

VETERANS & SENIORS COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE

Minutes

A regular 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 Monday, December 8, 2014 at 12:30 p.m.

Members Present:

Legislator Steve Stern - Chairman
Legislator Thomas Barraga
Legislator Sarah Anker
Legislator Al Krupski
Legislator Tom Muratore

Also in Attendance:

Legislator William Lindsay - Legislative District No. 8
Jason Richberg - Chief Deputy Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature
Sarah Simpson - Assistant Counsel/Suffolk County Legislature
Jill Moss - Budget Review Office
Debbie Harris - Aide to Legislator Stern
Bill Shilling - Aide to Legislator Calarco
Tom Ronayne - Director/Veterans Service Agency
Tom Vaughn - County Executive's Office
Lisa Santeramo - County Executive's Office
John Jordan - Suffolk County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Services
Patricia Wood - Grassroots Environmental Education
Ruth Albright - Greater Long Island Running Club
Robert Cisco - Greater Long Island Running Club
Joe Ingino - Vietnam Veterans New York State Council
Frederick Welge - Suffolk County Restaurant & Tavern Owners Association
Patrick Donohue - Project9Line
Tim Scherer - UVBH/CCGS Semper Fi Fund
Richard Gunzel - Bohemia Track Club
Maury Dean - Bohemia Track Club/Long Island Running Community
Marty Brown - The Long Island Running Community
David Kennedy - Patchogue Chamber of Commerce
Charlie Taylor - The Soldier Project
Chris Delaney - 9-1-1 Veterans
Brendan Barrett - Sayville Running Co.
Michael Stoltz
Peter Hawkins
Linda Valdez
Rick Brand - Newsday
All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

Minutes Transcribed By:

Kim Castiglione - Legislative Secretary

*(*The meeting was called to order at 12:38 p.m. *)*

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the committee on Veterans and Seniors. I am going to ask everyone to please rise and join us in the Pledge led by Legislator Barraga.

Salutation

And if you would remain standing and join in a moment of silence and keep all of our brave men and women fighting for our freedoms overseas in our thoughts and prayers.

Moment of Silence

Good afternoon and thank you for joining us today. Okay. I do have quite a few cards for Public Portion. Number one is John Jordan. Mr. Jordan.

MR. JORDAN:

Good morning. My name John Jordan, Deputy Commissioner of Suffolk Fire Rescue. I'm here to answer any concerns or with the Police Department answer any concerns on the questions about public safety relative to the Suffolk County Marathon 2015.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good. Thank you for being here today. Are there any questions at this point from any members of the committee? Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you, Legislator Stern. I guess the question is do you have a -- just give us a brief overview of how you are going to handle the, you know, the safety of the runners and participants and bystanders and traffic.

MR. JORDAN:

As of this point, there's no set plan yet. What we did is we met with all the fire departments -- I'll speak to the fire rescue portion, and the Chief is here from the Police Department, Chief Cameron, he can speak on the police aspect. What we did is we met with all the fire departments, rescue squads, that are directly affected, their response areas. We had a preliminary meeting at the end of October just to bring them to the table to find out if they had any concerns. We have no distinct plans yet. We are waiting for a race director, actually, to be named, so we could all sit down and start planning together.

What I will tell you is that they are very optimistic as far as the folks that we met. We met with the chief -- the chief of department and/or the chairman of the board -- commission. They are optimistic. Their biggest concern was that they would be included, and obviously we would do that. We wouldn't plan an event like this without them being included.

Again, there's no specific plan made, but what we are doing is we're assembling the County Incident Management Assistance Team. They will direct the planning of this through that. They will all be at the table for the planning meetings as well as the State Police, State Parks Police, all of the entities involved. And, you know before the final plan is made, you know, we'll do things like we'll assemble standby crews for fire and rescue. We'll have our assets, County assets there. We'll set-up communications plans, you know, special frequencies so we can talk. We'll have, you know, EMS there for the participants as well as the public. You know, there will be no area that's going to be segregated that, you know, emergency response can't get to during the event.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Have you also included the local municipalities, whether it's a town or villages?

MR. JORDAN:

Local municipalities were contacted, I believe, through the County Exec's Office, and they've had meeting with them as well as civics and all of that.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Okay. Anybody else? Legislator Muratore.

LEG. MURATORE:

I guess my question may be to the County Exec people. First of all, why is it coming before Vets and Seniors? I mean, there's going to be cost involved and shouldn't it have gone before Ways and Means rather than Vets and Seniors?

MS. SANTERAMO:

So like we've stated a couple of times, the goal of this race is to raise money for veterans, so we're working -- the reason it is before Vets and Seniors I think is because it's to raise money for veterans. I don't -- I'm not in charge of assigning the committees though so I'm not -- I'm not sure. I think maybe George Nolan could answer that probably better than I could.

LEG. MURATORE:

Yeah, because if that's the end result then I'm fine with that. I just want to know, being that it's an expenditure of funds, County funds, which we have no idea how much it's going to cost us right now, correct?

MS. SANTERAMO:

We are -- the purpose of this resolution is to allow us -- we put an RFP out. We had one complete response. We had another one that was -- unfortunately came in seven minutes late. The reason it's before the committee is because we actually before we can really move forward and get every final detail down, we need the race director. So this is, in essence, to get the race director. The Legislature has to approve because it was a sole source bidder.

LEG. MURATORE:

Okay. So this is just for the race director, nothing else.

MS. SANTERAMO:

Yeah, this is for the race director. That's all this is for, and a lot of the final details will be made once we have the race director and can work. We at the County Exec's Office have gone as far as we can go without having a professional race director on board. But we have stated very publicly we are working to create a budget that through sponsorships and registration fees would be cost

neutral to the taxpayer and in essence raise money for veterans -- to expand veteran services in Suffolk County.

LEG. MURATORE:

Yeah, that's wonderful hopefully and then with being it's vets and seniors we'll get a good turnout. People will contribute and sponsor and it will be a wonderful success to give money to our vets and seniors. But my only concern was why here and not -- but it's about the race director, it's not about expending any money, other than what, is it \$20,000 for a race director. Do we have a cost on him?

MS. SANTERAMO:

We have not negotiated. We have not gotten into those conversations yet. We have their proposal, we have to have those conversations, but we're not -- we're not there yet. We need you to approve us entering into those contract negotiations.

LEG. MURATORE:

So are we approving the contract with the race director or the ability to negotiate with a race director?

MS. SANTERAMO:

You're approving the RFP -- you're approving the sole source RFP for the race director.

LEG. MURATORE:

Okay. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

All right. Anybody else for Mr. Jordan at this point? All right. Thank you, sir. The next card I have is Patricia Wood.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Mr. Chairman, if I may just for a moment.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Legislator Barraga.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Before you have the next speaker, unfortunately due to a personal commitment I have to leave in the next couple of minutes. I just wanted to get on the record that if I had stayed for the actual committee vote I would be voting in the affirmative on the marathon piece of legislation, 2159. I'll be voting in the affirmative again when it goes before the General session.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Patricia Wood. Patricia? Okay. Linda Valdez. On deck is Ruth Albright.

MS. VALDEZ:

Good afternoon and thank you very much for allowing me to speak before you today. My name is Linda Valdez. I'm a Huntington resident and I am a runner. I'm here today to support the marathon. I'm so excited. I had already started planning my race calendar, and when I looked in

the newspaper in October, I don't remember the date, around the 5th or 15th, and saw that there was a proposed marathon for Suffolk County, well, that event was automatically put on my list.

I stand before you wearing a few of my medals today. I had about 30 of them. I couldn't put them all on, so I just chose three. Seven hundred and seven days ago I started running, January 1, 2013. I started running to improve my health, and as I stand before you today, I say that running has saved my life. I look forward to being able to run in Suffolk County close to home. My very first race was a local 5K in Nassau County where I came in in the top three of my age group, and that was the 50 to 54 age group so I was really proud of that. I had the opportunity a little bit later to run the half marathon in Nassau County. That was fabulous. Within ten months of running, I ran my very first marathon. That was the Brooklyn Marathon. It was a wonderful experience, but I look forward to running a marathon close to home here in Suffolk County. So I do hope you'll approve the proposal for the Suffolk County Marathon because I look forward to that being my second marathon. Thank you very much for allowing me to speak.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Linda, thank you. Thanks for being with us today. Ruth Albright and Joe Ingino is on deck.

MS. ALBRIGHT:

Hi. My name is Ruth Albright. I'm a member of Greater Long Island Running Club, a longtime Long Island resident. I lived in Amityville all my life, now in Wheatley Heights. I'm the child of a mother that has 13 children that were raised on this Island. We gave this Island a lot of its service. My whole family. My mom is still alive, 81 years old. When I told her that I was going to run this race, she was so ecstatic to know, and I'm sorry, I'm tearing up, that I would give back my service to a County that we -- took care of all our lives and she was like a care worker like in the hospitals for Suffolk state years ago. And all 13 of us have lived here and gave so much service to Long Island. So when I found out that this -- I did the same as this young lady. That was immediately on my calendar at work. They all know I'm running it. I laminated the copy, put it in my car and made like hundreds of copies to hand out to people that I know, because I know it's going to be a great asset not only to my family to see me do something that they love that I do it all the time, and just this County and what it would bring to this County as a whole and how it's going to make us -- put us even more on the map. So I love it. I stand to tell you right now, and I have been running all my life. Just started competing at 50, winning races in my age group. Nobody believes me, yes I am 50, 55 actually, and I just thank God that I lived this long to do what I'm doing. And we run for a lot of charities, so to run for these guys, which I have millions of them in my family, like Navy, Air Force, Army, it's just a privilege. I thank you guys very much for what you do.

So with Greater Long Island Running Club and all my running partners I'm sure, we are behind this and we hope that you have in your hearts to let us go forward with this endeavor. Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Joe Ingino and on deck is Chris Delaney.

MR. INGINO:

Good afternoon. I'm Joe Ingino. I happen to be representing Vietnam Veterans of America State Council. I'm in support of this marathon that they want to hold in Suffolk County. I think it's a great thing for veterans and I am -- just wanted to let everybody know that I am in support of this 100%, and I know we'll probably have a lot of Vietnam Vets that will come out and probably participate in it. Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you, sir. Chris Delaney and on deck is Frederick Welge.

MR. DELANEY:

Hi. My name is Chris Delaney. I'm the President of 9-1-1 Veterans. We're a locally based not for profit who actually takes care of their Long Island Veterans. I know a lot of us have these yellow stickers on our cars that say we support our troops, but I would beg to differ, because if we did really, truly support our troops, I wouldn't have to be out there volunteering my time raising money and helping these people that we fail as a nation, a County, to take care of.

It also bothers me much that whenever it seems like we have something to move forward on that's positive, in recent lights the veterans exemption for school taxes, where our Governor put it on the burden of all local municipalities to make that decision instead of coming out and putting that across the board to everybody, they have to put that burden on the communities to say whether or not they are going to take care of our veterans. And what I saw at some of these meetings disturbed me because there was bigger turnouts at those Board of Education meetings to oppose a veteran exemption tax, which is miniscule to the men and women who served this County, but yet we open up our boarders and our schools to people who don't pay into our society, who don't pay their taxes, but there's no outrage against that. So as a veteran, I have to say it's very disappointing to see that roadblock after roadblock will continually be thrown up.

If any of you would like to know exactly what it is we do and how we help, we have Vietnam Veterans who are in homelessness status still that we get out of that status by going out and raising these funds. Vietnam Veterans. We have World War II and Korean Veterans who cannot afford the price of oil in their tanks. They're freezing in their homes, that we go out and we get that oil in their tanks for them. There's many Legislators that I work with that will call me up on my phone, while I'm raising my family or working my job, because everything I do, we volunteer. Our organization is all volunteer. But they'll call me up saying that there's no more funding from HEAP, there's no more way that the County can help them or the State can help them.

And now yet we have a contribution like this, such as the marathon, where all the monies that are raised here on Long Island, like our organization, are going to stay here on Long Island to help Long Island Veterans to supplement the lack of what the County does and the State doesn't do already that was promised to us. You know, I stand before you as an Iraq Veteran and, you know, why do we always have this battle when it comes to doing what's right, but when it comes to doing what a lot of us don't think is right, we turn that blind eye.

I want to plead with you, you know, any hold-up on this will significantly push this further down the road. We had great event, which I know probably a lot of you know about, the LIMA 5K that was held in the Town of Islip. That was a very, very -- it generated a lot of revenue for us. And I don't know why to this date, because no one has ever contacted me about it, but to this date we don't know why that came to a stop or an end. But that significantly hurt us enable to help veterans. But, you know, we make amends. We try to find other ways. And then when we were approached by the County and that this was going to be another way that it could, you know, help us help our Long Island Veterans and then to see how we just always put that roadblock up when things are being done diligently. So I just plead on behalf of the veterans that we help, and that we're going to continue to help, that we get to be able to move forward on this and at least get to the planning stages and then answer all those critical questions that can be answered by that race director that they need so much. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Chris, thank you.

(Applause)

LEG. MURATORE:

Excuse me, young man.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Chris, if you can come on back up. Legislator Muratore has a question for you.

LEG. MURATORE:

Chris, thank you for coming down and thank you for your service to our country, and thank you for everything you do for our veterans, you know, whether they be World War II, Korean, Vietnam, Iraq. I just hope that everyone listens to your words and that all the money raised from this event, which I am sure is going to take place, does go back to our veterans and is used to supplement what they need. So again, thank you for coming and thank you for your service.

MR. DELANEY:

Well, I can tell you this. Tom Ronayne, who we work with a lot, I know he's going to be probably one of the bigger oversights of this, and I know the Long Island ABATE had a motorcycle run for veterans, and Tom was tasked with finding the organizations that are worthy to uphold to a certain standard. So I can tell you, in working with Tom, that when I went to that event and saw where the monies were going and the charities they were going to, they were indeed staying here on Long Island. That all the charities that they chose, I believe it could have been anywhere from 13 to 18, but whatever charities they choose, all of them, you know, we support fully. I'll tell you right now, I only support charities that are done by volunteers and that the stuff stays here on Long Island. So I can attest for them saying that I'm pretty sure it's going to stay here where it belongs.

LEG. MURATORE:

Well, that's my concern, is what's raised here stays here. That's why -- you know, I'm a member of ABATE, and I just did a fund drive in my office for ABATE. Why? Because it goes to everyone here in Suffolk County, and that's the important thing. So, again, thank you and let's hope this rolls forward with success and we raise a heck of a lot of money for you and your people.

MR. DELANEY:

Thank you, sir.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Chris, hold on. Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

Don't go away. I also want to thank you for the work that you've done. And also, I wanted to bring up Tom Ronayne's name, because he knocks himself out to try to find the men and women in our military that need help. And I got to tell you what's so frustrating even here on a County level, is that when we ask for information, the State and Federal, they don't give us the information that we really need to identify those men and women who need help. And I was working on a piece of legislation to try to help the children of our vets, and I couldn't even get that information because it's confidential and, you know, there's a lot of red tape that we have to plow through. But because of you and the people here today we will do it and, again, I just want to thank you for coming out here and supporting, you know, letting us know your thoughts. So, thank you so much.

MR. DELANEY:

Thank you. I also would like to talk to you on that is our organization is big on the community taking ownership of their veterans, and that's where it has to first start, because as somebody in the military I don't want my information out there, especially with what's going on in the world now with ISIS or ISIL. But the bottom line is we work with the Northport V.A. We work with Tom Ronayne, and we all got to work together in order for it to make, you know, to make it work. Tom is a very, very integral part of that and he's very knowledgeable. And I know I call him late at night and he's out helping veterans. He's definitely a good point man on it.

LEG. ANKER:

So while you're here, can I maybe reach out to you, you and your organization, to look into supporting -- we were trying to create a PTA military group to support all the kids. And a lot of these kids, they don't -- the teachers don't know that their parent is away because they're not allowed to know. But we'll reach out and maybe work with you on that?

MR. DELANEY:

Absolutely. Like I say, any way that we can help to make it better. Because I learned on my deployment, at first when I first started getting involved in veterans issues it was about the veteran and solely the veteran, and then I realized what my family went through, what my kids went through, and my son still has some issues that he's dealing with and he's nine now. So any way that we can help, you know, that's what we're about, especially the families.

LEG. ANKER:

Thank you. As a daughter of a disabled navy vet, I would really appreciate it. I'm looking forward to creating better programs for our country.

MR. DELANEY:

Us too, thank you.

(Applause)

LEG. ANKER:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Frederick Welge and on deck is Patrick Donohue.

MR. WELGE:

Good afternoon, Chairman Stern, committee members. I am Fred Welge, board member for the Suffolk County Restaurant and Tavern Owners Association, and we're here to voice our support from all the members for this event. It's a lot of planning and logistics involved in it, and the sooner the race coordinator is named, the quicker we can all get involved. Even restaurants that aren't in the immediate area of the race love the veterans portion of it, so the entire organization Countywide is in full support. President Jack McCarthy is out of state. He sends his regrets he couldn't be here, but he fully supports it as well.

Personally, I live in Sayville, am an active member of the Sayville Rotary, which is very involved in veterans affairs, so personally I'm looking forward to doing whatever I can as well. If you need anything from the Association or myself, we're there to help you and look forward to naming a race director as soon as possible. Thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Very good. Thank you.

(Applause)

And thank you for being here. Patrick Donohue and on deck is Tim Scherer.

MR. DONOHUE:

Hey, how are you doing? My name is Patrick Donohue. I'm a veteran as well as I'm still in the Reserves, so I guess I'm a soldier still. I am representing Project9Line. I am President and founder. We're aiming to help veterans, you know, communicate as well as to help them find purpose. I believe this race will help them do both of those. It will open the communication line between the community and the veterans so they could see what's really happening and the need that they have, which will really benefit them, as well as give them purpose. Maybe veterans will be training and running this event. We run a lot in the military, so we're trained for this and I think it's a perfect fit. I think the community is really going to benefit and the veterans in this community, which is really what I care about the most, are really going to benefit because, you know, anything that truly helps our local veterans you guys should be all for, and I fully support it and I believe you guys should, too. So, thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Tim Scherer.

MR. SCHERER:

Hi. My name is Tim Scherer. I work for United Veterans Beacon House and I'm a Gold Star Dad. My son, Marine Corporal Christopher G. Scherer was killed on 21 July 2007. So what I would like to do is just show my support here today to hopefully help these veteran organizations as United Veterans Beacon House and so many other good ones. We have a race in honor of my son each year and have some experience in working with some of the logistics in a smaller way, but what we really found is just by communication and working with these people that it can all be worked out, because ultimately at the end of the day we measure our time in hours on what it takes to put on a race, but we are helping people that their lives have been affected forever. Whether it's PTSD, whether it's losing limbs, and just realize that this doesn't go away for them. So I just hopefully -- that I can urge everybody as, you know, take egos aside, get in a room, and let's get this thing worked out. I think that it would just really, really truly benefit all of our veterans. I just want to say -- I think that's really about it.

We find that we do this race in East Northport called I Did the Grid. Many people are not connected to the veterans and to military and really to a lot of things that happen, but they want to be. There's so many good people out there that you now can offer a vehicle to connect these people that I don't know what to do, I don't know how to help. Well guess what? Come volunteer for this race, and not only for you as adults, but you can teach your children, because I'm hoping you'll have stuff for the kids to be involved in a positive way. And all of us doing positive things can hopefully help change these lives that have already been changed in a positive way so that they can really adapt back into our community and be a productive part of it. Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you, sir. Michael Stoke? Is that you? I got to tell you, Mike, it doesn't even look close. Mr. Stoltz.

MR. STOLTZ:

We all have our limitations. I'm Mike Stoltz. I'm with the Association for Mental Health and

Veterans and Seniors 12-8-14

Wellness, which used to be Clubhouse of Suffolk. Under our umbrella is Suffolk County United Veterans as well as the Mental Health Association in Suffolk.

I wanted to talk first, though, not having to do with anything to do with my organization. I'm also a member of the Rotary Club of Ronkonkoma, and I have been a member for the last 24 years. For the past 30 the club has been doing the Run Around the Lake. About three years ago we connected with the Michael Murphy Foundation, and with that affiliation the outpouring of support and collaboration with the veterans community was unbelievable, incredibly enthusiastic. We went from a race every year that had about 500 runners to over 2,000 runners in June. We get people from all across the country. This past year we made \$50,000, every penny of which went back mostly to the veterans causes.

I can tell you the enthusiasm that comes out from that event is just -- and that's a small inkling of kind of what's out there. The enthusiasm from the veterans community, from people who want to support veterans causes just through that small run, if that's, you know, a microcosm of what can happen with a marathon, this Legislature and this County is making a wonderful decision. There is a tremendous opportunity here from an economic standpoint as well as from a supporting our veterans standpoint.

Until about six years ago I knew very little about the plight and the experience of veterans in Suffolk County. I am not a veteran. A gentleman by the name of John Lynch, who ran Suffolk County United Veterans, approached me at the time and said, listen, you know, a lot of the veterans we're getting in our homeless shelter and in our homeless outreach are veterans who also seem to have the signature injuries of our post 9/11 conflicts, TBI and mental illnesses and PTSD. He thought at the time that the relationship between the outreach for homeless veterans and, you know, our mental health agency made a lot of sense.

Through that experience I met some incredible people, Tom Ronayne, who has been mentioned. Tim, who spoke before. Frank Amalfitano from Beacon House, the late Tim Clark and now Chris Delaney from 9-1-1 Vets. This County leads the east coast not only in population, and Tom Ronayne has spoken often about the number of veterans who are in Suffolk County and Long Island. This region is so passionate about its veterans, really leads the east coast. This will really -- if the County is not already on the map, this will clearly put the County on the map. So congratulations on your effort. I urge your support and anything that we can do from our agency as well as I'll say from the Rotary Club in Ronkonkoma and the Rotary network of clubs in Suffolk, the Rotary will be there, too, to help out. Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Mike, thank you. Richard Gunzel and on deck is Robert Cisco.

MR. GUNZEL:

Good afternoon and thank you very much for allowing me to speak here today. My name is Richard Gunzel. I am the President Elect for the Bohemia Track Club for 2015-2016. I'm also the recording secretary for the Suffolk County Restaurant Tavern Association. I work with Fred, who was up here earlier. I just want to say that we are in full support of this. Should the Greater Long Island Running Club become the race directors for this, we of course would work very closely to help them with this and anybody else. I'd like to point out one of the numerous advantages for the Greater Long Island Running Club is they work with U.S.A. Track and Field. I know the first gentleman that was up here was speaking about safety and concerns of that type. The U.S.A. Track and Field is the national or actually the international organization that actually runs all racing events. Training, etcetera, would be similar to NASCAR for running.

Veterans and Seniors 12-8-14

Just for your own edification, they also provide a very, very inexpensive liability insurance policy for this kind of an event through an A+ 15 carrier. It's all New York State admitted. It's \$11 million in liability, and I see a lot of the town Legislators are here today. You can add all the towns to that kind of a contract as additional insured but no additional costs. So with 11 million in force obviously everybody can be properly protected. And that would pick up the -- something of that nature would pick up the set-up of the race the day before or whatever, the day of the race, the race after and any events such as medal ceremonies and things like this would also be included. And should Greater Long Island Running Club be the director we would be glad to work with them in these ways.

I'm also a veteran. I was in the service in 1966 and '67, and I'm glad to see that when soldiers do return things are a little bit different today than they were in 1966 and '67. Again, I truly hope that this event takes place. And again, speaking for the Bohemia Track Club and the Suffolk County Restaurant and Tavern Association we would be glad to work with you in any manner, form or shape we can. Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Robert Cisco, and on deck is Maury Dean.

MR. CISCO:

Good afternoon. My name is Bob Cisco. I'd like to approach this a little differently. I'd like to speak as a veteran of the 1960's, when it wasn't popular to be a vet. As my brothers who know, we were second-class citizens, we weren't respected. We were turned back from our friends actually. I started running at 50 years old; I'm 65 right now. I did the New York Marathon in 2007, and you are just one of the crowd. I mean, you might as well be on a cattle drive. The week after that I did the Wounded Warriors run in Babylon. It was the first time since I have been out of service that someone spoke to you as a man and spoke to you as a vet. They actually knew what you had went through, knew your life and knew how to talk to you. So not only as a runner but as a vet, these runs that are geared towards veterans are more than just someone giving a speech. They really are addressing the veterans. I will always support them, I will always support the runs. And for you vets out there, I'm telling you, come down and listen. Come down to Wounded Warriors, come down to Mike Murphy, come down to any one of them. They are good people and they do respect the vets. Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Maury Dean and on deck is David Kennedy.

MR. DEAN:

Hello. My name is Maury Dean. I'm the current President of the Bohemia Track Club. Richard Gunzel is next year and current VP, and I just wanted to kind of put an exclamation point on everything he said about the connection between veterans and running. And running, of course, is always a tribute. It's a physical tribute to something or other in your life, some kind of courage that you get together. I haven't quite had the courage to run a full marathon in years, but my neighbor ended up with that 13.1 sticker on his car, so I went back and ran a half marathon this year. So I've got a good -- half of a reason to push this. And I admire everyone who has run a marathon. I've never won at any prize at a marathon in my life, and I didn't get my varsity letter until I was 37 years old. I couldn't make it, I was a little too slow. And then later on, some of you know, I did fairly well, and now that I'm pushing 72.

Veterans and Seniors 12-8-14

Running has been such a big part of my life. Mike Polansky with GLRC, I think every one of us looks up to him for so many things. And basically we have a whole lot of track clubs on Long Island. We represent the south shore, and we're basically out of Bohemia. I live in Patchogue, speaking of Michael Murphy. I got a letter from my old English teacher, Nick Pappas, who was a veteran, got a Purple Heart in World War II, mentioning your town is on the map just because -- I have been corresponding with this guy all my life, and he got me into writing and running came along somehow.

So I just want to thank everyone here for their effort, for their spirit and for wanting to put together something. Having run my first marathon, the Long Island Marathon in Nassau County, we've always known Nassau County can do a great marathon, half marathon, they have over the years. We can do it, too, and here in Suffolk County we can have one of the best in the country, and for a whole lot of reasons. And I want to say everybody here, you have somebody in your family who runs. Maybe it's you. And you cheer them on, it's a big part of their lives. And I wanted to note, too, financially we're all nonprofit organizations. If we had to live on the money we made as professional runners, it doesn't stack up to A-Rod's contract for a quarter billion dollars. If I lived on my winnings from running, I'd be living in the back of an abandoned Buick somewhere in the woods.

However, there's something so much more important than that when you get a tiny medal because you really worked for it. And I think every one of you who has never run a 5K race come down to the Bohemia Track Club or the Greater Long Island Running Club. I also belong to New York Roadrunners. And the spirit there is something that's guided my life in so many ways, some of the best friends I've ever had, some of them sitting in that row right there. So, you'll hear from them. Thanks so much.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. David Kennedy and on deck is Charlie Taylor.

MR. KENNEDY:

Good afternoon. As stated, my name is David Kennedy. I'm the Executive Director of the Greater Patchogue Chamber of Commerce. I am also here to echo the Chamber's support of the Suffolk Marathon. Certainly the most important byproduct of this event is the support it can and will give our veterans, but I just want to highlight the great opportunities that are going to be for a lot of our downtowns on the South Shore of Suffolk, since that's where the route is going to be running through. You know, this has the potential to be a really important destination race, and not only the day of the race, but leading into the race as well. The County Executive's Office has already reached out to the Chamber and we already are working with them in creating events that would lead up to the race as well.

As a matter of fact, another happy byproduct of this race is already talking place in that from the first initial meeting some of the Chambers had over this, we formed something called the South Shore Business Alliance. And we're running a special trolley between all the communities from Oakdale to the Bellport this Saturday for holiday shopping. That was a direct result of us getting together to start planning and talking about this race. There's a lot of potential that this race could bring to the area and highlighting us as a tourist destination in a lot of our downtowns. So we look forward to continue working with the County and supporting this endeavor and, you know, thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Charlie Taylor.

MR. TAYLOR:

Hi. My name is Charlie Taylor. I work for the Soldiers Project. I'm a veteran and a social worker. I'm here to pledge support for the marathon and to thank Executive Bellone for hosting the marathon. I feel it's a really important message to draw more attention to the veterans community and the needs of the veterans community, and I think this marathon would be a key event in being able to do so.

In addition, I also work for Mr. Ronayne for the Joseph Dwyer project, and the one thing I have learned from doing that, is any time you have an opportunity to draw attention to what the issues are, typically you'll end up seeking out those or finding those that need help. That's all I have.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. I have no other cards in front of me. Is there anybody else that would like to address the committee? Sir, if you could just be sure to state your name and address for the record.

MR. BROWN:

Yes, my name is Martin Brown. I live in Nassau County, Malverne, New York. I have been a runner for some 40 years. I just want to say in the 1970's there was Suffolk Cross Island Marathon, which started in Port Jefferson and finished in Patchogue. And it -- before the actual running boom it was -- I went to school on the west coast and it was the thing that we couldn't wait to come home for, one of the things. It was a great event on Long Island, but that's a different time and place.

I'm here just on behalf as a runner, as Maury and many of the guys are and women who spoke so eloquently regarding the Greater Long Island Running Club. It's amazing to me, I have been involved as I'm currently a high school coach at Kellenberg Memorial. I'm a teacher and a runner, as I said, for 40 years. I've worked for Nike in running promotions. It really is phenomenal the organization and the management capabilities of the Greater Long Island Running Club and how they galvanized this great, noble sport here on Long Island. I mean, if they ran, the guys who run that organization, if they ran a corporation it would be a Fortune 500 company. But it brings in such an eclectic group of Long Islanders and you've heard them speak, some of them, today. But it's just a great group. Anything they get behind has been incredibly successful. And when I see folks like Peter Hawkins over here and the people, Ruth Albright and Linda Valdez and Maury, that's the range of people that are part of this organization and that you get. And you're getting so much support it's a win-win for everybody.

And to finally have all those people in such a strong organization in a worthy cause for our veterans, I have three -- I have a daughter and two sons in the military right now, and I'm so proud that people in an organization on Long Island would do something on behalf of people who, as the gentleman said, were forgotten a long while ago, a short while ago unfortunately, but now we're appreciating and I'm happy that Suffolk County and Long Island is taking the courage and the enthusiasm to support our veterans, our worthy veterans. Thanks very much.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Yes, sir. Please come on up. If you could just state your name and your address for the record, please.

MR. BARRETT:

Hi folks, thanks for having me. My name is Brendan Barrett. I'm from Sayville, New York, and I'm a co-owner of the Sayville and Smithtown Running Company. We are at two local running stores here on Long Island. I actually brought with me, my customers have been so excited for this event, I brought a little over 20 letters of support that I would like to enter into the record if possible. Many folks have spoken to this so I'll be brief.

I can tell you that the plans that have been laid out so far are very exciting as a runner in terms of the course, the involvement of the downtowns, which as a business owner is also attractive, you know, as a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Everything we've heard on this race in terms of what you would be looking for as a runner as a destination race is pretty topnotch and exactly what you would be looking for.

We're all very excited to be involved with it. I think it's very important to note that something like this is a massive undertaking and in need of a race director pretty quickly. Any delay on having a race director is really going to set back the chance to have anything succeed by quite a bit. Because people already, believe it or not, in my store have been coming in and asking me, since they saw the press coverage, if I know where they can sign up. And of course there can't be any registration until there is a race director in place and all the logistics get worked out. I hope everyone will consider that, too, when taking things into account. We've had a lot of success here with a lot of different events on Long Island to become excellent community events and communication and sort of dialogue with the community is a very important but a very wonderful thing. So thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Sir, why don't you come right here to the table. You can just state your name and address for the record, please.

MR. HAWKINS:

My name is Peter Hawkins. I'm from Malverne, New York also. I got into racing about 30 years ago. I was in a car accident 33 years ago that put me in a wheelchair. I was a football player and lacrosse player before I got hurt. For me, I was very hesitant to start the running, but when I started running it really kind of brought back for me what life is all about. And that's what the running on Long Island has done for me. And I've run in Nassau County and I'm known for the Nassau County Marathon is probably my biggest race that I have been successful in, but I've done many races in Suffolk County also. But what it brings to the athlete is an incredible amount of self-satisfaction, but it also brings a tremendous amount to the area, and the area of Nassau County I know has been very supportive of the Long Island Marathon, but I've also done the Entenmann's Half Marathon many times, and it brings a tremendous amount of attention to those communities. I just think that this would be a great event.

When I first came out here I really had no intention -- I didn't know I was going to be allowed to speak, but I also didn't realize that it was to raise money for veterans affairs, and anything that does that I think is very important for us and for the County. I thank them for the service that they have given to all of us. But what running has done for me has been -- I can't even -- it's priceless for what it's been able to do for me, and I have been able to bring that message out in all the speaking that I do. I thank you all for taking into consideration and I look forward to doing the race. Thank

you very much.

(Applause)

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. Okay. There being no other cards and nobody who would like to be heard before the committee, we will move on from the Public Portion. So we will move on to the agenda.

Tabled Resolutions

Beginning with Tabled Resolution ***IR 1853 - Adopting Local Law No. -2014, A Local Law to strengthen requirements for nonprofit veterans organizations soliciting donations in Suffolk County (Spencer)***. This is still before public hearing, so I'll make a motion to table for public hearing.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Second by Legislator Krupski. All in favor? Any opposed? Any abstentions? IR 1853 is tabled for public hearing. ***(Vote: 4-0-0-1 - Not Present: Legislator Barraga)***

Let me invite Director Ronayne up to the table. Director, welcome. Before we continue with the other item on the agenda I wanted to give you the opportunity to say hello and see if there was anything that you wanted to talk about specifically with regards to 2159, if there's anything that you wanted us to be aware of.

DIRECTOR RONAYNE:

Good afternoon, Chairman, members. Again, as always thank you for the invitation to appear today. I would like to make just a few remarks. I'm echoing, I think, largely what has already been said in the room today. I would like to personally express my support for the Suffolk County Marathon. I think on many levels this is -- it's simply a net positive for the County. And by the County I am not referring to County Government. I certainly -- my intent is to refer to our County as a community, as a group of communities that an event such as this would act to bring so many of these communities together. The fact that ultimately the race would serve to benefit, and I believe probably quite significantly, veterans throughout Suffolk County is simply an added bonus.

The message that I would like to send is that we make distinctions between runners and business owners and government officials and veterans. The plain truth in my view is that we are all members of the same community. We are all Suffolk County residents, we are all taxpayers. Those of us who are homeowners, we are invested in our respective communities, and I think that something such as this marathon can only enhance bringing all of these different communities closer together and allowing us to further recognize that we all rely greatly on one another. This is an opportunity for us to engage in really a very powerful, very positive effort.

I anticipate that we will have the support of our Legislature. I know that our County Executive has been tremendously committed to this effort. There's been a lot of work going on. I can tell you that I have attended some of the meetings. They are a team hard at work who have been meeting with community representatives, Chambers of Commerce, Civic Associations, veterans organizations. And this effort, while a great deal has been done, we are nearing a point, if we're not already at that point, where there are certain logistical and mechanical elements of planning such an event, it simply can't advance much further beyond where they are right now until we have a race director in place and I can't -- I don't think that I can stress that strongly enough. Without a

race director in place there are simply elements of this that we will not be able to solidify, and that will affect one of the things, as we heard a moment ago, was something as elementary as being able to register for the race. We can't do some of the very necessary pieces of this until we have that organization, that entity on board.

So I would encourage and I would respectfully ask that you all consider supporting this effort and helping us to advance this so that this wonderful undertaking can proceed and we'll get to the business of building our -- of further building our community and better serving our County's veterans.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

As always, thank you, Director Ronayne. Okay. With that, then I will make -- let me call ***IR 2159 - Requesting legislative approval of a contract award for a sole responder for the Professional Management of Suffolk County's Marathon and Half Marathon for Veterans Event and Associated Sponsorship Services (Co. Exec.)***. I will make a motion to approve.

LEG. ANKER:

Second.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Second by Legislator Anker.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Steve, on the motion.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Yeah, just one second. On the motion. We're very proud of the fact that Suffolk County has the largest veterans population in all of New York State, and this event is very exciting for all of us. I think it is more than properly placed before the Veterans and Seniors Committee of this Legislature because in addition to the economic impact, in addition to bringing communities together, we are also not only raising funds for the benefit of our veterans, but we're also bringing great awareness to the fact that our veterans are a part of our community. So many of them need our assistance in an ongoing and meaningful way, and this is an important message to send out of this committee, that we are accomplishing an awful lot of very important goals as we assist our veterans.

I think it's also very important to recognize and appreciate the comments of Mr. Scherer, and we so appreciate him being with us today. But this is an opportunity not just to assist our veterans, but to give so many of our neighbors who want to have an impact, who want to contribute to helping our veterans any way they can, this gives them an outstanding and focused opportunity to do just that. And so I look forward to supporting this initiative today and going forward. Legislator Lindsay.

LEG. LINDSAY:

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to start by thanking you for giving me the opportunity to be here today. I'm not on this committee but I thought it was important to participate in this meeting given the fact that most of the race will take place in my legislative district, so most of the residents within my district will be affected one way or another from the race. I can tell you of -- I think we all agree that the benefits of this event and the funds it will bring are very deserving -- to a very deserving portion of our residents and that no one can argue the merits of those funds and those benefits.

It's unfortunate that there has been some people within the town government that have tried to politicize this issue and tried to unfortunately raise some concerns and try to pull some support away from the event, and I really wanted to come here today to make sure that we were able to get most

of the information out. I don't want to be redundant and discuss the benefits, because I think we all agree on those, but I think we're at a point where it is very important that we do pick the director of the race because of what we plan to do within each one of these communities.

We've already met with and spoke to all of the Chambers and Civic groups within the district where the race will be run through, most of which are in agreement for the race. We plan to hold meetings in each one of those -- which each one of those Civic and community and Chamber groups to allow them to air any questions or any issues that they may have, to allow them to have input on how the day will run and how their businesses and their personal lives will be affected and how we can try to work around those issues. None of that can happen without having a race director in place.

I've never run in a -- I've never directed or organized a marathon, I don't think anyone here in the Legislature has, so I think it would be difficult for any of us to hold public hearings and listen to public comment on those issues without really being able to formulate any possible solutions of what we can do to combat some of those questions and answer some of those concerns. And as many people have said here today, it's critical that we get that position in place as soon as possible so that we could start the process of answering those questions, getting people signed up for the marathon and moving forward.

For an undertaking this massive we could not have those meetings and could not formulate those plans 30 days, 60 days, 90 days in advance. We've already talked about holding meetings and starting to get Civic groups in January and February to at least give them multiple opportunities to air out their concerns and work on possible solutions. Because I'm sure as this community is very unique in how they are set up along the South Shore, it's -- things are going to come up that may have never come up before with some of the other races that have been run, but we will find solutions. There's always a solution to every problem and we're looking forward to this event taking place. I think in all the Civic and Chambers that we have spoken and met with, they are all very excited to have this event run through our community.

I think it is important to note, because it didn't come out today, for the benefit of my fellow Legislators. This is going to be the last qualifying event for the Boston Marathon, so we expect that there will be runners from all over the world who will come out to run in this even. I'm not a runner, but I've heard from members of the running community and the folks out here who will probably nod their heads in agreement that the track is a very favorable track. It's flat, it should be a fast track from what they've said and they expect that there will be record times that day, as long as the weather conditions are favorable. So we expect that we'll receive people into our community that for no other reason would ever come to our community. For our Chambers this is an exciting opportunity for them and for our Civic groups and our neighbors. It's an exciting opportunity for them to show off our community and to show off all the benefits that we have and why we live where we live and why we love our community so much.

So I urge all of you, I don't have the ability to vote because I'm not on this committee, but I urge all of you to vote in favor of this, and when it does get before the full Legislature, I do plan to support it. So thank you, Mr. Chair. I appreciate the time to speak.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you, Legislator Lindsay. Legislator Muratore.

LEG. MURATORE:

Thank you, Chairman Stern, for explaining to me why the bill came before us. It was important that I knew that, and I'm glad it's on the record now that our veterans will be receiving the proceeds, the profit that we make from this wonderful event that's going to hopefully raise lots of

money and we can help our veterans out there. So again, thank you.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Anybody else? All right. Mr. Clerk, we have a motion and a second.

MR. RICHBERG:

Yes, we do.

CHAIRMAN STERN:

Thank you. I'll call the vote on IR 2159. All in favor? Any
Opposed? Any abstentions? IR 2159 is approved. **(Vote: 5-0-0-0)**

(Applause)

There being no other business before the committee, we are adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 p.m. *)