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SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
EQUESTRIAN TASK FORCE
SUFFOLK COUNTY

WILLIAM H. ROGERS LEGISLATIVE BUILDING
ROSE Y. CARACAPPA AUDITORIUM
725 Veterans Memorial Highway
Hauppauge, New York

August 6, 2009
3:00 p.m.

BEFORE:

LEGISLATOR JACK EDDINGTON, Chairman

REPORTED BY:

THERESA PAPE, Court Reporter/Notary Public

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A P P E A R A N C E S:

TRACEY BELLONE, Suffolk County Parks

JOHN PAVACIC, Suffolk County Parks
Suffolk County Officials Association

THOMAS A. ISLES, Suffolk County Planning
Department

PAMELA GREENE, Suffolk County Environment
and Energy

DAVE MACKNEE, East End Supervisor's
Association

GIGI ASHER, Suffolk County Supervisor's
Association

GERALD LAUBER, Suffolk County SPCA

JANET PLYMPTON, Long Island Professional
Horsemen's Association

VITO (ROCKY) DI VELLO, Long Island Farm Bureau

SAM ULIANO, Nassau/Suffolk Horsemen's
Association

A L S O P R E S E N T:

ROBERT CALARCO, Legislative Aide to
Legislator Jack Eddington

JESSICA KALMBACHER, Suffolk County Planning
Department

DENISE SPEIZIO, Ridge Civic Association

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Equestrian Task Force 8/6/09

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(WHEREUPON, this proceeding
convened at 3:00 p.m. Off-the-record
discussions ensued, after which the
following transpired:)

(Time noted: 3:12 p.m.)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. I'd
like to call the Equestrian Task Force
organizational meeting to order.

I'm Legislator Jack Eddington from
the 7th Legislative District, and I'm
the chair. And I guess what I'd like to
do is just have -- from my right side,
just go along and just mention your name
and organization, and you -- you have to
press and hold for it to work.

MS. BELLONE: Tracey Bellone,
Deputy Commissioner, Suffolk County
Parks Department.

MR. PAVACIC: John Pavacic,
Commissioner of Suffolk County Parks
Department.

MR. ISLES: Tom Isles, Director of
Planning for Suffolk County. But I'd
also like to introduce a staff member

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Equestrian Task Force 8/6/09

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from the Planning Department, Jessica Kalmbacher, who is in the audience today, and she is the Farmland administrator for the County Planning Department.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Great.

MS. GREENE: I'm Pamela Greene, and I'm the representative for the Division of Environment and Energy.

MS. ASHER: Gigi Asher, Suffolk County Supervisor's Association.

MR. LAUBER: Jerry Lauber, Suffolk County SPCA.

MS. PLYMPTON: Janet Plympton, Long Island Professional Horsemen's Association.

MR. DI VELLO: Vito DiVello, Long Island Farm Bureau Equine representative and East End Livestock past president and board of directors.

MR. ULIANO: Sam Uliano, president of the Nassau/Suffolk Horsemen's Association.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. Thank

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you all for coming.

What I'd like to do is just start off with my vision, and then see where we can go from there and get some feedback.

Initially, what I found out is that we had lots of small farms. Living in Medford, I had three horse farms on my block. One was 18 acres, and it has been sold to a developer and it's now 18-acre homes. And I have one that's six acres, and it's still in operation, and then one that now is just a private home with their own horses and they don't board out or anything. And I'm afraid that we're going to see the demise of small farms.

I have my neighbor next door to me, I live on a -- on what used to be a farm, six acres, it's split into four, and I have a -- two horses to the left of me and two horses in the -- the plot in front of me. And I say two horses because that's all you're allowed to

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have per acre in Brookhaven; sometimes I see visiting horses. But my concern is that it's very hard economically for them to survive. And they're not trying to make money, but they're just trying to provide horses and enjoyment in riding.

And what I'm hoping out of this committee is that we're going to be able to find out some ways to offer some tax breaks, some way to help them with food and services for their animals at a -- a reduced rate, some way of -- like a co-op for horse farms or horse owners so they can share on purchases and things like manure removal, maybe even getting Suffolk County -- where we buy farmland -- try to get somebody to dedicate to raising hay so that you don't have to go to New Hampshire or wherever else you have to go to get supplies.

At the same time, trying to make our Suffolk County parks, at least some

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of them, more horse friendly so there are more trails and parking facilities for them. And, in my mind, I visualized like when you go to a place where you boat; there's a place for trailers and a place to let your boats out and -- you know, in that area. So we can not only help the people that have horses, but really help Suffolk County help them and make it economical for the people that have horses, and also to get some money for the Parks Department, because I think a lot of people would be willing to do that.

I know right now the people on my block go to Pennsylvania. I want them to go to Suffolk County. I think they'll do it more often if it's in their backyard. And so that's a part of it.

The other pieces that -- the way I would like to run our committee meetings is that we're going to have an hour and a half. After that my attention level

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starts to go down, and my experience with facilitating meetings is everybody else's is. So we'll get what we can done -- if we can do it in an hour, great. If it takes an hour and a half, that will be where it will end, everybody will be able to get home. And then, before we leave, I'm going to set a time for the next meeting and then a place.

I would like to find a place that is centrally located; otherwise, we could have meetings at different places, at a library somewhere or a school, I'll set it up, but I would like to find a more centrally located place so that it's convenient for everybody.

So that will be it.

What I would like to do now is get maybe some of the committee members view, and maybe we could start off with Rocky and just come -- come along and give me what -- what your view is. And out of this, I'm hoping that today we

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will start with some subcommittees.
Because I -- I told you about six or
eight things I'm looking at, and I think
each one of those would be a different
task for this committee. And then we'll
get a subcommittee chairperson, and we
can start working on that. If not at
this meeting, that will be the direction
of the next meeting, if I can.

Okay. Rocky, why don't you tell
us.

MR. DI VELLO: Okay.

The organizations I'm involved with
are not really related. They do
different kinds of services, like the
Farm Bureau is preserving farmland and
trying to save -- you know, develop --
save them from development. And they
are allowing horse farms on their -- in
their programs.

The East End Livestock Horsemen's
Association does a lot of other kind of
work, such as rescues, scholarships for
kids going to college in the equine

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studies and veterinary studies and things like that.

And in the East End Livestock, we do volunteer work with Parks Departments. All equine people going and volunteering their time to clean up parks as -- you know, good -- good citizens and -- trying to promote the equestrians in -- in the park use.

I hope, as a member of this task force, that I can be some sort of a liaison because I do come in -- across many people in the equine community from all -- all backgrounds, all sorts of -- you know, all different venues. So I will hope to be like a liaison and report their feelings to this committee if I can, if that's of any help to you guys.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

Does anybody have any questions about what Rocky said or --

(WHEREUPON, there was no response.)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. Sam.

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MR. ULIANO: What Rocky said is quite true for Nassau/Suffolk as well. They continue to look at the overall process for horses; what they need, where they need.

With Nassau/Suffolk, we basically look at the trail systems throughout the county. One of them being the Pine Barrens area, which is our largest trail system in the county. And we just opened up one recently this year, that took us ten years to get going, okay, on Hot Water Street in the Calverton area.

Okay. We can to try to rush that process, instead of having these things take all these years, and maybe through this committee we'll be able to do that and bring equine service back to where it should be.

On top of that, you should note that one of the new things on the horizon is we're trying to bring equine vendors to the Island, which is going to happen at the racetrack next May.

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LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Could you just speak -- pull that closer and speak into that so everybody --

MR. ULIANO: Okay.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- can -- yeah.

MR. ULIANO: Is that better?

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: It will be.

MR. ULIANO: Okay.

Yeah, there's going to be an equine vendor show at the racetrack of Belmont. Of course it's not in our county, but it does concern the overall program of equines.

So I think that's about as much as I can bring to you right now.

Plus, I do have a variance of information that we'll be able to share with this committee.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Could you just tell me a little bit more about the trail system. Now, you mentioned a Calverton project. How are we -- in Suffolk, specifically, how -- how -- is

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there an adequate --

MR. ULIANO: Well, every time --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- trail system?

MR. ULIANO: -- we open a trail system or keep it done, most of our -- the groups here try to maintain them for the county, because they are so vast, okay, and we get very little help from the county.

You're talking about hundreds of miles of trails. If you've ever been in the Pine Barrens area, you'll notice that it has highways bigger than the expressway, because they need it just to maintain the fire that goes on in that area. Okay. But we need help, and -- and maintenance of -- of those areas.

And this new one that's on Hot Water Street, like I said, it took us ten years to get it developed.

Okay. And to get parking areas, we have several in the area that -- it took us years just to get parking, and in

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different locations in the -- the Pine Barrens.

The Pine Barrens runs about -- from Exit 66, 67, something like that, and clear down to Exit 71, and from the Long Island Expressway south to Sunrise Highway. It's huge. Very huge.

Okay. And of course we have all the other county facilities.

Connetquot Park, which is a state park, but certainly the county can get behind that, which is going to come to a full view -- they wanted to close the park because it was a fish hatchery, and that they said it was too expensive to run a fish hatchery -- and that's going to be coming up for view during the weeks as well.

That's an equestrian riding area that we use quite often. The state runs it, but certainly the county can get involved and see if something could be happening there as well so we don't lose that park.

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LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Maybe I
could ask John.

Are you aware of different trails,
like he's mentioning, in the Pine
Barrens? I have to confess, I'm
ignorant to all of that.

Are you aware of that, and -- and
is it maintained or --

MR. PAVACIC: Well, first of all,
in the -- the first location the
gentleman was referring to is Manorville
Hills.

We just implemented a multiuser
trailhead there at the intersection of
Hot Water Street and County Road 111,
that's at Exit 70 on the expressway.
That was the beneficiary of a state
grant.

That was a project that was first
proposed at the Pine Barrens
Commission's Protected Lands Council I
believe about six years ago or so. They
made an attempt at applying for a grant.
That grant was not approved.

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The Parks Department then picked up the mantel, then obtained a state grant for that. The project began in late 2007 and was completed earlier this year with the erection of a handicapped accessible equestrian ramp.

So there's parking for -- for horse trailers. There are trails there. We're working on enhancing the trail system. And it's -- as I said, it's a multiuser facility. It was designed for access by equestrians, hikers, and, also, we're developing a mountain biking trail there as well.

Right now we're in the process of mapping out the trail system there. One of the things we have to keep in mind is the need to avoid conflicts among different users. We wouldn't want to have mountain bikers, for example, on the same trail as equestrians and have a collision or some type of accident there. So that's one of the things we're cognizant of.

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2 In regard to horse equestrian
3 access, though, that's widespread
4 through our county parks. West Hills
5 County Park, Blydenburgh County Park.
6 So there's -- Cathedral Pines County
7 Park. Those are just a small sampling
8 of the many county parks where
9 equestrian use is allowed and
10 encouraged.

11 In regard to maintenance of trails,
12 I'm not sure. That's the first I'm
13 hearing that there's a problem in regard
14 to trail maintenance. I'd like to hear
15 further about that because I -- I have
16 not heretofore heard any issues about
17 that.

18 Hiking trails, for example, we do
19 employ the assistance of the Long Island
20 Greenbelt Trail Organization. They do
21 assist us with hiking trails, we do have
22 an agreement with them. But as far as
23 equestrian trails, I -- this is the
24 first I'm hearing that that is an issue.

25 LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: That might

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2 be something that we could look into.
3 Because certainly the Parks Department
4 does what they can, but we also have to
5 remember the reality of limited staff.
6 So if we can get volunteers and people
7 that are helping the Parks Department to
8 know where there is some problem, that
9 might be something that we could -- we
10 can help ourselves by helping the Parks
11 Department.

12 MR. ULIANO: Well, yeah. Many
13 years ago, if you remember, we had
14 cleaned out the Hot Water Street area
15 with -- with the help of prison inmates
16 to save labor costs. One of the things
17 we didn't have -- don't have -- have
18 access to -- we have many volunteers who
19 are going to come out and help trail
20 systems throughout the county, what we
21 don't have is power equipment to get out
22 there and do that. Okay. So maybe the
23 county can assist from time to time on
24 major cleanups that we can do on these
25 trail systems, and we'll be glad to do

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that.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: But I think the commissioner was pretty clear on that. That this is part of what we can do, and that might be where we can -- they have to know there's an issue to be able to help with the issue, and, you know, the parks are so wide.

Do you feel that there's enough advertisement? I mean, obviously, I don't -- I don't know. But in the industry, do you think most people know? Like, do my neighbors both know about the parks and the availability; is that something that's --

MS. BELLONE: No.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- sent out?

No.

MS. BELLONE: No.

MR. PAVACIC: No.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. So then that might be something that we want to put on the list, because -- I mean, we have great parks, but people

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may not know -- in other words, through you, we may be able to get the information of the wonderful parks we have available, through you, to your organizations. I mean, you could do a -- an e-mail to all the people rather than us trying through Suffolk County to tell everybody. So this might be something to get people to start using it, and then they can report to you if there's a problem or a -- need some service or something. So this might be something we can do right away.

MR. PAVACIC: Legislator Eddington, if I may.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Sure.

MR. PAVACIC: We do have quite a bit of information regarding equestrian use.

First of all, we have a separate pamphlet that's -- that's distributed; we have the Leisure News that's put out once every year, and equestrian usage is prominently featured on that; as well as

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our parks' Web site.

One thing I would encourage is for the Nassau/Suffolk Horsemen's Association to consider participating again in deliberations of the Central Pine Barrens Commission's Protected Lands Council. I know since Cyla Allison left that organization, there hasn't been a presence at those meetings. And I am the co-chair of that, and you have various user organizations that are represented there, but I know, you know, over the -- over the prior ten years, they had been a prominent presence there, and they have not been. And certainly in regard to the vast areas of the Pine Barrens, that is something that I would encourage equestrians to -- to bring up those issues regarding that type of passive recreation in the -- in the Pine Barrens.

MR. ULIANO: That's absolutely correct, and we still receive your

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meeting notifications. Unfortunately -- well, with our vast size as a group, we don't always have the volunteers to make those meetings. And I apologize for that, but we do keep a presence reading the information.

On the communications scale, it's a lot better if you reach us through -- not -- not the newspaper, but through our e-mail services on every equine user group, because then our equine people are going to get that information a lot quicker and a lot easier. They're not going to look for it in the newspaper.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Well, that might be something that we can set up. You know, we can provide --

MR. ULIANO: Yeah.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- if it's just putting it on a Web site, I don't think it will be hard to blast it and then have you make sure you get it out to people. So that might be something we could look at in setting up. You

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know, again, giving the right e-mail addresses so that they can add that to their list of -- of things.

Or even if they send it to one person and then it gets out from one person in this committee to everybody else. Because what I -- I'm reluctant to do is give more jobs to an overworked department. What I'm looking for us -- us to help ourselves in the community to make it better, with the support of -- of the county executive and his staff.

And so that's what we'll try, we'll try to set up something like that.

MR. PAVACIC: And if I may, that's what we normally do. If we have a contact person, a particular organization, we rely upon them, we send the information to them, and they disseminate it to their individual members.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Good. And that's -- that could be one positive outcome of this first meeting right

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there.

MR. DI VELLO: Sir, how can I
contact you?

MR. PAVACIC: I can distribute some
business cards right now --

MR. DI VELLO: Okay.

MR. PAVACIC: -- if you want.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

Yeah, Rob will get them.

Okay. That -- that's great.

Janet.

MS. PLYMPTON: Okay. I represent
the Long Island Professional Horsemen's
Association. We're an organization of
about 90 adult members, professional and
associate, and about 150 junior members
annually. We provide scholarships to
college-bound children. We also have an
aid-to-members program for any of our
members that fall ill, what have you.
We do a horse show annually in May, and
a dinner dance in January, an awards
dinner dance.

I also want to represent the equine

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community as a whole. I own Morning Star Farm, a small boarding facility in Holtsville. And to answer your question, Jack, about what I'd like to kind of address, or one of my biggest issues is, perhaps, standardizing some sort of -- the codes, the zoning regulations throughout the townships that we have. I understand Huntington is different than Riverhead, but I'm concerned that there's so much difference between all of the -- the codes that I'm familiar with, even just living in Brookhaven, to just a town as close as Islip, but I think it needs to be a little bit more standardized. So that's where I'm coming from.

And I'd also like to see what we can do from -- I understand we're in Suffolk County, but what we can do to help salvage whatever's left of Nassau County. I know that they're interested in doing some sort of a task force, and they are interested in what we're doing.

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So I'd like to try to -- I have a boarder that keeps horses with me from Nassau, and she's very interested in knowing what we're doing to maybe help out in Nassau.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. Well, first of all, I would say, certainly invite her to any of our meetings.

And what I -- what I think is that we can be a role model. Once we get going and we can see some things happening, it'll make it easier for Nassau because we can actually give them -- here's what we've been doing, and here's how we're doing it, and here's the people we have on our committee, and it seems to help facilitate it.

So, you know, tell her we're moving on, and that we'll certainly reach out to her, let her come here. And then we'll give her -- we can give her a little bit of an idea, maybe of the minutes of what we've done, so she'll

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get an idea of where we're headed.

MS. PLYMPTON: Great.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

Okay. Great.

And when I first got here, I talked to Gigi, and that's when I mentioned to her -- she's representing the Supervisor's Association -- about standardizing some kind of -- because it -- it gets crazy. If you live -- you know, or you move two blocks away, and now you move from Brookhaven to Islip, you can have three horses, and now here, you can only have two. So, yeah, I think we have to have some kind of a mutual understanding here.

MS. PLYMPTON: Yeah. Plus the codes are very limiting.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Right.

MS. PLYMPTON: And they're getting even more and more limiting.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Right.

MS. PLYMPTON: I have a list -- a small list of the codes that I'm

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supposed to be following as a horse farm owner in Brookhaven, and I don't think I follow one.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Well, I mean, that's --

(Laughter)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- that's the problem. You know what I mean? We want people to feel comfortable and safe and not like somebody's looking over the fence to -- to get them. So, yeah, I understand.

Jerry.

MR. LAUBER: Thank you for the opportunity to -- to make a -- a brief presentation today.

The Suffolk County SPCA is the local SPCA for Suffolk County. It seems like there's some sort of magic that takes place that people want to put an A in front of it and call it the "ASPCA." That is the most well-branded organization in the world.

The ASPCA serves New York City, and

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does not provide any services to Suffolk County. As a matter of fact, over \$2 million a year in funds are donated from people in Suffolk County, thinking it's going to us, and it winds up in New York City.

Imagine what we could do with that \$2 million in terms of humanitarian aid that we can provide, the humane approach to taking care of all of our animals.

The SPCA never really did very much with -- with horses because, A, there wasn't the need, and B, we really didn't know very much as to what we needed to do.

And a few years ago, we started to put together groups of individuals who really have the expertise in terms of, you know, what constitutes good horsemanship practices. And we found for every five horse experts we had, we had ten opinions.

(Laughter)

MR. LAUBER: There's just a lot of

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diversity in terms of what people think in terms of -- of horses, but it's clear to us that there's a nexus between the economy and problems in the equine community.

We cannot do what people think we can do. We're limited by law. We are a law enforcement agency, and we're governed by the Agriculture and Market Laws of the State of New York. So we have both civil and criminal functions. And when people say to us, Why can't you just go in and feed that animal or take that animal or do this, it's a process of education that people just don't understand our limitations. But when we do act, we act very decisively.

As an example, with the CI-5, those were five horses that were abandoned and starving and poorly taken care of, and we were successful in -- in prosecuting felony convictions with regard to the maltreatment of those horses. And that led us to a whole new community that we

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were not aware of, and that there are a lot of people who really care about horses.

I was shocked to find that there are 40,000 horses in -- on Long Island, more per acre than Texas. So Long Island really is a -- is a horse country. Most people don't know that.

So we had some hope raised for us that we could get a facility to handle both large and small animal needs; horses, larger animals, farm animals, and -- and dogs, cats that were -- are victims of spousal abuse (sic).

The sheriff has been very cooperative. He's willing to donate convict labor, and we would just have to get materials to -- to fix up what we thought would be an easy deal to put together with Southaven. Nothing -- nothing is easy. Nothing is easy when you have a lot of people involved in a -- in the project.

We saw there was \$400,000 in the

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budget for Southaven. We thought that was money that maybe could be used to help kick off the repairs. Lo and behold, that 400,000 wasn't for Southaven, it went someplace else. And that's okay, because the government has its needs to put its money where it best serves, you know, their -- their mission. But we have an estimate of a million and a half to \$2 million just to repair the facility. Now, you can't do that with -- with donations. There's a need to focus our efforts.

And I think that's the problem. Is that a concentrated effort to build awareness as to the need, as you're trying to do, and I -- I really compliment you on the efforts to get this started.

But to have the county use the bully pulpit, if you will, in terms of helping people understand that -- we appreciate your donations, but if you're donating to this group, it's not serving

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the needs of Suffolk County, it's serving the needs of New York City.

And we would like to make a concerted effort with government, with volunteer groups, possibly federal money, to help convert Southaven into a facility that can be used for equine support, equine rescue.

And there's a collaboration among many groups, and we called it the "Equine Rescue Collaborative," working under the umbrella of the Suffolk County SPCA, and a wonderful group of people who are interested in doing the right thing. But an interest in doing the right thing doesn't always result in the right thing happening.

And we find it very frustrating that we're not making any progress on -- on negotiations, and -- and there are all sorts of things that get in the way. I mean, the Pine Barrens, that's a legitimate group that wants to protect the interests of the Pine Barrens. But,

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again, that prevents us from doing certain things.

That stable would be a wonderful facility for the equine community to use for horse shows, to bring business onto Long Island, but because there are limited -- limited parking on those 22 acres, that's a problem. Sure, we can park people over at the -- at police headquarters and transport them over by bus. I mean, that's -- that's a possibility also, but there's a lot that needs to be done. We have a group of people willing to do it, the Equine Rescue Collaborative folks are loaded with energy, and hopefully with your direction and focus, we can -- we can move this project forward.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. So, I mean, what I'm hearing is that -- that if we could have a facility like Southaven Park and work on that, this would -- this would then help the people that have horses in Suffolk because

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they'd have a place where they could go to get services at a -- obviously, a reasonable or free price, so they would have -- they would be able to take care of their horses better, and would have less problems. That would obviously save them some money if they have somewhere to go to take care of their horses. That would be a helpful thing.

MR. LAUBER: That would be analogues to what we do in Islip, where we have over 2,000 people a year come for free rabies shots.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Right.

MR. LAUBER: So that could be a function. And it has to be a balance, because we don't want to take away from the equine vets, because they have a living that they have to make also --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Right.

MR. LAUBER: -- and we --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Right.

MR. LAUBER: -- we reach that balance with our -- our dog and cat

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2 population. But this center not only
3 can be a place for animals that are
4 rescued or -- you know, being abandoned
5 or being abused, but it can also be a
6 center for income coming into the
7 county, which is a problem right now in
8 negotiations because the -- the current
9 negotiations, I believe, and I haven't
10 been directly involved in it, limit the
11 use of that facility that it can't be
12 income producing. So, to me, you know,
13 we're hearing, okay, help us do this,
14 help us do this, but you've got to do it
15 with both hands tied behind your back,
16 and it's -- it's a problem.

17 LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: What -- what
18 is -- is there anything happening, John,
19 with Southaven Park, or Tracey?

20 MR. PAVACIC: I'm going to ask
21 Deputy Commissioner Bellone to address
22 that, she's been intimately involved in
23 it.

24 LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Great.

25 MS. BELLONE: There's a few issues.

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We are working quite, you know, hard on trying to enter into the agreement with the SPCA, the Southaven stables. We've been working with Steve Layton, the chief operating officer, and we actually just had a conference call with Roy Gross last week with the county executive on the matter.

Obviously, it's in the central core of the Pine Barrens. So there are some concerns that need to be addressed.

We're working with the Pine Barrens Commission staff to hopefully get them to make a negative declaration of development, so that we can continue with the contract.

We have been going back and forth trying to get specific questions that they asked answered by SPCA. And we're doing that so that we don't enter into -- and I guess the Legislator can speak to this, but so we don't have another situation we do like trap and skeet, which is also in the Pine

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Barrens, which is adjacent to this facility.

So we're trying to get all these questions answered now so there aren't problems later on that could force the closure of the facility. I think we're pretty close, though.

Yesterday we had some discussions with Steve Layton. He did send us a new mission statement which addressed a lot of those issues, which we will bring to the Pine Barrens Commission staff, and hopefully that will resolve those issues. And then we'll continue on with the contract process, which will be relatively quick after that.

The issue of funding, you know, that's an issue. When SPCA first came to the county, they had submitted on several different documents that it would be at no cost to the county, the reopening of this facility. And that is what the contract -- preliminary contract was drafted as, and that's what

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we've testified at the legislature because of statements of SPCA.

At the discussion last week with the county executive and Roy Gross, he did ask about federal funding sources. We are trying to help look into that to see if there's any money available to help SPCA because we do think it's important. We do think it's a great fit for the parkland. We know that it has tremendous support from not only the equestrian community, but the community at large, because we've gotten back positive feedback about it. We've also talked to the sheriff's office, we know they're going to help you with labor.

And, you know, we'll do what we can, but you don't know that the -- you don't have a permanent source at this time available, and now in the equivocal tough economic times, you know, we're all struggling, you know, with funding sources. But we'll continue to move forward, we'll continue to work with you

1
2 and -- you know, I probably talk to
3 Steve Layton every day about the issue.
4 But we're trying to get the place open,
5 and we do think it's a good fit, and
6 we're happy that you, you know, want to
7 find a home in Southaven.

8 MR. LAUBER: Just --

9 LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Yes. Go
10 ahead, Jerry.

11 MR. LAUBER: I'm one of the
12 directors of the SPCA, and we've been
13 discussing it.

14 We do appreciate the fiscal
15 concerns that -- that exists throughout
16 the country. And for us, I think
17 naïveté would have been the correct word
18 when we first entered, because the
19 mission was wonderful and still is
20 wonderful, but the reality of the
21 delivery of that mission, without
22 funding to support it, that's more of a
23 fantasy than a reality. And I think
24 that when we sit down to talk, that we
25 have to have that connection between

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mission and funding in order to make it happen.

And we certainly don't expect the county to come up with \$2 million, but we think that -- that we need to build in a long-range capital development plan, including expenditures and resources, in order to make that plan realistic and functional.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

Okay. Gigi.

MS. ASHER: I was asked by Supervisor Patron in Huntington if I would be part of this task force, mostly because he knows that I ride horses. I don't belong to any committees like these wonderful people do, I can only speak for fellow equestrians that it's incredibly expensive to board horses here on Long Island. And I think that's the biggest concern that all of us have.

I would say -- besides, if you go to someplace like Westbury, and that's just incredibly expensive. I would say

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average board is about \$900 a month in Suffolk County. Caumsett is about 900; Stanhope is about 800; Thomas' is 900.

I'm actually going to purchase a horse tomorrow, and I'm trying to figure out where I'm going to keep it.

So if there are ways to help the farms here on Long Island --

I know you mentioned if we did hay here and they didn't have to go out of state to get hay -- I don't know if that's possible. I don't know anything about it. That would be a terrific thing.

I know the zoning regulations are really strict. There's a farm on Pulaski Road I know that wants to put an indoor arena up, and they're having difficulty in trying to do that. And that is something that people do look for when they're trying to find the place to board their horse for the winter months, for obvious reasons.

So I would say, that's what I can

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bring, and I definitely would love to participate in trying to make the equestrian community stay here on Long Island.

I was just in North Carolina two weeks ago at a stable that was just gorgeous. Huge turnouts, grass paddocks, indoor arena, jumping facility; and the board's 375 a month. And I said, And a brand new barn. Oh, my gosh -- you know, compared to 900 here on Long Island.

So if there's a way to definitely help these farms and -- and maybe get the regulations for zoning to be a little bit more standardized, like John had said, that would be a terrific thing.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Great.

Well, you shocked me because it's a -- what you're telling me is it's more expensive to board a couple of horses than to rent an apartment on Long Island, which is already outrageous. So

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I think you're going to be an invaluable part here.

And maybe Janet hooking up with you to -- to try to work on the codes and making it -- if we can get the people that have the boarding facilities to be able to get some tax breaks or buy -- and put them together so they can buy hay cheaper or feed or whatever, maybe the price will trickle down. That could be a great thing right off the bat.

So what I'm seeing so far as the things are shaking out in my head, I see Sam connecting with our Parks Department and making sure that you have e-mails, and that information is flowing from the Parks Department and then will be distributed to everybody else in the other organizations, and I see that as a possibility;

And I see Janet then hooking up maybe with Gigi and talking a little bit more about the codes and where we can go from there;

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And, Jerry, I guess what -- what I'm thinking is that -- you know, the county is positive, they're supportive. But, as you know, we have a hundred million dollar deficit and our sales taxes are taking a nosedive, we've got to talk about fundraising then.

MR. LAUBER: Great.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: And as you said, a lot of people that think they're helping the animals in Suffolk are sending donations to the ASPCA. So that maybe we could get some kind of a fundraiser going, just to give you enough money to tell people that. That here's an organization that you want to support. And so that maybe we can look into doing something like that, even if it's on a small level. Not near millions, but a few thousand to give you the money to advertise to tell people where to give money.

So I'm seeing those type of things shaking out of this meeting, where we

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have a little direction where we can go forward.

What about Tom or Pam, do you have any feedback or comments or anything on what you're hearing?

MS. GREENE: Personally, on behalf of the division, we're here to help the task force get any information that it requires to meet the goals of the task force, and we can certainly do that with identifying properties or with either gathering some of their various zoning codes through all the municipalities, if that would be helpful for you.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

So Janet, that -- Pam is a person that -- you might --

MS. PLYMPTON: Yeah.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- want to get her number and everything, so --

MS. PLYMPTON: Yeah.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Good.

Okay. Great.

MR. ISLES: Okay. Similarly, the

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Department of Planning can certainly assist in any of the zoning research as well. Certainly the codes, you know, today's real estates doing that, that's terrific. In terms of any other research beyond that, we're certainly happy to help to the extent we can.

Secondly, in terms of aspects relating to the county's farmland preservation program, whether it be the county purchases development rights or agricultural districts program. Here again, any information that would be helpful to this committee, we'll be happy to provide and to -- you know, give additional information on.

I'd also like to make the point that I think it would be -- you know, for this committee to keep in mind, too, the services of the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the Soil and Water Conservation District in terms of when we talk about the use and then the impact or intensity of the use that

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perhaps you may want to access some of their resources as well.

So we're here to help, and there are different sources out there that we can provide, and certainly working with real estate as well, and we're pleased to participate.

Thank you.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

Did anybody else want to say anything right at this moment? Otherwise, I'm going to --

Is there anybody in the audience that would like to address the committee?

MR. DI VELLO: (Indicating)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Rocky.

MR. DI VELLO: Just one clarification.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Sure.

MR. DI VELLO: When I mentioned that our office --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Just speak in the microphone.

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MR. DI VELLO: I'm sorry.

When I said our organization volunteers to clean up, basically, our home base is Hallockville Farm in Jamesport. And twice a year we clean up the new Jamesport Park, and we have been since before it was a park. And we've taken, you know, hundreds of yards of refuse out of that -- out of that park. And Bob Nellon of Wildwood Park could attest to that fact if you ever need to talk to him.

MR. ISLES: Right. You're referring to the 300-acre state park that used to be the KeySpan property in Jamesport.

MR. DI VELLO: Correct.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. So there is already a collaboration of efforts going on, and --

MR. LAUBER: (Indicating)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Yes, Jerry.

MR. LAUBER: As a recovering superintendent of schools, which I

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retired from 11 years ago, I think we need to also address the education community.

This is a process of education that I think we need to use to build awareness. And our kids are wonderful resources, and the voices of the students can go a long way towards helping to educate folks about the equine needs of the county.

Certainly, project-based community service activities on the part of school districts and students could go a long way to help provide some of the physical support necessary to clear up trails. And I think there's some wonderful activities and opportunities to involve young people to -- you know, help them reassert a sense of community and family in this kind of work.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: And then I would say that we're going to have to get a -- have somebody -- and I don't want to say you, but somebody in the

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committee or -- or a subcommittee member to reach out to schools and do that. Because, I mean, I know that -- I go to Gold Awards for Girl Scouts and Eagle Scout Awards, and they're always doing different projects. So that if maybe we can give a focus to them that we're looking for some help, whether it's trails or -- or a working farm that they could do something or -- you know, that might be a good avenue to go, so maybe we could explore that, too.

Okay. You know what I'd like to do? I'd like to try to set up another meeting and a place.

Now, I -- I don't know where everybody is from.

Is this a central location, or do you need it out east further?

MR. DI VELLO: I'm probably the further east, and I don't mind traveling.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

This is good for you guys, huh?

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MR. ISLES: Absolutely.

(Laughter)

MR. PAVACIC: (Indicating)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: John.

MR. PAVACIC: We can offer the Southaven Lodge, which is near the proposed SPCA facility, if that would be, you know, helpful.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Where is that? Where is -- is that on that property?

MR. PAVACIC: That's actually where park police headquarters is located.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Oh, yeah, sure, I know. That's where --

MR. PAVACIC: The southern end of Southaven Park.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Oh, yeah.

Well, I mean, would you want to have the next meeting there, just to get a look? Maybe we could actually see where the site of --

Can you walk to the site of the horse facility?

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MR. PAVACIC: It's actually a long walk. We'd probably have to --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Oh.

MR. PAVACIC: We probably would want to meet at the stable area first, and then drive to the --

MR. LAUBER: Yeah, it's at the farthest end of the --

MR. PAVACIC: Right.

MR. LAUBER: Yeah.

MS. PLYMPTON: Are there microphones?

(Laughter)

MR. PAVACIC: It would be a much more intimate setting than this.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Yes.

Well, then -- I know where the park police thing is. Do you want to all meet there, and then we'll take a field trip down and come back? Or -- because I don't want people getting lost trying to find the --

MR. ULIANO: The stables would be best --

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MR. LAUBER: You can't miss the stables. In other words, you're going up to Yaphank, and then you make --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. Then you know what I'll do? I will get directions from the park police, because I'm going to have to figure out where it is, and make sure you all get a copy, and -- and we can meet there.

Now, the next thing is time and date.

Do you want to have a meeting in a month? Is that too soon? Too late?

Do you want to have it every two months?

What are you feeling?

MS. GREENE: Mr. Chairman, if I could just --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Absolutely.

MS. GREENE: The legislation empowering the task force stated that the report had to be issued within 180 days of the effective date of the resolution, which requires it to be

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submitted September 27th of '09. So I don't know how firmly we have to adhere to that --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Is that six months? 100- -- six months is --

MS. GREENE: September, correct.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: September? Is that right?

MS. GREENE: That what -- I didn't know how firm we --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. Then you know -- yeah, what we'll do --

MS. GREENE: Yeah.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: -- since we're just getting started now -- yeah -- I'll put in a resolution to expand -- to extend that.

Thank you.

MS. GREENE: You're welcome.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Thank you.

MR. DI VELLO: (Indicating)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Yes.

MR. DI VELLO: I would like to make a motion that the next meeting be casual

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attire.

(Laughter)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Sounds good to me.

Okay. So now it's August, do you want to have one in the beginning of, you know, September?

(Discussion held off the record)

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: I guess we'll meet at the barn, and I'll get directions so that you can get from the police station to the -- from the police place to the barn, and then just directions right to the barn so that people --

I know, that's the entrance --

MR. PAVACIC: Mr. Legislator, the barn would probably be easiest to get to. It's right off Gerard Road --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

MR. PAVACIC: -- just south of trap and skeet --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

MR. PAVACIC: -- and just north of

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Equestrian Task Force 8/6/09

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Sunrise Highway. So that would be
Exit 67 on the expressway, south.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.

MR. PAVACIC: But we'll provide
those directions, e-mail --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Oh, okay.
Great.

MR. PAVACIC: -- your office.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.
That's great. Okay. Fine.

And are we going to meet just there
then? We'll just have the meeting
there; is that what we're saying?

MR. PAVACIC: There's really no
meeting place. I think we would --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Oh, okay.

MR. PAVACIC: -- meet there first,
and then move on to the -- to the -- we
could just car- -- caravan over to --

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay. Fine.

MR. PAVACIC: -- the police
headquarters.

LEGISLATOR EDDINGTON: Okay.
Great. That's good.

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All right. If there's no other business, than I will conclude our first meeting. I think it's good -- you know, to me --

You know, I used to -- used to work as a consultant for the federal government, drug prevention. And we always tried to keep our meetings together, because when we had two-hour meetings, we found out all we had was coffee and -- and just conversation and nothing was done. And when you can keep it down near an hour, you get people to want to come back because they can still do the rest of their business.

So I really appreciate us sticking to a task. I think we have a couple of things that are going to be looked into between now and then.

The next meeting date is September 9th, Wednesday, at 3:30, at the Southaven stable.

Okay. Thank you for coming today. Have a good weekend.

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(WHEREUPON, the meeting of the
Suffolk County Equestrian Task Force was
adjourned at 4:04 p.m.)

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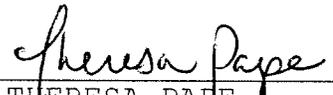
C E R T I F I C A T E

I, THERESA PAPE, a Shorthand Reporter and
Notary Public of the State of New York, do hereby
certify:

That the foregoing is a true and accurate
transcription of the stenographic notes taken
herein.

I further certify that I am not related to
any of the parties to this action by blood or
marriage; and that I am in no way interested in the
outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
hand this 6th day of August 2009.



THERESA PAPE