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ORIGINAL

SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
EQUESTRIAN TASK FORCE
Suffolk County

Southaven County Park
October 7, 2009
3:30 P.M.

Hon. Jack Eddington, Chairman

Reported by: Donna Spratt
Court Reporter

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

3 Jon Pavacic

4 Janet Plimpton

5 Steve Laton

6 Pamela Greene

7 Jessica Kalmbacher

8 Denise Speizio

9 Tom Isles

10 Lisa Filsaine

11 Ellen Stitt

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MR. EDDINGTON: Jessica sent us
some information that I thought was really
a great analysis and some recommendations.
I appreciate that.

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John did a masterful job of
breaking down some questions that we were
throwing out, and I want to look at John's
suggestions and here's what I'm thinking.

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The first one, number one
identified the specific types of
equestrian entities, describe them and
distinguish them. That is part of what
Jessica had said in her outline.

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I'm wondering if, Janet, that might
be something that you could really focus
on.

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MS. PLIMPTON: Okay.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Here is what I'm
thinking; that I'm going to give different
jobs to different people, but that just
means that you're going to be, like, the
head of that, like, subcommittee that is
going to be researching that information.

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Since you're an individual horse owner and you have to deal with many of those things, if you could take the lead and start putting that part together.

MS. PLIMPTON: Okay. When you ask for distinguish them, are you telling me name names or telling me categories?

MR. EDDINGTON: Categories. I know we have people with an acre, acre and a half that have horses, some people have six acres and twenty acres, because one of the other groups are going to start looking at the zoning, how we can start focusing in on that, but we have to be able to identify what are we talking about, who would be included?

What is your background again?

MS. SPEIZIO: I've worked with the equestrian community for a long time.

MR. EDDINGTON: You may be a great resource for Janet. You may want to hook up with Janet, so that you have somebody you can bounce what you're finding off of.

MS. SPEIZIO: I'll see if there is

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2 one of the other categories. I do have a
3 question for the first one.

4 Are handicapped riding facilities
5 looked at as different?

6 MS. PLIMPTON: I would think under
7 riding schools, no?

8 MS. SPEIZIO: I didn't know if most
9 of the handicapped riding facilities are
10 not for profit, if they were categorized
11 differently. That is part or what we
12 could look into to find out.

13 MS. PLIMPTON: Right.

14 MR. EDDINGTON: That's what I was
15 thinking and, of course, everybody on the
16 committee, Janet, would be available for
17 you to reach out to, whether it is Tom at
18 Planning or Jessica or John from Parks or
19 Pam from real estate. All of those people
20 if you have a -- we know you could
21 specifically get to them and try to get
22 information so that we now have at least
23 it broken down into that part.

24 Then the second part to identify
25 equestrian support services, I was

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thinking that Sam probably would be really good, because he seems to have a huge background with all the different tasks.

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Jerry.

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MR. LATON: Steve. I'll be filling in for Jerry from now on.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Okay. I was thinking that probably with your background with veterinary services and that kind of thing, what animals require, maybe you could work with Steve on identifying the equestrian support services and, of course, what is written here.

What John gave us is not limiting. It's just a target. It doesn't mean you have to be inclusive, but this is just to give you a focus of where to start looking to start getting some answers, and I think Sam would be really good at that.

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Do you talk to Sam?

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MS. SPEIZIO: He E-mailed me last night because if he doesn't show up, I'm supposed to cover for him.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Could you let him know, and by all means jump in.

MS. SPEIZIO: I'm a member of several organizations, including the SPCA.

MR. EDDINGTON: Wherever you feel your expertise could go to help, reach out to them. Maybe it's better that you be, like, a utility person rather than a subcommittee leader because this way you can bounce back and forth.

Certainly we got to notify Sam he has been in charge, but you could also reach out to him and give him a copy of where we're headed.

Then the third category I'd like to characterize and categorize, the specific issues faced, I thought Rocky would be real good there, so nobody heard from Rocky?

We'll have to reach out to Rocky, because he talked last time about how he was already doing some of these type of things. So then I was going to ask Jerry

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MS. SPEIZIO: Just to jump in, the next one talks about growing hay, those type of solutions. He is part of the Farm Bureau, I believe.

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MS. STITT: Yes, Rocky, Long Island Farm Bureau.

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MR. EDDINGTON: That is why I thought he would be helpful with that.

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10

Ate aides for number four.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Okay. You're saying Rocky for number four.

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MS. SPEIZIO: Because it deals with growing hay, talks about the Long Island Farm Bureau and --

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MS. PLIMPTON: You want me to let you know what my experiences are in the cost of insurance, vet care, feed etc.? In running a boarding barn for 30 years, I can certainly sniff out some other people that might be able to give you some figures.

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I can get you at least some figures in number three.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Okay, then you know

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what? Why don't you see if there's

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overlap one and three, if we can

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incorporate them.

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MS. PLIMPTON: I can do something

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like that, yeah.

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MR. EDDINGTON: But certainly Steve

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will be available, I'm sure, with

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veterinary care to help out, and I was

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going to ask Gigi to deal with land use

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and zoning, and I thought that Pam would

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be a resource we're going to try to get.

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You certainly know Islip.

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We'll try to get all this

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information, and then what I'm thinking is

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get the different planning boards together

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so we can start talking to them about what

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we are -- whatever our suggestions are

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going to be.

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MS. GREENE: Would it make sense to

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have one presentation to the Suffolk

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County planning commission?

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MR. EDDINGTON: Would you -- if we

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were going to deal with that, you would

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need the town. There is also --

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MR. ISLES: To change local zoning, yeah, that's a town board or village board action. Planning boards are certain authorities, but certainly don't have the authority to change zoning standards, but the towns, municipalities are very important.

MR. EDDINGTON: I guess probably what we would do is present it to you, let you get a feel for it. You've dealt with all the towns, and make the next step would be to bring them in.

MR. ISLES: Bring in planning directors or whoever is administering zoning in the towns at a staff level because they are going to be the ones, elected officials are going to go to get the initial reactions, see what needs to be adjusted.

MR. EDDINGTON: That is certainly down the road apiece. What I said before you came in, certain people are going to be focusing on these things. John came up with a, I thought, a great design in that

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you guys would be their resources so that

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they could reach out to all of us in the

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County for whatever expertise we might

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have as they're trying to find the answers

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to these things.

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Does that make sense?

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MS. GREENE: Did everyone get the

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zoning handout from last time?

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MS. SPEIZIO: No. Basically the

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way I'm seeing this now is that each,

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like, subcommittee -- and we have like one

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and three kind of working.

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Janet, you're going to kind of

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focus there, but certainly, like I said,

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reach out to other people to help you.

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You could check out on pharmacology

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and vitamin supplements, reach out to

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Steve, see if he could help you with that,

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my office or whoever, and anybody else.

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It doesn't just have to be people in this

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room.

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If you know somebody --

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MS. PLIMPTON: I have numerous

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contacts and friends in the business that

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2 can certainly give me what they're paying
3 and what their problems are or what have
4 you, sure.

5 So I can certainly kind of come up
6 with -- it might not be full scale but I
7 can certainly give you ideas.

8 MR. EDDINGTON: That is what we
9 want to get. I'm figuring that the next
10 -- our next meeting, a month, sometime,
11 will be to see if anybody in any of those
12 groups need more assistance and just a
13 rough view of where are we going, how are
14 you making out?

15 It would be just to see, because I
16 think we need a couple of months to really
17 flush out this stuff, and then my thinking
18 is that, Janet, you would talk about one
19 and three and how you've progressed and
20 where you think you are, and then I'll ask
21 Sam and Denise or whatever to talk about
22 number two and where you think we are
23 there.

24 MS. SPEIZIO: You have Steve and
25 Sam for two.

2

MR. EDDINGTON: Right, yeah.

3

You're going to make sure Sam is aware of that.

4

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MS. SPEIZIO: I'll talk to Sam. As

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far as, like, the manure removal, if you

7

want me to look into quotes and stuff, I

8

did own a trucking company for 14 years.

9

That would be familiar territory for me.

10

MR. EDDINGTON: Cool.

11

MS. PLIMPTON: Terrific.

12

We'll get Rocky on board for this

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last one. I guess after we see all that

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stuff, just have to see where we can go

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with it.

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My goal is to help the people that

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own horses. I don't really know how we

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can do that, but I guess as we go through

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this, we'll start to see what they really

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need and whether it becomes -- we can

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actually change zoning or unify it at

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least.

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We can make help them financially

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with services, if nothing else.

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Tom, what do you see? Do you see

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anything else I'm not talking about?

MR. ISLES: Not at that point. I guess we identified a number of issues or impediments to these different types of horse activities, whether broken down by individual horse owners, boarding barns and so forth which are more commercial businesses and so on.

In terms of anything beyond that, there are larger issues with agriculture and markets and the County's PDR program category that so fits into that. State law does allow, does consider horse boarding and production and so forth.

So I'm not sure if that is something you want to get into or not. I think we need to give this either -- if it becomes something that comes out of these discussions and investigations, we can go there.

The thought on the zoning, that is tricky. There are 42 municipalities. Each have their own way of regulating and so forth. There is their side of the

2 story, too, which I'm not sure what
3 they're receptivity will be, but that is
4 the purpose of opening up a discussion.

5 Maybe if it gets down to almost
6 like a model code or we find something
7 like this really seems to work for
8 everyone from a regulatory standpoint and
9 a user standpoint, maybe here's what
10 everyone thinks is good, maybe they don't
11 know about it.

12 That might be something where if
13 through this process and outreach that is
14 being done. If there is something that
15 seems to work, maybe we could get the word
16 out about that and maybe a generic
17 document for the municipalities that can
18 customize it to their situation.

19 MS. SPEIZIO: That is a great
20 suggestion.

21 MR. EDDINGTON: I said, John, I
22 thought this was an outstanding job for
23 us, and what we did was just kind of break
24 it out into, like, subcommittees and Janet
25 is going to -- sees a connection between

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one and two. She's going to start with that.

MS. PLIMPTON: One and three.

MR. EDDINGTON: With Denise's assistance, and we'll all be available, if we can help in any way.

And number two, Sam isn't here but Sam and Steve are going to work towards that, and Rocky is not here but we picked him to -- because of his background -- to work on number four, and I thought that the next meeting we have is where we'll just have them say how are they doing, what support have they gotten and what more can we do to push them forward.

And then I think next year, I would think that that is when we can start having each group talk to us about what their findings are, because right now, I just see it is big, and we're going to start bringing it in and by you guys making the contacts, you're going to start hearing where the real concerns are and where the secondary concerns are.

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That's how I'm looking at it.

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Is there anything else that you

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could --

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MR. PAVACIC: No. I believe that

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is a great approach, breaking it down into

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specific components.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Because I don't

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really want to have lots of long meetings.

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I think it is just where we get together;

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how are you doing, what help can we get

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you, and it's, you know.

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I don't want pressure that we have

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to have it done in six months. I want it

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done right and once and for all.

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So if we get it done in six months,

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it is great. If I have to extend the

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committee, I will extend the committee.

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Is there any other resources that

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anybody can think of that Janet or Denise

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or Steve might be able to tap in that

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we're not thinking of?

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Certainly we have real estate, we

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have Parks, we have Planning.

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MS. GREENE: I don't know if you

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2 covered this already. How are we
3 examining what resources already exist
4 from the County and what or which could be
5 improved or expanded upon?

6 MR. EDDINGTON: I guess John would
7 know.

8 MS. GREENE: With the handout from
9 last week, but is there any talk of
10 rehabing the stables here? What would be
11 the most --

12 MR. EDDINGTON: That is a part of
13 the plan, I believe, right here, isn't it?
14 We're almost in a contract, I think, with
15 the --

16 MS. GREENE: It seems like as a
17 County task force, that would be the most
18 immediate accomplishment.

19 MR. EDDINGTON: I think it is going
20 on independent --

21 MR. PAVACIC: It actually started.
22 That started before the task force was
23 created, and it's for the SPCA, not to
24 re-establish that as a set of stables.

25 MR. EDDINGTON: We're supportive of

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it, of course.

MR. PAVACIC: For us, the real issues we've had -- we used to have four for hire operations; here at Southaven, Sears Bellows, Montauk and West Hills. Sears Bellows and Southaven ceased. They just couldn't afford to run the operations anymore for a lot of reasons.

That has been outlined, so we just have the two at Montauk, Deep Hollow Ranch and West Hills, but certainly if that is something that could -- still expressed a desire by County park patrons to go horseback riding but not to have their own horses, but to have the ability to hire a horse for a day at a facility.

And certainly, if that was, that would be a positive outcome of this task force for that to happen, if there is a way to foster that happening to address some of the issues that caused two of those four operators to go out of business.

MR. EDDINGTON: We also might be

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able to identify local, whether they're horse farms or not, that may be willing to do that for residents, too, so I think out of that, a --

MS. GREENE: Links to the County website.

MR. EDDINGTON: Absolutely. I'm hoping all of those possibilities come out of this. But we definitely do support that. I guess that will be part of hour statement of the committee.

We are in support of the County's working with the SPCA.

MS. SPEIZIO: One thing that is not on the list, I don't know if it is something that we can address; there are certain laws that look at horses and our events or things that we do here on Long Island, but there is one in particular that was brought up. They re-categorized horses as a pet rather than an agricultural animal.

A lot of grants and monies that are available through the County or State,

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federal grants are issued based on the horse being an agricultural animal rather than a pet and things like that.

That is something that we can address, because it has a long-term effect on how facilities are able to raise funds.

MR. EDDINGTON: That is a great idea. I didn't even know that.

MS. SPEIZIO: Buster's Law is one of them.

MR. EDDINGTON: That is what categorizes it?

MS. SPEIZIO: It categorizes animals as pets.

MS. STITT: Is it a State law?

MS. SPEIZIO: It is on a State level, yes.

MR. LATON: It classifies them as companion animals and up until only a few years ago even, a house cat was not considered a companion animal. It became a pet and companion animal.

It is considered a farm animal Agriculture and Markets Law.

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MS. PLIMPTON: Not yet considered a
3 pet.

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MS. SPEIZIO: No. The reason for
Buster's Law isn't necessarily a negative
one. It is for reasons, like, with the
SPCA that addresses as far as abuse so
that they can prosecute on a higher level,
but ultimately for people in agriculture
or someone with a farm looking for funds,
it would have a negative effect on that
end.

So things like that we could look
into, so that's something that is trying
to do one good thing on one side, doesn't
affect another rroup of people negatively.

MR. EDDINGTON: Ellen, put that
down as my office looking into the law
part. We'll see what we can find out
about that.

We'll find out if it's State or
federal and reach out to the proper
people.

MS. SPEIZIO: The recent loss of
the 4-H Club is horrible, to say the

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least.

MR. EDDINGTON: I know that was a Nassau County funded group, I believe, but it did accept Suffolk County children, and they lost their equestrian part of it, and I think that's really sad, so things like that is something else we could look into.

MR. PAVACIC: Did they operate here in Suffolk County?

MS. SPEIZIO: Riverhead.

MR. PAVACIC: Did they shut that facility?

MS. SPEIZIO: I can find out definitely. It is recent, just happened this year, but the woman, Denise, who ran it, I could get all the information from her and bring that back the next time.

MS. PLIMPTON: And 4-H is huge everywhere, everywhere else. You go to state fairs. It is gigantic. These kids bring bunnies, their mice, their cows.

MR. EDDINGTON: We're like the number one agricultural, and we don't have a 4H.

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MS. PLIMPTON: I did want to touch

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on that in relation to Long Island is

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losing their riding schools per se. We

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have a lot of trainers who teach lessons,

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but nobody is running -- I grew up in a

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riding school.

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We didn't have riding lessons. We

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had theory and learned about the parts of

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the horse and how they, you know, are

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structured and all sorts of, you know,

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veterinary skills and what not. We don't

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have that anymore.

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We have trainers that go out and

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teach children how to ride, but the riding

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school -- I'm going to use a very

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well-known school that still is in

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existence -- the Thomas School on Round

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Swamp Road does a bang-up job. They have

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a fabulous day camp for forty odd years

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and just in my notes, riding schools are

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insensitive for these boarding

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barns/lesson barns.

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To have an actual school program

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where you sit down at tables and you learn

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theory and you learn about -- you're not actually riding a horse and learning how to ride a horse but all the other aspects of it.

MS. SPEIZIO: BOCES used to offer classes at night. Gail Fields used to run the program.

MS. PLIMPTON: With the loss of 4H, we're not going in a good direction. We're not creating horsemen anymore, we're creating some riders but not creating horsemen.

Who would man the horse farms in twenty years, that are out there?

MR. EDDINGTON: Right.

MS. SPEIZIO: That is true.

MR. EDDINGTON: I would say that is something else we need to look into -- well, we could look at funding options for something like that.

MS. PLIMPTON: Maybe some sort of incentives to encourage them to have a program, educational program.

MR. EDDINGTON: Good.

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MR. ISLES: On the first category, it is well done. I think we talked about this a little bit. It's kind of nice to get collect information on the size of the industry. Here it is broken down by individuals, by riding schools so forth.

The problem is I don't think there is a lot of data there, but for the purposes of framing this report and how significant is the equestrian industry in Suffolk County, what does it mean to the economy and things like that, how many people participate in the activities and so I think those are good.

But if there are sources that have -- that it might be helpful to frame the report.

MS. PLIMPTON: There is a woman, Rita Gambino, who can rattle off numbers on Long Island like it's nobody's business, and when she starts at me, I'm like, I can't take notes that fast and she is your girl for that particular aspect.

I already wrote her name down for

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me to contact, but she had talked about coming to these meetings.

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MS. STITT: What is her name, please?

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MS. PLIMPTON: Rita Gambino from Bayport.

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MR. LATON: She was one of the casualties at Southaven Stables.

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MS. PLIMPTON: She ran it for a while. She would be a great one to come in here and tell what pulled her down.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Okay. You know what? Reach out to her and if you want to have her come in next time, we'll have her make the first presentation as part of your subcommittee.

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MS. SPEIZIO: We did a study, it was a couple of years ago. It would need to be updated, but it's a good outline, with Celia Allison when we sat on the Protective Lands Council a few years ago. That had a good structure for numbers for New York. It was in the three million dollar a year --

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MR. EDDINGTON: Any of these people we did bring in to give us additional information will be fabulous.

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MS. SPEIZIO: Unfortunately for financial reasons, she is in Virginia. She couldn't stay here. I could tap into her now.

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She sent us a painting for an event over the summer. She still wants to see horses on Long Island. I'll reach out to her.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Janet, rather than set a date for the next meeting, why don't you make contact with her, find out what date -- it would have to be probably like right before Thanksgiving sometime, like maybe the week before Thanksgiving and see if she's available any of those dates.

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I'll check to see if I have any committee meetings, and I'll get it to everybody else with a couple of possible dates on the basis of Rita's availability.

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MS. PLIMPTON: I can E-mail her right away. I'm on friendly speaking

terms with her.

MR. EDDINGTON: What I'm basically seeing is that we're going to start branching out, doing some research, getting other people involved to help us get -- gather the information, and then we will have each group talk about where they are in the preliminary stage and what support they think they need to get moving, and then we'll just -- I would say that would be three months of that, trying to get that and then probably have, like, a final couple of meetings where we can make presentations.

Then probably what I would say is we'll do one big presentation in the horse show in Hauppauge and invite interested people to come in and anybody else and then kind of start working on the financial report and recommendations.

Anything else?

John, I appreciate your running from one meeting to another. This was great.

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MS. PLIMPTON: Thank you for
putting this together. It is great.

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MR. EDDINGTON: Believe me, anybody
that has any suggestions or -- there are
all different kinds of learners. There is
visual learners, auditory learners,
kinesthetic learners. If you heard
something that you're not sure everyone
heard, get it to all of us. This kind of
stuff is great so we can get a good focus.

Is there anybody else that wants to
add anything?

I feel like we're heading in a good
direction, so any update on the process
over here?

MR. PAVACIC: Just waiting for a
contract. I guess it is that stage.

We're in the next stage. The
County Attorney's office is involved.
We're drafting a draft agreement. Then
we'll be engaging in more formal
discussion with SPCA.

MR. EDDINGTON: Good.

All right then. Have a good week

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then. Thanks for coming.

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(TIME NOTED: 4:10 P.M.)

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CERTIFICATION

I, DONNA L. SPRATT, a Notary
Public in and for the State of New
York, do hereby certify:

THAT the foregoing is a true and
accurate transcript of my
stenographic notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
hereunto set my hand this 22nd day
of October 2009.



DONNA L. SPRATT