

**VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**Minutes**

A regular meeting of the Veterans & Seniors Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on June 3, 2008.

**Members Present:**

Leg. Steven H. Stern, Chairman  
Leg. Jack Eddington, Vice-Chair  
Leg. Jon Cooper (Not present)  
Leg. John M. Kennedy, Jr. (Not present)  
Leg. Edward P. Romaine

**Also In Attendance:**

Barbara LoMoriello, Deputy Clerk  
Lance Reinheimer, Budget Review Office  
Deborah Harris, Aide to Legislator Stern  
Holly Rhodes-Teague, Director/Office for the Aging  
Tom Ronayne, Director of Veterans Service Agency/Human Services Div.  
Paul Perillie, Aide to Majority Leader  
Linda Bay, Aide to Minority Leader  
Judy Pannullo, Suffolk Community Council  
Doreen Fratello, Suffolk Community Council  
Elizabeth Antella, SCC volunteer  
Patrick Macrae, SCC volunteer  
Anthony Act  
Debra Alloncius, AME Legislative Director  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken By:**

Diana Kraus - Court Stenographer

## (THE MEETING COMMENCED AT 1:13 PM)

### **CHAIRMAN STERN:**

I'll start the meeting of the Committee on Veterans and Seniors. I'll ask everybody to please rise, join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Vice Chairman Eddington.

### **SALUTATION**

Ask everybody to please remain standing, join is in a moment of silence as we keep our brave men and women fighting for our freedom overseas in our thoughts and prayers.

### **MOMENT OF SILENCE OBSERVED**

Thank you.

Good afternoon, everybody. Thanks for being with us today. We have a short agenda today. First we have presentations. Tom, come on up.

### **DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

Mr. Chairman, members, thank you for inviting me yet again. I actually have very little to report on today other than some housekeeping items. The numbers -- the numbers of Suffolk County residents deploying overseas continues to increase. We have most recently another company from the 142 Aviation Brigade in Patchogue. We had the Ronkonkoma Contingent. As we know the Fighting 69th is over. And at any given time we have a varying number from the 106th in Westhampton. So the numbers of our residents serving in harm's way continues to increase. We also over the weekend deployed an additional 400 marines out of Garden City, some of which were Suffolk County residents.

### **CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Tom, do you have any idea what the total number is for Suffolk County residents?

### **DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

I was asked that question this morning actually. And our best guess right now currently deployed we're thinking it's about 1500; somewhere between 1500 and 2000 but probably closer to 1500. And that certainly does not include regular active duty and reserviced who are attached to units outside of this area who are deployed not as part of a local unit.

Speaking of the deployed units, there will be a fundraiser, I hope you're aware, on Friday morning at the Oheka Castle. They're hosting a fundraiser for the families support group of the first of the 69th. It sounds like it'll be a pretty successful event. They had 400 tickets for sale and they sold out much faster than they had anticipated.

### **CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yep, we understand that they're sold out so it should be a great success.

### **DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

Yeah, it should be. They moved the time up to 8:30 AM by the way versus the original nine. I had the pleasure yesterday of meeting with Greg Curran who is the new Section Chief for the Veterans administration Homeless Veterans Services. We met for about an hour-and-a-half and we feel very strongly that we are going to be able to partner together his teamwork with mine, my teamwork

with him and even further enhance the services that we are providing to the community in terms of outreach and exposing the veterans and their family members, dependents and spouses who need it, two services so that's going very well.

Obviously we had a very busy couple of weeks with Armed Forces Day and Memorial Day, the parades, the events, the ceremonies. We had good weather for most of it so attendance was good. And the message, I think, was well sent.

In the spirit of the stand downs that we've had very good success with, pardon my cough, we've had wonderful success with the stand downs that we've hosted thus far. We are planning another event now in October. We've yet to finalize a day. It'll be the second or third Friday in October. We will be hosting an employment and education fair for veterans. It deviates a little bit from the homeless program that we've been running but certainly employment and education are key issues. And we're going to focus on that for our next event. It will be held in Yaphank with an eye toward exposing those veterans who live further east giving them an opportunity to access the programs that we're running so we're keeping a keen eye on including the east end in what we're doing.

And the only other thing I would say is about two hours ago my office became aware of -- and I believe you're aware of the situation -- we have a Suffolk County resident, a United States Marine who was very seriously wounded in Afghanistan. Apparently he was -- he was hit by an incendiary IED, was very severely burned. We've interfaced with the family over the last couple of hours. There was some -- there was some communication issues between the family and the Marine Corps and we've liaised with both. And it looks like the issues have been resolved and the needs of the family will now be met. But, again, keep in mind that it's yet another Suffolk County resident who has made an enormous sacrifice.

My understanding is his current condition in addition to his other injuries, he's sustained third degree burns over about 60 percent of his body. So, God bless him.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Thank you for your assistance. Legislator Romaine.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Tom?

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

Pardon me? Yes.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I represent a number of veterans that are serving overseas and one specifically that came into my office, Suffolk County Police officer. It's my understanding that if you're a police officer and you become pregnant, you're capable of using your time on a one day for one day basis. But if you are assigned overseas, you are not capable of doing that. You must use two days to achieve one day.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

On the accruals.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Yes. In other words, they are being treated differently than their other colleagues in the police force. For example, I used policewomen who become pregnant are capable of taking, you know, one sick day for one day; where if you're assigned overseas and you want to use sick or vacation day, you have to use two days for one -- for every day deployed. It only applies to veterans serving overseas.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

And I think that stops after 30 days if I'm not mistaken.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

No, that's goes on forever. And the one gentleman brought this to my attention, he -- I guess the Executive had been listening to him until he decided to bring this issue to his attention. It was the fellow that ran against me last time. And he came to me as his County Legislator, Matt Bjelobrk, as you know he's a lieutenant colonel in the 69th. And he said, you know, I was a police officer, I got promoted to sergeant just the Friday before the election. I got promoted to sergeant, but, Ed, this is ridiculous because I'm being deployed again. And the first time I was deployed I wound up owing the County money. Why can't I use my accruals as others can use their accruals here in the states? Why is it so discriminatory against veterans who are serving their country overseas? And I wrote and the Executive hasn't answered me on that correspondence. I don't know if I copied you on that or not.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

No, I did not see that.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I'll make sure you get a copy of that correspondence.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

I would appreciate that.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

But I'm rasing that question, maybe it's a contractual thing that was negotiated in the contract. But I would appreciate if you would check into that because I believe there's about 130 Suffolk County Police Officers that are currently deployed overseas.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

I was going to say that I believe it is a contractual issue. There was another situation where there was an MOU that the police officers were signing prior to deployment. And that would touch on the reimbursement to the County for their County pay and so forth that you referred to a moment ago.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Well, I'm going also bring it to the attention of the Chairman of this Committee because despite the fact that it may be contractual, and I'm going to ask the Budget Review Office to review the PBA although he's now an SOA member because he was promoted, to check into both the SOA and the PBA contract to determine what the equities are for people that are deployed overseas. Because those people being deployed overseas have to use two days to get one. Where, for example, if you have a temporary -- I don't want to say disability, but temporary condition such as pregnancy, you're allowed to use one for one. And it seems to create an inequity there. And if that's the case, I'd like to know about that. I'd like the Chairman to know about this because I think that we as a Legislature, if there is, in fact, this inequity, should at least have a discussion of it. I understand, you know, in a contractual obligation the County Executive is looking to squeeze everything he can out of those unions that he negotiates with. That's understandable. But when it comes to depriving people who are deployed to combat zones overseas of the same right that others here enjoy, that raises a number of questions in my mind.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Legislator Romaine, we are on a short cycle this time around. And so perhaps at our next meeting we'll have -- BRO will have a representative of the administration and we'll have that specific item on our agenda for discussion. And we'll see if we can get you -- everybody those answers.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I truly think that that would be worthwhile.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

And if you could also share with me that correspondence.

**MR. REINHEIMER:**

It might be wise to extend an invitation to Labor Relations Jeff Tempera. He's probably the best person to analyze the language within the contracts and/or if -- be aware of any side letters that may exist that govern these conditions. So my recommendation is that the Chair extend an invitation. If you want, Budget Review can contact Labor Relations. We'll contact Labor Relations and ask Jeff Tempera to be here. Thank you.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

And if I could ask Legislator Romaine, if you would share with me that correspondence.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Absolutely.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

This way I can make sure I'm up to speed as well.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Absolutely. And I spoke with Lieutenant Colonel Bjelobrck when he was back, he came into my office, we had a cup of coffee. And he just thought it was very unfair now that he's deployed again that he actually will wind up owing the County money because he was deployed.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Tom, maybe you know the answer, maybe not. We see off the men and women of the Fighting 69th and they go off as a unit. I had the opportunity to speak with a wife of one of the -- you know, one of the leaders of that unit who told me that unfortunately so many members of the Fighting 69th upon their arrival in Afghanistan are no longer serving together as a cohesive unit but they're broken up into two and three person units. I'm wondering, if you know, because of the different and more specific duties that two or three man units are doing, does their time on this particular tour remain the same across the board? Or is it that no longer the case if they are reassigned to fill in with these other various units?

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

What happens with a lot of these National Guard units is when they arrive in country, you're right, they break them up. And we call them one-sies and two-sies. They do that, they extract them from the National Guard units depending upon what their mission is to fill operational voids in other units that are already in theater. Somebody may have been wounded or injured or killed, transferred to another component. And they leave a gap in another operational command. So they take these National Guard units and they supplement the line units with them in order to make sure that they remain operational. But, yeah, it's very, very common. They're time in theater, generally it's going to be bound by their home unit. If they deploy in April for 12 month deployment, if they go to, you know, the second battalion, third infantry, they're there six months. If that unit rotates home or rotates out, in all likelihood that soldier would be reassigned to another unit.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Thank you. Anybody else? Anything else? All right. Tom, thank you.

**DIRECTOR RONAYNE:**

All right. Thank you. I didn't want to get into it but we always talk on homeless veterans issues. And I have an article that I'd like to leave just at your leisure if you'd like to glance at it, it gives some very sobering statistics with regard to veterans within the homeless populations and geography, where in the country the larger populations are. And we are at the top of the heap. Thank you.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Thank you.

Holly?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Hello. I just wanted to bring up an issue that may or may not be -- you might hear about it in your offices. Medicare and Epic are doing some outreach right now to let people know that there maybe some assistance available for those who are low income with their Medicare Part B premiums. The Q I one used to have an assets test. It no longer does in New York State so there is a possibility that there are people out there that may be eligible. Epic did send out letters. The letter's a little convoluted in the sense that they didn't send out the guide lines to it but people can call our office and we can walk them through the application process. The other -- and those letters went out to -- in total they're only going out to about 350 people in Suffolk because those are the people that Epic knows of that might be eligible.

But there were also some ads that Medicare put out in Newsday. They had one last week. It was not in a great spot in the newspaper but it is out there telling people about low income subsidies for Medicare costs. Again, if they see the ad, you can let them to know to call us and we'll try to work with them on that. The applications are through Social Security, but, you know, we can let them know what the eligibilities are for those. But, again, you know, there's outreach going on but the outreach is not really fabulous.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Do you know if they plan to run on any other ads in any other papers or at least a better location?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Don't know because it's on the national level that they're deciding to do these things.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Mr. Chairman.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Just one more question. Holly, I'm wondering if we can make available to the Committee and maybe all of my colleagues at least some basic information that we can have distributed to their offices so that they would be prepared in the event they do receive these phone calls.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Sure. You know, again, it's probably easiest -- is probably just to let them know to call our office because we do have -- the whole premise of some of these outreach efforts on the federal level and the state level, which I don't necessarily agree with, is that they're going to ask the volunteer program, the high cap program to assist these seniors, which is great except for the fact that, you know, it is a volunteer program. And what's happened on the federal and state level is that they've been shrinking the paid people to do some of the assistance. And so they say, well, we have a volunteer program who can do it. We have had some heated discussions with the state on that issue. Because quite honestly we have a very nice volunteer program in the County.

But with the cost of gas and obligations that people have, they don't necessarily want to do continuous volunteer work. You know, they're willing to do so many hours a week but, you know, you can't bury them with new things that the state and the feds would like to have happen. So we have people to assist them in the office right now, but, you know, at some future date they may try to overwhelm these programs.

So just putting a heads up out there that we've had some discussions on that, on that issue with the state because I think that when the federal government shrinks the people that they have who are paid to help and the state has done the same, it's hard to look to the volunteer programs. I don't

care how much money they throw out at a volunteer program, it's a volunteer program. There's only so many volunteers that are willing to do this work. It's very technical, the Medicare issues. And, you know, it's a special person who wants to do that kind of volunteer work. And we've been pretty fortunate with ones that we have.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

About how many volunteers do you have right now?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Right now we have approximately 20 volunteers. I'd say 10 to 12 are very active and then the other ones, you know, work as they can. To think that we're going to take hundreds phone calls or make hundreds of phone calls, I think, is a little -- you know, is an unrealistic expectation. That's my issue I've had with the state because they want to throw us another 10 to \$15,000 but that doesn't mean that I can translate that into more volunteers. You know, a volunteer is a volunteer. And you have to beat the bushes to find them sometimes. So anyway, it's an issue that's come up. But in the meanwhile if you have people who need help with the Medicare, again, our office is available. And either through the volunteers or through paid staff we'll make sure that they get the help they need.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Legislator Romaine.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Mr. Chairman, what I might suggest is that information you could suggest to each of our colleagues that there's 18 of us, between us we could do two things. One is put out a press release to the local newspapers indicating the Aging, who to contact, whatever the basic information is. The second is we could incorporate it into our next news letter. My news letter just went out for the spring. But for the fall obviously could put something in there if it's still current. So maybe -- what I would suggest, Holly, is that maybe you would notify all 18 legislators, just give them some basic information, a sample of what you would like to see in just a basic governmental, for your information release that they could generate from their office. And most of us know our local press people. And it's a better shot that it may get in.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

I'll try to get some information that maybe they might have their own press releases that give the detailed information. Right now it's like this ad that says go ahead and call this number but it doesn't give a whole lot of information, which is one of my arguments, is that the very least they should put what the income levels are so people self-screen themselves out from just making a phone call.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Exactly. And that's why a little bit longer of a release but not that long of a release, just an informational release that we could issue from our offices with your number or whatever the contact numbers are.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Okay.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

And some of us could even regionalize it.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

All right. We'll try to get something together because honestly with the low income subsidies it's an ongoing program. They can apply any time, you know, to receive the subsidy. So it's not as if it has to be done by a certain date for that. Okay.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Great.

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Anything else? Okay. The picnic's July 22nd by the way. And the rain date's the 23rd.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

And where's it going to be?

**DIRECTOR RHODES-TEAGUE:**

Southaven.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

That I knew. For the record. Holly, thanks.

Doreen? How are you doing? It's a pleasure to welcome Doreen Fratello of the Suffolk Community Council.

**MS. PANNULLO:**

Actually, Judy Panullo, Executive Director of the Suffolk Community Council. I'm going to be doing that presentation this morning. And Doreen is here to help out.

We just wanted to talk about -- well, first of all the history of the Suffolk Community Council we've been in operations for 75 years doing planning, efficacy and information. We're an umbrella agency of Housing, Human Services. And we identify gaps and services and develop solutions to meet those needs. We have a long history of spin-offs. The Peconic Community Council is one of our spin-off's. SNAP, RSVP, the Senior Volunteer Program and so on. And so we saw a need for more accessibility on Long Island. And so we set up Accessible Long Island as one of the projects of the Suffolk Community Council.

The mission of Accessible Long Island is to increase accessibility for all Long Islanders, that's Nassau as well as Suffolk, through the promotion and use of universal design in all new and renovated buildings and homes. And we're going to talk more about universal design in just a minute.

Right now the focus of the project is on legislation, efficacy and policy. And this is for new rehab -- new buildings, rehabs, public commercial, residential buildings and homes. And we've have set up an advisory committee that is made up of builders and planners and architects, community organizers, realtors, educators, some elected officials, veterans, advocates and so on to begin the dialogue, the discussion of more accessibility.

And so some of the stats that I have up on the screen now is merely one million baby-boomers and seniors live on Long Island. This is like one third of the population. And 77,000 of the seniors have grandchildren living with them and they are the primary source for their care. And I'm hoping these numbers are right because we do have the experts in the room here, but 186,000 veterans live on Long Island and an estimated 9,000 have served on active duty since 2001. Some returning with life altering disabilities.

And right now Long Island is currently home to almost 300,000 people over the age of five living with a disability. And these demographics is going to require an increase in accessibility to allow people to age in place and to create homes that are visitable by others who may have a disability and for communities to remain active -- for people to remain active in the community.

Accessible Long Island seeks to create lasting and sustainable change and create inclusive and accessible communities that promote civic participation for all Long Islanders. So we're talking about seniors, baby boomers, veterans, people with disabilities, people of short stature, family, children, adults caring for aging parents and anyone who wants to age in place. And that means to

stay in your home, not have to go to a nursing home or anything else; to be able to age in your own home.

Now, there's some benefits of universal design. Now universal design goes beyond the ADA, the Americans with Disability Act. That act is almost 18 years old now. And things have changed over the years. People now are using maybe power-chairs which are a little bit wider so we need a little more accessibility. So the benefits are the ease of use, safety, life span usability, the visitability of others. Now visitability may be a word you haven't heard but it's the ability to visit. And it provides for aging in place and accommodates all users. What we have here is a picture of when you think about curb cuts, originally they were for people with wheelchairs. But curb cuts and sidewalks are used more by people on bicycles, people pushing baby carriages and so on. And that is a sample or an example of universal design and how that can benefit everybody, not just a person who may have a disability.

And some of the basic -- Accessible Long Island has a list of basic universal design features that we think are important. And that's one no-step entry. And that doesn't have to be the front door for a home. It could be a side door, a garage door, a back door. The doorway should be wider, 36 inch doors with a minimum of 32 clear passage. And what you have here is a picture of a door lever. Rather than the door knobs that turn, and if you have arthritis -- it looks like that door's good, and if you have arthritis or something, it makes it difficult to turn. Also, you know, I'm a mother of twins. When I had one twin on each hip, it was difficult to open the door so I could use my elbow if it had a lever. So that makes it universal. It's universal for everybody.

An accessible bathroom on the first floor with a 60 inch clear turning radius to allow a person in a chair to move around, lever faucets and backing on the walls to enable safe installation of grab bars that you may not need until later on. But it's there so the wall is reinforced. And a bedroom on a first floor or a habitable area for a later conversion; could be an office, could be a dining room, that type of thing. And those are the basic features that we say are important for a home and a building. Well, right now that's for a home. And that's what's important to have, basic universal design features.

This is not anything new. This is taking place across the country. As a matter of fact, the Town of Southampton here on Long Island has universal design principles -- they have passed actual legislation for universal design. They also have passed -- well, actually they have incentives. So if someone is building a new home and they're going to have some -- actually they only have three principles, homeowners get a discount on their building permit. Other places have passed legislation, you know, like Atlanta, Georgia and Austin and Michigan and so on. So we're saying that Long Island is really not prepared for the onslaught of people living longer, people who want to remain in their homes. When we think about the cost of nursing homes, how much does it cost to put someone in a nursing home? If they could age in place, we'd save a lot of money.

So we are bringing this to your attention. And what we would like you to do is to consider passing legislation for universal design that will save money by allowing people to age in place, to promote home and commercial use for universal design and support public projects that use universal design features. I know there are some projects before the County and -- commercial projects, but nevertheless we're pushing for residential as well as commercial. And so we would like universal design features to be used in all future buildings. And we have talked with the County folks, too. We talked to Jim Morgo about this.

There is some websites here if you want to know more about universal design. As I said it's nothing extremely new but it's something that's very important. And I think when we think about it, you know, if I think about my own house, I'm not sure I could age in place in my own home. And so I think that we're now thinking about when we maybe redoing our homes or moving into a new home. Is this something where you can live in for the next 30 years or something. I think we just have to start thinking about it. And we're beginning the discussion. And we just bring this to you because it really affects a lot of people in Suffolk County.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Very good. Judy, thank you. Thanks so much for being with us. Universal design is a concept that we had the opportunity to discuss at great length during our public hearings during our county-wide Senior Citizens Task Force. And it was one of the very strong recommendations of the task force that Suffolk County adopt as policy, you know, this concept of universal design. And we take a look at our buildings and our projects that are coming up in the future and we're starting to work in that direction, I'm pleased to say. But you know, as we know, that in order to have universal design universal, that it's going to take the cooperation of the towns because ultimately the land use and the zoning authority lies with the town. So I guess my question to you is what efforts have you been able to make in working with our town supervisors and our town boards so that universal design can become universal?

**MS. PANNULLO:**

Right. Well, thank you for asking because that gives me opportunity to brag a little bit. And we have met with every single -- no, we have one left in Nassau County -- but every single town supervisor in the County of Suffolk. I'm going out as far as Shelter Island, which is really a long trip, and Legislator Romaine would know that, but to -- just to introduce the concept of universal design as well as ask them to consider expediting the process.

Let's say somebody gets hurt and has a disability, whether it's temporary or permanent, and they need to add a renovation to their home whether it's a ramp or a lift. Most houses you'd have to go through the Zoning Board of Appeals. That could take six or seven months. Now if a person needs to be carried in and out of the house for that length of time, that's really a huge inconvenience and God forbid there's a fire or something. So we're asking -- we asked each and every one of the town supervisors to consider expediting the process to speed it up so they would either go on top of the list or be the first, you know, the next hearing that was scheduled that they would be on there or if they could just pass it. Every single town either has it but it's not been codified, has, yes, they agreed to it and they're passing legislation. And so we've been very positive.

It was also an opportunity to talk more about universal design. For instance, in Huntington they really liked it so much. Supervisor Petrone said that he would consider an incentive for people by having a person assigned who will look at universally designed plans. And that person dealing with the -- I mean a person building with universal design would be put on the top of the list, which is what builders really want. They want to get it in and out. So that's an incentive that doesn't cost anything.

As I said, in the Town of Southampton, they give you \$300 off of your building permit. So that's why I said this is a legislative agenda; we're working with elected officials because that's the only way we can effect change. So thank you. And I know that we probably will have work with villages because villages have their own government as well but that's -- there are a lot of villages in Suffolk County. But I think there's actually -- isn't there an association of villagers because that was how we originally started this. We were working with the Association of Supervisors and then met with them individually.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Legislator Romaine.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Yes, there is as a -- as you know, there's 31 villages in Suffolk County. And the Executive Director of the Suffolk County Village Association is Josh Horton, H-o-r-t-o-n. If you want, contact my office, we'll give you his telephone number. He's the former Supervisor of Southold. Working with villages and towns are very important. What do you think we can do to assist this effort at a County level?

**MS. PANNULLO:**

Well, you know, we need the help of everybody. And the Legislators are extremely important. You know, a phone call from the Legislators to a town, a phone call from Legislators to the County Executive when we're talking, his office, when we're talking about be, you know, future building and any kind of supportive legislation would be very helpful.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

I'd be happy to do that. I usually get disconnected when I make either a call to the Supervisors or the County Executive.

**MS. PANNULLO:**

The supervisor, too? Oh, no.

Do you want to add anything to it?

**MS. FRATELLO:**

Hi, my name is Doreen Fratello. I would just like to say that I think one of the things that would help extensively is starting to increase the dialogue. So even just the fact that people are beginning to discuss it, as you said, and continuing to discuss it, because there are a lot of projects that go on that if it's not brought to light, that it doesn't really come into, you know, discussion and doesn't come into play. So if that -- you know, there are a lot of projects that go up that are commercial projects, but they include housing.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Well, one of the things that you may want to consider is any housing that's funded with -- through County funds or through the County -- Suffolk County IDA, if it is permitted because sometimes they do mix use projects. We're using IDA funds. Anything of that nature or with affordable housing funds that we require handicapped accessibility, and, in fact, with affordable housing you may want to see that the County dedicates a portion of its affordable housing to those with disabilities, those who are handicapped, those who need a different situation in terms of accessibility. I think setting a certain percentage aside like a 10 percent or a requirement of all affordable housing be set aside.

If you want, where's our legal Counsel when we need him, I'll Budget Review to contact legal Counsel. I'll be happy to introduce a resolution that would set aside a fixed percentage, in this case, I'm thinking 10 percent, of all affordable housing funds be spent on housing that is handicapped accessible.

**MS. FRATELLO:**

Well, I think one of the things that's important is that if you -- if you include universal design features in the base line in the beginning process of building a home or any future homes, one of the things that is extremely useful is that the home doesn't necessarily have to be used for an accessible purpose now but that it can be easily altered.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

So then we can include that in as a design feature for all affordable housing that the County expends County dollars on.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Yeah. In fact that -- Legislator Romaine, that's the approach that we've started to take now and not necessarily a specific percentage of set aside. The idea is that universal design be incorporated into all such units.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

We don't we co-sponsor this. We'll work together on this.

**MS. PANNULLO:**

I think that's great. And, you know, there's this big push for green buildings. And that's wonderful.

I'm an environmentalist, too. Many years ago -- for many years I've been an environmentalist. And it's great to have sustainable in green buildings, but if can't get them in, what good are they? So what is the percentage that they put aside for green buildings? Is it higher than 10 percent?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

That the County is spending? The County should not be spending any money on building --

**MS. PANNULLO:**

Not spending, but they're saying a certain percentage has to be sustainable, green whatever; is that not true?

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

It should 100 percent.

**MS. PANNULLO:**

Okay, it should be 100. What I'm saying -- what I'm trying to -- the point I'm trying to make is that if we're saying ten percent is accessible or universally designed and 100 percent is green, maybe we need to up that percentage a little bit. I mean you got to start somewhere but it's a thought. Make them green and accessible. I wish there was a color for accessibility. Maybe blue, I don't know. But anyway, I think that's great. Legislation would be perfect; would be absolutely wonderful. And I really sincerely appreciate that.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Judy, thank you. Doreen, thanks so much for being with us. Anything else? Anything else? Anybody else? All right. Very good.

**LEG. ROMAINE:**

Motion to adjourn.

**CHAIRMAN STERN:**

Motion to adjourn by Legislator Romaine. I'll second. We are adjourned.

**(THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 1:50 PM)  
{ } DENOTES SPELLED PHONETICALLY**