of teen-age driving, and that figure is even more startling considering the fact that there are far fewer teen-age drivers than there are in relation to the overall public. Twenty-one of the 180 fatalities were victims under the age of 21 years.

Although as a lawyer I was taught not to generalize and make assumptions, we all know that as parents and former teen-agers that young, inexperienced operators are often driving too fast and take too many chances on our roadways. When you add to that the fact of the modern technology with respect to telephones -- cell phones, rather, and text message, we have nothing short of a recipe for disaster.

Very clearly, young men and women, the majority of them being inexperienced drivers as well as those in their early 20's, are driving high-performance vehicles on roadways not capable of handling the extreme high rates of speed that they are traveling. So as a consequence, the Commissioner, myself and Major Heesch are proposing a four-pronged County-wide strategy to reduce the senseless waste of life on the roadways. It focuses on operators that are particularly at risk, drivers between the age of 16 and 22 and those individuals, no matter what age, who operate their vehicles in a reckless manner. The strategy consists of prevention, enhanced investigation, aggressive prosecution and education.

As far as prevention is concerned, I'm asking all of the Police agencies in Suffolk County to embark on an enforcement program that targets inexperienced motorists behavior shown to have a causal connection to fatal accidents, especially alcohol, reckless and aggressive driving, excessive speed, unsafe lane changes and operating a vehicle out of class and the use of electronic devices -- cell phones, text messaging, things like that -- while they are operating their motor vehicles.

I'm going to also ask that all of the school districts in Suffolk County follow the lead of the Smithtown School District and that is to request that the students who come to school in cars leave their cars in school, not be able to leave the campus from the time that they arrive at school to the time that they leave school. As I mentioned before, just in the last couple of months and as recently as a couple of weeks ago, four teenagers -- five teenagers, I'm sorry, were killed while they were returning at a high rate of speed in both instances to their campuses because they had gone out on a luncheon break.

I'm asking our Police Departments to consider cumulative conduct that would constitute a charge of reckless driving which is punishable as a misdemeanor and be prosecuted in a criminal court. By that I mean often times the Police Officers, and rightly so, are issuing tickets for perhaps speeding, unsafe lane changes; all of that would also constitute, in my view, reckless driving and reckless driving is a Class A Misdemeanor which we could prosecute in the Criminal Courts rather than the Traffic Violation Bureau. I don't mean to say in any way that they in the TVB, the Traffic Violations Bureau, are not doing their job, they're doing a great job, but I would like to have the opportunity, because of the more serious consequence affecting reckless driving, to be able to prosecute those cases in a criminal court.

We're speaking and suggesting enhanced investigations. Every single fatal accident, regardless of alcohol or drug involvement, will be reviewed by an experienced team of prosecutors to determine if the operator's conduct was reckless or criminally negligent under our Penal Law definitions. Given the unique nature of these accidents and the catastrophic impact on victims and survivors, we're calling for the redeployment and specialized training of Police Officers to staff an Accident Investigation Unit which would be available to assist our local Police Departments in fatal crash investigations. Such specialized units presently operate with success in other jurisdictions such as Nassau County.

The Accident Investigation Unit, along with Crime Lab, Forensic investigators, I'm asking to respond to all fatal accidents to assist local investigators. If criminality is suspected at the outset, the DA's

Office will immediately be notified and will provide legal support to the investigation such as getting blood warrants, search warrants or whatever else we could possibly during the investigatory stages. In all cases, the circumstances of every single fatal motor vehicle crash will be given to a prosecutor within 24 hours regardless of whether criminality was suspected at the scene. Utilizing the resources of the DA's office, the Medical Examiner's Office, the Criminalistic Laboratory, the Suffolk County Police Department and the New York State Police, I'm hoping that Police Officers in all Police agencies in Suffolk County will be provided training at the Police Academy on investigatory protocols to be followed in the investigation of fatal accidents. Such uniform, detailed training will ensure that criminal liability will not go undetected or unpunished.

If the fatality rate continues as it presently is -- and as I said before, just this year alone, the number that we have, we probably will break all of our records -- I may have to come back to the Legislature and to the County Executive to seek funding for additional Forensic Investigators for the Medical Examiner's Office and the Criminalistics Laboratory to enhance our accident investigation capabilities at fatal motor vehicle accident scenes. I've spoken to the County Executive, I'm not asking that anything be done now, we're hoping with the training that we can do for all Police agencies, that that will be sufficient. And I am very well aware of all the budgetary constraints.

Aggressive prosecution would be the next strategy. Investigations and prosecutions of fatal accidents will be handled by specially-trained and experienced prosecutors and DA Investigators. My office will continue to seek extensive State prison time for anyone convicted of a crime involving a motor vehicle, death or serious physical injury. Persons convicted of offenses regarding reckless driving will be -- we will ask the judge as a condition of the sentence that they be required to attend a Risk Awareness Program at his or her own expense.

Additionally, I am going to speak to the County Attorney and possibly, if we can -- if this is a law that can constitutionally pass muster, come back to the Legislature to consider amending its vehicle seizure law so that the Police may seize vehicles of anyone convicted of reckless driving.

The last part of the program is education. We have to teach our teen-agers that operating a motor vehicle is a privilege that carries with it enormous responsibility. My office is prepared to fund through our Asset Forfeiture Revenues programs to support all worth while educational programs designed to make our youth safe and responsible drivers. Additionally, I'm prepared to provide prosecutors to student and parent groups to discuss developments in the Penal Law, the Vehicle and Traffic Law and the fact that we are going to be prosecuting these cases far more aggressively than we have in the past.

As Legislator Stern so aptly notes in his resolution, motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among teen-age drivers and hopefully together we can make an impact to better protect our most precious resource which are, of course, our children. And I want to thank you very much for allowing me the opportunity to come before you to let you know what we in the Police Department, in the DA's Office, the Medical Examiner's Office, the Criminalistics Laboratory intend to do. I don't know if we'll be successful, but we're certainly going to take all of these steps as we see fit to ensure that we stop this carnage on our roadways. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

If I could just ask you one question.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

The education, enforcement and prosecution, great arrows being shot at a common target. But I have great anxiety or high anxiety with May 1st coming. What I'm calling "T-Day", we're talking about reducing the Highway Patrol as -- unless the troopers show up, and I don't have a whole lot of faith in that. So that you've outlined a tremendous problem, at the same time we're talking about

taking away one of your prongs. I'm hoping that you're getting this information not only to our County Executive but also to maybe our Governor so that they can see that this is a dire need to not -- not just maintain, but it sounds like to increase the enforcement.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Well, we're certainly -- I, and I will only speak for myself and the District Attorney's Office, you know, we're acutely aware, as I said before, of the budgetary constraints, but I'm also acutely aware of a potential that may exist if the State Police cannot indeed enforce the Vehicle & Traffic Laws on the Expressway and Sunrise highway, that portion that occurs within the Suffolk County Police District. I only read an article this morning where apparently the Acting Superintendent has indicated that he can't do that; that is a major, major concern for the DA's office.

As I said before, the Highway Patrol Bureau had on the highways in Suffolk County, I believe there were 12 fatalities of the 180, 12. And I know that the -- their mission is to provide safe roadways through aggressive enforcement of the Vehicle & Traffic Law. And quite frankly, and I have some numbers right here, they account for 23% of all the Suffolk County Police District DWI arrests. They account for 74% of the speeding tickets that are issued in Suffolk -- in the Police District, and 29% of the seat belt violations.

I would certainly be amenable, if you request it, to write to the Governor to provide him with these numbers. Because if the State Police are going to take over, I don't like to read in the newspaper that the Superintendent is saying that he can't do it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right, correct.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Because if we pull these Police Officers off the Expressway and there's nobody to cover it, that is a real recipe for disaster.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, and I would like you to do that on behalf of the Public Safety Come because that is a concern. And our officers, under the Commissioner's direction, you know, they have done an outstanding job and your statistics show that. So I would like to have that information both to our County Executive, to put it again as people, not just statistics but people, we're talking about lives that these officers are saving.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah. I just want to make it clear, I'm speaking only on my behalf, not Major Heesch's and not the Police Commissioner's, this is my thinking. And I also appreciate the County Executive's -- what his thoughts are with respect to the budget and the crisis that we're facing in Suffolk County. But we have the overall -- in my view, the overriding factor is public safety.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Correct; you're talking to the right people here. Any --

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

It's not -- if somebody else has questions for the speaker.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Oh, okay.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I have questions for the Commissioner on a separate matter.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Jack, I want to talk when you get a chance.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

On this? Okay.

LEG. BROWNING:

Okay. I know we had a conversation not too long ago, and Commissioner Dormer may remember this. I know this probably requires State legislation, but when you have a young driver, the first year of driving, like they do in Ireland is you have to have --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

A sticker.

LEG. BROWNING:

-- a decal in the window.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah, a decal.

LEG. BROWNING:

It was a letter R; is there any effort to try and get something done like that?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Well, as a matter of fact, I spoke to the Commissioner about that just about a week ago.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, a couple of weeks ago.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah, a couple of weeks ago we had been talking about that. And again, we were going to speak to Major Heesch and other -- you know, I've got to get all the Police Chiefs involved in this. I think it's a great idea, quite frankly. I don't know whether -- again, that's something our County Attorney would have to -- and the people in my office would have to look at whether we can do that. I think it's a terrific idea, though.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah, because it does, it limits them --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Because that will alert our Police --

LEG. BROWNING:

I believe it's 45 miles -- I don't know if you remember, they're limited to being able to drive no more than 45 miles an hour.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Well, that I don't know -- that I don't think we can do, but at least it will alert our Police Officers. Especially for stopping, there's no question in my mind that a lot of these kids are driving out of

class, they're driving at times that they shouldn't be driving, you know, with the restrictions that they do have.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, I'm not sure if this thing is on.

LEG. BROWNING:

It's on.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes, it is.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Thank you. If I may on that particular process, the DA and I spoke about that and I actually mentioned it to the County Executive and it's something that we're going to be looking at. We may need legislation on it, there's one way of doing it, legislation, and the other way is voluntary where parents would opt to have a sign on the car that says a teen-ager is driving this vehicle and giving the Police --

P.O. LINDSAY:

That ain't going to work.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I see Presiding Officer shaking his head.

LEG. BROWNING:

Parents are not going to volunteer.

P.O. LINDSAY:

The kid will take it out of the window the first time he goes around the block.

LEG. BROWNING:

Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, look, you know, I must -- I have to say, by the way, I applaud the District Attorney for stepping forward to address this epidemic. Nobody has mentioned that term and I applaud Legislator Steve Stern for introducing this legislation.

Anything that would save our kids, save one child is worth the effort, and we applaud both Legislator Stern and the DA for stepping forward. And this is a very broad proposal that the DA has presented here today. We certainly are going to help him in any way we can to reduce this carnage on the highways of Suffolk County. We're talking about families. Today there's a wake in Northport where I live, a youngster killed two days ago on 25A and a devastated family, and I'm sure many people in this audience today can relate to that. This is a devastating issue for all of us and, you know, anything we can do, you know, even with the stickers on the car. New Jersey, our -- the Governor of New Jersey right now is looking to make this part of the law and that's what the DA and I spoke about. If it saves some kids it may be worth it. I understand what the Presiding Officer is talking about but, you know, this is a parent's worst nightmare, by the way. People in this audience that have teen-agers that drive cars today in Suffolk County know exactly what we're talking about. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, thank you very much, Commissioner. Legislator --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Does the Presiding Officer want to go?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, I'm just trying to go by order. Okay, thank you, Legislator.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

No, I don't want to speak to the DA, I want to speak to the Commissioner.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator?

P.O. LINDSAY:

First I want to commend the District Attorney for the plan that you've laid out. I think it's long overdue. I think we've led the State in fatal accidents for way too long --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I agree.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And I'm happy to hear that we're going to try and do something about it. My problem is your whole plan starts with enforcement by PD.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

All PD, all P D --

P.O. LINDSAY:

All PD.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

-- in Suffolk County.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Okay, but our County force is low as it is.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yes.

P.O. LINDSAY:

And I am -- I share the Chairman's concerns about not patrolling our major highways, and your concerns. And I'm not blaming anybody for this but -- I'm certainly not blaming the County Executive, I know he has a fiscal problem, but we all have a safety responsibility. The State has not given us any tools for a long, long time, and I think -- I applaud the press conference that's going to take place that I believe Legislator Stern is behind; maybe we can put some pressure on the State to give us more resources.

For seven years I've been asking for some kind of electronic enforcement. I wanted to put red light cameras, cameras on red lights to prevent red light running; the State won't give us the approval to do that for seven years now. They have continually turned their back on funds to patrol State highways --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

That's right.

P.O. LINDSAY:

For long before my tenure here, and I think the time has come that it has to. Stop. We need some resources here to make our County roads safer and I -- with my colleagues, I'm going to draft some kind of joint letter that can all sign to send to the Governor with a plea for some help here. I know

they have their budget constraints too, but some of the things we're looking for doesn't cost any money, it just costs permission from them and they're dragging their feet with that archaic system they have in Albany and meanwhile our people are dying here and it's wrong, it's absolutely wrong.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I actually wanted to speak to the Commissioner about another issue, so if somebody wants to continue to speak to the District Attorney on this issue, I'll wait.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. You're here -- can you stay a few more minutes or do you have to run?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, I've got to run, yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You have to run.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I'm running with him.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Who wanted to speak to the DA? Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Thank you for that absolutely scary, horrible report which needed to be said. I just wanted to add a few things, perhaps bring up things that you already knew. The accident that you spoke about on 25A was in my district.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yes.

LEG. NOWICK:

And I know there's nothing we can do about it, but that road is an accident waiting to happen. Every time I get on that road I say to my daughters, "Do not drive in the left lane, that's number one."

And I wanted to also commend you on the thought, when I was in school we couldn't leave at lunch. Not that that will be the entire fix to the situation, but maybe it would help just a little bit, they wouldn't be running back to school.

Just one other thing. We do talk about teen-agers, but the Commissioner and I have spoken about our daughters and our children and I want to tell you something, it's not just the teen-agers. When they go into their 20's, I watch how they drive, there's no fear of speed. They sit in those cars, put those seat belts -- seats back, they get on their -- what do they do with the numbers, the cell --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Text message?

LEG. NOWICK:

Text messaging that I can't even read the numbers, I don't know how they do it when they're driving. But I think they need to be scared.

I think the 20 year olds, 20's to 30's, believe it or not, in a way, letting them know if they're not going to listen about accidents, I hate to say it, they go to those bars in Smithtown -- we've talked about it, Commissioner -- I'm talking signs that have to go up mandatory, letting them know, "You can lose your car," I don't know how else to scare these young people, "if you drive when you walk out of this bar." And I know most of them now are taking cabs, but they think one or two drinks is not intoxicating. I think these young people in that age group as well needs to know the ramifications, put up the signs in the bars because that's where they're going at 21, scare them to death. We can do just so much as parents, and I know we do, we try and after a while they say, "Okay, Mom." I say, "I have to do it because that's what I get the big bucks for." But just as an additional thought, that age group is -- I think they're dangerous as well.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah, I have the -- I didn't bring them with me, but you're absolutely right, the statistics up to about the age of 25 or 26, if you take all of the number of fatalities percentage-wise, it's startling. And again, especially considering the proportion of people driving between 16 and say 25 and 26 as compared to the overall public, the number of fatalities --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

(Inaudible).

LEG. NOWICK:

I want them to be scared, I want them to think they're going to lose their cars.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah, well mention it.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

You know, I just mentioned to the DA, the insurance companies know something. Up to the age of 25 they hammer you and they say at 25, "You're now a good driver;" I mean, we've all known that. So statistics -- the insurance companies pay attention to the statistics and that's why the insurance rate is so high for young people up to 25, I believe it's still like that.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, it is. It is.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

It's still like that?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, I pay it.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Stern.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Did you say you pay it?

LEG. HORSLEY:

I have kids and I pay their insurance.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Oh, okay.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

If I may add something, Mr. Chair, with your permission?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I talked to the District Attorney a couple of weeks ago when we went over this whole program and he outlined his plan and we are stepping up Police presence at high schools which started last week and we'll continue till the end of the school year. We're going to be checking youngsters for driving out of class in particular and for aggressive driving. We've notified the schools so they could notify the parents that we're going to do this. We don't want to ambush anybody, we want to just put them on notice that we were doing this. So the Chief of Patrol has come up with a procedure, within the law, by the way, for -- to keep our youngsters safe, particularly from now to the end of the school year which is really a bad time, as we all know. So I just wanted to mention that, and the District Attorney was very supportive of that, he thought it was a great idea to reduce, to help reduce the carnage, you know, this season.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Commissioner, I can tell you from my own personal experience that you're right on track. Spending 30 years in the school district, both as a teacher and a social worker, we had within two years two fatal car crashes on Woodside Avenue and with two kids killed and then five, and we immediately closed the campus and there have been no fatalities since that time during the school day. So I think there is a proof that it does work, I want to applaud you for looking at that and working with the schools. Legislator Stern.

LEG. STERN:

Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. District Attorney, thank you so much for being here today and sending this important message. Major Heesch and Commissioner Dormer, thank you for being here as well. And it's great to hear that it will be the policy in Suffolk County to be as aggressive, as aggressive in reckless driving has become in Suffolk County.

We all came here this morning on this beautiful day which, of course, is a great time of year, but unfortunately it also indicates that it is really the beginning of what has unfortunately become the hundred most deadliest days of the year for our young people on our roads in Suffolk County. As we come up on graduation time and prom time and summer time, unfortunately reckless behavior only increases. So I guess my question for you, Mr. District Attorney, is how much time do you think it will take in order to implement many of the initiatives that you're looking to bring forward to make an immediate impact?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Some of them won't take that much time at all if I can get the -- and I know the Commissioner and the Major are supportive, it's the other outlying Police agencies that we have to address, we haven't yet spoken to them about everything that I have proposed in here. For instance, reckless driving, what I talked about before, often times what I'm encouraging the Police to do, if at all possible -- and we will give them what we view the law on reckless driving to be -- rather than just charge a person with speed and/or some form of other aggressive driving, unsafe lane change, whatever it may be, it may be that we should also be charging the far more serious charge of reckless driving; that can be done almost immediately. That's a crime, it's a Class A Misdemeanor and that moves the cases over into my jurisdiction and that is what -- and the Commissioner is prepared to do that, I think he is.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Major Heesch is prepared to do that. I've got to speak to the Chiefs of the outlying districts, and I'm talking like the Amityville, Northport, the districts out east, Southampton and East Hampton, Southold; I can't believe that they would not be supportive as well. So that we can do right away. The other -- and we have been prosecuting a lot of the fatalities that are criminal in nature, very aggressively. And the Commissioner just mentioned -- I'm sorry, Legislator Nowick just mentioned -- no, I'm sorry, it was the Commissioner, the tragedy that occurred just two days ago where the, motorcyclist was killed. Now, I think you know, it deserves emphasis and reemphasis, that the driver of the car that killed him was impaired by drugs at the time; those are the types of things we can do right away.

What we will have to do, because we don't have the monies right now to hire other accident reconstruction experts and forensic investigators, it's going to be a matter of training, and the Commissioner is prepared to allow us to use the Police Academy. We'll all join forces, the State Police, I have accident reconstruction people on my staff, the State Police and the Commissioner have accident reconstruction and crime scene people to teach the outlying Police agencies how to conduct the fatalities that occur within their district; that's going to take some time. But overall, some of this can go into effect almost immediately.

LEG. STERN:

Thank you.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Jack?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Horsley.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Good morning, Mr. DA. Thank you very much. And on behalf of being a parent, and particularly a parent in that age group of a little over 21 but yet not old enough sometimes to be sensible, I appreciate your efforts.

I'm questioning -- what is -- and this is -- we need a war plan and that's what it sounds like, you're going to war against reckless driving and driving problems that exist throughout Suffolk County. Are you going to be outlining to each group where they can -- where they can assist? I mean, whether it be the County Legislature, but certainly a lot of this falls back to the State and their jurisdictions and law making and the like because it's going to take some time to make some of the major changes here which I fully endorse. Where -- how is this going to unfold for us as a County?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

You're talking --

LEG. HORSLEY:

And how can we assist?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Well, first of all, I have to speak to, for instance, the vehicle seizure law upon a conviction or however it will work; that is something I have to speak to the County Attorney about because she really will provide us with the necessary terminology in order to enact the law, if indeed it's possible. I will and I will join I think Legislator Lindsay had indicated that he wants to, on behalf of the Legislature, contact the Governor and I think the State Legislature.

LEG. HORSLEY:

You'll be giving our list of all those issues that you want to address.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Of our concerns, yeah. And we can get together informally and go over the method or manner in which we should do these things.

LEG. HORSLEY:

A war plan, you know.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah.

LEG. HORSLEY:

So that will be your responsibility to organize this whole --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I'd be very happy to do that; Bob Kearon will do that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, you'd be very happy to have him do it.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Go, Bob.

MR. KEARON:

I'll be happy to.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Cure reckless driving, Bob, no problem. Easy stuff. That's great, thank you.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Just quickly, I just wanted to say I am so happy that you're here. Because we sit here as Legislators, we talk about we save the environment, budget, we save the 477 Water Protection Fund, consumers, we do everything, health and social service, we talk about budget, budget, budget. What you're talking about today as us, as parents, as -- this is the single most important thing I think that I've heard in a long -- this is very important and I congratulate you all and I thank you.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Losquadro.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you. I certainly have to concur, I truly believe that the single most fundamental charge of any County government is public safety and this is a key aspect of public safety, keeping our roads

safe, that when people go out just go about their daily lives, that they're not put in jeopardy by those who would act in these reckless manners.

All of you know, you've heard me talk about it many times, I've been around the automotive industry my whole life and I saw the aftermath of these accidents every day and the worst days for me was when I got an assignment to go out to the Westhampton Impound and it wasn't an arson or a theft, because I knew it was a fatality and I had to go look at that car and to the assessment for the insurance company, and those were always tough days. So seeing the aftermath of this, I'm always very interested in your efforts.

I'm sitting here trying to remember, Commissioner, what was the name of the unit that used to exist within Highway Patrol that did the target enforcement? It had a specific acronym, we used it up in my district when we had those fatalities on 25A.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, I have Chief Ponzo here, he knows that, but it was the traffic enforcement unit, a special unit.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Yeah, it was -- they would come in and really drop the hammer, I just can't remember what the --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, they moved about the County into -- what was it, Bob?

CHIEF MOORE:

The SITE Team.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Oh, okay, the SITE Team.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

SITE Team, that was it.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, they love these acronyms.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

It was too many.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

It even confuses me, I think that's why they use them.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

And it was very --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

The SITE Team, yes.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

It was very unfortunate that we weren't able to keep that unit. I understand -- and that's something that we've heard several times about the redeployment of officers. The SITE Team I know firsthand was very effective. We had -- my first year in office we had several fatalities up on the 25A Corridor, the SITE Team came in and I believe they wrote 3,500 tickets in a very small window of time, I mean, it was unbelievable, they absolutely dropped the hammer on that community and really knocked people's heads around and it cleaned it up, it cleaned it up.

I was -- I know our budgetary constraints, I know our manpower restraints, but it seems like every time we turn around we're talking about another unit being absorbed into other units in the Police

Department. First it was SITE, we're talking about Highway Patrol going off the major roadways, and the issue that I wanted to bring up to you additionally was I just heard from my local township, the Town of Brookhaven, that the Suffolk County Police Department is going to be ending their relationship with the Safe Summer Program, especially my community over at Cedar Beach, and I was wondering if you can give me any insight on this because that's a program that's been going on since I was a kid there. It's been very successful, it gives the kids a place to go in those summer evenings, I got to know some of the Police Officers who work down there and they made very good contacts with the kids in the community.

So I just wish I could get this information prior to having to hear about it from another level of government or, you know, from some news story. So if you could just -- I don't know if anyone else on the committee had heard this or was informed of this, but I would like to hear, one, what the rationale is, if it's just a manpower issue; and two, where these individuals are going to be going, where they're being redeployed to. So if you could please enlighten us on that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

If I may, I would like to address the issue of the SITE Team. When we came on board in 2004 we looked at what our regular cops were doing in the precincts as it related to traffic summonses and we found out that the ratio of movers to non-movers was really out of whack. And so we stepped up our enforcement of moving violations in the precincts, throughout the seven precincts, so that it went from about 18% movers to right now about 40%. Because we're now concentrating on the behavior, traffic behavior that causes crashes, that's a major change in philosophy and policy in the Patrol Division and we think it was a Good thing.

Now, to address the town youth programs, and I mentioned that it's the towns run these youth programs. There are seven of them in the Police District, 21 Police Officers detached during the summer for -- in other words to, I guess, these gatherings of youngsters in parks and at the beaches for the summer. We, the Police Department, and this was a patrol, Chief of Patrol initiative, we wanted to put these officers in the downtown areas on the streets of Suffolk County during the summer rather than in the parks. It was, again, a decision that we felt was necessary because we didn't think that the officers were being utilized for what they were hired to do.

Again, I mention that these are town youth programs. And we gave them plenty of notice so that they could make arrangements to have somebody monitor, somebody else monitor these gatherings for the summer. So we -- you know, we think it's the right thing to do. The 21 officers, by the way, many of them were on overtime which is an issue for us and we felt that we needed them in our sector cars and our foot posts.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Well, I mean, the simple math is seven locations, 21 officers, you're talking three locations, three officers per location. Could we -- on average. Could we cut that down instead of just simply eliminating it? I don't ever remember seeing three officers at any one location, and it should only be a one-shift type of issue, it's not something -- it's obviously not something that's manned 24-hours a day. That seems like an awful lot of officers to be assigned to this, I don't ever remember seeing three officers at any of these location. And if for some reason there were, could we scale that back to down to maybe one officer to have them there and put 14 officers back out and only keep seven on this detail?

Like I said, it's been something that's very successful, it's been a great relationship. I understand it is a town -- these are town programs, but we do work in concert with other levels of government, you know, whether it be to provide security for parades or whatever it may be that other levels of government may hold. And this is something that really dovetails very well -- dovetails very well with our efforts to keep kids out of trouble and give them, you know, an option to go someplace that's safe and that they're not going to get into trouble and when there are issue that there is someone, a real law enforcement officer on hand, not just a public safety officer who has to call

SCPD when they need backup if an incident happens; I mean, that's why it's been so successful in the past. So just if you could touch on those couple of concerns, I just really don't understand the average of three per location.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, some locations require more attention than others and I don't know -- I'm not familiar with all the locations. I know Sunken Meadow Park which, by the way, is a State park, why don't the State Park Police do it; that's my question to the people in the Police Department.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

For the same reason the State Police haven't patrolled our road and we've had to do that to keep our public safe.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, you know, we have an obligation, by the way, in the Suffolk County Police District to respond to our core mission which is respond to emergency calls, keep our officers on the streets, in foot posts in the downtown areas. And we didn't think, by the way, that this was a major public safety issue when we looked at it. We sat down with the Chief of Patrol and said, "Is there any public safety problem with turning this over to the towns and have their code enforcement or parks Police or somebody like that do it," at a lot less expense, by the way -- and we keep our cops on the streets and in the sector cars -- and the answer from the Chief of Patrol was, "No, we've done it because that's what we've done," and that wasn't good enough for me. I said, "We have to look at the return on investment."

We know that kids gather for whatever peaceful situation, it doesn't need Police Officers, sworn Police Officers to monitor the youngsters as they listen to a band for a couple of hours. We need these cops in our downtown areas and we thought that this was a very rational, reasonable redeployment of our officers.

And I must say, you know, we all talk about the budget, you know, tightening our belts during this critical time for the County, the State and the country, and that's what we're doing in the Police Department without in any way impacting, at least with this program, our core mission of responding to 911 calls, car crashes, aided cases; we're continuing to do that, well continue to do that. But some of the stuff that we do was nice, but that's not good enough in today's age, just because it's nice to do. You know, I'm giving you the harsh realities of what we're dealing with with our budget. So we're trying to be very careful and prudent with the taxpayer's dollars.

You know, we didn't do this suddenly, if I may mention again. We put everybody on notice months ahead of time by letter from me telling them we weren't going to do it so they could make other arrangements for the youngsters. You know, it wasn't like we pulled the plug a week before the programs, we didn't do that. And, you know, I think it's the right thing to do, we're comfortable with it. We wish we could do everything for everybody in the Police District, we just can't; these are the realities we deal with.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I understand your point completely. When you talk about core mission, I guess times have changed, in the past we had enough staffing to do both and now we don't; that's what you're saying?

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No, I -- well, you know, staffing is always an issue. Look, you know, I don't want to discuss the staffing issues, but what I want to say again, I want to reiterate that this wasn't a proper use of Police resources, we didn't see it as our core mission.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I apologize, Commissioner, I have to disagree with you to make such a blanket statement like that. I think this was a beneficial program, it had certain benefits. To just make a blanket statement that this was an inappropriate use of resources, I understand if you want to redeploy or you feel that assets could be better used elsewhere in light of the need for staffing in these other areas, but to just say that this program had no benefit by having the Police Department there, I have to vehemently disagree with you on that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Okay, so we disagree. But if I may say, if I may say, I would rather have these officers in Port Jefferson on a weekend or on a weekend night or Huntington or Babylon or Sayville where we get the calls for service, where youngsters, young people who are not as well behaved as the people who go to these gatherings, these concerts are, and that's where we get the calls for service. That's where there's a public safety issue and that's where we get a clamor from that community, to send us more foot officers and more sector cars. So we have to prioritize what we do and I think that that's what we're doing.

It would be nice if we could continue a program like that, but I can't justify utilizing officers to monitor -- some people in the business say babysit -- the kids while they're listening to a band. Officers are very expensive, experienced professionals, we can utilize their expertise somewhere else. And the towns, by the way, have the wherewithal to step up and monitor the program themselves and we're saying to the towns, "You take care of it, it's a town youth program, not a Police program."

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

I would beg to differ in the sense that perhaps some of the reason why the kids are well behaved when they've been there is because of the real law enforcement presence and not because they know that there's some, pardon the expression to anyone out there; you know, kids look and they say, "Oh, it's just some square badge, he can't do anything to me." When there's that Police Officer there with the badge and the triangle patch on his sleeve and that kid knows if he gets out of line he's going to have a problem with that officer and that officer can throw him in the back of that squad car.

You know, again, 21 officers, I don't know where we're putting three officers, you're telling me some locations require more; is there a location we had five, six officers on-site for one of these things? I agree with you, I think that's completely excessive, but to -- my opinion is and I would ask you to take a look at it, I understand, you know, the staffing concerns, the budgetary concerns, but maybe to look to see if we could keep some officers in this program and not remove all 21 of them from it. Redeploy 14 of them perhaps, maybe keep one for each site, do it on a rotating basis, I don't know. But what I do know is having seen this first hand, I know it has been successful and at least in my opinion, and I know in the opinion of many of the people who run these programs, the reason that there have been gatherings that stay in control is because the officers are there. That's all I'm asking you to do is take a look at it.

And I know that you said you contacted these youth bureaus regarding this. In the future, if it's something that is going effect our constituencies, if it's a longstanding program -- and I bring this up only because in the past it did create, you know, a great deal of clamor much in the same way that the DARE information came out to us --

I would ask that you at least notify us, contact at least members of this committee to let us know so that I'm not getting a phone call from a local township saying, "Hey, your Police Department is eliminating this," and I'm sitting there on the other end of the phone going, "Wow, that's news to me." So I would just ask for that line of communication.

I'm not asking to micromanage your department. I trust in the professionals that you and your senior staff are, but in something like this that has been in place for so long, please, even just a phone call to let us know what your intentions are with something like this and to please take a look

at where your staffing is with this. Because as I said, I just don't see where that many officers were at seven sites and I've been to some of these sites in the past. We can talk more about this later, I don't want to monopolize time.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Commissioner -- and I'm not really going to be positive or negative of that initiative. I can tell you that years ago in the 70's I was the chair of the Youth Committee for the Eagle Estates Civic Association and we used to have concerts in the summer in our park and we didn't have Police available, but we had a lot of parents. And I'll tell you right now, a parent is better, in my estimation, than a Police Officer because they say, "Hey, Joey, cut that out." But I think Legislator Losquadro's point is more important. We get blind-sided, we get calls, "Did you know this is happening? Do you know that?" And we haven't heard any alternatives, we haven't heard that you've reached out to civic associations or you've come up with strategies for the towns to do it.

And so I guess what I'm going to ask you to do is next Public Safety Committee meeting, I've gotten calls on your budget on changes, moves, and maybe what we could do is have the committee available to ask you some specific questions, get it out in the daylight. I'm sure you have great rationals, it's just that when we get calls we don't have that and we kind of sit there and go, "Well, they're doing it because" you know, whatever. So could we maybe put that on the agenda and then they'll come prepared with some questions about where movement is going.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. Yeah, we're open to discussing whatever issues, but if you could maybe give us a head's up on some of the issues that you want to talk about --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Absolutely.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

-- because we don't want to walk in here and then not know what the agenda is.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I will coordinate that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

And then I will make sure that the people that can answer these questions are here.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Good, we'll work on that and we'll see you then next week.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Last question just for these --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, I think Legislator Horsley had a question and Legislator Nowick.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yes, I just -- good morning, Commissioner. I just wanted to assure my thoughts on 1129 which is the scrap metal bill that we'll be voting on out of committee or not out of committee today, of the Police's feelings on this. Is it endorsed by the Police Department; I want to know yes, no, that kind of thing.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yes, the Police Department supports this a hundred percent, we think it's very necessary today. The increase in scrap metal thefts throughout the County and actually throughout the country are up in the hundreds, especially in Suffolk County, and we need some tools to address this problem. By the

way, some communities where homes are being vandalized are being devastated with the theft of copper in particular from these homes, where they now are sitting -- because they're going to be repossessed or they're for sale and somebody takes the copper piping, the houses are flooded, I think you all know this. They devastate that community, that particular community's values, their home values go down because of the home that has been destroyed. We think that this bill is necessary to address this problem, it will be a great tool and we ask you to pass this out of committee. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Before we have any more questions, is there any questions for the District Attorney? Otherwise I'll let him go back and start prosecuting.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Do work.

P.O. LINDSAY:

Yes, I do.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Well, I have to go with him, I have to work with him on this thing.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

No way.

P.O. LINDSAY:

A real quick question, fellas. We've had a bill before us for quite some time about text message, driving and text messaging, and we haven't passed it out because we thought it was really covered under existing statutes, that this is a violation. Do you guys want to weigh in on this; do you want this? I mean, in the theme of what we're talking about now about traffic safety, would this be helpful?

MR. KEARON:

Yes, it would be helpful.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

Yeah, I think so. Tom, maybe you can answer that.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I'm not aware of the proposed legislation, but certainly --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I am, I'm in support of it.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

The Commissioner is and he says he's in support of it and if he's in support of it I'm in support of it. Well, that's one of the problems I addressed before with the text messaging. We know what these kids are doing. It's very difficult to enforce, I'm sure, for the Police Officer, but nonetheless we should have it -- I see it -- well, we all see it every day of the week, these people, as they're trying to steer they're doing all that stuff which I can't do myself, but I see it.

P.O. LINDSAY:

I can't see the keyboard.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

But that's as much of a concern and a cause of the accidents on the roadways as cell phones.

P.O. LINDSAY:

So it wouldn't be covered under the cell phone legislation?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I don't believe it's -- I don't believe that is.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No, different.

LEG. NOWICK:

(Inaudible).

P.O. LINDSAY:

All right, that's what I thought.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

If I could just -- could you get -- we're going to have to table that for public hearing anyway, but could you look at that for us?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Sure.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Because, you know, I did think that it was covered.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I'll check.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

If you can't use a cell phone, whether you're talking on it, listening -- you know, a hand-held --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

That's a good point. I certainly will do that, yeah.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Because the next thing would be, you know, you can't drink coffee and I want to make sure we're clear; if one law covers it, let's not add five or six different laws.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

I'll come back to you if you want at the next meeting.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

If you could let us know.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Yeah, absolutely.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Sure. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Nowick.

LEG. NOWICK:

Mr. District Attorney, you said if the Police Commissioner supports something you support it, so that's --

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

No, I don't mean -- there are many things we disagree about, but in this I do.

LEG. NOWICK:

Is that a yes or a no on the scrap metal?

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Oh, yes, absolutely.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay. Just quickly, Commissioner, we have a wonderful youth group in my community, in my district who has been meeting at Sunken Meadow State Park for years and years and years and they do an incredible job, and I have been there personally and they do have a lot of parents. And I also understand the budgetary restrictions. My only thought is I think sometimes a uniform officer is like preventative medicine for all of these young people; and again, I will say I do understand what you're going through.

My question to you is I know my particular group didn't get a letter until this week; did the 4th Precinct, which would have been in my district, ever get an opportunity or did they go to the towns and ask the code town enforcements to get involved; do you know if they did anything like that.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

No, I'm not sure what the precincts did. But I should say that these letters went out at least over a month ago because I signed the letters. I'm sorry --

LEG. NOWICK:

Well, they must have gotten -- I don't know how that --

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I'm sorry that it didn't get there sooner to your constituents, but it did go out some time ago because we've had inquiries over a month ago on this.

LEG. NOWICK:

And as far as going to our local towns to code enforcement, did our Police precincts work with the towns, do you know? Sometimes the towns can be a little difficult.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

I don't know.

LEG. NOWICK:

Okay. Thank you, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DORMER:

By the way, we're willing to help out the towns and give them some guidance on handling these types of events so, you know, we're always open to that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

DISTRICT ATTORNEY SPOTA:

Thank you.

*(*The following was taken by Diana Kraus &
Transcribed by Alison Mahoney*)*

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, we'll go to our public portion now, I have a number of cards. Nancy Dwyer. Go right ahead, Nancy.

MS. DWYER:

My name is Nancy Dwyer, I'm a member of PAX Christi, Long Island, the local branch of the Catholic Peace Movement.

I was with the accused Deacon, Don Circle, age 80, on March 29 in the food court of Smithaven Mall, basically I'm one of the Food Court Four and this is the T-shirt that all of four of us were wearing.

Four thousand US Troops --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Could you just read it into the record so we'll have it on?

MS. DWYER:

"Four thousand US Troops, one million Iraqis dead", and then on the back it says the same word used by Pope Benedict himself with regard to this war, "Enough."

Mall management had Deacon Don dragged away from a food court table by eight security officers, plopped into a wheelchair, then taken away in handcuffs to the 4th Precinct. Don, by the way, speaks well of the professionalism of the Suffolk County Police; is the Commissioner still here? Just make sure that he knows that, that Don has really commended the professionalism of Suffolk County Police and how they conducted themselves. There were four of us, all members of PAX Christi; Don, his wife Marie, myself and another lady. We had been outside with the anti-war demonstration; it was cold, damp and windy, and that's especially hard for people our age, I'm 74 and I'm the youngest of the four. We got coffee, a hot dog and french fries and were peacefully eating and chatting quietly with one another. Oddly, Don is accused by mall management, according to a Suffolk Police Press Release, of handing out leaflets; not so. At no time did any one of the four of us hand out or have in our possession any leaflets, there were no leaflets on the table.

Questions. Wouldn't making such an accusation by mall management have to be submitted on some kind of a formal official paper signed by someone? Especially since it would result in the Police taking someone into custody, handcuffed and confined? Who signed it? Did he or she commit perjury or, given the abundance of security cameras throughout the mall, can this person produce any proof whatsoever that Deacon Don Circle handed a leaflet to anybody? No, they can't. So did Smithaven Mall management invent a charge against Deacon Don, perjur themselves? And if so, what kind of crime is that; aren't there laws against this kind of harassment and shouldn't those laws be enforced?

Smithaven Mall management ordered us to take off our T-shirts or leave. Why? Because the mall owner management -- the mall management can. He can order anyone out of his mall, he has all the rights, you as an American have no rights, only those that the mall owner wishes to grant you as though you were in his private home. It is not a private home. It used to be that every town had a town square with people of all ages, all ethnics, all religions, American, all its marvelous diversity would gather, stroll, meet friends, discuss important issues of the day; now there is no such town square. Only in the malls do people gather in such diversity where they can stroll, meet friends and discuss shopping. Is it any wonder Americans' attention is so focused on shopping and so out of touch with our \$3 trillion war and the 4,000 U.S. Troops killed and 30,000 wounded in that war? But I've just got to tell you --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm going to have to ask you to wind up, please.

MS. DWYER:

Oh, I just wanted to give you a sign of hope. When security scooped Don out of his food court chair and plopped him into a wheelchair, the crowd in the food court, a little slice of America, booed the security officers and as they wheeled him out of the mall and we three women followed still wearing our T-shirts, the crowd in the food court applauded our little procession. So the people got it. And do you also get it? I would like to hear the views of the members of the Public Safety Committee. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Kevin M. O'Hare, please.

MR. O'HARE:

Good morning. Good to see some of my friends from the Legislature.

I am currently the President of the Smithtown Veterans Youth Program at Sunken Meadow State Park where Legislator Nowick had explained to you earlier is the program that is run there with us. The parents there are chaperones, just to let you know, they are not there to Police anybody. The kids would not show up if their parents were there, as you know. We have two officers there, they are on duty the first four hours of their shift, they attend to regular business, the last four hours, 8 to 12, they're at Sunken Meadow Beach acting in the background, not -- just to be there in case there's a problem.

I am the President, I do not get paid. I've been a volunteer for 12 years. You're taking the kids, we get three to 400 a season, we only have eight weeks in the program, now they're going to put them out on the street. We're an anti-drug program, they don't have the malls to go to, the Time-Outs are closed, Sports Plus is closed and this is the future of America that we're just throwing out there with no program in the summer that they would have anyplace to go but hang out at the mall or the streets or their friends' house. Okay?

I disagree with the Commissioner. He has been very supportive of us, I want to say that, as the 4th Precinct Commander, James Rhodes who I meet with periodically. But we received this letter 18 days ago, and I have copies here for everyone here. It was not addressed to us, only the envelope was and there were copies, there was no original. It's a good program; again, it helps the children get out of where they are together and they enjoy themselves. We have bands there, yes; it's not a concert. We also have a DJ there, we have inflatables, we have ping-pong. It's like having a rec center where you don't have any more in the towns and we are not run by the town, we cannot be at the State Park without the 4th Precinct. We cannot rent a place, we can't do, we're out of business. I've just received \$36,000 from the County to run the program, \$10,000 from the State and now we've got to turn it all back if this is closed plus the \$20,000 worth of equipment I have, and this is all against the kids, again, the future of America.

The other thing to tie in with that, I'm also Vice-President of the Suffolk County Civilian Police Academy. I understand last week they're going to cancel that, too. This is a community group where people get to know the Police Officers, Jim had been a member, Angie Carpenter had gone through it and so had the late Maxine Postal. We all attend this, it lets you get an insight as to the Police Department and I just feel both of these organizations that I'm in which is dear to my heart are being let go.

And I just want to be here today to address all of you. I know a lot of you from a lot of organizations from veterans that I'm involved in and I appreciate anything you can do to save these programs.

Applause

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Charlotte Koons.

MS. KOONS:

Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature, my name is Charlotte Koons, I reside at 81 Locust Lane, Northport, and I'm proud to take advantage of speaking before this party, an example of the town hall meeting concept so integral to our democratic system.

Much to their credit, the States of New Jersey and California are among the six states that have declared that since malls are the new public squares, citizens can distribute literature and in a decision by the New Jersey Supreme Court in 1994, engage in expressive conduct in privately owned malls. I feel that the citizen who wore the T-shirts declaring on the front that 4,000 troops and a thousand Iraqi dead and on the back the word "enough", as I am wearing today, were fulfilling their moral obligation to bring information about this illegal and immoral invasion and occupation of Iraq to their fellow citizens. The wearing of these T-shirts was simply expressive conduct permitted in other states. These citizens were exhibiting the morality of commemorating and honoring men and women who died for what they believed and served their country. They wore on their body the cost of this quagmire in terms of human life. I know they felt this was their duty as citizens.

It seems that one 80 year old man, a church Deacon, sat in a food court with his 77 year old wife, far from the demonstrators who had been respectfully reading the names of the fallen, drinking coffee and eating fries. His expressive conduct consisted of refusing to remove this informational T-shirt, this led to his arrest. What but a fear-based morality could see this man as a threat? Surely his expressive conduct did not insight or bring to harm his fellow diners, many of whom expressed concern as to what these officers of the law felt necessary to do to uphold the security policy very selectively enforced. I do not blame the officers, they were upholding another law that needs examining and changing.

I ask that you, members of the Public Safety Committee, consider these harsh responses to peaceful, non-violent, expressive conduct as actually harmful to the public, concept of public safety. How can a citizen feel safe in public when they're such an intemperate reaction to peaceful protest. Think about your moral obligation to protect the rights of protesters as well as the rights of private property owners. Thank you for considering my request to look into this matter, going into dialogue with mall owners and security and then consider amending an unjust policy, an unjust law in this County. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Dan Andersen?

MR. ANDERSEN:

I have some handouts here, I wanted to get them to you before I came up but I'll give them to you now. The subject I'm here today on involves what I know to be unconstitutional imposition of the Federal Income Tax as imposed on the citizens' wages and salaries in the County of Suffolk. Of course, this is happening across the nation, but I'm only here addressing the citizens inside this County.

I'm a student of the income tax, I'm fully familiar with the history going back to 1894. In 1895 the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the Income Tax as unconstitutional and so the Congress struggled with bringing about another form of tax and in 1909 the ratification of the 16th Amendment took place, otherwise known as the Income Tax Act. But as the U.S. Supreme Court said, the ratification imposed no new form of taxation but simply kept the existing form from being taken out of the

category from which it inherently belonged and that was the indirect tax which must be imposed uniformly across the country. And the Congress themselves knew this and they didn't impose the income tax as -- on to the people's wages and salaries, which is otherwise known as capitation. In fact, they said in the reading of their minutes, I read their very words from 1909, and there's a lot that was said in this, they clearly avoided the language of embracing the subject of direct taxation which capitation is a part of, probably no more direct than capitation on salaries. But they didn't use that language, they used the language of income tax or taxation on incomes from whatever source derived and without apportionment, according to populations.

They did this because they wanted to preserve the people's wages and salaries and not bring them up into the ratification. This stuff, its lawbreaking. I don't know about you, but I can't live with this and there are thousands of other people that are involved in the investigation of this subject. The evidence is overwhelming and about five organizations right now, including Bob {Schulz} and we the People in the 2nd Circuit in Manhattan, every organization is involved in their own specific area of interest. {Schulz} is with the -- withholding at the source in the 2nd Circuit where he is hammering the department of Justice Attorneys, making them look like idiots in his motions; they're readable on "givemeliberty.org", you can help yourself to what's going on in the 2nd Circuit.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you, Mr. Andersen. We're going to have to ask you to wrap up.

MR. ANDERSEN:

Okay. I'm here because this is a matter of public safety, I want to move this committee to take first steps to look at the evidence, the overwhelming evidence and consider that evidence in moving the Sheriff in this County, which is the highest law environment entity in the County, to protect the people against these illegal, unconstitutional acts until the questions are answered.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Thank you very much.

MR. ANDERSEN:

Okay?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Next speaker, Jerry Gilmore. Any time you're ready, sir.

MR. GILMORE:

Okay, thank you. Good morning, Legislator Eddington and the other members of the Public Safety Committee. I'm here today, as you can see, to oppose the plan of the County Executive to disband the Suffolk County Police Department Highway Patrol Bureau. I have a prepared statement which you have, and I think it is even more evident after the DA's presentation and how important this will be.

Since the inception of the Suffolk County Police Department in 1960, there has existed a specialized command within the department for the specific purpose of enforcement, engineering and education in the vital field of traffic safety. Originally this command was known as the Traffic & Safety Bureau, in 1971 it was renamed as the Highway Patrol Bureau. One of the most important functions of the Highway Patrol Bureau has always been to provide patrol services on limited access highways within the Police District. The high speed nature of these roadways call for modified patrol tactics and specialized patrol equipment. The fact remains, however, that the Highway Patrol Bureau's Expressway and Sunrise Highway Patrol function is just that, Police patrol.

It would be reasonable to consider this patrol function as a sort of a linear precinct. These highways are the main streets of the Suffolk County and it is unreasonable to postulate that because they happen to be limited-access highways they should be patrolled by another Police agency. The Long Island Expressway in the Police District has one of the highest average daily vehicle traffic counts in

the world, 130,000 cars a day. All of these vehicles are residents or visitors to or suppliers to Suffolk County. There is virtually no traffic on either the Long Island Expressway or Sunrise Highway, it is all originating or terminating in Suffolk County.

Police management experts agree that the I'll -- ideal method of Police patrol is for one unified organization to patrol a given geographical area. This greatly enhances communication, coordination and effective Police coverage. Policing the entire Police District with one law enforcement agency is good management. The Highway Patrol Bureau has a written plan that can be implemented at a moment's notice to divert traffic along any point of these roadways in order to keep traffic moving. This plan calls for the use of Highway Patrol officers along the highways and precinct officers on traffic posts in outlying areas to ensure the smooth flow of traffic around closed sections of the limited access highways. These plans enjoy unity command and a common communication system.

An example of the importance of a common communication system is a robbery/homicide of the Radio Shack in Bohemia in the 5th Precinct. Responding Police units were able to alert Highway Patrol Units in real time so that they could position themselves at strategic locations. One Highway Patrol Officer Unit spotted the perpetrator's vehicle and pursued it into the 3rd Precinct; the subject fled on foot and was eventually apprehended. The entire effort worked because Highway received the initial notification without delay.

Another important responsibility is Homeland Security. In addition to the radiation detectors that are used by the Motor Carrier Safety Unit, 21 Police Officers in the Patrol Command are equipped with the state-of-art radiation detectors. This insures that Detectives are deployed on the main arteries of the County 24-hours a day, seven days a week. Suffolk County Highway Patrol Units are unique in what they get equipped to immediately assist and correct minor vehicle problems. They carry gasoline, water, battery jumper cables and are equipped with more visible McDermott Lights, video cameras and push bumpers to clear traffic lanes. We are --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Mr. Gilmore, I'm going to have to ask you to summarize.

MR. GILMORE:

Okay. Well, I'll get to the real thing here. Current minimum staffing levels for Highway Patrol are eight sectors staffed from 7 AM to 11 PM and seven sectors staffed from 11 PM to 7 AM out of eleven sectors. On May 1st, 2008, these minimums were reduced to six 7 AM to 11 PM and five 11 PM to 7 AM. Frequently there is more than one motor vehicle crash scene being policed at one time and each scene could require two to five minutes to safety handle. Road closings and openings for destructions require two to four units and often times there are three or four projects simultaneously operating on the highways. If the reduction of the current minimums are reduced as planned, the safety of the motoring public and the Police Officers will be greatly compromised. What will happen on August 1st, 2008 when the second reduction takes effect? Or on November 1st, 2008 when the staffing will be three and two or two and one? What is the County's liability after 48 years of patrol responsibility? Is traffic safety no longer a priority in Suffolk County?

The Highway Patrol Bureau patrols approximately 78 miles of road; Nassau Highway Patrol patrols approximately 26 miles of road with the same number of officers. Response time will increase if another agency or precinct sector cars respond to calls on the highways. Precinct sector cars are not properly equipped for high speed roadways. Highway Patrol Officers administered 1882 Intoxilyzer Exams in 2007. Approximately 3% of the Police Officers are assigned to Highway Patrol; these officers account for approximately 23% of the DWI arrests, 73% of speeding arrests, 29% of seatbelts and other 50,000 summonses a year.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You know --

MR. GILMORE:

In summation --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Here's what I'm going to ask you, because I don't want you to rush through this. The next Public Safety meeting we're going to have the Commissioner here and I'd ask you to come again and be able to address it in a more timely fashion. I don't want you to rush through your presentation, but we do have to move on. But the point is we'll taken; we're talking about an increased traffic safety initiative and at the same time we're talking about cutting the people that enforce it. Your point is well taken, but I would ask you to come back again when the Commissioner is here.

MR. GILMORE:

Okay. Thank you for your time and I hope you take a real good look at this.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Absolutely. Thank you very much.

Applause

Louis Raffone?

MR. RAFFONE:

Hi. My name is Louis Raffone, I'm the Executive Director of the Heckscher Youth Program run at Heckscher State Park.

I received a letter yesterday about that the Police Officers would no longer be assisting at my park program. My contract stipulates "no Police Officers, no program". The program's been running for 14 years, I've had over 20,000 kids at my program; I average a thousand to 2,000 kids at my program. The biggest nights I've ever had is 325 kids, and if I have that many kids they generally send me two extra Police Officers, only because I ask. I have adult supervision.

We have a lot of educational programs. It's not just a program. I mean, I've had ice sculpture down there, I have a glass blower come down there. This year I was instituting a program from the Astronomy Program, I have somebody from The Custard's Institute out in Southold there that is coming down with telescopes to talk to the kids about this program. It's for gang prevention also. We're catching the kids at a younger age to get involved with a program. And I wish you all had the time to look up our website; there's a lot of information on there, you'll see the kids interact with a lot -- excuse me, I have a cold -- interact with a lot of things.

The Police Officers work well with the kids, they talk to them. They learn to earn their respect, able to talk to them on the streets, instead of being quiet, they see things, they'll actually talk to them. There's a lot of interaction and I really wish that they would come back to the program. I mean, I've tried to talk to my park manager, he says there's no program if I don't have any Police Officers. I had auxiliary Police there, the park Police chased them out because they're not Police Officers, they're not allowed to carry firearms.

So what do I do? I get a letter yesterday. I work on this program as soon as my program ends in the summertime, I'm three nights a week, 7 to 11. How hard is that? And what are we talking about here? We're talking about a lot of kids. I get kids from Brentwood, Bay Shore, I do all the high school health fares, I do street fares, I hand out all these fliers, I talk to the parents. Parents look to see if it's safe, I take them around and let them see all the different things that are there. It's a very, very important program. So I wish you would consider talking to the Police Commissioner, having them work something out. I'm a private non-profit. We even offer a scholarship for kids for college, there's a lot of things. This is not, you know, like little games and things, this is a very important program. So I wish you would take the time to look at it. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Donna Napoli?

MS. NAPOLI:

Good morning. I really appreciate having the opportunity to speak to you all today. Thank you, Legislators. I'll try to be brief, I know there's a lot of people here to speak on behalf of these programs. I work with the Town of Brookhaven's Youth Bureau and have for about 15 years, I have a lot of experience with young people as do I know a lot of you.

In all due respect, many of the Commissioner's statements were a little off the mark today. One of the most important things that I'd like to bring up is that these programs started in 1991, at least in Suffolk County, the first one was down at Cedar Beach and it was not the town approaching the Police Department necessarily, it was actually the reverse. The Police Departments came to the town and said, "Look, we've got a lot of problems, there's kids hanging out, they're congregating, they're causing trouble, we need to do something." And as we all know, the pendulum has swung with community-oriented policing, I understand that. The administration, I guess, at the time was much more invested in getting Police Officers to be good partners and friends with kids, and I understand we need enforcement at the same time. However, the program started in '91, we now have four programs -- that's just in Brookhaven Town. Each area is very different and it's very important to bring that up.

In Brookhaven Town, the other thing I would like to add is that over the years, what he have done, because the Police Department is very stretched, is we kept adding and adding and adding resources at the town level. I personally, and I'm sure none of you need any extra work to do and I'm not here because I need these programs to do my job, but these four programs in Brookhaven Town alone service hundreds of kids on any given summer night. One is in Bellport, it is in an area where the kids have absolutely nothing else to do. I'm not going to say it's been a perfect program, but there is huge community involvement, dozens of civics are involved in these programs, it is not just town and Police department. And to be notified -- oh, I'm sorry, the other program is in the Mastic area, Mastic/Shirley area, and then there's a program also in Moriches.

Clearly, kids need something safe to do. The partnership between the Police Department is absolutely vital. It is not that we don't have youth workers, we have 20 part-timers already on board for this summer. We don't start planning these programs now and with all due respect, March 20 whatever, when we got this notice, is just not enough time to go to Plan B. The advertisements are out, the kids need a place to go.

And lastly, as you all know, some of these -- they all look a little different, each community, you have to have them look a little different. But in some of the areas that these programs service there is a lot of trouble going, one of which is when there is a crisis or a problem or a gang rumbling going on, there is this real crisis with kids doing this "Do Not Snitch, Do Not Tell". These officers are dedicated officers who come back year after year and make relationships with these kids, wherein the kids feel safe, maybe once in a while to say, "You know what, Officer So and So, there's going to be a fight tonight. I heard so and so has got a gun."

This is a very important issue. I feel extremely passionate about it and will talk to anybody about it and ask for any help. We don't have time, we can't wait until May or June to get the programs going.

*(*The following was taken by Diana Kraus
& transcribed by Donna Catalano*)*

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Before you leave, Donna, I just wanted to ask. I know there has been initiatives by the town with, I think, the Police in Martha Avenue in North Bellport. We obviously know that two children have been killed in the last year there. What will happen to the program if the Police presence is taken away?

MS. NAPOLI:

The absolute truth is although we would as a township want to do something -- maybe in corporation with Boys and Girls Club, we have some kind of program -- there's no way we can have an open park in that area with the kinds of problems that are going on. The kids need a safe place to be there. I will not have our youth workers down there without some Police support. We need --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

No. It's probably a good example of where we absolutely need some Police presence.

MS. NAPOLI:

Absolutely. You know, again, Mastic-Shirley area, if you think about it, the community is kind of outraged, they're worried about their kids being safe. We found a model that works. And it's not -- like I said, the Legislators are involved there. It is not just town dollars, it is not just the County's commitment, it gets multiplied out by all these other community groups. We've got all kinds of non-profits involved, you know, volunteers. A big commitment has been made year after year.

This is at what's so frustrating sometimes with changes in administration and such. This huge investment has been made over the years for community-oriented policing, helping the community and, you know, somehow it gets lost and everything just gets thrown away with it. A lot of stuff was built up around this. It's not a simple issue, and we need these programs to continue.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Legislator Losquadro has a question for you.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you. For the previous speaker and for you, it seems as though having the law enforcement presence there is an integral part of the program and that some of these programs, some of the locations, it may even be a condition that --

MS. NAPOLI:

Absolutely. In fact --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

-- without the law presence, the town or whoever the governing body for the location is, will not allow these gatherings to take place without the law enforcement presence in place; is that true?

MS. NAPOLI:

That's absolutely correct. And I think some of the other speakers can even speak to the fact they have gotten grants based on this collaboration, based on this partnership.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

So I reiterate -- and, you know, I was bit surprised to hear that this was Chief Moore's initiative considering I have a letter here signed by Commissioner Dormer -- I think he may be a bit surprised himself. But I really have to say that this really smacks of the same type of initiative as the DARE Program, that the schools curriculum and their ability to adapt to these changes was not taken into account, that this was simply a matter of looking internally within the department. And we have these agencies, other levels of government, that now may not be able to fulfill these programs and these initiative because they don't have the collaboration that they were counting on.

Them is something that's going to have to be revisited. I don't see that this is going to be able to take place in the manner that the department has put forward, because the letter that I have in

front of me just says, "To Whom it May Concern, Be advised that the Suffolk County Police Department will not be assigning personnel to administer summer youth programs."

LEG. NOWICK:

That's it; that's what we received.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

That's doesn't sound like soliciting input for me.

MS. NAPOLI:

Truthfully, at the end of every year --

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

This is something that's going to have to be revisited. And I can't speak for the other members of this committee, but I see some heads nodding, I'm certainly going to continue to look into this. And we need these programs to continue throughout Suffolk County, whether it be Town of Brookhaven or with other independent agencies.

MS. NAPOLI:

And time really is of the essence. I mean, we've begun to contract with people; DJs, staff people. I'm sure every program is in the same boat. Every program in government has to, you know, think about where we're going to allocate our resources. We've done that for this year, made choices in our own departments. It's really blind-siding to us.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

So, I mean, basically what you're saying is no decision exists in a vacuum, it has extensive ramifications, obviously.

MS. NAPOLI:

Absolutely.

LEG. LOSQUADRO:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

And I want to thank you for speaking. Since I have known you for 25 years as a social worker, I understand the frustration that you exhibit here, because you're all about proactive activities and prevention. And when we do -- when the Executive does budgets, it's for the here and now to get through this year and that's where the conflict has been and you're verbalizing some of my very big frustrations. Thank you for being here.

MS. NAPOLI:

Thank you. One last thing. The research in the early years of these programs really show that it actually cut down on Police nuisance calls in the areas that offered these programs for kids, because the kids had a place to go.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. Thank you, Donna. Roseann Miceli, and Sheila Croke will be next.

MS. MICELI:

Good morning. My name is Roseann Miceli, I'm the Executive Director of Reach Community and Youth Agency. I'm also here to speak on behalf of the other two youth agencies that serve the youth in the Township of Huntington, Youth Directions and Alternatives and Tri-Community and Youth Agency.

I, too, am here to see continued involvement of the Police Department in our Summer Teen Night Program at {Ceego} Park. This year would mark our 10th Anniversary of the Teen Night Program, and our program was also initiated by the 2nd Precinct Police Department. They approached the youth agencies in the Township of Huntington because they wanted to do something to improve relations with the teens in Huntington. They wanted to replicate the great programs that were taking place around us in neighboring townships.

You've have heard all the great things that the program does for the kids. The most imperative part of the program of the night is when our Officer, Drew {Ferilo}, rides up on his bike wearing shorts and a smile; we use one officer for two-and-a-half hours a night for four nights. When the kids arrive, some dropped off by the parents, the parents looked relieved at the site of Police presence. Some participants come by bus because we use grants and fund-raiser money to provide transportation to participants who wouldn't otherwise be able to attend.

You can tell at first the kids are hesitant and cautiously eyeing the Police and teens from other school districts, but it's not long before the kids are interacting with one another and cheering on Officer Drew who joined in on a basketball or volleyball game. Officer Drew's presence is paramount, even when he's on my team and misses an easy lay-up shot. He's diffused countless conflicts and it's because of him and officers like him that kids see the Police Department in a positive light.

As community and youth agencies, you know, we have run hundreds of programs for youth each year without the need for Police presence. But when you get hundreds of youth together in one park from various school districts at night, Police presence is necessary, and it's our belief that our program cannot, will not run without them. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. Sheila Croke.

MS. CROKE:

Honorable Members of the Public Safety Committee, good morning. My name is Sheila Croke from Greenlawn and I speak as a member of the Pax Christi, the Catholic Peace Organization. I was one of about 25 who stood on March 29th within the central area of the Smith Haven Mall reading names of the Americans killed in the Iraq War. I was told to leave or face arrest.

Incidentally, earlier this morning there was a discussion here about how we can protect our teenagers on the highways, yet we are not permitted to speak about protecting them from the IEDs on the highways of Baghdad. I felt compelled to be at the mall because where there should be coverage of the human cost of war, there is instead a vast abyss. For one example, Andrew Roth did a study of pictures related to Iraq War that appeared in the fronts pages of the San Francisco Chronicle and the New York Times during a periods of 1,389 days. Of the 6,000 front-page photos, only 3% showed the human cost of the war. That means that a five year span that killed 4,000, wounded 25,000 Americans and killed at least half a million Iraqis, these newspapers showed about 36 photos of the war on the front page each year; of these, the majority were Iraqi and Afghani civilians. No photos of American casualties on the battlefield or returning body bags were printed.

This is just one small example to show how newspapers have distorted the reality of the ongoing wars by covering up the loss of life and misery of the civilians and the those involved in the fighting. The public is not given the information needed to make a judgement about the war, whether or not it is worth the pain and suffering of so many and the consequences upon their own futures.

Just yesterday I learned that Suffolk Community College changed the name of their annual Peace Day event; they changed it to Iraq War Awareness Day because so many of the students were obvious of the Iraq War. In 1994, declaring that shopping malls have replaced the parks and squares that were traditionally home of free speech, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled that the malls must allow access to protesters who want to distribute leaflets on social issues. In 1979, the

California Supreme Court extended free speech protections to shopping malls, which were described as the modern equivalent of the town square. Please consider these actions in reference to Suffolk County so we can reclaim our rights to freedom of speech.

Martin Luther King said, "There is a time when silence is betrayal." To be silent as our young men and women put their lives at risk in a misguided war, that is be betrayal. To be silent when they are stop loss, exhausted, traumatized, that is a betrayal. To be silent when they themselves, our own soldiers, have become Prisoners of War, that is betrayal. We ask your help in restoring our voices to the public square without fear of harassment or reprisal. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. One second, please. Legislator Browning would like to address a comment to you.

LEG. BROWNING:

Good morning. I just want to say thank you to each and every one of you for coming out. You know, my son served in Afghanistan twice, he is going again and it's upsetting that he's going -- I'm sorry. But what you guys are doing is a good thing. It's not about being against our troops, it's about supporting peace. I grew up in a war zone, I know what it's like to live in one. I just think it's great that you guys are coming out and doing what you are doing. And what your T-shirt said, I did not object to what your T-shirt said, especially in the shopping mall, because I can tell you, you go to a shopping mall and you see these teenagers with all kinds of derogatory, disgusting things that are on their T-shirt; marijuana leaf, you know, nobody stops them.

So I want to give you a lot of credit for doing what you are doing. Plus the fact that an 85 year old man is a Korean War Veteran and he fought for that First Amendment Right, Freedom of Speech and, you know, extend my thank you to him because he fought for this. And you know what? You have a right to do what you're doing and keep doing it.

MS. CROKE:

Thank you so much. I appreciate that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay. Patsy Hirschorn.

MS. HIRSCHORN:

Good morning. Thank you so very much, not only for allowing those of us who are to speak this morning to speak in behalf of those issues that are near and dear to us, but also for your steadfast eye that you're keeping on young people and their health and their safety and that's indeed appreciated, because we all know that they're risk takers and they don't always make wise decisions and they do need us to be there for them.

That being said, I am particularly speaking on behalf of the Smithtown Veterans Youth Program. It started during the early 1990's along with the Town of Huntington, receiving a Federal grant known as Project Care. The purpose of that grant, which was a competitive grant nationwide, was to create with the Police Department a safe, orderly drug and crime-free area for young people who were in need of safe activities to get together. After the Federal grant discontinued, veterans in Smithtown who had volunteered to be part of the program said, "This is a wonderful thing that is going on here. Kids need a safe place to go. They need adults to pay attention to them, to be role models for them, to step up and to take a responsibility -- not to say, 'Figure it out on your own what to do with your summer,' but to come together and do this.' So our veterans in Smithtown are the ones who picked up that, not the town

I am here as Executive Director of the Town of Smithtown Youth Bureau. And as of now, we're working in close conjunction with the veterans program, but it is a veterans program. Without the Police presence, the program at Sunken Meadow State Park cannot exist; the State Park will not

allow the veterans to be there with the youth. The program does involve enormous collaboration and participation by everyone who's there, including youth leaders who have emerged, one of whom is going to speak soon.

But the thing that I think is the most important about the Police being there is parents will not take their kids if the parents are bringing them to a place they do not believe is safe. Sadly, the Police sometimes need to be somewhere for the parents to believe it's okay for a large number of kids to get together. And so the Police are there and the parents come and check it out and then they bring their kids and they leave them.

The other thing is the relationship, and that's been spoken to before. A Police Officer both gives reputation and respect to the kids and earns from the kids their trust and their respect. So there is communication back and forth, and there is information that I'm sure is generated that otherwise would not be.

Finally, I just wanted to address also that our youth board most recently has adopted as its number one mission for the year traffic safety and awareness of teen's responsibility for doing their best as drivers and for the community to help them with that. So I want to make that note, because it was our intention and it is our intention, to put part of that program into the summertime, because that's the main place that we have kids together. So all of these things for us and our teens are intertwined. We're are so grateful for the continuation of support since the 90's and we urge you to make sure that we're able to continue that. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Jenn Hutchins.

MS. HUTCHINS:

Good morning. I'm also here from the Smithtown Veterans Youth Program. Yes, I am a teenager and I was a volunteer. I loved going to the beach every night to hang out and just hang out with my friends, listen to the bands and watch the sunset. It was lot of fun. It was a safe environment, it was drug-free and that's what a lot of the parents liked about it, too, they loved that it was drug-free and that there were the officers there to help and support.

They did close Sports Plus and the YMCA a couple of years ago. And they have sports camps and regular camps for kids up to ages 13 or 15. Yes, when we turn 17 and 18, we can get our license and we can drive, but a lot of my friends hang out in Smithtown and they hung out at Starbucks or in the parking lot. Yes, there are some officers that came, but it wasn't a secure place. The beach at least was drug and alcohol-free. And like I said, it's not what most kids want, but it's what their parents want and what most people are looking for.

You know, you say that you need the officers where the kids are. Well, if we didn't have the beach program, then the kids would be hanging out in town, they wouldn't be where there is a safe environment. So if you need the officers where the kids are, I mean, I think the beach was a great place to have that. Otherwise, if the kids are in Smithtown and the officers come, chances are good that they are going to find somewhere else to hang out and do whatever they do. So thank you for taking the time to listen.

Applause

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you for coming. Thank you. Mario Mattera.

*(*The following was Taken & Transcribed by Alison Mahoney*)*

MR. MATTERA:

Good morning, everybody. Good morning, Chairman and the committee. I would just like to say, I would like to thank you for this time for speaking about an important matter, IR 1129.

I represent approximately eighty plumbing contractors that perform work in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. We have a big problem with the copper that is being stolen, the copper piping that is being stolen on the projects that's being installed and then cut out and then my contractors then get a Police report and the Police report basically goes nowhere because the Police really can't do anything unless if they go into the scrap yards to find out if any of this new copper has been stolen and then the next thing it's being scrapped. We need to help out these detectives, you know, find the culprits that are doing this. I mean, it's becoming a huge problem. My contractors can't even go to the insurance companies because once they go to the insurance companies, they get dropped for the first -- for a first problem. This is on Public Works projects and plus it's on private jobs.

Copper today for No. 1 copper is \$3.15 per pound for clean copper. Now, if I have a 20 foot length of inch copper that's installed, that copper is \$844 a length for this. How is my contractor -- that's one like the 20 footer. Now, you've got to understand something. You know, the \$3.15 that the theft -- in the theft is one thing, you know, I could fill up a little crate that's 50 pounds or a hundred pounds, you know, they're getting \$315. You know, this adds up very, very fast.

IR 1129 will help the Detectives get the people that are robbing my contractors and please consider IR 1129. Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Just one second. Thank you. I hadn't thought -- you're saying that even though they only get maybe 50 or \$100 for the copper they're selling, but for your plumbers to replace it, because they can't get it on insurance, is hundreds and hundreds of dollars.

MR. MATTERA:

You know, you couldn't even imagine. You know, usually when we have the mains that are running in these buildings, you know, even a one inch 20 footer, that's like almost \$90 for that twenty footer. You know, copper is this -- it's just crazy with the amount. And that's the big -- that's my huge point here --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. MATTERA:

-- is that my contractor is losing this amount of money, but it's getting sold for \$3.15 and you --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. I wasn't -- I know the vandalism to rip out the stuff is tremendous, but I didn't realize the cost to the plumbers themselves.

MR. MATTERA:

Right, so we're talking about thousands of dollars that might contractor, like I said, once he puts a claim in he's going to get dropped.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. MATTERA:

You know, I was talking to one of the Legislators about even our homeowner's insurance. You know, it's even like with me, you know, with my home, just fast. You know, the last thing you want to do is put a claim in because what happens to all of us when we put a claim in? The insurance

company's is dropping us.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right.

MR. MATTERA:

So my guys can't even just do this. They get a Police report and, you know what, they have nowhere to go with it. It's really sad.

But you know what, if we have some kind of law that's put in place that if the scrap yards could help us, you know, with this, to see when -- I mean, come on, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to figure out to come in with a roll of -- a brand new roll of copper tubing. I mean, it happened in my new house, I built my new house I had -- you know, I ran the main and I had it up probably a good six feet, I went -- I came back the next day, someone cut it, you know, just for that little six feet of copper. You know, it's becoming a problem. But the biggest thing is my contractor's losing thousands of dollars worth of costs.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

MR. MATTERA:

All right, thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Debra Alloncius.

MS. ALLONCIUS:

Good morning, Legislator Eddington, Chairman of the Public Safety Committee. My name is Debbie Alloncius, I'm here on behalf of Cheryl Felice and the Association of Municipal Employees and I'm here to speak to you about a resolution that was not before your committee but that was recently withdrawn by Legislator John Cooper.

In October of 2007, we came before the Budget & Finance Committee regarding a resolution requesting an Agency Oversight Report. We also made a study of the budget by {Abrahms, Heard & Merkle} available to every Legislator on this horseshoe. In that Agency Oversight Report, we were requesting a detailed current staffing level of each County department, including filled staff positions and vacant funded positions. The report should also contain an analysis of each department's total caseload and caseload where -- with the position, when available.

Legislator Losquadro, he would have been aware of what was going on in the Police Department with deployment of all these officers if you had the correct information. I have sat before this Legislature and watched Cameron Alden say on more than probably six, seven, ten occasions that he cannot -- and he has requested a full staffing report from the Police Department. In order for you to track and analyze the statistical data of the County departments such as staffing numbers, caseloads and work loads, you need a report like this.

The Highway Patrol redeployments, you would have an idea of what's going on, you can't possibly be staffing these department correctly. They need help. We've come to you before, staffing levels are awful. The call center and the dispatchers, you were wonderful with getting us to rectify some situations that are really deleterious and affecting the public safety every day.

I just wanted you to be aware, as sitting members of this Legislature, that we're not happy about this report, about this resolution being withdrawn and think that you need to be aware of the ramifications of what's happening day to day in not having the information available to you. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much. Krista Conte.

MS. CONTE:

Good morning. For those of you who attended the Legislature meeting last month, you heard from me about Allstate's Safe Teen Drive Program. I'm here before you today to just remind you about Allstate's Safe Teen Drive Program. If you don't recall what it is, Allstate is granting every public and private high school in Nassau County and Suffolk County \$1,000 for the purpose of funding activity and awareness, projects and programs to support safe teen driving. The deadline for the program was April 15th; we've elected to extend that deadline to April 30th.

I have a couple of kits here that I'd like to share with you. In these kits we've included the schools that have applied. If you see a school in your district that has not applied, if you see one that's left off the list, I'd ask that you please call them, encourage them to apply, it's \$1,000 to fund the initiatives of safe teen driving. You spent a good portion of today talking about reckless driving, distracted driving, aggressive driving, especially by our County's youth. Allstate is out in front of this epidemic -- and that's what it is, it's an epidemic -- and we are looking for your support and cooperation in getting schools, getting school administrators and getting community leaders to pay attention to this issue as you have all done today.

We sincerely appreciate you dealing with this head-on, we think it's an issue that needs to be dealt with head-on through awareness, activity and education, and we pledge our continued support, cooperation and resources to help Suffolk County address this issue. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Well, thank you very much for your initiative and information. Kristofer Goldstein.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

Good morning. My name is Kristofer Goldsmith, not Goldstein.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

That's okay. This morning you started off talking about young people, the youth, protecting the youth, of Suffolk County. I'm a Nassau County resident, I come from Bellmore. My relation with Suffolk County is you hold the Veterans Hospital and I frequently go to.

I am a Veteran of the Iraq Conflict, I was there from January to December of 2005, and I am now a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War. I was -- I received a general discharge after attempting suicide in May of last year due to PTSD, depression and other results of combat. And I would like to express that I am personally disgusted by the fact that anyone would be arrested in a public mall in Suffolk County, Long Island or anywhere else in this country. I joined the Army as a patriot to support and defend the Constitution of the United States to include the Bill of Rights and our First Amendment Right is the freedom of expression, freedom of speech, freedom of press, etcetera. And to know that someone could be arrested for wearing a T-shirt which would offend someone because it shows the truth of war I find very personally offensive to myself as a veteran who served this country.

I believe that legislation needs to be passed on -- at first a local level, and hopefully eventually a national level, to protect the First Amendment rights to protest in a public area. As it's been explained by other speakers today, there is no town gathering place for the youth and now malls are where recruiters such as myself have used to pick up recruits. After graduating basic training in 2004, I spent two weeks on a program called "A Trap; Hometown Recruiting Program", and I walked around in uniform attempting to reach out to the youth of this country and I think that Code Pink

and Long Island peace groups should be allowed the opportunity to reach out to the youth also.

Right now, pro-war statements, regardless of anyone's statements, whether pro or anti-war, pro-war does have a very big advantage in the fact that the T-shirt that I'm wearing right now with the image of Iraq with my unit's symbol pasted across it is not offensive, whereas the "4,000 dead", which is now much more, as I hope all of you are aware, is considered to be taboo and shouldn't be shown in public.

I had eight of my friends just two weeks ago who were the victims of an IED attack in {O'Bradley}, and seven of them were under 25 which is within the age group that you were discussing about how they shouldn't be driving because they're irresponsible and they're too young to know any better. I at 19 years old was carrying a rifle overseas and you all have been discussing how at the age of 19 I shouldn't be driving a car recklessly or whatever.

The consumer culture of our nation means that everyone spends more time in the malls, my age group at least, than watching the news. The news hasn't made the war as important of an issue in America as it should be. In 2007, the percentage of newspapers of any media that covered the war was 15%; it has since, in 2008, dropped to 1% of news coverage. So --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

I'm going to have to ask you to wrap up, if you could, sir.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

Okay. Now, the fact that in this country photographs are not allowed of American body bags or caskets returning home from war, some of which have been my friends, I find to be repulsive, and I don't expect you to be able to stop that. But please, on a local level, I would like for you to protect the rights of the peace groups on Long Island to speak out in malls and other public forums. Thank you.

Applause

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you. And Mr. Goldsmith, as a veteran I want to thank you for your service and as a member of the Vietnam Veterans of America, I want to welcome you home.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Is there anybody else who would like to address the committee? Okay then, we'll go to the agenda. But before I start the agenda, I wanted to make an announcement that Legislator Losquadro had to leave because he had a prior commitment and you guys all kept him here longer than he expected, so, but he'll be back.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

Can I make one last comment?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Sure, one last comment, go right ahead. Veteran's honors.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

Thank you very much. I would just like to urge all the member of the Legislature to please check out the Winter Soldier Event which occurred last month, I was a test fighter; hopefully we can get Congress to listen, too. Please go to "IVAW.org" and listen to our testimonies, there are hours and hours of testimonies; if you want to just see mine there's a link called "breakdown of the military," you'll notice my face. And please watch those videos so that you can understand what is going on with this Iraq conflict.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Thank you very much.

MR. GOLDSMITH:

Thank you.

MR. ZWIRN:

Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Where is that coming from? Oh, yes, Mr. Zwirn.

MR. ZWIRN:

If it pleases the committee, I can give you a little bit of an update on the information with the State Police and policing the LIE and the County Executive's position on that, we could do it another time, I could do it very briefly?

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

You know what, Legislator Losquadro I think really should be here. But Legis -- are we talking a couple of minutes?

MR. ZWIRN:

Yeah, just a couple of minutes.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, give us a brief outline, but with the caveat that you'll be back when I have the Commissioner come next month.

MR. ZWIRN:

Oh, abs --

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay.

MR. ZWIRN:

I live here, so.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Great.

MR. ZWIRN:

Let me just say that we appreciate all the comments that were made today. And the County Executive's position is very clear on this; he's on the side of the taxpayers of this County who, in addition to paying County taxes, also pay State taxes. And everywhere else in New York State, on State roads, State Police maintain public safety on those roads. That's their mission, that's what they do, except here on Long Island. And why not on Long Island? Because the taxpayers on Long Island, in both Nassau and Suffolk County, pick up the tab; they pick up the tab for it. So the State says, "Hey, what a great deal. We're taking their tax money to patrol the roads, but we're not giving them the State Police."

The County Executive has said, "Look, we don't need the State Police to patrol the Long Island Expressway and Sunrise Highway. Give us our State tax dollars back so that we can offset our costs of the \$12 million that we're paying to do that now." Now, what does he do? The taxpayers of this County are getting screwed; in this particular case with public safety. So he and County Executive Suozzi said, "Look, we're going to begin to remove these officers from the LIE," and the State has the obligation to come back and replace them. You don't have to replace them all at once. The

County Executive has met with the new Superintendent of the State Police, Harry Corbitt, he's already met with him and they have agreed to do an analysis of what it would take to bring resources down here to do that.

We're not asking necessarily for the State Police to come down and do these roads. We're not asking them to give us \$12 million all at once, but show us good faith, phase it in over a period of years so that we can have the same rights for our tax dollars that the people in Westchester and Upstate have. And what set this off this year in particular is that the State in its budget has cut State aid on programs to Suffolk County by the tune of almost \$8 million; now, it's not cutting \$8 million, it's shifting \$8 million. The State programs still have to be operated, only now that money is going to come out of only and solely Suffolk County taxpayer's dollars.

We appreciate the union officials coming down here and saying that they want to do the job on the LIE, but we'd also appreciate it when they go up there and lobby our State representatives, they ask for the money to pay for those salaries so that that money could be freed up to do other things.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Uh-huh.

MR. ZWIRN:

And that's what the County Executive is -- this isn't just some press conference or something that -- we have been fighting this for over 20 years and he is trying to get their attention and for the first time in 20 years he has their attention. So nobody wants to see anybody in any danger or public safety compromised in any way, but there's some way we have to have say enough is enough and fight for the people who you represent who are paying not only County tax dollars but also State tax dollars and deserve to get something back for that.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Right. And I think the committee is aware of the intent, it's the implementation and the people involved, you know what I mean? We often make great rules and we debate and fight, meanwhile there's casualties and that's what we want to avoid. So as long as we do come up with a plan so that we don't abandon at any time the roads.

MR. ZWIRN:

Well, I know that in the next week we'll be up again meeting with the State Police, we have met with Mike Balboni, former State Senator who's head of Homeland Security for the State of New York. We have met with the Acting Superintendent of the State Police, Pedro Pelez -- Perez, we have done everything that we can and we will continue to meet with them to try to have a plan in place before the May 1st deadline.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Great. Okay, thank you very much.

Tabled Resolutions

Okay, Tabled Resolution IR 1046-08 - A Local Law to prohibit text messaging while driving (Schneiderman). This has to be tabled for a public hearing; I'll make the motion.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE:**

4-0-0-1 Not present: Legislator Losquadro).

IR 1129-08 - A Local Law establishing crime prevention requirements for scrap metal processors (Eddington). I'll make a motion to approve.

LEG. HORSLEY:

I'll second it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Horsley. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Okay. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not Present: Legislator Losquadro).**

1151-08 - Appointing a member to the Suffolk County Citizens Corps council (Edmund Moore)(Schneiderman). He's not available until the next meeting so I'm going to ask to table that.

LEG. BROWNING:

I'll table it.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Second by Legislator Browning. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Tabled (VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not present: Legislator Losquadro).**

1177-08 - A Local Law to maintain the integrity of drug and alcohol screening tests (Stern).

LEG. BROWNING:

Motion to approve.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Browning.

LEG. HORSLEY:

Second.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Seconded by Legislator Horsley. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not present: Legislator Losquadro).**

Introductory Resolutions

IR 1284-08 - Designating May as "Youth Traffic Safety Month" in Suffolk County (Stern).

LEG. HORSLEY:

Motion.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Motion to approve by Legislator Horsley, I'll second that. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

LEG. BROWNING:

Cosponsor.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Cosponsor by Legislator Browning.

LEG. BROWNING:

Should we put everybody as cosponsor?

LEG. HORSLEY:

Yeah, sure.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Yeah, put us all down as cosponsors, please.

That's it. I'll make a motion to adjourn.

LEG. BROWNING:

Second.

MS. KRAUS:

No, I think there's more.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Is there?

MR. CALARCO:

No, they're Tabled Subject to Call.

CHAIRMAN EDDINGTON:

Okay, I'll make a motion to adjourn, second by Legislator Horsley. Have a good day. Thank you.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 A.M. *)*

{ } - Denotes Spelled Phonetically