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Public Hearing

Suffolk County Wide Senior Citizen's

Task Force

May 24th, 2007

HELD AT:

Suffolk County Community College
Selden Campus
Selden, New York

2 CHAIRMAN STERN: Good morning. Welcome to
3 the, I guess we're going to call it the third day,
4 but actually the fourth session of the Suffolk
5 County Wide Senior Citizens Task Force. Before we
6 begin, I'm going to ask everybody to please rise.
7 We are in an alternate setting today. We're going
8 to have to deal with sound. We're going to have
9 to deal with lights, and we're also going to have
10 to deal with no flag. So, instead of a pledge,
11 I'm going to ask everybody to join us in just
12 taking one moment of silence as we keep everyone
13 of our brave men and women in the military in our
14 thoughts and prayers [MOMENT OF SILENCE]. Thank
15 you. So, we are all very pleased to be back, once
16 again, to hear all of the very important things
17 that everybody here has to say today, and to
18 continue listening to some of the wonderful
19 professionals, and some of the seniors of the
20 community, as we continue the process and to
21 formulate a policy on how best to work with our
22 seniors and veterans throughout Suffolk County not
23 only for generations today, but for generations to
24 come. Before we begin, I'm going to ask and you
25 can start on this end. I'm going to have all of

2 the members of the task force introduce
3 themselves.

4 MS. GLASHEEN: Good morning. I'm the
5 Director for Senior Citizens for the Town of
6 Smithtown and I apologize for being late. I was
7 taking the bus.

8 MS. BENNET: Good morning. My name is
9 Karin Bennett. I'm from Shelter Island and
10 represent the Senior Citizens Center.

11 MS. GALLOGY: I'm Carolyn Gallogy. I'm
12 the Chairperson on the Suffolk County Committee
13 Assisting the Aging on the Advisory Board.

14 MR. FRITZ: I'm Gene Fritz and I'm a
15 member of the Office of the Aging and also a
16 consultant with the Department of Health and Human
17 Services in Washington.

18 MR. KERN: I'm Bob Kern. I'm with
19 SAD, Seniors Against Discrimination. I'm one of
20 the associates with the organization.

21 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: I'm Holly Rhodes-Teague,
22 I'm the Director for the Suffolk County Office for
23 the Aging for past ten years.

24 MS. HARTY: Good morning. I'm Sue
25 Harty. I'm the Director of the Town of Huntington

2 Senior Division.

3 MS. MC LAUGHLIN: Good morning. I'm Karen
4 Mc Laughlin. I'm Director of Human Services for
5 the Town of Southold.

6 MR. HALUCHA: I'm the Chief Planner of
7 Human Services, Town of East Hampton.

8 MS. GIACOIA: I'm Pam Giacoia, Director
9 of Senior Services, for the Town of Southampton.

10 MR. MALETTA: I'm retired and represent
11 Brookhaven Town as a volunteer.

12 MS. BARONE: Maryann Barone from
13 Bohemia, concerned senior, representing Presiding
14 Officer Lindsay.

15 CHAIRMAN STERN: Good morning everybody.
16 Let me also acknowledge the presence the of
17 Director of Senior Citizen Affairs for the Town of
18 Brookhaven, Donna Bonacci, is with us today. Good
19 morning. My name is Steven Stern. I am the
20 Suffolk County Legislator representing the 16th
21 Legislative District which encompasses parts of
22 Huntington and Babylon. It is also my great
23 privilege to serve as the Chairman of
24 Legislature's Committee on Veterans and Seniors
25 and it is a responsibility that I take very, very

2 seriously, as anybody here in the audience, or
3 that certainly on the task force knows, that
4 working with, and behalf of seniors throughout
5 Suffolk County really has been my passion and my
6 commitment for so many years.

7 I always begin these sessions telling just a short
8 story. I'm a coach in my son's Little League
9 team. Every game, every game, there will always
10 be a parent that comes up to me and says, you
11 know, this is really the only game that my kid's
12 grandparents are going to get to see. Can you bat
13 my son up a little bit in the order, can you put
14 my daughter out on the pitcher's mount, because
15 this is really the only opportunity that his or
16 her grandparents are going to be here to see them
17 play. We'll get into talking about why that is.
18 There are so many situations where they'll tell
19 me, well grandparents, they left New York many
20 years ago in pursuit of the retired life style and
21 wanted to retire with palm trees and play eighteen
22 holes of golf everyday. Of course, that's great.
23 But many more tell me, as we all know, that the
24 reason why they left Long Island is that they are
25 in search of a lower cost of living, and higher

2 quality of life in their later years. Whatever
3 the reason that might be. But unfortunately,
4 that's the case, and that's wrong, not just from
5 the prospective of our seniors, but this is very
6 much a family issue. No longer do we have the
7 situation like I grew up with where my
8 grandparents were close to home, close to home
9 geographically and much closer to us as a family.
10 Unfortunately, we no longer see that. In fact I
11 was giving a speech, a presentation, to a group of
12 high school seniors the other day, and I asked
13 them, how many of you get to spend that kind of
14 quality time with your grandparents. Where do
15 they live? Almost all of them raised their hands
16 when I asked the question, how many of their
17 grandparents lived out of state. That's the
18 situation, and the coming age, where we would know
19 that unfortunately that's only going to present
20 greater challenges for us, for us as a community
21 and certainly for us at every level of government.
22 And so we created the County Wide Suffolk County
23 Senior Citizen Task Force to address, in many
24 ways, for the first time in a coordinated way
25 between various levels of government because we

2 know that so many issues aren't just Federal
3 issues, aren't just State, County or Town issues.
4 The only way, really, to be able to provide the
5 best quality services or quality of life for our
6 seniors in our area is to do it in a coordinated
7 way. You heard that the divisions creating this
8 task force was really to have not just policy
9 makers, elected officials, but those
10 representatives of the various towns throughout
11 Suffolk County to tell us all the good they do
12 with the towns, what kind of kind of system they
13 use from other models of government. It's in many
14 ways for the first time to try and come up with a
15 coordinated effort among all of the ten towns so
16 that we can learn from each other and provide a
17 more seamless and coordinated set of services for
18 those who need services in one town and might have
19 to seek services in another town. They may not be
20 able to make use of town services just because,
21 ultimately because, the service that they need
22 just happens to be on the other side of some
23 arbitrary line. The days of divisions among the
24 towns needs to come to an end. We need to take a
25 much more regional approach, in so many issues

2 here in Suffolk County but certainly we want to
3 provide the best in quality services to our
4 seniors. You may have heard me say this before,
5 but the purpose of this task force is examine
6 critical issues like access to affordable housing,
7 access to public transportation, access to long
8 term care, particularly within a community where
9 so many seniors want to remain and age in place.
10 I say this all the time, that in all of my years
11 in practice and years of involvement, and working
12 with seniors and disabled, never once have I ever
13 heard someone say that they'd rather receive the
14 important care that they need in a nursing home
15 rather than at home, the home that they loved and
16 the community that they helped build. So, really
17 the purpose of this task force is to ask the very
18 simple question, is it good to go old in Suffolk
19 County? Many say yes and will never leave. Many
20 say, unfortunately, perhaps that the answer might
21 be no. At the end of this process, after all of
22 the public hearings and testimony, after all of
23 the review of the all of the written testimony of
24 all of the wonderful professionals here and
25 throughout the nation, we will get to work on

2 drafting our reporting and come up with concrete
3 legislative and executive things that can and
4 should be implemented at the County level at the
5 Town level, and working much more closely with our
6 State and Federal representatives, so that along
7 the way, ultimately, the answer to that question
8 will be yes. With that, we will get started on
9 the public portion and start to hear testimony.
10 First of all, we're all going to use the podium
11 and we were told by our stenographer today that we
12 won't need a microphone. The acoustics are fine
13 and we're close together. Walk up the steps and
14 come down and along the ramp rather than having to
15 climb up on the stairs. Again, our apologies for
16 our alternative location today. The first speaker
17 this morning, our friend, Laurette Mulry, Suffolk
18 County Legal Aid Society. As always, we always
19 welcome Laurette.

20 MS. MULRY: Good morning. My name
21 is Laurette Mulry. I'm an attorney with the Legal
22 Aid Society for Suffolk County. I work with
23 senior citizens division there. I'm very, very
24 pleased and honored to be here, again, to speak
25 about the issues that we believe are impacting our

2 counties' seniors, and Legal Aid, and are
3 certainly affecting their quality of life. Last I
4 spoke, I was out in Riverhead at previous
5 meetings, and I talked about several issues
6 including mobile home ownership and mobile home
7 ownership in today's day and market. I also
8 talked about mortgage fraud cases. I talked about
9 credit card debt and problems with that and talked
10 about restraining notices that are negatively
11 effecting our seniors who are on a fixed income
12 anyway, that are not being able to access their
13 funds when they need to. I'm going to touch upon
14 the follow up issues again, just to follow up.
15 I'd like to start with an issue that's new and
16 that would be the senior citizen real property tax
17 exemption and that is a statutory lender, under
18 real property law, Article 467 that affords a
19 senior, qualified as sixty-five years or older,
20 for their principle residence an exemption up to
21 fifty percent of the assessed evaluation. That is
22 a substantial exemption and it is a wonderful tool
23 to allow seniors to grow old in his or her home in
24 Suffolk County. That is one of the tax exemptions
25 that we'd like to advise our clients that they can

2 take advantage of if they are eligible. There is
3 an income means tax. The one thing I'd like to
4 point out there is that there is a lack of notice
5 for the eligibility for this particular exemption,
6 because not only does it benefit seniors who are
7 sixty-five and older but it is also available to
8 disabled individuals who are under sixty-five, who
9 have a Social Security Disability or a
10 Supplemental Security Income. I'd like to commend
11 the Suffolk County Office for the Aging because
12 they do put out a benefits check list that the
13 applicant's and case workers can use in working
14 with the seniors. It does include a section that
15 talks about the property tax exemption and it does
16 include, under the eligibility checklist, for
17 those who are under sixty-five and have S.S.D. or
18 S.S.I. So, at least the information is getting out
19 to those individuals that are accessing case
20 workers for the office of the aging. I think
21 there are other avenues that perhaps this task
22 force could investigate, to get the notice out
23 there to these individuals who would otherwise be
24 eligible, such as notices in our Department of
25 Social Services Offices, or notices coming out of

2 the Town Supervisors offices or the Tax
3 Accessors's office. That's one area that we do
4 feel is important because as you spoke about
5 earlier, all of us here want to keep our seniors
6 in the least restrictive environment available to
7 them for as long as possible, and keep them an
8 active part of the community, and independent for
9 as long as possible. Certainly, this is one of
10 the tools that would allow them that. I'd like to
11 revisit the issue of mobile home ownership and as
12 I talked about earlier, there is, definitely
13 nobody can deny, a lack of affordable housing,
14 especially for seniors, in Suffolk County. You've
15 heard that time and time again. I'm sure you have
16 as well. Mobile home ownership is a viable option
17 and keep many of the mobile homes for seniors and
18 veterans. Unfortunately, they do not have many of
19 the protections that many of the other individuals
20 in rental housing. For example, if the mobile
21 home operator wants to sell the lot that these
22 mobile homes are on, these individuals are now
23 faced with a situation where here own this home or
24 asset that may be worth ten, twenty, and fifty
25 thousand dollars, they can't up and relocate. Now

2 they have to relocate which is sometimes difficult
3 because once these mobile homes are on the lot for
4 an extended period of time, they become immobile,
5 so to speak, unless you do a lot of work to get
6 them to relocate. Another problem is, because of
7 the dwindling numbers of these lots, of these
8 mobile home parks, there's not a place to relocate
9 them to. At the last meeting we spoke about this
10 issue, what I suggest, what Legal Aid suggests is
11 that this task force would do: One thing I'd like
12 to suggest is a home rule message. A home rule
13 message is a request by the Suffolk County
14 Legislature to New York State Legislature to
15 sponsor to a bill on behalf of all of the
16 residents of all of Suffolk County or in the
17 interest of justice on behalf of a single resident
18 or a group of residents. Certainly a group of
19 mobile home owners would be a group of residents
20 that would be impacted by this law. A home rule
21 message must be sponsored by a Suffolk County
22 Legislator and must be passed by vote, I think, in
23 order to go to up to Albany and then to be
24 sponsored to become a bill. It is a long process,
25 I do agree, but at least it would offer another

2 initiative to get the ball rolling, so to speak,
3 in this area. In fact Legal Aid has participated
4 in this task and has been successful in two home
5 rule messages where there was one enacted to help
6 senior citizens in this county. One such, in
7 which we had a widow, her husband had a life
8 insurance policy through the County and
9 unfortunately the county did not provide the
10 document and being one day late and she was not
11 going to be getting the life insurance policy and
12 because we helped her with drafting a home rule
13 message, she went to each and every Legislator's
14 office and it did finally pass, afforded her the
15 right to that life insurance policy. That
16 impacted one single resident. Here we're
17 suggesting a home rule message that would impact
18 several residents in Suffolk County that own
19 mobile homes. Another instance that I want to
20 bring up here quickly on home rule message is a
21 senior citizen was trying to avail herself of the
22 senior citizen property tax exemption, what had
23 happened was that her husband had abandoned her,
24 some twenty years ago, twenty years prior to
25 trying to get property tax exemption and because

2 she could not prove his income, couldn't provide
3 his residence, so she was being denied it. We
4 drafted a home rule message and it effected change
5 in the law such that now if they can prove they've
6 been abandoned, divorced or separated or a reason
7 the spouse is not in the home, then she was able
8 to use what was available. So, the home rule
9 message would be a way for this task force to ask
10 Legislation to affect change in this area. I'd
11 also like to talk again about the mortgage fraud
12 cases. I have good news on that horizon. If you
13 recall, last time I gave a brief summary to high
14 light some of the egregious acts that are being
15 undertaken out there, and that result in harrowing
16 circumstances for senior citizens including
17 pending foreclosure. In these cases what we did
18 suggest, in January, to the Attorney General's
19 Office, is the formation of a task force to look
20 at predatory lending with regard to mortgages.
21 What I'd like to announce that there was a press
22 release dated May 18th from Elliot Spitzer's
23 office that there was a task force formed on
24 predatory lending and it was call H.A.L.T. which
25 stands for Halt Abusive Lending Transactions. I

2 want to read this, "Lending practices that prey
3 upon the public can not and will not be tolerated.
4 This task force will take a comprehensive look at
5 the prime lending industry and take a look at the
6 lending practices for particularly minorities and
7 elderly." Also press release which he ads that
8 they're going to look and see what is going on out
9 there in the community and effect change. I also
10 wanted to touch upon the credit card debt issue we
11 talked about last time. Again, many had restrained
12 bank accounts even through the assets in that bank
13 account are exempt from execution or judgment.
14 George Roach, is a Managing Attorney at Legal Aid,
15 as many of you know and know you know. He's not
16 here today. He's on a training session through
17 the evening. He will be here for the last
18 meeting on June 28th. He's going to suggest or
19 recommend action be taken and hopefully recommend
20 by your task force for change in that area.
21 Finally, I'd like to talk about auto fraud. It is
22 also suggested that an automobile task force be
23 formed. This is another area where we see that
24 seniors are preyed upon. There are abusive
25 tactics taken by salespeople to sort of coerced

2 individuals to purchase cars or purchase cars that
3 they didn't intend to purchase. In fact I was
4 just with the district court on an individual who
5 purchased a car and many months down the road, now
6 he also has another six thousand dollars in add
7 ons that he never intended including extended
8 warrantees that he didn't take. All of these
9 things really do not cost the dealership maybe a
10 couple of hundred dollars. That's it. They
11 charged him approximately six thousand dollars on
12 the price of that car, in add ons. He did sign
13 papers. That's a problem. You sign a lot of
14 papers in front of you when you sign a deal,
15 signing and signing. He did not have anybody
16 there to help or to assist him with those
17 documents. They're sophisticated documents. Now
18 he has a warrantee that he really does not need.
19 The manufacturers warrantee covers the car for
20 36,000 miles. It's really duplicative. So he
21 really didn't need that. Now, what we are
22 suggesting -- And in that case we were able to
23 settle the case and get the money back for the
24 individual who showed that he did not have the
25 document in his possession. And because they did

2 provide him with that document, they did not give
3 him the copies of the documents, it showed that he
4 didn't actually agree to it. Even right of
5 rescission, he didn't have knowledge or notice of
6 it. That's what we're suggesting here today that
7 some of these retailers, where they have been
8 found to have the right of rescission, the sixty day
9 right of rescission under the insurance law. So
10 some suggestions to the County Legislator and the
11 New York Legislation are changes in the law to
12 afford greater rights and greater notice rights as
13 well. I know I've taken too much of your time.
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRMAN STERN: What would, if you have
16 given any thought to it, what would a home rule
17 message call for regarding mobile homes?

18 MS. MULRY: Good question. I'd like
19 to see a right of first refusal for mobile
20 homeowners. This is a statute in many other
21 states Florida and California, and has been a
22 great success, because it allows the mobile home
23 owners to unite and try to come up with the
24 finances so that they can purchase the lots
25 themselves, and they have been successful in other

2 states in doing so. So, the right of first
3 refusal would be paramount, and of course,
4 secondary to that would be relocation fees and
5 greater notice right. After speaking to this very
6 nice gentleman who came up to me, actually going
7 to be presenting later that day, and he was a
8 representative of the Mobile Home Owners
9 Association, and he gave me some documents and
10 information on this. Apparently, there was a bill
11 on this and it died somewhere along the way. He
12 did give me information on this, and I did include
13 it in your packets, and I hope that would be
14 helpful.

15 MS. BARONE: Excuse me. What would
16 the home rule message imply? I live in a mobile
17 park with three hundred and eighty homes. How
18 would that impact all of the people in the park
19 that I live in?

20 MS. MULRY: If the operator decided
21 to sell that facility, if they tried to sell that
22 facility right now, I think it's 30 days notice.

23 MS. BARONE: We signed a one year
24 lease. They have to stick to the year at least.
25 I know the right of refusal is something that

2 we're fighting for. This home rule message is
3 something to new to me. I still don't get the
4 drift of what you're saying.

5 MS. MULRY: The home rule message is
6 the Suffolk County Legislature, an individual
7 Legislator could sponsor an individual. It is a
8 request of the New York State Legislature to
9 amend the law, change the law, bring about a new
10 law, to effect a law. Here what were talking
11 about is affording certain rights to mobile
12 homeowners such are yourself, mobile homeowners.

13 MS. BARONE: Did Joe ask you to come
14 and speak at the Mobile Home Owners Association in
15 Riverhead? I hope you can make it.

16 MS. MULRY: Yes.

17 MS. BARONE: Okay, because I also sit
18 on the Board of Trustees.

19 MS. MULRY: I'm not sure of the
20 gentleman's name.

21 MS. BARONE: It was Joe.

22 MS. MULRY: Okay. I'd be glad to.

23 MR. KERN: One thing I want to say
24 about Legal Aid, everybody wanted to come here to
25 listen to what you heard. One good shot,

2 consultation free, give you all kinds of help,
3 free. Don't be afraid to call them. They want to
4 help.

5 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you.

6 MR. MAC GILVRAY: This is going to be a
7 problem. I have projection problems
8 and a spring cold. I'll do my best. I'd like to
9 thank the task board members for the work they've
10 done. I have a packet for you to read, Legislator
11 Stern, and of course anybody else who would like a
12 copy. If anybody else would like a
13 copy, written testimony, call my office at
14 853-3105. I am the Director of Suffolk County
15 Community Mental Hygiene and my division is
16 responsible for providing and overseeing and
17 contracting communications for mental health,
18 alcohol, substance abuse, and
19 mental retardation and adult services. Much
20 discussion has been given to the
21 projected growth of the older population and
22 especially as it relates to their impact on Social
23 Security, Medicare and affordable housing. What
24 is perhaps not so well known is profound impact
25 the elder have on the mental health system.

2 Although mental illness is not a normal part of
3 aging, it is estimated twenty percent of the aging
4 have a diagnosable mental health disorder.
5 Geriatric Mental Health Alliance gave me that
6 information. Older adults have distinct mental
7 health needs from these traditional services for
8 whom mental health assistants were originally
9 designed. As the elder approaches proactive plans
10 the immediate needs are taking form in
11 Suffolk County. U.S. census has established
12 that the population over sixty-five have growth
13 from thirteen percent to twenty percent, all
14 Americans over the next quarter of a century.
15 In Suffolk County, the population is a little
16 older. Adults over the age of sixty are already
17 comprised of sixty percent of the population.
18 Interestingly, higher ratio at a much greater than
19 twenty-four percent of the population. By the
20 year 2015, these numbers are expected to increase
21 by thirty-seven percent. Suffolk County, in
22 particular, faces unique problems in addressing
23 the needs of the aging population. Called a first
24 suburb, much of Suffolk County was designed for
25 working families due to its proximity of New York

2 City. Built in the age of single family
3 neighbors separated by commercial uses and by many
4 miles and congested highways. Public
5 transportation is limited or inaccessible all
6 together. Access to services for many older
7 adults will become, for many older adults,
8 increasingly inconvenient if not impossible.
9 Current mental health services were designed
10 nearly a half a century ago when Suffolk County
11 was a very young suburb. Today, mental health
12 housing, case management and treatment services
13 are still geared toward a younger clientele.
14 People with long term psychiatric disabilities
15 continue to be expected to go to work or go to a
16 day treatment program, or to work toward
17 independence. For many, these goals may no longer
18 be realistic or for that matter welcome. Mental
19 health disorders that come late in life are
20 anxiety and depressive disorders. These
21 disorders can cause social isolation and
22 inactivity. Disorders involving alcohol
23 dependance and misuse of prescription drugs may
24 also develop later in life.
25 Health problems are more likely to be present as

2 older people which might further exacerbate mental
3 health problems and future limit access to
4 community care. In addition, many older
5 people feel embarrassed or are fearful to seek
6 outside help for mental health issues. They may
7 instead seek help from primary care practitioners
8 or not at all. Mental health services must be
9 designed to meet needs of older adults. They must
10 be made more accessible. The introduction of
11 older adult services and mobile treatment teams
12 would enable older adults to age in place.
13 It's an economical and dignified alternative
14 approach rather than institutionalization. There
15 must be an increase in the number of treatment
16 slots in order to provide for the
17 growing need of services. Training on the
18 unique needs of older adults must be made
19 available for primary care practitioners, mental
20 health professionals, senior center staff and
21 others that come in contact with older adults.
22 Mental health housing services must be geared to
23 include older adults who may never live
24 independently or with the sole support of their
25 families. Suffolk County Division of Mental

2 Hygiene, my division, has been working toward
3 making these services available. Beginning 2005
4 the Geriatric Mental Health Planning Committee,
5 was sworn to study the needs of the aging.
6 The committee is comprised from representatives
7 from the Suffolk County Department of Aging,
8 New York State Office of Mental Health, South
9 Oaks Hospital, Adelphi University and Federation
10 of Organization. The committee held a
11 planning conference called Geriatric Mental
12 Health in Suffolk, preparing for the future. This
13 was held on June 14th of last year. The
14 conference trained sixty-two representatives for
15 mental health and government community service
16 volunteers, on the needs of geriatric
17 mental health recipients in the 21st century. A
18 needs assessment study is being conducted and work
19 being done by Adelphi University Social Mental
20 Health, from a grant from the Long Island
21 Geriatric Foundation. Utilizing the focus
22 format the group will seek to answer questions
23 such as, what type of mental health problems are
24 prevalent in older adults? What barriers
25 providing useful services exist? What

2 intervention would work with adult clients? What
3 additional services will be helpful? The outcome
4 of the study will further direct the program and
5 delivery of appropriate services. Through the
6 passage of 2005 Geriatric Mental Health Act the
7 New York State office of Mental Health offered a
8 gatekeeping program late last fall. The
9 gatekeeping program will be designed to
10 proactively identify at risk older adults in the
11 community, who are not already connected to the
12 services of the system.

13 Additional referral services such as police
14 officers, utility workers and senior center
15 workers will be recruited and be trained to
16 identify older adults older adults who may be in
17 need of services. It has been estimated that over
18 half of the older people who received mental
19 health care, received it from their primary care
20 physicians. This may be more convenient for older
21 adults and less stigmatizing. However, primary
22 care physicians unfortunately, often receive
23 insufficient training in mental health disorders
24 and may attribute psychiatric symptoms to physical
25 disorders. The mental health grant will seek to

2 integrate mental health services into primary care
3 practice and to improve collaboration between
4 providers. It will work in conjunction
5 with and build on gatekeeper program. I just want
6 to mention that Suffolk County was one of the six
7 counties that received the primary care
8 integration grant. We're very happy to receive
9 that, South Oaks Hospital, was the recipient of
10 the grant. South Oaks Hospital is also a member
11 of our task force, and a lot of discussion around
12 what type of services. We're Very happy that New
13 York State acknowledged the work of the geriatric
14 task force. That grant was for \$250,000. A new
15 conference is being planned for this fall,
16 entitled Aging Gracefully. This conference will
17 submit the finding of the research grant studying
18 existing programs such as those that bring senior
19 services to the home and build on the work from
20 the prior conference and work programs. My
21 division will begin work with
22 Holly's division and work toward planning for the
23 older boom. Our senior citizens are a valuable
24 resource in the work force and families and
25 volunteers to the community. Through careful

2 planning and coordination with other county
3 agencies and State government and service
4 providers, my division will work toward assuring
5 that older adults the mental illness have the
6 support and treatment they need in order to lead
7 healthy and normal lives. Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN STERN: Tom, thank you. Thank
9 you for your presentation. One question for you
10 with regard to the grant, the County is seeking to
11 integrate mental health and education providers
12 when it comes to integration of primary care
13 physicians. How, ultimately would
14 that work? And what your ultimately looking to
15 accomplish? The first thing that comes to mind,
16 whether it's myself, children, parents, and even
17 grandparents when going to the doctor, you meet
18 with the primary care physician, nurses, and
19 ultimately you're with your doctor all of two or
20 three minutes. What role do you see the primary
21 care physician playing, with not just the services
22 they have to provide but unfortunately in a faster
23 time. How are they going to be able to take the
24 time and to recognize the expertise that will
25 identify these issues?

2 MR. MAC GILVRAY: Right. I think the
3 reason for the grant in the first place is to
4 acknowledge to the fact family physician or
5 general practitioners in the community are really
6 not trained to begin with on mental health issues.
7 The first issue, the idea that physicians in the
8 community really don't have a lot of knowledge and
9 training in providing and is minuscule for mental
10 health issues. That's the first acknowledgement.
11 Secondly, even if they did, in a managed care
12 world, there are often times when I used to go to
13 my physician he'd spent a lot of
14 time with you. These days, I'm in one room
15 and he's got four patients in another and he goes
16 back and forth. So, we don't seem to
17 get the same sort of care we used to. I think
18 this grant proposal is an acknowledgement on what
19 the grant needs to do. We're going to hire a
20 mental health practitioner and have them available
21 to provide information. A lot of it would be
22 dropping off pamphlets and making them available
23 to the physicians in the community. That part
24 hopefully get results from awareness. So, it's a
25 pilot project. Quite frankly it's on the east end

2 on the North Fork. It's a pilot project and we're
3 looking carefully and we'll be working, looking
4 carefully.

5 MS. GALLOGY: Not only the need for
6 mental health care support to the towns but also
7 that there's other towns. This is a nice
8 proposition, and it was referred to at the last
9 presentation. I'm wondering if you made any
10 attempt, to take it a step further. Is there
11 anyone who can make doctors aware? It
12 seems to me that the gatekeeper portion would
13 touch on some of these other people, people who
14 come in contact with seniors who are beginning to
15 experience mental health problems, not just the
16 workers some have seen. Could there also be some
17 training perhaps from your office, not just for
18 workers in the town but also seniors, people
19 who have access to seniors in the in the
20 retirement communities and in the clubs, ecetera
21 so that they are trained whether they can look for
22 it. And they can always bring it back to the
23 center, to the center directors, and let the
24 center directors be take it from there. They
25 don't have to do anything about it. They can at

2 least say, you know I'm concerned that this person
3 is in the house and no one is ever tending to
4 them anymore, or I never see the person anymore.
5 This is so they don't just sit there in isolation
6 and end up on the front page of Newsday.

7 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: Carol, that was the
8 one gatekeeper program and was supposed to do
9 that with a couple of people, we were fortunate
10 enough in Suffolk County to get a grant --

11 MS. GALLOGY: [INTERPOSING] Where did
12 the money come from?

13 MR. MAC GILVRAVY: It's the Office of
14 Mental Health who is distributing this, the office
15 of the aging. The other thing, South Oaks also
16 received a grant and hope this addresses the issue
17 that you're talking about. We have some
18 agencies that touch on that, for instance I have
19 Federation of Organization. The idea that you
20 really further that notion of getting seniors
21 and provide the training to spread the word.

22 MS. GALLOGY: If that's the only cost,
23 the people should go out and get training. These
24 are volunteers that I'm talking about. It seems
25 to me something we can get behind.

2 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: I see, in the next couple
3 of years, this becoming an issue on the State
4 level. The pilot program is a huge program and
5 finally got money into the pilots. Tom, it's got
6 to be two years when you and I sat and talked and
7 because of people who are on this task force for
8 mental health services, to people who are isolated
9 and not being able to get services to them. Tom
10 and I got together before and fortunately
11 got one of those grants. I think all of the
12 ideas that have come before are finally emerging.
13 I do thank you and your office.

14 MR. MAC GILVRAY: The Office of the
15 Aging are combining our separate resources and
16 bringing together these issues.
17 One of the things that you raised as well,
18 geriatric screening mobile efforts. The
19 money that I get from New York State is to provide
20 services to seriously mentally ill. We used to
21 have a geriatric screening team in Suffolk County
22 and it was operated by the New York State Office
23 of Mental Health. Holly and I were discussing,
24 sometimes the isolation of people
25 living at home. My testimony dictated, it's very

2 important that we simply don't have facilities and
3 agencies where people are expected to come. It's
4 getting workers out to the community and see
5 people that need somebody. It could be like a
6 phone call from a neighbor saying you know I got
7 my neighbor over here, or something's wrong. He's
8 acting different. With State cuts, we've lost
9 that service. We're really talking to reinstitute
10 that sort of the screening team. Our effort, not
11 only through government agencies but community
12 hospitals and people with other professional
13 interests. I was really surprised, and Holly was
14 too, on the responses that we received from the
15 conference and the people who attended the
16 conference, and issues that were raised. It was
17 really kind of enlightening for us, at the same
18 time Legislator Stern, had his task force on all
19 issues and it really kind of dove tailed it
20 together for us. Hopefully the work from our task
21 force and office can feed into your office as
22 well.

23 MS. MC LAUGHLIN: I'd just like to add,
24 that it's nice to meet you Tom. Southold Town is
25 a South Oaks partner in that health integration

2 grant. The exciting thing is that we have
3 partnered with Eastern Long Island
4 Hospital. I think the question that you posed
5 before about really getting the education out
6 there and my understanding is that psychiatrists
7 will be working with local physicians and
8 identifying a lot of the seniors with issues
9 because those professionals will also be available
10 in the senior centers and hopefully in the homes.
11 What we've seen is that seniors much more amenable
12 to seeking mental health services when there's
13 physical problem. It's an easier way to get them
14 to help as you discussed in your earlier
15 testimony. The way the services are now is that
16 it's geared to a younger age group. Not something
17 seniors are accustomed to availing services
18 or not as familiar with it, and I'm kind of
19 excited about doing that. We'll keep everyone
20 posted.

21 MR. MAC GILVRAY: Nice to meet you also.
22 Your name was mentioned as someone doing
23 great things and like to also replicate this in
24 other parts of Suffolk County.

25 MR. GALLOGY: By whom do we find

2 out about the conference in the fall? I didn't
3 know about the last conference.

4 MR. MAC GILVRAY: Call my office or
5 Holly's office. Again, if people are interested
6 in the conference, you can call my office at
7 853-3105. Not just about the conference but any
8 other issues that may be of interest to you in the
9 mental health area.

10 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. Thank you so
11 much for being with us today. Audience, this is a
12 public hearing and there's a certain format that
13 we have to follow because it's going on the
14 record.

15 MR. SHINNICK: Bob Shinnick, Director of
16 Transportation Operations, Transportation Division
17 of the Suffolk County Department of Public Works.
18 Thank you, Legislator Stern, particularly for
19 inviting me to be here. It seems here from the
20 placard here that if I haven't gotten the
21 message before, I do now. [INDICATING]
22 It's number one on the hit list, at least for the
23 purpose of this meeting, that's me. Our
24 agency, is a small planning agency. We represent
25 the County, New York Metropolitan Transportation

2 Council. That's a Federally mandated
3 organization that looks at plans for highways,
4 public transportation and other land based
5 transportation to determine whether or not
6 they meet certain criteria for planning for the
7 distribution of Federally funded funds, for public
8 transportation. Long Island Rail Road, bus
9 services, bridges, tunnels, these kinds of things.
10 They are also the county agency that files for
11 Federal grants and administration and executes
12 these grants. Those are the monies used by bus
13 shelters and things that go with the public
14 transportation system. We are also the agency
15 responsible for planning and administrating
16 county buses. Primarily, Suffolk
17 County Transit, we are the largest transportation
18 system within Suffolk, all though there are buses
19 operated by the Village of Patchogue and Town of
20 Huntington. They do a very good job. There are
21 Nassau County buses that extend partially through
22 Suffolk County. There are really four of us
23 running bus transportation. By far, Suffolk
24 County Transit is the largest in the County.
25 The bus system has grown dramatically over the

2 past several years. We have had record ridership.
3 We've done survey's and actually gotten good
4 results and suggestions but clearly not
5 finished. It's a system that extends from
6 Massapequa, Amityville, and Halesite on the west
7 end and all the way to Montauk point and Orient
8 Point. We operate six days a week. Primarily
9 service starts as early as quarter to 5:00 in the
10 morning, usually more likely at 6:00 or 7:00 a.m.
11 and continues until 10:00 at night, but typically
12 ends at 8:00 or 8:30. There are timeframe issues
13 when people more typically in need of the
14 services. Most operate where there are
15 seasonality issues when you have thirty minute
16 service and we need fifteen minute service. Last
17 year, we carried over six million riders. That
18 translates to twenty-two thousand people a day,
19 during the week, which is good numbers compared
20 to what we've done in the past. About
21 sixty-three percent of our surveyed are workers
22 going to and from work. Another twelve percent
23 are people going to and from college. So,
24 combined seventy-five percent of our riders are
25 commuters on the buses, generally, at least four

2 days a week. So, there's dependance on the system
3 as well. We've finally arrived as far as being
4 part of the infrastructure where
5 we're being useful. We're not being casual
6 about this. It's something the County is doing.
7 I would imagine it's important for
8 this task force, to understand the ability to get
9 to and from work that they have some opportunity
10 for people who are seniors that need to and want
11 to continue employment somehow. Nine percent of
12 our riders are sixty years of age or older. At
13 one time it was twenty-seven percent. It
14 doesn't mean our seniors have depreciated. We
15 have captured a lot of working people.
16 Ninety percent of the people on buses are in the
17 between sixteen and sixty. They are going to
18 work. They are generally at the lower
19 end of the economic scale. A survey done years
20 ago showed a little less than half of the riders
21 were from households with than \$35,000.00 per
22 year. Some don't have a car available or the
23 means to buy a car. Twenty-two percent of the
24 riders do use it because want to, which is a
25 surprise to me. It's a good system. Out in

2 Suffolk County it's a tough thing to get people
3 out of their cars, which is what our goal is, to
4 build a bus transit system. I realize we're here
5 to talk today about the seniors. We want people
6 who are older on the buses. We need to work to
7 provide people with transportation to and from
8 medical services. All of the other things that
9 makes sense. What happens is that each rider
10 subsidizes the other people. Let's say for the
11 benefit here, something is designed just for
12 senior citizens has a vulnerability on certain
13 days. Bad weather cold or extremely hot, people
14 may not use the services. If it's a student-home
15 situation, students often go to school hiatus and
16 breaks between semesters. They change each
17 semester. There is a rollover. When you have a
18 crossover between different people and different
19 purposes, that's really what we're trying to
20 develop. Now, the system itself, we are
21 undertaking a system analysis that work stage over
22 six months, to analyze the data. When the
23 summer comes, they're going to talk to the public
24 and to get the County to reach out. Legislator
25 Stern we'll you know what schedules are

2 available, and let you know what we're doing.
3 Holly, remember we had a meeting a number of
4 months ago and haven't heard from you. We've had
5 a lot of back office activity,
6 people running numbers, as I have
7 over the summer looking through to fix the system
8 and make it better. What I anticipate to make it
9 better is a recommendation and run the services
10 later in the evening. People want to do social
11 activities after work, and can't get home in time
12 that we have on our current schedules. Some
13 people show up and go earlier. We have no Sunday
14 services. That would be a recommendation. All
15 things cost money. Higher levels of service, once
16 an hour and half hourly. We're probably bringing
17 the bus systems up to thirty minutes. It would
18 give people a greater opportunity to travel.
19 Better when they want don't have very long bus
20 rides. Very important and east Hamptons seven-two
21 miles long. They are longer bus lines
22 than most systems, because we are not own a
23 big County, it's spread out. The closest
24 thing we have to a city out here is a huge magnet
25 for transit and not everyone wants to go there.

2 There will be possibly of modification to the
3 fares that make it more attractive. The current
4 fare is \$1.50, standard fare, seniors sixty and
5 older people with disability are fifty cents.
6 One dollar for students and eighty-five cents to
7 allow people to get on two more buses,
8 in addition to the buses. In addition to the
9 buses, we operate SCAT. SCAT is a transportation
10 reservation service that was put in place for
11 people with disabilities, for people who cannot
12 use the County bus system, regardless whether
13 buses are accessible or not. Accessible in its
14 context means people ins wheelchairs who go on the
15 buses. People who are hearing-impaired, visual
16 impairment, mobility impairments or unable to stay
17 in one place for a long time. They are private
18 services that they are entitled to, complementary
19 use of our system. It's a bureaucrat pass to
20 travel. What that means is that it's a reservation
21 service. A SCAT vehicle will come to the location
22 that person wants to be picked up at, as long as
23 the trip is three quarters of a mile off the bus
24 line, at either end of the trip. And despite,
25 probably, a prevailing opinion that there's not

2 a lot of bus service in Suffolk County, map it
3 out, eighty or ninety percent are within the area
4 that they want to go to. That bus system, SCAT
5 system is growing tremendously. Right now, we're
6 looking at 1,150 trips a day. Last year quarter
7 of million riders. The year before that one
8 hundred and ninety seven thousand and I believe
9 this year we'll reach three hundred. The first
10 year we operated we carried twenty-five thousand
11 riders and last month we carried twenty-five
12 thousand riders. Van driven service, qualified
13 drivers, registered with the system, like
14 to travel. We must give a -- And I don't have a
15 problem with that, it's very expensive,
16 an expensive proposition for people with what.
17 People ask why can't a SCAT carry other groups of
18 people? Get into the details, it's Federal
19 bureaucracy, red tape. Some parts on the
20 transit system carry over to the other system. It
21 makes it difficult to accomplish something. It's
22 a very good idea to coordinate the services, and
23 you may need a task force to do something like
24 that. That's what we do. Two items, something
25 that I'd like to bring up, something, a couple of

2 issues of concern, we do a lot housing complexes,
3 mostly seniors who have used public
4 transportation. We have met with most of the
5 representatives from these places, and where we
6 can put the bus service in. What is happening,
7 the sights become available but not necessary
8 public transportation. People move in and often
9 told something different. They pick up the phone
10 and call, when are you going to come get me.
11 They call the Legislators and Town Councilmen and
12 usually we can do something and oftentimes it's a
13 very, very serious problem.
14 Somebody, I believe, needs to be requiring it at
15 the Town level when site plans are being reviewed
16 not only in consideration of the
17 proximity or planned public transportation. If no
18 public transportation for the residents,
19 definitely do that now. Don't approve --
20 Something to take that vehicle to where they
21 can get a covenant, write it in the paperwork to
22 be able to operate the facility.
23 I would eventually recommend that be considered
24 as something you may look it. The other thing is,
25 and I heard it alluded to before, we can do a lot

2 with public transportation to address the needs of
3 people from sixty years of age, up to seventy or
4 seventy-five. People get older and people need
5 change and buses may not be the solution. You
6 said correctly, people want to stay
7 in their homes. I know that years ago when my
8 parents came out, both my parents were from a City
9 environment. Their history has been knowing about
10 transportation and they used it. I got them
11 enrolled in SCAT, when of age. People like that,
12 not a majority of the senior population are going
13 to see people who are born raised in the suburbs
14 using the buses. When people talk about
15 aging and who rides the public transportation, it
16 may not be as true as it was in the past. The
17 seniors are a solid population, people who resist
18 using something they don't know. I know people
19 who are aware of bus services near them and they
20 won't use the system. It's not part of the
21 culture they came from. Many of these people rely
22 on families, friends and neighbors and that works.
23 For some of them it doesn't. I don't know the
24 answer to things, specific programs perhaps. I
25 don't know. I see that coming. I see a

2 misconception, people I deal with, may not be
3 true. That's my more than three minutes.

4 CHAIRMAN STERN: Very important
5 information. Has there been an analysis done
6 as to why the increase in ridership over the
7 years?

8 MR. SHINNICK: I can only tell you that
9 lot of people, we have had a lot of demographic
10 changes. Many of them are Spanish speaking who
11 just arrived. They don't have a driver's license.
12 They are workers in large numbers. They pay cash
13 everyday. We see them everyday and welcome them
14 on the bus. We have something we've never had
15 before. We have a situation where we have almost
16 too many people on the buses. That was never,
17 ever the case on our bus systems. When the local
18 businesses are hiring people who ride our buses
19 are the people who take the jobs. They are at the
20 lower end of the economic scale. Unfortunately,
21 when the economy tanks, they are also the people
22 will begin losing their jobs. So, it's an
23 economic thing. It's a demographic thing. Three
24 years ago we assigned thirty-three hundred new bus
25 stops. Last time we had newer equipment. If

2 anybody has seen the buses, they look pretty nice.
3 The destination signs are bright. We do not have
4 the problems with the wheelchair lifts not working
5 so well. You may see as you travel through the
6 communities where bus stops are where you had one
7 person or somebody every so often. If you go to
8 Cosco or go to Stop and Shop New, you see those
9 wheelchairs and carts moving around. You see this
10 whole cultural change as well with people with
11 disabilities getting around.

12 CHAIRMAN STERN: One of the things I see
13 that we'd really require is some type of Sunday
14 service when we talk about seniors needing public
15 transportation. It also goes to those that
16 provide services to seniors particularly home
17 health aids. How many times seniors are home
18 alone because the home health aid didn't or
19 couldn't get to them on a particular day because
20 it was a Sunday, because the transportation wasn't
21 provided.

22 MR. SHINNICK: Common issues when
23 you're dealing with transit operations because of
24 the nature of their businesses, they have to go to
25 various locations and do work and leave buses and

2 return accordingly, to get them to the other
3 location
4 without having to go around the world. Because
5 sometimes this changes. You don't know when the
6 bus is coming by, in fifteen minutes, and you're
7 in the middle of what you're doing, and got to get
8 out or otherwise, no other bus for a long time.
9 It's a common problem.

10 CHAIRMAN STERN: You're doing an internal
11 analysis now. Any update on how the county wide
12 analysis, that's going to be done in entire bus
13 system --

14 MR. SHINNICK: [INTERPOSING] That is
15 what I was talking about.

16 CHAIRMAN STERN: Public hearings are going
17 to be coming up?

18 MR. SHINNICK: Probably over the summer.
19 I think that's a very realistic issue. We've got
20 a consultant and they know what they're doing and
21 they're running through all of these numbers.
22 I'll give you a heads up. I would imagine in the
23 fall and maybe towards the later part of the year
24 is when they'll start making recommendations. One
25 of the things that they're going to do is have

2 every bus stop where people are getting on and off
3 the buses, and that data is critical, that
4 they'll be collecting. It's a seasonal issue and
5 has to be done in April or early May or in
6 September or October. This campus, four
7 weeks ago, you couldn't move around because all of
8 the people in there. Now it's empty. Now
9 they've left. We want to capture those students.
10 It's a staffing thing. In the fall, we'll collect
11 that last bit of data for insight. There are
12 pieces of bus lines that should be operated
13 historically, and there are pieces in need of
14 support.

15 MS. GALLOGY: I just want to add to
16 this funding piece. I think that sometimes also,
17 someone, I met someone who relied on the buses to
18 visit her spouse and, on Sundays, can't go.

19 MR. SHINNICK: It is an important issue.
20 We never closed it. What happens when you look
21 at these things, there's a large cost involved.
22 Everybody has roughly the same needs. You have to
23 put in place something on a smaller scale. It's
24 millions of dollars and haven't finished other
25 work. What the study is also going to do is

2 prioritize. We're going to use consultant's
3 expertise.

4 MR. FRITZ: You mentioned the
5 reservation service, how do I take advantage of
6 that?

7 MR. SHINNICK: First thing you need to
8 do is register. It's a Federal process. When
9 you get your registration card from the Suffolk
10 County offices for Handicapped services, that card
11 is good anywhere in the Country, free. You can
12 use that anyplace. You need to qualify under
13 certain criteria. Fundamentally, you have to not
14 be able to use the buses because of the
15 disability. If the bus system is not accessible
16 in a particular area, you qualify because it
17 should have been accessible. Thirdly,
18 when there's a disability with environmental
19 factors that results in you not being able to
20 use the buses.

21 MR. FRITZ: It's not just that you
22 want to go to the doctor and the bus is not
23 accessible?

24 MR. SHINNICK: When you qualify, you can
25 use the service for any purpose you want. As a

2 matter of fact, under Civil Rights Law, there can
3 be no prioritization so that if you'd like to go
4 to the doctor's office and somebody wants to go
5 down to the park. They call first, and even
6 though it's not supposed to happen, they got the
7 ride and there's no more room. They get the ride.
8 They're not allowed to ask. What we do have the
9 ability to is to give what we call a prescription.
10 You can call for a ride for tomorrow. You won't
11 get a ride today if you call today. You can get
12 a ride tomorrow. It's up to seven days out, and
13 that lets you plan your trips and you can make as
14 many trip reservations seven days out. We can
15 also offer prescription for a standing
16 reservation. We do that for people going to
17 college and people going to work. The original
18 purpose of the ADA was to reach out to the
19 community, to bring people with disabilities, to
20 mainstream them more. On that basis, we'd offer
21 prescriptions. Federal regulations also cap how
22 many we give them, they want no more than fifty
23 percent of the trips, during the certain time or
24 period on the prescription, so other people call
25 and they're not going to be told no.

2 MR. FRITZ: One more. Energy.
3 They're talking about hybrid cars.
4 What are they doing as far as the buses?

5 MR. SHINNICK: We have a bid opening
6 on, it was June 13th, and it was put off about
7 three weeks for hybrid buses. We're accepting
8 them as a pilot. A standard transit bus, such as
9 the Suffolk County bus, cost about \$300,000. A
10 hybrid bus costs over a half a million. Until
11 recently, they were very new technology, not
12 proven too well. Now, there has been enough
13 of them sold. We have a phrase that we don't want
14 to be on the bleeding edge of technology. So,
15 let someone else buy it first. We're
16 buying four and we're going to see how they work
17 out. We only get so much money each year. That
18 could help our decision making.

19 MR. FRITZ: In New York City, they're
20 talking about a five year plan, and in five years
21 all taxis and buses will be hybrid.

22 MR. SHINNICK: That plan is all
23 encompassing. It's Parks and transportation, and
24 very aggressive.

25 MR. FRITZ: Maybe the price will

2 come down a bit.

3 MR. SHINNICK: We also want to see that
4 they operate and are maintained properly.

5 MR. FRITZ: Thank you.

6 MR. HALUCHA: I'm wondering what type
7 of collaboration are you involved in now and what
8 would you recommend other organizations?

9 MR. SHINNICK: We have been a member of
10 the whole SEEDS project since its inception.
11 As a matter of fact, I introduced a resolution on
12 behalf the woman in the Town Supervisors's office
13 out in Southold, when SEEDS was just a concept.
14 We authorized funding for that. We still sit on
15 the committee. SEEDS is pretty much wrapped up.
16 It's a local matter and again handled very
17 professionally by the representatives of the
18 Towns and they've done a good job and been there,
19 which is a help. To helps and give guidance.

20 MS. GLASSSHEEN: You said that the Federal
21 Government is going to prioritize where the
22 Federal funding is going to go. With Smithtown,
23 there was a collaboration on replacement buses,
24 how is that going to impact on replacement buses
25 for the Towns if the Federal government is going

2 to prioritize who needs what?

3 MR. SHINNICK: We don't actually
4 prioritize. What we do is make sure they're
5 complying with the Federal regulations. In
6 your case and many of our towns, eight towns
7 funding came, the earmark identified. What we did
8 was we filed a grant application on behalf of the
9 Town and the County and received the buses in our
10 name, and paid for the buses through a
11 contractual relationship with the Town of
12 Smithtown. We were repaid and transfers title to
13 Smithtown. As long as the money is there for a
14 particular project and we can help, we will.
15 There's not much I can do except collaborate and
16 give advice. When it comes to transit we were
17 asked to file a grant and we did.

18 MS. GLASHEEN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thanks so much.

20 MR. BERNSTEIN: Good morning members of
21 the task force and concerned citizens. I'm Ira
22 Bernstein. I'm an advocate for seniors on the
23 Brookhaven senior advisory. A few weeks ago we
24 were at Riverhead, I presented a petition which I
25 have in front me. It has to do with the lack of

2 LIPA's interest in situations on many seniors who
3 are in medical need or disabled, for whatever
4 reason, need to use more electricity to live here
5 on Long Island. I must say, Legislator Stern,
6 that when I first did that, I did not know that
7 the response would be recognized and supported.
8 Well, most of you are young enough to remember the
9 movie, The Miracle on 34th Street. In that movie,
10 they had to prove that Santa Claus existed and
11 thousands and thousands of letters came to the
12 Post Office to somebody called Chris Cringle.
13 Ladies and gentlemen, the response to that
14 petition has been overwhelming. We have thousands
15 of signatures being delivered to the Post Office
16 with thousands of seniors saying that LIPA is out
17 of line and not in fully accord with the Older
18 American's Act to serve the needs of seniors
19 that need relief of electricity. I'm very proud
20 to say that the response has been excellent.
21 We have a person like Steven Stern and Nassau
22 County David Denenberg and working together
23 and accomplished hundreds of thousands of
24 signatures that LIPA will know that we mean
25 business, that seniors want to stay on Long

2 Island. They don't want to turn off
3 their electricity and want to live decent quality
4 of life. We had opposition. One of the problems
5 that we had about two weeks ago -- I grew up
6 with Richard Kessler from LIPA. Now, he presented
7 a check to the Town of Brookhaven for \$25,000
8 to the Town Supervisor showing that they have in
9 effort been trying to make homes energy efficient.
10 That was his main contribution. In the meantime,
11 Steven, he went to David Denenberg's office and
12 warned them to put a gag on this petition.
13 Naturally, I said, uhh, uh. It's freedom of
14 speech. We have a right to put this petition
15 forward. So, he was not successful in getting a
16 gag or getting our efforts squelched. In
17 addition, I've been in touch with LIPA officials,
18 Walter Hoffman, he was the former NY State
19 Department of Aging Commissioner
20 and he later moved from that to the assistant to
21 the executive assistant to LIPA, and they are now
22 saying to me that because of these petitions,
23 we'll talk. We will consider making some
24 adjustments to address the population that you
25 talk about in the petition. So, I'm very

2 thrilled and excited to be able to move forward.
3 Our effort is only halfway done. It is my hope,
4 with your help and others here that are concerned,
5 that we can start to get the LIPA people to
6 realize that they're supposed to help us and not
7 discriminate against us. I'm happy to say that.

8 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you.

9 MR. GALLAGER: My name is Jim Gallager
10 and I'm a member of SAD, Seniors Against
11 Discrimination. Like Bob. What Bob mentioned
12 before about Legal Aid, I had an experience,
13 first experience, that I had a problem that was
14 really causing me odgeda. I called up and spoke
15 to Ms. Mulry and she gave me advice. She told me
16 my rights and responsibilities, gave me a course
17 of action, and because of her help the problem
18 was solved. Anybody got a problem, give them a
19 call. I wrote something down, but I had to
20 say that first. The way I understand it, this
21 task force, one of the problems seniors have to
22 deal with is an attempt to find solutions. The
23 most recent meeting in Riverhead, the auditorium
24 was packed. The meeting ran well beyond the
25 specified time. Several people told their

2 problems that needed to be addressed. However,
3 most of the time was taken up with some of the
4 people singing the praises of their senior
5 centers. I thought they were here because of
6 increasing their funding was in jeopardy. If
7 they didn't have a problem, why tell
8 us? That certainly wouldn't help because some of
9 us do have a problem. I can almost hear the
10 politicians now. What are they screaming about?
11 A whole bunch of them went out of their way to
12 tell us how great they were being treated. Well,
13 as the kids say today, duhh. I was told by a
14 politician that the younger people think seniors
15 are getting everything. I wondered about that,
16 so, I asked around and found the younger people
17 looking after their parents and grandparents don't
18 think that way. They live in the real world.
19 I can only conclude that the people he was talking
20 to live in a fantasyland and don't have a clue.
21 Another thing that took up a lot of time at that
22 meeting, was the representatives from the various
23 municipalities and government sponsors from senior
24 organizations. I think that they should be here
25 to address specific problems brought up by the

2 seniors at the specific time the problem was
3 brought up. Some did. Too many made speeches
4 about how great they are. They are not so great.
5 If they were as great as they'd have you believe,
6 we wouldn't need this task force and these
7 meetings. Too much time was taken up by not
8 talking about senior problems. The meeting ran
9 over time because of that. This task force needs
10 to stay focused on the reason it was formed. When
11 someone starts to tell us how wonderful the
12 treatment is that they're getting, they should be
13 told that this is not the place for that that.
14 That goes to anyone who wants to make the
15 aforementioned speeches. We need less bragging
16 and more action. This is a place for learning
17 about the problems and trying to find ways to
18 correct them. There's no shortage of such
19 problems. If we're going to invite dignitaries,
20 let's get Tom Barrenger here and Steve Levy here
21 and bring issues and tell us how to get around the
22 road blocks and foot dragging in Albany. That's
23 where a lot of our problems originate. These men
24 have Albany experience and we need their help to
25 deal with shenanigans, to help us continue our

2 fight. That would be a big help. The property tax
3 exemption, the income limit is unrealistic.
4 It's somewhere in the neighborhood \$34,000.
5 A person falls into the doughnut hole already.
6 that's thousands already. You get the idea.
7 It should be based adjusted gross, after the
8 necessities. On a different note, there was a man
9 at that meeting, from Montauk. His wife was
10 sick and had to leave someone to take care of her
11 his absence. He said that he was one of the first
12 ones to sign a card to speak, yet he was among
13 the last to be called. I got there late so I
14 expected to be last or not at all, but that was my
15 fault. I think that man was treated unfairly.
16 If you're not going to be fair here. How much
17 confidence do we have that you'll be fair
18 elsewhere? That cards should be numbered so that
19 the fair thing is first come, first serve.
20 I think the task force should look into ways to
21 support our organization, SAD. I would
22 like to learn how SAD could get funding for
23 our recruitment efforts. It's the seniors
24 sticking together to force the improvement. We
25 don't have enough members to make our voice loud

2 enough to make Albany pay attention. Get us a
3 place to hold rally's. We couldn't have one this
4 year because the cost was prohibitive. One local
5 politician told us he'd help us but when we
6 asked, he turned his back on us. So much for
7 political promises. We need a lot more seniors
8 making a lot more noise to wake up these career
9 politicians to the fact that you can put an end to
10 their careers unless we get some favorable action.
11 If they don't want to do something for us, we'll
12 get someone else who will. We just don't have the
13 numbers right now. We need a lot more publicity.
14 We need action not rhetoric. That would be
15 a lot more help for all seniors. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN STERN: Maura Sullivan.

17 MS. SULLIVAN: My name is Maura
18 Sullivan. I'm here today because I'm wearing
19 three hats in my daily life. The first is I'm a
20 case manager with the Town of Southampton Senior
21 Service. As such, I visit frail, homebound
22 seniors, who are in need of services and
23 referrals to help them to maintain the
24 independence in their own homes. Our goals in the
25 senior service program is to keep our elders safe

2 at home, for as long as possible.

3 I have met numerous people over my nine year

4 career. They were born in these homes

5 as were their mothers and fathers. Their greatest

6 desire is to remain in their homes. I put the

7 second hat on at 4:30 when I then become a

8 daughter and a caregiver for my, today she turned

9 seventy-six, mother. Four years ago she was

10 gainfully employed full time and a member of

11 several church and school boards. She was busy,

12 active and contributed to society. She was also

13 known to pack a suitcase and her passport and

14 fly almost anywhere in the world on a moments

15 notice. She was seldom home. Now due to

16 a major stroke, she's paralyzed on her right

17 side, and an impaired ability to communicate.

18 My mother's world is a little bit smaller now and

19 less interesting. Last year, I secured a large

20 mortgage and added a completely handicapped

21 accessible addition on to my home. The bathroom

22 has a wheel in shower. The appliances are lower

23 to accommodate the wheelchair and next a ramp

24 easily accessible to her. As a single mother I

25 must work to pay the mortgage. If it were not for

2 the transportation department and Town of
3 Southampton Senior Services, as well as a fulltime
4 caregiver, I would not be able to work. The
5 shuttle transports my mom a minimum of two times
6 per week for physical, occupational and speech
7 therapy. Add to that a neurologist, cardiologist,
8 dentist, mammogram, and general practitioner
9 appointments. Without the wheelchair accessible
10 bus and the compassionate drivers, I would have to
11 leave my job on a daily basis. My third hat
12 is reserved for the we hours of the morning.
13 I'm a member of a two volunteer ambulances.
14 I would guesstimate that about forty percent
15 of our emergency calls are from senior citizens
16 with cardiac, respiratory and diabetic emergencies
17 or the proverbial, I've fallen and can't
18 get up. It's not unusual for pelvic or hip
19 or extremity fractures. There are numerous
20 possible causes for these falls. Tripping over
21 the dog or cat, slipping on a throwrug, nipping
22 the sherry, skipping medications. Over the past
23 nine years I have received numerous adult phone
24 calls from their children or grandchildren from as
25 far away as Hawaii, Alaska, California and as near

2 as New York City and Long Island, asking if there
3 is any service where they can check on dad or mom
4 or grandma for just an hour or so in the morning
5 to see if they have eaten breakfast, taken their
6 medication or gotten dressed. Is there anyone
7 to visit mom, uncle Ted or grandpa in the evening
8 to make sure that they have eaten dinner, taken
9 their prescriptions, ectera. Most agencies
10 require a block of time, a percentage of hours at
11 a person's home. These individuals, they don't
12 need that much assistance. All though our office
13 does Meals on Wheels, and make certain
14 the seniors are okay, it's impossible to stay very
15 long. There are almost three hundred meals
16 delivered on a daily basis. It would be most
17 helpful for long distance caregivers and to the
18 seniors themselves to have these daily
19 contacts. A program that would employ local
20 retirees, to provide the service to their
21 neighbors, possibly for a small salary or
22 stipend. It would enable frail seniors to
23 maintain their independence longer.
24 RSVP and RUOK do a wonderful job contacting
25 seniors with daily phone calls. I believe it

2 would best serve our seniors to take it one step
3 further and visit homes preferably on a daily
4 basis. We are a very busy and mobile society
5 and the neighborhood is slowly evaporating. A
6 program such as this one suggested, not only
7 benefits the senior and the caregiver, but also
8 society as a whole. A young mother who
9 moves to an area may not know a senior who lives
10 down the block and could use a friendly visit.
11 The baby's grandmother may live far away.
12 This older person may become an adoptive
13 grandparent. Many good things could come from
14 such an arrangement. There are many wonderful
15 programs currently in place that enhance the lives
16 of older population but we can always do more.
17 I think you for listening and considering this
18 proposal. I think it's doable. Thank you.

19 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you.

20 It is really my pleasure to introduce the
21 Supervisor of the Town of Brookhaven, the
22 Honorable Brian Foley.

23 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: Thank you, Steven and
24 I'd like to say good things to the whole task
25 force. This is a very important task force and

2 particularly want to commend Legislator Stern for
3 assembling the task force to address the issue
4 that we have talked about for years, before making
5 sound public policy and judgements. We need to
6 update the information and the task force is a
7 great vehicle to receive the most updated
8 information from the public as
9 well as other elected officials and other levels
10 of government and going forward with the agenda
11 for our growing senior population throughout our
12 county. With the approval of the task force,
13 currently I'd like to focus on particularly we
14 have Town of Brookhaven on some of the issues.
15 No doubt, we heard today already, pretty much we
16 can say the same about Brookhaven Township. I
17 want to focus on a areas to address the
18 issues facing senior citizens.
19 Not to far north of here we have a new senior and
20 cultural and wellness center under construction
21 and named after former Legislator Rose Caracappa.
22 It's being constructed in Mt. Sinai. That
23 particular center, we believe is the most
24 important project under way anywhere in Brookhaven
25 Town. We expect to be open by September 1, 2007

2 and I think very importantly it's a project
3 that's under budget and could be replicated in
4 other areas in the county. When Legislator
5 Caracappa, was with us he had arranged for
6 Suffolk County to turn the original building over
7 to the Town for use as a recreational center,
8 senior center. It was that intergovernmental
9 cooperation with town and county. A few years
10 back, initially that property was conveyed to the
11 Town. It was a very small building, now able to
12 turn it into a much larger facility to meet the
13 current and future needs of the senior population.
14 That kind of County and Town partnership certainly
15 will be well served in the future, not just in our
16 town but other towns as well. It will be close to
17 a twelve thousand square foot, state of art
18 center. It will offer a variety of programs for
19 seniors, adult day care, three day per week
20 nutrition program, meeting place for the Mt. Sinai
21 Senior Club and other clubs, computer clubs, Tai
22 Chi and yoga classes. What's really exciting is
23 that we'll have a large enough space as the needs
24 sees fit. It's not one size fits all. It's a
25 building to be utilized for other ideas and

2 programs that we may night think of right now.
3 Through the great work of this task force, we may
4 come up with some ideas and programs and services
5 in that particular building. What I really want
6 to do, with the help of the task force, is
7 identify the needs throughout the County and to
8 have that same cultural and wellness
9 center not just in Mt. Sinai, but we have a Cappa
10 Program for the next couple of years, as long as
11 we're still in office, to move forward with
12 similar construction throughout other parts of the
13 town. We're very excited. No doubt we heard about
14 transportation needs for seniors. At the time,
15 Brookhaven Town, we have a Silver Jitney program
16 which is a very, very worth while program. We can
17 definitely make the connection, the corelation
18 between the delays between the call and the actual
19 pick up is really a function of how large the
20 budget is. It's a budget issue. The Silver
21 Jitney program has been a great success story
22 for all of the towns and villages in Suffolk
23 County. Obviously we'd like to have same day
24 registration and reservation and you know it takes
25 a long period of time. That's really a function

2 of whether or not we have the ability to really
3 fund that particular program. The Meals on Wheels
4 program is something you mentioned before. One of
5 the most successful programs, particularly for
6 those who are shutins in order to receive their
7 meal but also to have some company during the day.
8 I know over a period of years, that program has
9 had the challenges of budget as well. But we know
10 that is one of our the successful programs that we
11 have in Suffolk, that we have in the Town.
12 That is something we highlighted as we move
13 forward. The fact is we need to have more hands in
14 recreational senior services. One of the more
15 interesting letters, sometime back in Newsday, was
16 the fact that we have a whole broad spectrum of
17 seniors within our Town and County. We have young
18 retirees as I'd like to say, and then we have the
19 elderly and frail elderly. What we need to do
20 and I hope that the task force can focus on is
21 interaction and suggestions from the public and
22 interaction is what we need, more broadly,
23 we need to expand the kinds of services
24 that seniors are receiving, particularly
25 recreational services. In the past, there have

2 been recreational services for the senior centers
3 but we really need to find more active programs
4 and recreational services that heretofore that
5 are not the norm. This is not just for
6 any one component of this population but for the
7 growing varieties of our seniors that are living
8 in our township. One thing, as much as you have
9 young families moving into town, we also have a
10 number of retirees moving into the town. As you
11 know, one of the land use categories are private
12 retirement communities. So, there really is a
13 number of proposals that have been already
14 approved by the Town and will be approved over the
15 next couple of years. The senior population is
16 going to grow in our township. We really need to
17 address the issue on how we're going to provide in
18 the future, particularly through Town programs,
19 even if they are part of the private communities.
20 Another area, not so much a purview of the County
21 but should be addressed, more of an issue
22 with the townships, what I find happening in year
23 and a half of being in town government
24 and this is true in some other areas of the
25 county, what is happening with a number of

2 land use decisions, is segregated housing. Many
3 of the times it's a private retirement community
4 or it's fifty-five and older or it's single family
5 developments, single family housing. We really
6 need to look at that in a general site plans, for
7 different site plans, to look at intergenerational
8 housing, intergenerational site plans in different
9 townships. One of the things, segregation of any
10 kind, and ethnic segregation is something that we
11 overcame many years ago. What I see, through no
12 fault of anyone in our case, or any diabolical
13 reasons, but I see we have a segregated private
14 retirement communities and single family homes and
15 not giving it the intergenerational approach. One
16 thing we're doing in Brookhaven Town is right now
17 there's no zoning category for that. For
18 instance, if you have twenty acres of land and
19 it's one acre zoned, it's twenty homes. Maybe we
20 can give that particular development twenty-five
21 homes above the twenty, but five of those homes
22 would be for senior citizens. Right now, multiple
23 families as well as multiple family. Let's look
24 at that. I encourage the task force to consider
25 Suffolk County Planning Commission and getting to

2 the Town, to come up with a new zoning category
3 that promotes intergenerational housing. A child
4 going down the street, as we were all growing up,
5 is able to see some of the neighbors who were
6 maybe a little wiser than we were, a little bit
7 older than we were and to hear stories about the
8 community fifty years ago. That's a real benefit.
9 I think what's happening now is with single homes
10 and family homes being constructed is that we're
11 losing that variety within a given community. We
12 should really use the zoning powers within the
13 townships, with the encouragement of the county,
14 to develop that new zoning category that would
15 promote intergenerational housing. Not only would
16 that address the needs for housing but also social
17 life but also a healthier community by this
18 approach. Some of the observations that I've
19 seen since being in office only a year and a half
20 in the Town of Brookhaven. Another area, as much
21 as we'd like to hear testimony, there are eternal
22 trues when addressing the needs of seniors and the
23 like. One of the things in particularly that can
24 be a great help to this task force is to peruse
25 and research a number of the papers which were

2 written over a period of years for the various
3 White House conferences on aging, going back to
4 the 80's right through to the present day. A
5 number of those papers that were written, were not
6 only a national application but can be brought to,
7 specifically, to Suffolk County and
8 our Township. These are good research documents
9 that can help the task force to help
10 come up with suggestions for our county as well.
11 Those are some of the thoughts that I'd like to
12 give today. The gentlemen earlier, by the way,
13 mentioned the State and like, and I know the State
14 Delegation, both the Senate and the Assembly have
15 offered legislation to raise the exemption levels
16 for property taxes, in particular, for school
17 property taxes. We are in the forefront of that.
18 We need to take a look at that
19 and see how we can best make our county still
20 affordable for seniors and at the same time ensure
21 that there is available funding for our school
22 districts at the same time. Everyone would agree
23 that needs to happen. I want to gently correct,
24 with respect, one comment made earlier, I
25 have found Legislative Stern and the task force to

2 have been eminently fair in their approach to this
3 issue and other issues. I wanted, to myself a
4 personal privilege to say that the fairness,
5 Legislator Stern, that you have extended not only
6 to senior population but to our Town has been
7 exemplary, and I just wanted to have that stated
8 for the record as well. Those are the few
9 thoughts for the Town of Brookhaven, that need to
10 be certainly followed up. Mr. Maletta, who we
11 appointed to the task force to follow up
12 senior services, we'd be more than happy to give
13 you the numbers and statistics that you would
14 need and some follow up to today's discussions.
15 Again, areas of nutrition, transportation, land
16 use, the fact that the towns need to construct
17 more cultural and wellness centers throughout the
18 towns. The fact more traditional senior
19 recreational programs are still important, which I
20 don't think meet the current needs of our senior
21 population, given the fact that many varieties of
22 seniors within our towns that are young retirees,
23 elderly, frail elderly. I think that you really
24 need for this task force to be a vehicle, a
25 conduit, to which we can come up with, or update,

2 information and make suggestions for future
3 actions by the County, by the State and by the
4 Towns. Brookhaven Town stands ready to work
5 with the County Legislature and with the County
6 Executor in partnership to address those issues
7 that are important to our senior population,
8 because we do need our seniors to stay on Long
9 Island. Don't want them all moving to Florida.
10 Thank you very much.

11 MR. FRITZ: You touched on a very
12 sore point, the White House Conference on Aging,
13 that's a Federal issue. I would only hope that
14 all of us write our Congressmen. There were
15 over three thousand people that attended that
16 conference December of 2005. I was one of them.
17 We came up with fifty resolutions. Not one of
18 them has been brought up to Congress at this
19 point. What are we going to do about it? I
20 realize that it's a Federal issue.

21 MR. FOLEY: Not that misery loves
22 company. I can tell you that former legislator,
23 John Foley, was a delegate for White House
24 Conference of Aging back in the mid 80's, at that
25 time not only didn't move a foot but there was

2 great damage, at that time, that was done by
3 administration at that time, that cut a number of
4 senior programs, particular funding from the
5 Federal Government to localities was cut
6 tremendously. So, what happened was the burden
7 was placed on localities. Through this day,
8 communities across the country are suffering
9 because of it. Secondly, a number of great ideas
10 that were formulated back '85 still haven't been
11 enacted. That's twenty-three years later. More
12 recently, go to the 2005 conference, those fifty
13 resolutions, I can tell you that I was in the
14 County Legislation for seventeen years, now this
15 won't happen on Steven Stern's watch, County
16 Legislation, it took ten years to get approved.
17 Certainly those fifty, knowing the Congressional
18 Delegation as we do on Long Island, they are up to
19 fair challenge and in fact there are these
20 resolutions in the House as well as the Senate. It
21 should be reviewed and hopefully approved.
22 I'm sure they'll be more than willing to
23 entertain the ideas. Again, given the
24 international reality that much of the Federal
25 budget has been going off shore to the other areas

2 of the world. That has put, in essence, a
3 constricted flexibility of the Federal budget to
4 address local issues. That's reality. At the
5 same time, I'm sure our local congressmen and
6 our senators would be more than willing, and
7 should be, and they are more than willing to get
8 along. The task force, these things need to be
9 this were addressed Federal as well as State.
10 Those things should be done. Thank you.

11 MR. KERN: Bob Kern.

12 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: From where, sir.

13 MR. KERN: From SAD. And I'm
14 asking about the new complex.

15 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: Yes.

16 MR. KERN: Are you going to
17 have bus service for the seniors at all times?

18 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: Not 2:00 in the morning.

19 MR. KERN: Are they going to have
20 the availability for people who can not get the
21 seniors that lost their driver's license because
22 they're not able to drive.

23 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: That's an excellent
24 point. The whole issue of transportation --
25 transportation, nutrition, wellness and the like,

2 shutins, who otherwise can't get out and about,
3 there will be bus transportation to that
4 particular center. How often through the day,
5 that we'll have to follow up with. Certainly I
6 know we will have fairly extensive jitney service
7 to that location. Also, those who can access the
8 county buses, this is along the route of the
9 Suffolk County bus route as well. If I just may,
10 with the approval of Chair and task force, I was
11 the Chair of the County Legislative several years
12 and in addition to that I was Chair of the Public
13 Works and Transportation committee. One of the
14 things we looked at, very closely, was the
15 expansion of the bus routes throughout Suffolk
16 County. Transportation was one of the few areas
17 that the Federal government was increasing their
18 funding to local governments. As we all know,
19 mass transit is never wholly supported by fares
20 or by the local governments. It's huge Federal
21 subsidies to make these mass transit systems work.
22 We had expanded, during the Gaffney
23 administration, a number of bus routes throughout
24 the county and some for Brookhaven Town. The way
25 we were able to do that was for the first three

2 years, there was additional dollars that came from
3 the Federal Government to expand these routes.
4 The Division of Transportation and
5 Public Works is very skilled at securing those
6 dollars from the Federal and State Governments.
7 Are those monies still available? That's
8 something to look at. Part of the
9 needs assessment, the senior population and
10 others, to see where else we could expand the bus
11 routes, much less the van service. The biggest
12 problem or challenge I saw in expanding service in
13 the county, also within Brookhaven, to this day
14 the stigma that's attached to bus patrons. We
15 have to get past that. A lot of folks use our
16 buses and have to wait in a more dignified place.
17 The bus shelter program, the Feds pick up
18 ninety percent and we pay ten percent. I can tell
19 when I was with the County, being factual, and not
20 being partisan, almost every Town they had come
21 kicking and screaming to accept the bus shelter
22 for ten percent of the cost. Actually, we gave
23 it to them for free, because the Feds gave them
24 ninety percent. We'd give it to the Towns and
25 Villages and they'd have to maintain it. I'm

2 telling you that up to the last couple of years of
3 my tenure in the County Legislation it was very
4 difficult to get certain towns to accept those bus
5 shelters, including this. Now we turned it around
6 a little bit. Now the State roads have some bus
7 shelters. They don't really protect much from the
8 elements. The County bus shelters have a more
9 interesting look and design to them and different
10 then before. Those will go a long way in
11 helping to encourage the use of the buses. I'm
12 also going to make the suggestion of working with
13 the Division of Transportation. One of the other
14 cutting edge areas of public transportation, areas
15 where you have fixed routes, along any given area.
16 You can have a feeder system go through the
17 fixed routes and go through the communities, pick
18 up at those who want to utilize them, and bring
19 them to the fixed route and coordination for the
20 buses. That's not easy to do. That takes staff
21 and there's an operational impact and all the
22 rest. It will be interesting to see
23 if and where and how the State and Federal dollars
24 will offset the operational cost, to a greater
25 extend, and the like, the new buses.

2 That kind of system and that kind of
3 cross-pollination of ideas between task force
4 seniors and transportation in the county and
5 transportation advocates in the region, I think
6 there will be a lot of commonality issues your
7 confronting and issues on public transportation.

8 MR. KERN: Cappa Center is on the
9 north shore? What about the seniors on the south
10 shore?Brookhaven is a big town.

11 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: That's why I said
12 earlier, this is the first center.
13 That's the first center. We expect, as long as
14 we're in office a few more terms, we expect that
15 we'll roll out a Cappa program to construct
16 similar centers, beautiful architecture, good
17 materials and site plan. In fact, we want to
18 bring that model to the community. We do plan to
19 have that model in other areas of the township.
20 In order to do it, it needs to be done in a tax
21 payer prudent way, we can't do it all in one year.
22 It's going to take a series of years.
23 Given the fact that Towns almost have almost half
24 a million people. And county has done very well
25 over a period of years, really three to five year

2 Cappa program. Incorporate in that program, park
3 improvements, not just for families and also for
4 seniors and go to our parks. Also part of the
5 Cappa program is construction of additional senior
6 and wellness centers. We don't say recreational,
7 we say wellness, because we believe that it's
8 about senior services, about recreation but it's
9 also about wellness. Those are the components for
10 a healthy senior population. We're going to
11 expand and going to have additional centers as the
12 Cappa program rolls out over the next five years.

13 MS. BARONE: On a lighter side, what
14 is planned for Bald Hill this year? Any free
15 concerts for us?

16 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: If you have ever watched
17 the Olympic Luge. We're making an announcement
18 today. There are ten locations in the country
19 were Olympic Luge organizations use to recruit
20 their athletes. One of the locations is going to
21 be Bald Hill. We're going to make that
22 announcement at 1:00 today. To answer your
23 question, there will be free concerts. Many of us
24 know the amphitheater. To really get do nuts
25 bolts, in coming out of the amphitheater, to me

2 how this has stayed this way for twenty-five
3 years, I don't know. One of the things I've asked
4 our engineers to look at is to find a way, not
5 just for seniors but for all that have difficulty
6 going up that steep hill, which is just off to the
7 side of the amphitheater. Find a different way,
8 engineer a solution, to access the amphitheater
9 and leaving it.

10 MS. BARONE: Go to the buses and they
11 will take you to the parking lot. You
12 don't have to go that route.

13 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: Some people want to going
14 to the chalet so it makes sense. We'll have some
15 free concerts this year.

16 MS. GLASHEEN: Town of Smithtown.
17 Initially, under the Older American's
18 Act, there was funding for the elderly and the
19 town provides that fund. I don't
20 know if that was reauthorized again and I thought
21 that may be included in the act.

22 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: It was reauthorized
23 already.

24 MS. GLASHEEN: It closed the Golden
25 Showcase, the crafts, to which, throughout Suffolk

2 County, seniors were able to supplement income by
3 selling arts and crafts. And also have somebody
4 from our office, and art and crafts expert go out
5 into the field and teach them and take them back
6 to the Golden Showcase and be able to sell them.
7 Golden Showcase in Port Jefferson.

8 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: In the Village?

9 MS. GLASHEEN: Main Street going to the
10 Ferry.

11 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you so much for
12 being with us. As you can see, the make
13 up of the task force is to bring representatives
14 of all of the ten towns, to take a really
15 meaningful role for some of the solutions and
16 suggestions to come up.

17 Because, as you know whether resolutions coming
18 out of the White House Conference on Aging,
19 Federal, State or County government, ultimately
20 Town is charged with delivering the services.

21 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: Correct.

22 CHAIRMAN STERN: The intergenerational
23 housing is interesting and a great idea but
24 ultimately something we would have to do with the
25 town. So, your immediate experience as a long

2 time County Legislator and Supervisor of one of
3 Suffolk's largest towns, I would ask, what role do
4 you see County government being able to play? How
5 can we help the towns implement that important
6 law?

7 SUPERVISOR FOLEY: That really is the crux
8 of the issue. That's why the task force was
9 created to help the towns, throughout the County
10 focus on not only seniors, to focus on solutions.
11 As long as the task force looks like this,
12 discussions between the different towns with the
13 county as the organizing principal here to
14 look at the best practices of other municipalities
15 and to apply them to the other towns and villages.
16 That's an important exercise in and of itself.
17 Also, the county through community development,
18 many times the county is the funnel where Towns
19 and Villages can receive Federal and State
20 funding. There are times when funding can be
21 directed from the towns to the Feds and State,
22 County Government can be the umbrella that
23 agencies and to help Village and Towns to secure
24 funding for areas. Also you
25 mentioned the Suffolk County tax map that may

2 serve some other purpose other than going to
3 auction. Legislators would sometimes ask
4 the real estate division, in the property auctions
5 office, if it could serve some public purpose for
6 these lands. So, looking at lands that could be
7 some public use for seniors or educational. I
8 think we need to, on an ongoing basis
9 to review lands that the county owns through the
10 nonpayment of taxes, and before they're auctioned
11 to see if there's some other public purpose. In
12 the purposes for today, for senior purpose for a
13 center or recreation purpose.

14 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you so much again.
15 Mary Kennedy.

16 MS. KENNEDY: He's not here. I'd
17 really like him to be here. I'd rather sit and
18 wait.

19 MR. FRITZ: We have a stenographer
20 taking down all of the information.

21 MS. KENNEDY: That's not the same
22 thing. I've been through stenographers a lot and
23 a lot of mistakes are made. Thank you,
24 Legislator Stern.

25 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you for

2 waiting.

3 MS. KENNEDY: I'm a petitioner
4 addressing, and was hoping to see a lot of other
5 representatives from other towns at this meeting.
6 It is very important. I was at a meeting at the
7 Town of Huntington this Tuesday evening and I was
8 shocked at what I discovered. There were a lot of
9 people and I'm not sure if people
10 heard of this space but it's called the Greens.
11 The Greens, it's in Dix Hills, in Huntington.
12 Now, a project had developed there, the old sod
13 farms. They built mega expensive homes
14 there. The reason they were permitted to build
15 is because they were supposed to build x amount of
16 senior homes, one hundred of them, at \$125,000 per
17 unit. Also for low income housing. I'm not that
18 familiar and I'm not that prepared but I did want
19 to speak about this. This was the brochure
20 submitted to the Town. It's been seven years now,
21 it's been stopped, the work. Mr. Kaplan, he was
22 the developer, he has stopped this assignment
23 after making eighty million dollars on this
24 project, that he's not making enough money. He
25 wants to put the price up to \$165,000.00. The

2 project is stopped. I don't think I have time to
3 bring all of this up but I have to address this.
4 Any future projects, I want people to be truthful
5 with the seniors and not by developers who give
6 good campaign contributions and say that we're
7 going to do it this way and once we start the
8 project and get the okay later on. Seven years
9 later these people are waiting and the prices are
10 astronomical. Not only for low income housing for
11 the poor but also for the seniors. Now there's
12 an instant that I know personally about in Port
13 Jefferson Station. A senior complex was built
14 several years ago, a very dear friend of mine
15 lives there. I come and see her when I can. I
16 learned and discovered, and too bad I didn't get
17 to speak before Brian Foley left. This does
18 pertain to him. The seniors didn't have a permit
19 for club room and swimming pool only discovered
20 after it was built. These seniors had to be held
21 up a whole year. No restitution for the time they
22 didn't have their clubhouse and other
23 facilities. They just gave a nice lunch and
24 dinner to compensate the people. I don't think
25 that's fair. No one really looked into the

2 situation. Some can't walk, some can't drive and
3 scared and have to come out to 347 and make a
4 right, go to the shopping center, then
5 cross over main highway and make another
6 left on the other side of 347. They tried
7 desperately to have a stop sign give them enough
8 time, because we are slower. I'm a senior. I'm
9 proud of it and I'm sixty-eight years old and I'm
10 slowing down. I see the terrible things that are
11 happening and I hope, Legislator Stern, that when
12 you get together that you will not be hoodwinked
13 by the developers and dishonest politicians. We
14 have plenty of them. Number one thing going on in
15 today's paper, it's about the, this person, it has
16 all of the money -- How much is it for Hempstead?
17 It says 488 million. It shows that the
18 Supervisors are getting kick backs
19 for political uses. We have to stop this. It has
20 to be stopped. I have another area here, they're
21 trying to take my property. It's eleven years,
22 actually twelve years, I was informed. They are
23 trying to take property for eleven or twelve
24 years. He said your property is rectangular. I
25 said how much to you got? I have been

2 persecuted. I didn't have insurance. My health
3 is destroyed. The atrocious things that
4 everybody knows about but everybody is afraid to
5 come and help me. This is big politics. My
6 property is between the developer, and the Town
7 and County on the left, and then the developer
8 again on the other side. I'm only one statistic.
9 I've got several other cases. This one in
10 particular is a disgrace because the Town has
11 fought this. He was in litigation fifteen to
12 twenty years and had to sell property. Something
13 like they tried to do to me. They sold it,
14 subdivided it, and built mega mansions for
15 \$1,495,000. This is right on Park Avenue.
16 There's another house right across, a surgeon,
17 Doctor Mamakos, the Town crucified him for years.
18 Doctors of Huntington Hospital were afraid of the
19 threat his business would be. They accosted him
20 for 15 years. Now, he died. He was 80 years
21 old. He was a good man. He did a lot of
22 volunteer work. The reason that I'm saying this
23 is that if we allow mega houses to be built like
24 this with taxes on \$1,495,000, later on next
25 year when the taxes are raised. How much is that

2 going to increase our taxes? It's got to be
3 stopped. If they want mega mansions, let them go
4 to Lloyd Harbor, Huntington Bay, or Dix Hills
5 where they have two or three acres. Not in this
6 little community. You know how much they got my
7 taxes, trying to break me? Nineteen thousand and
8 then it was twenty thousand a year. But it's low
9 enough because I got a tax exemption for seniors.
10 Anybody buying my property, how do we get control
11 of this? The other thing, the other paper, how
12 much the Town of Huntington, they're 1,904 million
13 dollars in debt. It was in the newspaper. I
14 asked Mr. Supervisor, this gives a list of all of
15 the Towns, I asked Mr. Supervisor the other night,
16 the first thing I asked him was. [INDICATING NEWS
17 ARTICLE] They all looked stunned and didn't
18 know where I got the information. That's maybe
19 because Newsday, Long Island and different little
20 papers, that's their little babies. They
21 don't put negative things about the Town of
22 Huntington, but the Smithtown News, David
23 Andrews, he printed it. He prints all of the
24 pages of the foreclosures of Suffolk County.
25 That's what the people need, honesty. That's

2 the way it is. You have a big undertaking now,
3 Legislator Stern, and get your other legislators.
4 I've spoken here before and I'll continue to
5 speak. I'm a senior and I'm scared. I'm a very
6 sick person, which is very debilitating, and I
7 don't care how bad I sound. God has given me this
8 ability and as long as I can speak, whether I
9 falter or not. You can ridicule me and call me
10 names. You know what? I'm in very good company.
11 They also crucified and called Jesus names.
12 That's higher up than Mr. Petrone and Legislator
13 Cooper, the most dishonest person I ever came
14 across. Maybe he'll get his dues to. I want to
15 know, where are the taxpayers going to be able to
16 come up with this deficit? One of the best
17 Towns, believe it or not, was Smithtown. How
18 are you going to -- You have big job. Frank
19 Petrone is supposed to be getting one of those big
20 condominiums. How are you going to give these
21 seniors the truth and get them to trust our
22 politicians because this is what we promised.
23 Seven years and now it's not enough money.
24 Eighty-eight million dollars. That's what I
25 wanted to say. We have a very honest man right

2 now, his name is Legislator John Kennedy. No
3 relation. But I have been following him because
4 he's doing an honest job for the County with Ed
5 Romaine. They help people. They don't hide
6 documents. That's what we seniors need. Don't be
7 afraid to speak. Don't be afraid to get up and
8 give a helping hand. Thank you. Legislator John
9 Kennedy, give him a chance. The ankle
10 bracelets help people.

11 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. I don't have
12 any other cards. Would anybody like to come up
13 and address the task force?

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Is that the same thing
15 that she's talking about? The Greens?

16 CHAIRMAN STERN: No. Different project.
17 Anybody else?

18 MR. NERI: Paul Neri. I'm a
19 resident of East Patchogue in Brookhaven Town. I
20 would like to say as a senior, I do participate.
21 I write my Congressmen, Legislators, and Senators
22 in Albany. As you mentioned before and I think
23 the gal hit the nail on the head. I think the
24 career politicians in Albany are the source of
25 a lot of problems. The perception that Mr. Foley

2 gave us about school aid and taxes for seniors
3 being exempt, after 65. It's no longer 65, it's
4 70. It has been in committee since 1977. So,
5 it's my belief that the only weapon we're going to
6 have is either a rally or massive letter writing
7 campaign to our elected officials that they don't
8 move this out of committee, that they're not going
9 to be going back to Albany the next election.
10 That's the only thing they seem to understand. On
11 the local level we need help with taxes. I wrote
12 our local people about eliminating our State tax
13 on fuel. Gasoline is sky high. Everyone is
14 getting a windfall in taxes. What are we going to
15 do? Everybody has a voice and a situation. All I
16 see ahead of us is more. All I see ahead of us
17 is more. Who is willing to give up their district
18 and consolidate. Why do we need, on Long Island,
19 sixty-four school districts? Why not talk
20 regional instead of Towns? Why don't we? Who is
21 going to give up their domain? That's what it all
22 boils down to. The golden goose is going to be
23 ended someday because where are the people going
24 to go? I retired three years ago. I went to my
25 financial planner. He told me I had nothing to

2 worry about until I was 102. This year I went to
3 him, on taxes, pension and health benefits, he
4 reduced it to 88. So I am looking for work
5 if I want to stay on Long Island. My daughter
6 moved off the island. They're in NJ. They're
7 suffering with taxes as well. I don't know where
8 you can go from there. It is a problem. It's
9 a problem and, I think, our elected officials have
10 forgotten they work for us. Everyone can
11 institute new taxes but no one is looking to
12 economize and look for ways to reduce taxes. I
13 think that's what task force should be focused on.
14 I'd like give more support to Steve Levy's
15 plan, consolidating purchasing for school
16 districts. I think the school districts
17 all over Long Island have to come under
18 control. I have an issue, reading in the paper.
19 Excuse me, I'm going all over the place. I'm a big
20 fan of Saul Freidman's column in Newsday. I'm
21 sure you all are. Medicare, health coverage, I
22 pay for insurance but I have to spend \$4,000 out
23 of my own pocket before my insurance kicks in.
24 There are so many plans and he writes about the
25 bill introduced in January, Medicare for all.

2 It's HR 676, U.S. National Healthcare Insurance
3 Act. It's a good plan. It's not a fix all but
4 it's a good plan. I think people here on Long
5 Island, us people, should contact our
6 representative and see what they think. Only
7 eight Senators have supported this bill.
8 I want to thank you again for giving me this
9 chance to speak. I would like to attend
10 your next meeting and prepare some other notes. I
11 think a lot of what the gal said today is very,
12 very true. Bob, I have been in touch with you
13 over the internet. Thank you for your work.
14 One comment, that when you put a notice for a
15 meeting, please state where you're going to be.
16 I came on the campus, it's a big campus, and I
17 went to the gym. Lucky that somebody directed me
18 here. A lot of people read the column.

19 MR. KERN: I would like to make reference
20 to HR 676, the reason so little votes on this or
21 approval so far is that there is a claus in this
22 that you don't even need a Social Security
23 Number.

24 MR. NERI: A lot of things in there
25 about that.

2 MR. KERN: That phrase in there that
3 stops a lot of people.

4 MR. NERI: I think you know
5 the problem with the system. I'm glad 2008 is
6 around the corner.

7 MR. KERN: I'm not. It only gets
8 worse.

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: You raise important
10 issues. I want to say a couple of things, for the
11 record. First of all, your comments about
12 everybody is not looking at it more regionally.
13 That's exactly what this task force is designed
14 to do. That is this task force's main goal, to
15 take those that provide services at the Town
16 level to see how we can operate in a more regional
17 manor so that there is a more seamless effort from
18 all of the towns and all of our resources and
19 volunteers to see how better we can coordinate
20 these kinds of services. As far as property
21 taxes go, of course they go to the schools. At
22 the Legislature's level, task forces can
23 look into services and costs at the County level
24 and play a role to manage the costs more
25 effectively, to have some sort of impact on

2 property taxes. For the most part, that is
3 outside of our jurisdiction. As far as property
4 taxes go, all though the County portion is a
5 relatively small portion, we have cut property
6 taxes this year. So, at the County level, we are
7 doing everything we can do. I feel as though
8 we are working with the County Executive in the
9 right direction. The last point, Legislation
10 is in place to place some kind of a cap on
11 property taxes for seniors and has been bottled up
12 in committee after committed for way too long.
13 There is pending legislation. There are two
14 different legislations pending. I was proud to
15 have County Legislature support it and urging our
16 State representatives to move on it right away.
17 At the County level of government, which is
18 all I can speak for currently, I feel as though
19 we are addressing those issues. Anybody
20 else? Yes.

21 MS. BURNHART: My name is Sheila
22 Burnhart. Wyandanch Road in Sayville. My concern
23 is more with frail, the frail seniors, who want to
24 stay at home. I'm afraid I might become one of
25 them. The transportation issue is really an

2 important issue in that regard. I didn't
3 understand one of the points that the person in
4 charge of buses mentioned before about the three
5 quarter mile SCAT thing, that if it's within three
6 quarters of a mile? They have to be within
7 three quarter mile? What if they're a mile away?
8 It wouldn't make sense to me.

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: Unfortunately, the only
10 thing I have is that it's a Federal Law. Where
11 they come up with that distance and why? I
12 couldn't tell you but certainly something that our
13 task force or our Council for Transportation
14 can speak with our Federal officials with regard
15 to that requirement. That's something that
16 absolutely needs to be on the table and discussed.
17 As the Supervisor points out that we can run
18 arteries from our main system and better
19 coordinate through the Towns and their systems.

20 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: You said you're from
21 Sayville. Follow up, they have a transit system
22 for medical, senior centers and SCAT.

23 MS. BURNHART: It's good to coordinate
24 it all together as well. And another thing,
25 people who are frail, living at home, may need

2 care at the home. I just recently read an
3 article, not sure which paper, where a woman was
4 caring for her invalid daughter. The Department
5 of Social Services denied her benefits because
6 this woman worked in a doctor's office part time.
7 All they needed was someone in the house to take
8 care of the daughter. Because part of the law is
9 that the caregiver would train the aid to take
10 care of her needs and then she would have to be
11 there at all times. It's kind of ridiculous.
12 You're here 24-7. The only time you get that is
13 in intensive care and even that is not that much.
14 My husband and I were in the hospital and heard an
15 alarm go off and nobody comes in. There's no such
16 thing as 24-7. Still and all, to apply and to
17 drop somebody's coverage? She has to go to all
18 things, doctor's appointments. Also if somebody
19 is in a nursing home, people are not active there,
20 and they don't have privileges in the nursing
21 home. They also don't want to travel there. They
22 have people coming to the office and don't want to
23 know you're in a nursing home. It seems to be
24 a regulation, State or County, or whatever,
25 that if you have a medical problem you have to go

2 to the nearest hospital. The hospital,
3 that person can be taken to a hospital that the
4 nursing home deals with and may not go to the
5 hospital where they have their own doctor.
6 As you know if you go into an emergency room and
7 you have a doctor in that particular hospital,
8 things go a little quicker. Beside the fact your
9 care is more coordinated it people now you for
10 some time. The other thing is I've been
11 in hospitals, before you get discharged, the
12 nurse goes through everything. If you're in a
13 nursing home, it goes to the nursing home. It's
14 not given to them or their relatives. The final
15 thing if you have a living will, and that you
16 become disabled and if you don't want to be in a
17 nursing home, that you can put that on there.
18 I don't know if the ambulance can bring you to
19 your hospital.

20 CHARIMAN STERN: Thank you.

21 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: I know the ambulance, if
22 it's volunteer, they only take you to the nearest
23 hospital. I live in an area where they only take
24 you to the nearest one, same thing. My doctor
25 may not be in the hospital that they take me to.

1 SENIOR CITIZEN'S TASK FORCE 101

2 Suffolk County Family Service League have
3 volunteers at nursing homes to work on behalf
4 of the clients at the nursing home. If somebody
5 that you know is having issues in the nursing
6 home, the Family Service League can work
7 with staff members in the nursing home and try and
8 resolve some of those issues.

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you.

10 MS. BURNHART: I'm aware of that.

11 CHAIRMAN STERN: Yes.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm from Oakdale.

13 I'd like to pay you all a compliment. I'd like to
14 give you a hand. You do a great job.

15 The reason I'm here is that we recognize
16 Suffolk County and more interaction with the
17 Townships. I want to know, if I'm a thousand feet
18 from the Great South Bay, since 1991 we are under
19 water. Red Fish market there in Sayville are
20 under water. I want to know what the County and
21 the Town of Islip are going to do with 102 doors.
22 That's the reason I'm here. You all do a
23 wonderful job and you'll see more of me.

24 CHAIRMAN STERN: Thank you. With that,
25 we'll close today's public hearing and look

2 forward to seeing you at our next, and our last
3 public hearing on June 28th, beginning at 9:30 in
4 the morning at the West Islip Community Center.
5 Motion to adjourn.

6 MS. RHODES-TEAGUE: Motion.

7 MS. HARTY: Second.

8 [AYE]

9 CHAIRMAN STERN: We are adjourned.

10 Thank you very much.

11 [HEARING WAS CONCLUDED]

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CERTIFICATION

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK)
SS:
STATE OF NEW YORK)

I, Charmaine DeRosa, Certified Court Reporter, in the State of New York, do hereby certify:

THAT, the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of my stenographic notes taken at the SENIOR TASK FORCE MEETING at Suffolk County Community College, Selden Campus, New York on May 14, 2007.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand on this 14th day of May, 2007.

Charmaine DeRosa, CSR

727-1107

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