

**PUBLIC WORKS & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE  
of the  
Suffolk County Legislature  
Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Public Works & Transportation Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, Veterans Memorial Highway, Hauppauge, New York, on **January 23, 2002.**

**Members Present:**

Legislator Joseph Caracappa - Chairman  
Legislator Brian Foley - Vice-Chair  
Legislator Angie Carpenter  
Legislator David Bishop  
Legislator Andrew Crecca

**Also in Attendance:**

Paul Sabatino - Counsel to the Legislature  
Phyllis A. McAlevey - Aide to Legislator Caracappa  
BJ McCartan - Aide to Presiding Officer Tonna  
John Ortiz - Budget Analyst/Budget Review Office  
Nicole DeAngelo - Intergovernmental Relations/County Executive Office  
Charles Bartha - Commissioner/Suffolk County Public Works Department  
Richard LaValle - Chief Deputy Commissioner/SC Public Works Department  
Leslie Mitchell - Asst to the Commissioner/SC Public Works Department  
Ben Wright - Suffolk County Department of Public Works  
Bill Shannon - Suffolk County Department of Public Works  
Vito Minei - Suffolk County Department of Health Services  
Michael Rothfeld - Newsday

**Minutes Taken By:**

Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographer

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(\*The meeting was called to order at 11:39 A.M.\*)

**CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:**

We will start the Public Works & Transportation Committee meeting. All please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance to be led by our Vice-Chair, Brian Foley.

**Salutation**

Okay. Welcome to the 2002 Public Works & Transportation Committee. It's a pleasure to serve as Chairman this year and before we go on, I would just like to take this opportunity to thank past Chairman, Legislator Foley, for doing an outstanding job and I'm glad he's still on the committee and serving as co-chair. Hopefully we can continue doing what you did over the years as Chair but in just half the dialogue. No, seriously, Brian, you've done a great job and I'm honored to follow as Chairman.

**LEG. FOLEY:**

Thank you, Legislator Caracappa. And I, too, look forward to a very productive year. And yourself at the helm, I know that we're going to continue a committee approach of bipartisan support for Capital Projects that will improve the public infrastructure in the County. So I look forward to working with you as Chair.

**CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:**

Thank you. Commissioner, why don't you come on up. We have no cards so we're going to do this very quickly. Charlie, why don't you give us your interpretations with relation to the two resolutions before us today.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

Okay. At the risk of starting the year off in a negative fashion, we're actually opposed to both of these resolutions. IR 1029 would impose a moratorium on sewer connections by properties outside the Southwest Sewer District and establishing a priority list. We -- the Southwest Sewer District has considerable excess capacity allowing outside contractees to connect, it facilitates the economic development and spreads the tax base for the Southwest Sewer District. There are a number of major projects that are being held up now during consideration by the Legislature and there's some major development projects such as as the Pilgrim Psychiatric Center site which will -- you know, has the potential of coming to the Legislature.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

So, in essence, you're saying the resolution, if passed, would basically put a moratorium on economic development to a certain extent for at least a year and possibly longer than 18 months.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

On some of the major projects for sure. We think it works best where the economy drives itself, people -- projects come before the sewer agency and then the Legislature can consider each of them on an individual basis rather than establishing us imposing a priority ahead of time.

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CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

I think all the committee members, especially those who live in Southwest or represent part of Southwest, realize what Legislator Postal is trying to achieve here. She's been a champion in a certain regard with relation to oversight with relation to hook-ups, outside hook-ups, to -- coming into Southwest from the outside sources. And we recognize there is a concern there, it's a concern of all of ours, those who don't even represent Southwest. But at this point in time, I've asked Budget Review to run a whole bunch of numbers and schedules for me with relation to subsidies, outside subsidies, sales tax revenue subsidies with relation to -- just to name a few, with relation to Southwest and I think that goes a long way in how we're going to discuss and approach this resolution.

So at this point in time, as Chair I would like to ask the committee's indulgence, seeing that we meet again in two weeks, for a tabling motion and supporting a tabling motion so we can at least get more information so that we can weigh this resolution fairly seeing that it has some significant impact on a whole host of areas. So I'll make a motion to table. Do you want to second the motion to table?

LEG. CRECCA:

Sure. This is IR 1029?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Yes. (1029-02 (P) - Imposing a moratorium on sewer connections by properties located outside Suffolk County Sewer District No. 3 - Southwest and establishing a priority list (Postal).

LEG. CRECCA:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Motion to table and a second. Legislator Bishop?

LEG. BISHOP:

I'm opposed to tabling.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay. All in favor? Opposed? Legislator Bishop is opposed. The motion is tabled (VOTE: 5-1-0-0 Opposed: Legislator Bishop).

LEG. BISHOP:

Keep the peace in Babylon.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Yeah, I don't blame you.

Okay, 1050 -02 (P) - Authorizing retrofitting of traffic lights and LED fixtures (Cooper). Commissioner, a quick run down?

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

IR 1050 we're opposed to because this would cost the County approximately \$5 million to retrofit the traffic signals with LED fixtures. And the reason for that is -- well, first-off, the County received no cost savings from the energy savings, right now the towns

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pay for the maintenance including the electrical charges on the traffic signals and those electrical charges that the towns pay are based on a fixed rate rather than based on consumption. So that would be something they would have to negotiate with LIPA if the towns would receive any benefit.

Then you have the cost of relamping the fixtures which in itself is significant, it's approximately \$2.7 million. And the pole -- the signals then would have to be retethered, additional guide wires would have to be put on them because if an LED signal swings in the wind, you lose the visibility of it, it has to be really face -- pretty straight on. Once you tether the signal you're putting more of a wind load on the poles and you have to replace poles. So the total package is approximately \$5 million to do this work and there's no funding within the resolution.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

And it's not revenue neutral. And in regard, due to the -- if there were savings, which there aren't based on the fixed rate, it would go to the towns anyway, so.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

That's correct.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Not to the County. So we would assume all the cost and receive no benefits.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

Correct.

LEG. CARPENTER:  
May I ask a question?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
Legislator Carpenter.

LEG. CARPENTER:  
What is the major benefit of having these kinds of signals over what we have presently?

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
There is a reduced energy consumption from these signals, but the -- one of the things the resolution says, I believe it makes a reference to a 25 year life on the bulbs.

LEG. FOLEY:  
Yeah.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
That is not the case for alternating current, that's based on a direct current and our signals are on alternating current, the life of them is five years. So it was anticipated apparently by the sponsor that there would be an increased life and reduced maintenance costs, which again is something that the towns absorb, the maintenance costs.

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LEG. CARPENTER:  
Right.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
But that is not accurate based on the actual power --

LEG. CARPENTER:  
There's no safety consideration, these aren't easier to see or -- it's just motivated out of energy, a desire to save energy costs.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
I will check with the Chief Engineer, Bill Shannon, if there's any improved visibility.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
Bill, you have something to add?

MR. SHANNON:  
Yes, with regard to the issue of, first of all, the life of the signal itself. Given the way an LED operates, there is the opportunity for less revamping. So where an incandescent bulb would go out on a more frequent basis, there's a maintenance savings in that respect. And you can then correlate to say that that is a safety improvement in that the signal is out, the lamp is out less time, that would be the only correlation you would have. Now, keep in mind that all signal systems are backed up with two faces so that if one -- a red should go out there's always a red there to preclude, you know, a blank facing the driver; that's primarily the safety issue.

In terms of the overall brightness, the LED is somewhat brighter but that's offset in terms of what this phenomenon the Commissioner mentioned called blanking, where in a stiff breeze or a stiff wind, as the light rays are so directional and as the signal head locks, it becomes less -- the rays are not focused towards the driver and

there's less visibility.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Okay, great. All right.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

So you're saying it's directed basically on direct light as opposed to now it's -- the light is directed by a lens that reflects, right?

MR. SHANNON:

That's correct.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

So there's a motion to --

LEG. BISHOP:

Why don't we make a motion to table it and --

LEG. CRECCA:

I will make a motion to table subject to call.

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LEG. BISHOP:

Perhaps your aide can let Legislator Cooper know that if he wants to pursue this he needs to come to the next committee, you know, with the information he has in favor of it.

LEG. FOLEY:

I will second the tabling.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay, we have a motion to table by Legislator Bishop and a motion to table subject to call by Legislator Crecca.

LEG. FOLEY:

Before we make the tabling subject to call, let's at least -- just through the Chair, couldn't we just for at least one committee round do a simple tabling motion?

LEG. CRECCA:

That's fine.

LEG. FOLEY:

Give the sponsor the chance and then we can make a judgment at that point.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Let's do that. The motion to table subject to call has been withdrawn. We'll give it one cycle and hopefully Legislator Cooper can make some sort of case; I highly doubt it, but we'll give him a chance. Motion to table, seconded. All in favor? Opposed? Abstained? The motion is tabled (VOTE: 6-0-0-0).

Just before we stop or adjourn, just in keeping with tradition that Legislator Foley set, if there's any projects in your district that you would like to ask the Commissioner about, now is a great time to do it. Did everyone get the monthly status reports? I know I received mine.

LEG. CARPENTER:

Yes, it came last week.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay, and reviewed it. Are there any questions relating to it?

LEG. CARPENTER:

Thank you very much, it was very thorough.

LEG. CRECCA:

I have no idea whether I got it or not.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay.

LEG. CARPENTER:

You have to look at your mail.

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LEG. CRECCA:

Yes.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Okay. Hearing none, we stand adjourned.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

Mr. Chairman?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Oh, go ahead, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

There's one resolution that is not on the agenda here but has -- would have a big impact on Public Works -- I believe it's at Health and Bill's going to address it later -- it's to put up signs on all the County roads to adopt a pet. No one's a bigger pet lover than myself. We're in the process right now of putting signs on all the County roads to encourage people to become volunteer firemen. There are an awful lot of very good causes to put signs along the County roads. We're concerned that you will remove attention from the important safety related signs as well as the cost involved.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Right. Let me ask, did Legislator Cooper introduce that, is he the sponsor?

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:

Legislator Postal.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

Postal.

LEG. CRECCA:

Max, what are you doing?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:

I thought that would definitely be a Cooper resolution.

LEG. BISHOP:

What do you want us to do? We can't do anything about it.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
Just adopt a pet and (inaudible).

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
I don't even think we were secondary on it, we're not. And I think we should have been, absolutely. Counsel?

LEG. CRECCA:  
I don't think we should be secondary, we should be primary.

LEG. CARPENTER:  
Yeah. Why is that Health and not Public Works; pets are sick?

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MR. SABATINO:  
The legislation calls for the Health Department to develop a pet education program and I think that the secondary part of it, as part of that program, was to put together a program for signs. But the primary thrust of the bill is a pet safety education program by the Health Department.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
Sounds like a paw concept; get it?

LEG. CRECCA:  
Can I ask the Commissioner, why would the Health Department do pet safety?

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
Alison got it, she's sharp.

LEG. CRECCA:  
Seriously, how does pet safety fall under Health?

MR. SABATINO:  
All of the licensing legislation right now for pets throughout the County is run through the Health Department.

LEG. CRECCA:  
Yeah, for that aspect of it, but --

MR. SABATINO:  
Because the sponsor needed -- well, the sponsor needed a place to have the work performed and done and a program put together and there's a place in the County where pets are currently being dealt with which is the Health Department.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
Oh, well. We appreciate your comments, Commissioner. And I guess you're sticking around for the Health Committee.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
Bill's in charge of pets this afternoon.

CHAIRMAN CARACAPPA:  
Okay, Bill. Good luck. Okay. Any other business to come before us? Hearing none, we stand adjourned.

COMMISSIONER BARTHA:  
Thank you.

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

Legislator Joseph Caracappa, Chairman  
Public Works & Transportation  
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