

Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation
Minutes of January 11, 2007
at Meadow Edge, West Sayville

**BOARD MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Ray Corwin	Chairman, Member at Large
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gil Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Aurelio Colina	Vice Chairman, Town of Southampton
Gregory Dawson	Trustee, Town of Islip
John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT:

Scott Hilary	Trustee, town of Southold
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
Todd Stebbins	Member of the Board
Vacant	Member of the Board
Vacant	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island

**PARKS
DEPARTMENT:**

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
Tracey Bellone	Deputy Commissioner
William Sickles	Senior Parks Superintendent
David Brewer	Chief - Parks Police
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
Nick Gibbons	Senior Environmental Analyst
Tom Hroncich	Marketing Specialist
Ann Rothenberg	Assistant to the Commissioner

GUESTS:

Thomas Isles	Director, Planning Department
Dan Gulizio	Deputy Director, Planning Department
Jennifer Kohn	Assistant County Attorney
Lauretta Fischer	Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning Department
Pat Zielenski	Director - Real Property Acquisition &

Janet Longo	Management. Div. Dept of Env. & Energy Asst. to the Commissioner, Dept. of Env. & Energy
Barbara LoMoriello	Representing Presiding Officer William Lindsay

Chairman Corwin opened the meeting.

PUBLIC PORTION

There were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF DECEMBER 14, 2006

Page 2 – Second to the last sentence – change Trustee Cardillo to Trustee Olsen.

Page 9 – Second line – change a number of to 300.

Page 12 – Thirteenth line – change Trustee to Trustee Colina.

A motion to accept the minutes as amended was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Fritz. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE

Tom Isles proposed two acquisitions.

Saw Mill Creek – Patterson Property, Riverhead, Town of Riverhead

Acquisition of 2.5 acres in Riverhead which are summarized on the distributed aerial photographs distributed and outlined in red ink. This parcel was included in Master List One going back to 2004. This parcel conforms to the County's Open Space criteria in terms of preservation of this watershed. This acquisition is proposed under the County's Multifaceted Land Preservation Partnership Program.

A motion to approve proposed acquisition was made by Trustee Cardillo and seconded by Trustee Colina. Unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Emerald Estates – Burr Property, Greenlawn, Town of Huntington

Acquisition of 2.36 acres in Greenlawn which are summarized on the distributed aerial photograph and outlined in red ink. It is proposed for acquisition under the County's Multifaceted Land Preservation Partnership Program.

A motion to approve proposed acquisition was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee Borden. Unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.

Tom Isles: The County Planning Department and the County Department of Environment and Energy have, in the past couple of years, done an annual pilgrimage out into the towns to talk to them about their open space plans and coordinate and prioritize acquisitions. We are going to be doing that in the next couple of weeks.

I'd also like to introduce the new Deputy Director of the Planning Department, Dan Gulizio.

Trustee McKay: I read about the County Executive creating a \$50,000,000 environmental legacy fund. Can you tell us about it?

Tom Isles: The environmental legacy fund just went into effect in January of this year. It's a \$50,000,000 program for open space park and farm land acquisitions. It was included in the County's Capital Budget. The intention of the program is to continue the initiative of protecting open space - farm land and park land. It is founded on the idea that there will be partnerships with the towns and we do want to work with the towns on shaping those priorities.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Park Police Hiring

Commissioner Foley: You all have a copy of Resolution 1361-2006 "Amending the County Policy for Park Police Hiring". This is an amendment to a formula that was passed in 1999 stating that for every additional 500 acres of land a new Park Police Officer should be hired. This amendment excludes from that formula farm land protection because it was determined that there wasn't any Park Police function related to farm land protection. By this altered formula, the number of Parks Police we should have is 52. Another action of the Legislature and County Executive increased our Park Police authorized number of staff to 47 as of January 1st of '07. We have 12 vacancies that will take some time to fill because we have to coordinate with the Academy, which is either in the spring or in the fall. If we fill those 12 vacancies, we'll be up to the authorized level.

Trustee Fritz: Will this have any impact on the land acquisition process going forward?

Commissioner Foley: No.

Chairman Corwin: This question is for the Planning Department/Real Estate Division and the Environment Department – As you go forward and acquire so many acres per year, how many Park Police would be required?

Lauretta Fischer: We will probably need two per year.

Chairman Corwin: It should probably be conveyed to the Legislature that every year the authorized level needs to go up by one or two.

Chief Dave Brewer: If you know anyone who wants to become a Park Police Officer, they need to contact Civil Service. The maximum age limit is 35 years of age. The phone number for Civil Service is 631-853-5500.

Trustee McKay: Are there any female Park Police Officers?

Chief Dave Brewer: Yes, there are four.

Chairman Corwin: Perhaps we should consider putting recruitment data on the County Parks web page.

Forsythe Meadows

As directed by the Trustees, the minutes from past meetings relative to Forsythe Meadows were sent to Brookhaven Planning with a copy to Gloria Rocchio.

Dogs/Leashes

Commissioner Foley: Based on the Trustees words of support, Park Police have started a program of visiting places where unleashed dogs are prevalent. We are verbally warning people that their dog must be leashed on Suffolk County parkland. That will go on for 10 days and then the Park Police will start writing tickets.

Fishing Pier

Trustee Fritz: Is there any way to push the Corps of Engineers regarding the fishing pier?

Commissioner Foley: If there was, we would have done it. We won't forget it.

Naming Committee

Trustee McKay: Is there a representative from the Parks Department on the Naming Committee?

Commissioner Foley: It's not in the legislation, but the County Executive's office has asked us to name someone to work with them on a continuing basis.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Corwin: As a continuation from the last meeting regarding the request from the Suffolk County Parks Foundation, Jay Miller's request.....

Jennifer Kohn: The Law Department is reviewing the legality of how the Parks Foundation was set up. There are potential legal issues there and the County Attorney has asked that you hold off on discussions.

Chairman Corwin: Can you be more specific on the legal issues.

Jennifer Kohn: No, I'm sorry I can't.

Chairman Corwin: Can you please keep the Commissioner and Tom Hroncich informed on this so the rest of us can hear about this?

OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS

Trustee Fritz: Regarding the canoe launch at Carmans River – Do people who rent canoes on Montauk Highway take their canoes and launch them? Is there a concession?

Bill Sickles: We did have a concession, but they are not there now. I'm not aware of how, when people rent a canoe from Carmans River Canoe whether they can actually take them to the river or Carmans River Canoe brings one up to Yaphank Avenue and puts it in the water for them. It's not monitored.

Commissioner Foley: We are looking at the whole Parks system to determine opportunities for expanding kayak and canoe launch areas.

Trustee McKay: If Carmans River Canoe is putting canoes on the river, it seems to me he should have an agreement with the county. He should have insurance and I think it should be monitored.

Trustee Fritz: I think that due to the popularity of canoes and kayaks and the fragility of the Carmans River, it's something that is going to have to be monitored. I was told that the Great South Bay Audubon had a Board meeting and they were going to bring up the idea of a proposal to get a grant for plantings along the river. Do they have to say where they are going to put the plantings?

Commissioner Foley: I would prefer that they come to me.

Trustee White: I went past Third House yesterday. It looks beautiful. Is there any update on CEQ vs. GATR site?

Commissioner Foley: We asked them for all their questions in writing. Because we are having our Trustees meeting a week earlier, we have not received them yet.

Trustee Colina: What is happening with the equestrian issue at Sears Bellows and the sub set of two others that flow from that – Southaven and Deep Hollow Ranch?

Commissioner Foley: I'll talk about Deep Hollow first – there's essentially no change. Sears Bellows remains dormant. It's in the conversation that's revolving around Southaven and Bohemia Equestrian Center and the equestrian community's desire to have an equestrian facility on a grander scale than Suffolk County has had before. That's defined to some degree by having a larger indoor arena than currently exists at Southaven, having a number of outdoor show rings, and they talk about it in various phases. Some of those phases include an adjoining campground for people who come in from out-of-state to show horses and an indoor practice arena for polo.

Colleen Hofmeister: They also would like a sheltered practice ring that would be aside from an indoor arena.

Commissioner Foley: The conversations are wide ranging, looking at many possibilities, and we're sorting all this out. At Sears Bellows and Southaven we have to work with the Pine Barrens Commission on any change to the property and development of it. We're getting a better sense of what people are looking for in a facility. Sears Bellows is least likely of those three places to be the home for this large equestrian facility because it's more easterly than the others. Out of these discussions and ultimate decision, there will be some new equestrian use for Sears Bellows.

Trustee Colina: We know the history of Sears Bellows and it hasn't been terribly rewarding. The Legislature put \$500,000 in to develop the facility at Southaven. I don't think there's an equestrian future at Sears Bellows. You mention three different centers. I don't think there's enough equestrian activity to warrant three different centers. I think that by narrowing our focus, we could do a better job in a more comprehensive way.

Commissioner Foley: I don't disagree with that and I think we ultimately will, but I'm not ready to eliminate any possibilities yet. There will be some type of equestrian activity at Sears Bellows even if it's just a people trailering in horses and riding the

trails.

Trustee Cardillo: The River Club property was supposed to be closed by 12/31/06. Did that happen?

Lauretta Fischer: It's not closed yet, but it will be closed soon. We're in contract.

Chairman Corwin: The Commissioner is passing around photos of Third House for your education.

DATE AND LOCATION OF NEXT MEETING

The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held on Thursday, February 15, 2007 at 1:00 PM at Meadowedge. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon.

The motion to adjourn was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Borden. Motion approved unanimously by a vote 8-0-0.

Minutes submitted by Ann Rothenberg.