

**SENIORS & CONSUMER PROTECTION COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

A meeting of the Seniors & Consumer Protection Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on June 13, 2016.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Sarah Anker - Chair  
Legislator Tom Cilmi  
Legislator Al Krupski  
Legislator Tom Muratore

**Not Present:**

Legislator Steve Stern - Excused Absence

**Also in Attendance:**

Amy Ellis - Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature  
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature  
Benny Pernice - Budget Review Office  
Alyssa Turano - Aide to Majority Leader  
Robyn Fellrath - Aide to Legislator Anker  
Catherine Stark - Aide to Legislator Krupski  
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern  
Bob Martinez - Aide to Legislator Muratore  
Lynne Bizzarro - County Attorney's Office  
Rick Brand - Newsday  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken By:**

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

(The meeting was called to order at 12:45 p.m.)

**CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:**

Welcome to the Seniors and Consumer Protection committee. Please rise for the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Cilmi.

(Salutation)

Please remain standing for a moment of silent meditation and prayer as we think of the victims and family of the Orlando terror attack and also keep in your thoughts our military men and women fighting for our freedom.

(Moment of Silence Observed)

We have one card here today for public portion. Kevin MacLeod, please come to the podium.

**MR. MACLEOD:**

Kevin MacLeod. I'm president of a new organization, Long Island Coalition of Solar Professionals, and I also own a nice business here in Bay Shore, KPS Solar. So what I want to talk a little bit about is about our concerns as a solar industry going forward here of the appointments to licensing boards, and I'll particularly hone in on the electrical licensing board. You've got two appointments coming before you today, and the industry is beginning to take a little concern about some of the people that are on these boards.

Now what I want to basically -- these appointments that come to you, they're basically from the county exec through the commissioner, and not to try to insult anybody, but they are basically rubber-stamped and sent on to the legislature, and does anybody here actually look at these appointments as far as their actual qualifications and their continued serving. Now the industry is concerned about if these people actually representing the people of Suffolk County or actually representing the interest of their own business. I mean, most of these business who won licensing awards, they have concerns and interests within the industry themselves, and they do have a tendency of doing things that is overprotected -- protective of themselves rather than the actual people of Suffolk County.

So some of the things that we're concerned about is that we're hearing coming down the pipe is, like, the continuing education component, trying to make an electrician's license or the solar contractors an electrician's license requirement only, which we have big concerns about because our industry, about 40- to 45 percent of it works under the home improvement license, and if you all of a sudden tell these people that they can't do solar because they are not an ME, I have concerns with that, and the industry has concerns about that, and that's going to hurt an industry.

The licensing board is here to basically approve licenses, not control industries, and this is one of the things that we're concerned about going forward. I mean, these appointments that are coming to you, maybe you should be looking a little bit more closer at them, I mean, and not just rubber stamping them, maybe tabling the motions and looking at their qualifications. The solar industry has been trying to get representation on this licensing board for years, and because, I'm going to tell you -- this is insulting -- it's a country club board. They reelect their members year after year after year. There's no term limits, and there should be, and they recommend who should be on the board and who shouldn't be on the board. So when people in our industry want to come forward and want to be on that board and they're told, Sorry, you don't have the qualifications, and all of a sudden somebody's brother or somebody's friend ends up on the position on the board, you know, we have concerns about that.

Now, I've talked to Sara about this, and we have some ideas of how we are going to approach this going forward, but right now, I think we should be looking at this a little bit more seriously, because we don't want our industry controlled by a licensing board. I mean, we have MEs on the board. I'm an ME, and I mean there are some components of solar that is a master electrician's requirement, but there's other parts that are under the home improvement license, and we have concerns about that. I'm going to be meeting with some of you going forward. I already met with Sara. I want to meet with a couple of the other people here as we go forward about this and see if we can work on something.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Kevin, I appreciate your time, and you do have some valid concerns and I'm sure we all look forward to working with you to address them. Thank you.

**MR. MACLEOD:**

Thank you, Sara.

**LEG. ANKER:**

We're going to move to the introductory resolutions. We have **IR 1498, Approving the reappointment of Russell Calemmo as a member of the Suffolk County Electrical Licensing Board (County Executive)**. I'll make a motion to approve.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Madam Chair? Before I go ahead and speak to it, is there a second on your approval motion? I was going to make a motion to table because I think Mr. MacLeod brings up a concern that's worth addressing, at least. If folks who he's familiar with in the industry have continuously expressed a desire to be a part of this board and they're met with either opposition or dismissal for some reason, you know, I think maybe we should look into that before we approve the reappointments that we're talking about today.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Okay. We will -- we're waiting to hear from a few of the committee members in just a few minutes. Legislator Muratore, would you like to give us your thoughts on that?

**LEG. MURATORE:**

I'll second the table.

**LEG. CILMI:**

So let's vote.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

On the motion, on the tabling motion. So the comments that we just heard from, is there anyone from Consumer Affairs here?

**CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:**

James.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

I thought I saw you walk in. Could you explain the function of the electrical licensing board and the number on the board and if there are terms.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

The Electrical Licensing Board is supposed to be comprised of 11 board members. There is currently one opening on the board right now. The function of that board is to advise the

administration on things that go on in the electrical industry as well as to help us with our testing for licensing to help us with the requirements for master electrician and restricted electrician. They have also made a recommendation, as has the plumbing board, to move forward with an education component. That was also just done and passed by this body in the liquid waste license. That's about basically it that the board is responsible for. They do not license. The agency has the final say on licensing and electrician. They make a recommendation.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Then who does the licensing?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

The department does.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Based on their recommendation, has anyone ever been not licensed?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

There has been issues, not since I have been there, but I understand there has been an instance where the department hasn't licensed someone, and there's also been an instance since I've been there where the board felt that we shouldn't license someone but we did based on other circumstances and information that was brought forward.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Excuse me. Could you comment on what the gentleman spoke about as far as --

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Rubber stamping board members? I don't know where that came from.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

No, no, no; the concern about the solar industry not being represented.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

We are currently seeking a member for the solar industry and have several resumes that we're currently vetting for recommendation.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Do these members that are up for reappointment, are they active members who contribute to the board?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Mr. Calammo is a very active member who gives a lot of his time, extra time, that he puts towards this board. Mr. Carmeyer (ph) is also an active member of the board. Since I've taken over as director of the department, I have been tracking the attendance of board members; and several board members, I've asked to either step down or to start coming to attend, because the commissioner and I felt that if someone was going to be on our board that we would appreciate that they took it seriously.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

So would you recommend Mr. Calammo to continue as a board member?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Yes, I would. I would recommend all three that I put forward. I actually did those resolutions personally.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

And what sort of commitment can we get from you to have someone put on the board that represents the solar industry? I mean, that's an important emerging business, I would think, in Suffolk County, and it would be important to have someone from that business who is active and knowledgeable on that board.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

We feel the same way.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Let me ask you a question. How many openings are there right now?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

There's currently one opening on the board.

**LEG. ANKER:**

So that could be a probable place for maybe someone with a solar background?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

It should be.

**CHAIRWOMAN ANKER:**

Legislator Muratore.

**LEG. MURATORE:**

Commissioner, you did say you were looking for someone from the solar industry, correct?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Yes, we did.

**LEG. MURATORE:**

Good. Well, I commend you for that, and I guess you have the foresight, like this committee does, to think about that for the future. Thank you.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

James, you mentioned something in your description of what the board does about the liquid waste licensing.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

I had mentioned that that electrical board and the plumbing board have come forward to the commissioner and I about the possibility of including an educational component upon renewal of a license.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Ah. Gotcha.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

The liquid waste board has already moved forward and has had a law approved by the legislature that has that component in it.

**LEG. CILMI:**

The reason my ears perked up when you mention that is because we have heard, or at least I have heard, and I think other members of the legislature have heard, subsequent to us passing that law that we effectively excluded hundreds of businesses from doing their business as a result of that law passing. It presents some restrictions that were not otherwise in place, and for some reason are problematic.

So I don't want to get into a discussion about that law here, but if your intention is to make our licensing of electricians more restrictive to the point where we basically push small business people, you know, individual electricians out of the business, then that's something I would have great concern over.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

That's not the departments intent at all. Most electricians do take a certain amount of continuing education credits annually when there's code changes, when there's new technology that comes up. We are not looking to push and licensees out of business by no means, big or small. Basically, the continuing education was brought forward as a sort of consumer protection. I mean, would you want an electrician in your house installing some new type of technology that came out that hasn't really done much than change an outlet, change a breaker box for the last 30 years and has done nothing in terms of educating himself about the new technologies that are out there? I would think not.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Well, at the same time, though, if we're going to install an educational component, which financially or otherwise makes it difficult for electricians to do their work and if we are, in fact, licensing those electricians, there is some degree of legitimacy, I guess, that comes from is that license. We renew licenses periodically.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Licenses are renewed every two years.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Every two years. So is there no effort to -- what's the process by which we renewly senses currently?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

A licensee comes in, pays the fee for the two-year renewal, and then they walk out the door with their new license.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Okay. So it's basically a moneymaking scheme, then, at this point.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

The department gets no fees whatsoever in terms of the educational component that would be added to the license.

**LEG. CILMI:**

No, no, no. Currently, it's a moneymaking scheme. If you're not doing anything to vet electricians as they come in for renewal of licenses and all you're doing is you're asking them to pay their fee and walk out the door, then all you're doing is collecting money.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

The electrician does have to pass a written and practical when they first come in to get their license. Would you expect us to test them every two years?

**LEG. CILMI:**

No, I wouldn't expect you to test them every two years. But I'm asking, do we not have any process by which they get retested? You said 30 years or something like that, would I want someone working on my house who hasn't been educated in 30 years.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

They don't retested, which is why the department is requiring an educational component upon renewal of an electrical license.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Yeah, but if the department were to propose an educational requirement, that would come to the legislature for approval.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Yes, it would have to. It would be part of the law because you would now change their requirements for a renewal.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Okay. Let's get back to the concerns the Mr. MacLeod expressed. You're working -- are you working with -- or I should say who are you working with from the industry to solicit resumes from applicants?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Recommendations come from all over. They come from the county exec's office, they come from members on the board, they come from members of the industry.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Uh-huh.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Right now, I've been speaking with a member of a company called Long Island Power Solutions, another local solar company, about the possibility of their master electrician coming on board.

**LEG. CILMI:**

What do you look at when you're vetting applicants from this board, in particular when you're vetting applicants with the mindset that you want to have somebody from the solar industry represented?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

They would have to have extensive experience in the solar industry. We're not just going to take somebody that's got a home improvement license and started a solar business two years ago.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Right.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

I would think it would be sort of along the lines of what we take for our electrical experience. I believe it's 7 years of industry experience in the last 10 to start. I would look at any organizations that they might belong to, whether it be local or national in terms of the solar industry.

**LEG. CILMI:**

The concerns that Mr. MacLeod expressed, has he expressed them to the department?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Yes.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Are you openly speaking with him about those concerns?

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

The commissioner and I have met with him, and he was one of the resumes that we were considering for the open spot on the board.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Okay. Fair enough. I'll withdraw my tabling motion madame chair.

**DIRECTOR ANDREWS:**

Anybody else, any questions?

**LEG. ANKER:**

Not yet. We have a second. Legislator Krupski seconded. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Excused: Stern)**

IR 1499, Approving the reappointment of Robert Kohlmeyer as a member of the Suffolk County Electrical Licensing Board (County Executive). We have a motion. I'll second it. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Excused: Stern)**

**IR 1500, Approving the reappointment of Robert Ritter as a member of the Suffolk County Home Improvement Contracting Board (County Executive).** I'll make a motion to approve. We have a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? Motion carries. **Approved (VOTE: 4-0-0-1, Excused: Stern).**

I see no further business. We are adjourned.

I'm just going to reopen one more time. I just wanted to mention that Legislator Stern has an excused absence. We will now go back and adjourn this meeting.

(The meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.)