

VETERANS AND SENIORS COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Veterans and 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 November 25, 2013.

Members Present:

Legislator Stern - Chairman
Legislator Anker - Vice-Chair
Legislator Barraga
Legislator Gregory
Legislator Muratore

Also In Attendance:

Renee Ortiz - Chief Deputy Clerk
George Nolan - Counsel to the Legislature
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Paul Perillie - Aide to Legislator Gregory
Kevin LaValle - Aide to Legislator Muratore
Tom Ronayne - Director of Veteran's Services
Rick Brand - Newsday
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken and Transcribed By:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

*(*The meeting was called to order at 1:05 p.m. *)*

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the committee on Veterans and Seniors. Please rise and join us in the Pledge of Allegiance led by Legislator Gregory.

*(*Salutation*)*

Please remain standing and join us in a moment of silence as we keep all of our brave men and women fighting for our freedoms overseas in our thought and prayers.

*(*Moment of silence observed*)*

All right. Welcome, Director.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Good afternoon. Thank you, as always, for the invitation to be here. I honestly have very little to report on today other than we've been very, very busy. 'Tis the season. About a week before Veterans Day through the holidays, we tend to get very active in terms of programs and events throughout the county and have been attending quite a few of those. In fact, I have also apparently not been attending some. I missed an event on Friday that I was very much looking forward to with Legislator Barraga for the acknowledgement of a gentleman who had served in three wars.

LEG. BARRAGA:

World War II, 50 missions.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Okay. But it was -- unfortunately, I was at another event at the time and did not make it. We're entering a very interesting period of time right now. For the next several weeks, we actually have several veteran-specific housing projects coming online. When I leave here today, I'm attending one in Medford for the Bishop Hale House, which will be a six-to-eight bed veterans residence. December 16, the property -- you all may be aware of a property that Computer Associates had donated last year to the Village of Islandia. There were eight residences build on those acres. They created a cul-de-sac, and on December 16, all eight veteran families will get the keys for their new homes, which is really wonderful because they've created, literally, a community within a community. All eight homes will be occupied by veterans or married with children, so the children will grow up on the cul-de-sac together; very, very nice program.

There are several other -- we are very quickly approaching the launch of the project at the old Navy Marine Corps Reserve Center in Amityville, which is coming along beautifully. Not only will that provide 60 housing units for veterans and veterans families, but it will also provide a new veterans community and resource center that we're very excited about being partners with. The other agencies will be in the facility, and we're just very excited. There's a lot of good happening right now. We do have -- we were contacted this morning by the Suffolk County Park Police who were, as a part of their regular patrols, had identified a small encampment in the Town of Babylon. Apparently at least one, possibly more, of the individuals residing in this encampment are veterans. We know of at least one Vietnam veteran in the group, so we have a team out there now with the parks police trying to link the individuals living at that encampment with services. We've already communicated with V.A. and told V.A. that we'll have at least one individual on his way over there today. Good things are happening.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good. All good things. Anybody for the director? No? Okay. All right. Director Ronayne, as always, thank you so much for being with us for all that you do.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Thank you. I would like to very quickly add, and this is more just for your information, I've been invited to -- and I cannot tell you how many people will be attending. I believe it will be about 40 people in Albany. The governor is going to be hosting a roundtable for leaders in the veterans community throughout the state. I've been invited to attend, and as I get closer to the date and prepare my talking points, if there's anything specific to this type of forum that you would like me to share any information with, please inform me of that, and I'll be happy to include it in my talking points.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good. Again, thanks, Tom.

Okay. We have one item on the agenda. It is Introductory Resolution **IR 2043, Accepting and appropriating 100% reimbursable Grant funds from the New York State Office for Aging (County Executive)**. This is for the Ombudsman program under Title VII. Can place this on the consent calendar, so I'll take a motion from Legislator Muratore. Second by Vice Chair Legislator Anker. Any discussion? All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstention? IR 2043 is **approved and placed on the consent calendar (VOTE: 5-0-0-0)**.

There being no further business before the committee, we are adjourned. Thank you.

*(*The meeting was adjourned at 1:11 p.m. *)*