

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2008
MEADOWEDGE, WEST SAYVILLE**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gil Cardillo	Vice Chairman, Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Ray Corwin	Member at Large
Gregory Dawson	Trustee, Town of Islip
John Fritz	Chairman, Trustee, Town of Babylon
Scott Hilary	Trustee, Town of Southold
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Bill Shilling	Member of the Board
Todd Stebbins	Member of the Board

ABSENT

Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

PARKS DEPARTMENT

John W. Pavacic	Commissioner
William B. Sickles	Sr. Superintendent of Parks
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Tom Hroncich	Director, Parks Foundation
Terry Maccarone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Ann Rothenberg	Assistant to the Commissioner
Karen Summers-Solinas	Senior Accountant

GUESTS

Lauretta Fischer	Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning Department
Janet Longo	Deputy Director, Real Property Acquisitions and Management
Roger Podd	County Attorney's Office
Thomas Ryan	Office of Legislator Viloría-Fisher
Legislator Jay Schneiderman	Suffolk County Legislature
Legislator Vivian Viloría-Fisher	Suffolk County Legislature

Chairman Fritz called the meeting to order. The Chairman welcomed Legislator Viloría-Fisher and Legislator Schneiderman and announced that William Shilling is replacing Terry Pearsall on the Board of Trustees.

PUBLIC PORTION

Steve Jendricks commented on access to Smith Point Park at the east end of the beach. He said Parks put in an eastern campsite and blocked off access to Burma Road which is the traditional entrance to the beach (if fishermen can't go down the first cut, which is the only cut they have). When he drives to the beach at 3:00 AM in the morning, he cannot get access to the beach. The fishermen all have night fishing

permits, but can't get out there to use the beach. They would like to be able to get around the eastern campsite only when the first cut is closed. Mr. Jendricks would also like to see three parking spots along Burma Road for duck hunting. He also reported that people at the eastern campsite are walking to the bathing beach down the first cut which is a safety hazard.

Commissioner Pavacic reported that Parks is presently investigating alternative access. He hopes to have a response by the next Trustees meeting. Bill Sickles reported Parks put in pedestrian access along one side of cut one with two rows of snow fence with signs directing pedestrians to walk through that fenced corridor. This way the vehicles can still traverse cut one.

Thomas Jones, Suffolk Committee for Camping – Mr. Jones expressed his concerns about one of the campsites blocking the entrance to the road they want access to. If Parks removes that one campsite, that puts the very next campsite in close proximity to traffic. Safety will be one issue and noise could be another issue. The Suffolk Committee for Camping is opposed to having Burma Road opened at this time.

Commissioner Pavacic said Parks would investigate the situation to determine if there is a feasible solution and report those findings to the Board.

Trustee Olsen asked if an aerial photograph of the area can be brought to the next Trustees meeting for review. Legislator Vioria-Fisher asked Bill Sickles to take her on a field trip of the area.

Arlyne McMullin

Ms. McMullin thanked Commissioner Pavacic, Bill Sickles and Robert Schubert for meeting with them and responding to their requests regarding Blydenburgh Dog Park. Before they could get out a thank you letter, the issues were being taken care of. There are 3 or 4 new fences, the parking lot is going to be taken care of, the water fountains are being taken care of..... "We couldn't ask for more care and concern in solving our problems. Thank you very much."

Debra Kuhlmann discussed horse back riding at Cathedral Pines. Last year people on horseback were turned away even though they had permits. Ms. Kuhlmann spoke with Joe Sblendoria a few weeks ago and was told they could ride in the park, but to please stay on the main trail and off the bike trails. Yesterday she went to get her park pass and while they sold her a pass, she was informed she couldn't ride her horse at the park until there are designated horseback riding trails.

Bill Sickles responded that Parks is looking at alternatives for setting up another series of horseback riding trails. He reported the information she received was inaccurate – the park is open and it's listed as a horseback riding park. He will call the park tomorrow to make sure that everyone has that information.

Ms. Kuhlmann said multiple users of this park are local residents who live in areas surrounding the park and usually come into the park through trails close to their homes onto trails not owned by Parks, but connect to Parks trails.

Bill Sickles responded that Parks does not support this. He feels there should be a designated beginning and end to the horseback riding trails. There have been erosion issues and other problems of that sort at other County parks where riders come into the park through trails close to their homes. Parks would prefer a designated set of bridle paths that they are familiar with and can maintain.

Ginny Munger-Kahn thanked Commissioner Pavacic for agreeing to meet with L.I. Dog regarding the situation at Coindre Hall. Legislator Cooper brokered this meeting and will also participate. They are

looking forward to this meeting to talk about a solution at Coindre Hall that will meet the needs the all the involved parties.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 21st, 2008

Under “Chairman’s Report” – first paragraph – change *dune buggies* to “legitimate off-road vehicles”.

Under “Round Table” – second paragraph – change *new bathroom facilities* to “new building”.

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Chairman Fritz and seconded by Trustee Corwin. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE

Lauretta Fischer proposed one acquisition. Colored site map was distributed describing the property.

Crab Creek – Judith C. & Howard Brandenstein Property

The acquisition of 12.67 acres in Shelter Island, Town of Shelter Island. This will be a 50/50 partnership acquisition with the Town of Shelter Island and will be acquired under the Multifaceted Land Preservation Program – Open Space Preservation.

A motion to approve this acquisition was made by Cardillo and seconded by Trustee Borden. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT

Commissioner Pavacic reported on the following:

Smith Point Fishing Pier

Three bids were received from DPW. Two of the bidders did not meet all of the qualifications and the third bidder, who was the highest bidder, came in above the projected cost. Parks asked DPW see if they could negotiate that price down, and they have. The Commissioner will obtain more information for the next Trustees meeting.

Indian Island

There’s a disagreement between Parks and the Town of Riverhead regarding Indian Island Golf Course. There is a new concessionaire in there and we’re trying to work with the town to resolve their concerns. The golf course is open, however the driving range is not open at this time because there’s some work that has to be done there by the new concessionaire and the town has some issues which we are trying to resolve.

Montauk Campgrounds

After the last Trustees meeting, the Parks Dept. had a meeting out at Montauk with Chairman Fritz, Trustee White, as well as camping organizations, surfcasters, Concerned Citizens of Montauk and other civic groups in the area. We looked at a proposed reserved campground contingency area behind the dunes near the outer beach camping area. The concept is that when the outer beach has to be partially closed to camping due to storms and high tides, and perhaps even evacuated, that this area could serve as a reserve area instead of having to send these people back to their homes. In addition, in times of extreme high usage, i.e. holiday weekends, this area could be used to supplement the areas out on the outer beach.

We could have up to 200 campsites there and this would be included in that number. The Commissioner reported he is presently reviewing the Master Plan, including the initial Draft Master Plan and some other information. At the April meeting he will put forth a proposal and ask the Trustees to review, consider and vote on that proposal.

Legislator Schneiderman asked if there was a sense that the citizens group would support this project if it was in conformity with the Master Plan or are they trying to redo the Master Plan.

Commissioner Pavacic responded there was a concern about a precedent for utilizing that area, however in the first draft of the Master Plan it was an area that was well described. The adopted Master Plan doesn't have as much explicit language regarding that specific area, but what it did do was set a ceiling on the total number of campsites at 200 and Parks is not near that number. The Commissioner will discuss this issue at the April Trustees meeting.

Manorville Hills Trail Head

Parks has embarked on creating a more formalized opening into the western portion of the Central Pine Barrens in Manorville. The land has been decimated by illegal ATV use and we would like to use existing cleared areas, do some re-grating, put down gravel and formalize those into parking areas and access areas for people who want to hike or bring in a horse with a horse trailer. We hope to have this ready in time for the busy season.

Mileage Reimbursement for Trustees

The County has set up a centroid system for mileage reimbursement expenses. How the centroid system works is that a geographical location is picked and the mileage is started from that centroid measuring point. We have asked Audit and Control to set up centriods for the more prominent Parks to assist with the mileage discrepancy. The second issue is timing of the mileage reports.

Karen Summers reported that Audit and Control uses the centroid mileage chart when calculating Trustees mileage. If the Trustee's odometer or Mapquest numbers were different from the County centroid mileage chart, Audit and Control will adjust to centroid mileage chart. County employees are required to fill out mileage vouchers every three months. Because the Trustees aren't employees, that rule has been relaxed. Parks problem is that if they don't receive them within the calendar year, they are forced to pay them out of a different year's operating fund. The Budget Office has requested that we ask the Trustees to submit their mileage quarterly. Parks is going to request that we start this in 2009 because the 2008 budget has been used up. Parks also requests that the Trustees submit their 2008 mileage vouchers in early January of 2009. After that, the Budget Office requests that Trustees submit vouchers quarterly.

Commissioner Pavacic suggested a training session to show Trustees how to read centroid charts and encouraged Trustees to contact Karen Summers or John McKinney if they have any questions. If it would be helpful, the next time there is a meeting in West Sayville we could set up an instructional demonstration after the meeting. The most important message is that the mileage reimbursements be submitted in a timely fashion.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

GATR Site

Legislator Schneiderman thanked meeting attendees for their efforts in getting permission to allow the Fire Department use of the GATR site for their 911 communications. He asked if there would be any revenues as a result.

Commissioner Pavacic responded there are provisions for payment of revenue to the County.

Third House

Legislator Schneiderman asked about the status of Third House.

Commissioner Pavacic reported that DPW has just issued a certificate of occupancy. The second floor and a large section of the first floor were renovated. The Park office will be moving into that location over the next few months.

Bill Sickles said the certificate of occupancy is not for the full use of the facility. It's for the Park offices and meetings up to approximately 15 people.

Legislator Schneiderman said we need to develop a long term strategy for the completion of this project and he believes more funds will be needed to do so. He said how the upstairs floor is configured should tie in with how the facility will be used.

House in Westhampton Dunes

Legislator Schneiderman asked if the house that the County owns (by tax default) is going to be torn down. It's a visual blight and public safety issue.

Commissioner Pavacic responded that Parks is proceeding with the demolition. Asbestos and lead paint removal would have to occur first. Parks may also need to obtain DEC permits because a large portion of the house is located within a title wetland. The longer term strategy is to remove everything except the deck because it could serve as a wildlife and bird observation platform.

Legislator Schneiderman said he doesn't think the current deck could serve in that capacity and that there is a capital project to build a walkway. He has liability concerns and recommends the whole house be demolished.

Chairman Fritz said that right now the residents have access to Cove Road. If you eliminate that house and close off that strip of county owned property from Dune Road to the bay, there's no access for county residents to get to the bay.

Commissioner Pavacic responded that the current driveway for that house could provide access to that area. The area would be turned into an off-road parking area off of Dune Road.

Vacant Houses

Legislator Schneiderman said he was concerned about the number of vacant houses within the parks. He understands that one of the issues is that pricing may be preventing them from being rented. He would like Parks Trustees to revisit this issue and as the houses are appraised some of the factors that may lower the property values (i.e. property in a remote area, older structure, may come with job obligations, etc.,) should be taken into consideration.

Commissioner Pavacic responded that Parks is already looking into this issue. Recently there was an additional rent increase that went into effect the beginning of the month. Presently, half of the rental units are vacant. The Suffolk County Historic Trust and CEQ have expressed their concerns regarding vacancies. Parks is looking into models that are utilized in county parks and some of the towns for housing of people who also act as stewards of both the building that they are living in and the grounds surrounding them. We may be looking at doing an amendment to the county law to account for this need and address the vacancy issue we now have.

Northwest Creek

Legislator Schneiderman asked about issues pertaining to access, moorings and kayak storage – has there been any resolution?

Commissioner Pavacic said the East Hampton Trustees Clerk sent a letter asking for an increase in the number of boats that can be stored there. It does not appear we can honor their request because of the environmental constraints and other factors. There's also an issue about how much access is given to county residents as opposed to town residents.

Legislator Schneiderman asked about the hours of operation.

Bill Sickles responded that the gate is opened from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM daily. Those to wish to drive through that gate and up to the cove area require off-road, four wheel drive vehicles and would have to purchase a Suffolk County Park Off-Road Vehicle Permit. After that point, it's all foot access only.

FINS Meeting

Chairman Fritz asked for a report on the FINS meeting that was held in Patchogue.

Commissioner Pavacic responded the meeting was rather open ended with approximately 30 to 40 attendees. What this entails is the beach nourishment proposals to put sand back onto both Smith Point and the private communities in Fire Island. Smith Point is within the Fire Island National Seashore so it's under federal jurisdiction as well as state jurisdiction. The Fire Island National Seashore was chosen as the lead agency to oversee the environmental portion. This meeting was a scoping meeting to ask the public and interested parties what they believe should be covered in the environmental impact assessment for both the work at Smith Point as well as the private communities. There weren't too many questions regarding Smith Point. Most people are in favor of us trying to replenish the sand there. Most of the concerns were from residents of the Fire Island community about whether the work would be allowed by the federal government.

The proposal for the county is to dredge Moriches Inlet and pump that sand onto the beaches in several hot spots that have been eroded. The county is going to be reimbursed by FEMA for that work for up to 10 million dollars for both beach nourishment work at Smith Point and Cupsogue. Once we get all the permits in place the work to dredge Moriches Inlet can begin around October 1st of this year.

ROUND TABLE

Tom Hroncich reported Earth Day will be April 20th at Indian Island County Park. He encouraged all the Trustees to come and enjoy. There are more corporate sponsors than last year which is a little bit easier to get now that the Foundation has their 501C3 status. The next board meeting will be in April. The Foundation is still recruiting Board members.

Ray Corwin asked if the Capital Budget approval will be on the agenda for the April Trustees meeting.

Commissioner Pavacic replied it would be included on the agenda.

Chairman Fritz announced the next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 17, 2008 at Timber Point Country Club in Great River.

A motion to adjourn was made by Trustee Stebbins and seconded by Trustee Hilary. Unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.