

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF JULY 21, 2016
SMITHERS COUNTY PARK
FLANDERS, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Kathleen Gooding	Vice Chair, Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Dawn Hopkins	Chair, Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Peter Leis	Trustee, Town of Islip
Arthur Leudesdorf	Trustee, Town of Southold
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Terence McSweeney	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
William B. Sickles	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT

Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
Michael Rosato	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Terry Maccarrone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

GUESTS

Jenn Hann	Leg. Aide to Legislator William Lindsay, District 8
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PUBLIC PORTION

There were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2016

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee White. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Dawson welcomed all to the Ducks Unlimited building on the Smithers property of Hubbard County Park. Suffolk County Parks has an agreement with the Ducks Unlimited group and they conduct a lot of programs at Hubbard CP. Trustee Sickles spoke about the history of the group. At one time, it was known as the Flanders Club and going back to about 1890, it was owned by about eighteen different sportsmen who ran it as a hunting club for waterfowl, deer, pheasant, etc. In the early 1960s, one of the members, R. Brinkley Smithers who was from Locust Valley purchased the 334 acre property for his friends and family. The property included the cabins and the main house, and the hunting club continued to meet there. Smithers built the brooder house (a concrete block building) and a seven car garage in which he stored equipment. There are a

number of ponds and wetland areas on the property, and water control structures, such as dams and bulk heading were created as water holding areas to grow corn and help improve waterfowl hunting. They also raised and released pheasant on the premises for shoots. In the early 1970s, Smithers transferred the entire property to Suffolk County with the agreement that he could continue to live on the property for the next twenty-five years or until he passed away. He passed away in year twenty-four of the agreement. At that time, Mrs. Smithers turned over an additional one hundred acres of land located on the other side of Route 24 and adjacent to Sears Bellows County Park. Since 1996, some work has been done on the buildings. Ducks Unlimited holds several different programs, such as Youth Conservation Day in July and the youth Hunter Safety program. The main house and cabins are also used by stewards working in the summer environmental program that monitors the piping plover season. Commissioner Dawson added that Ducks Unlimited does a lot of volunteer projects and recently contributed funds for an employee to build a handicapped accessible duck blind at Penny's Pond in Hubbard CP. This agreement has created a good public/private partnership.

Commissioner Dawson reported that there haven't been any legislative meetings but there was a committee meeting yesterday with one special event on the list. At Legislator Hahn's request, Commissioner Dawson led a tour of the East End beaches on July 7th and Parks Trustee Peter Leis attended the tour as well. The tour included a visit to Cupsogue CP, Shinnecock East CP, Meschutt CP, a section of Southaven CP and it ended at Smith Point CP.

Commissioner Dawson thanked Trustee Leudesdorf for obtaining a letter of support for the blueway trail from Southold Town Supervisor Scott Russell and asked that if anyone else receives a letter of support, to please send them to Legislator Hahn or the Parks Department and it will be greatly appreciated.

Commissioner Dawson reported that the Parks Department is in the middle of doing a Master Plan for Hubbard County Park and he asked Terry Maccarrone to give an update. Terry reported that several years back Assemblyman Englebright supplied a \$550,000 grant to be used at Hubbard County Park. The funds were divided for use on construction improvements, trail and signage improvements and a Master Plan for the entire park. There are ideas for re-purposing some of the buildings, particularly the brooder house to possibly create a field laboratory or an interpretive center. The Hubbard County Park property encompasses the Smithers property on the west side and Black Duck Lodge on the east side. The Master plan encompasses the whole property and is currently at its final draft stages. The County is working with a consultant to meet with potential user groups to partner with the County and has been meeting with some organizations to gauge what the needs would be. A department member from Hofstra's Center for Public Archeology has shown interest in doing field work there with student interns. The County has also met with interested parties from the Peconic Estuary Program and the U.S. Geological Survey to discuss field sites.

Commissioner Dawson reported that there is now additional fulltime staff at Shinnecock East CP and it has been working out very well. The port-o-sans and trash collection issues have been resolved as well. Trustee Sickles agreed that it seems to be going well this season.

Commissioner Dawson reported that the piping plover season this year is very productive at Smith Point CP. There are 12-13 active pair of plovers with a number of nests brooding now and a few getting ready to fledge. It is hoped that the plovers will fledge early this year so that the beach can re-open for the rest of the season.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Hopkins requested an update regarding the placement of sand at Meschutt CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that the County got a temporary permit for five days and DPW pumped 5,000 yards of sand which created approximately 100 feet of additional beach. The DEC has already given tentative permission to DPW to go back in mid-September to finish the project by placing 15,000 additional yards. DPW provided the work with its own dredge crew and Commissioner Dawson is very appreciative for the very impressive job and the

double shifts that staff had to work to get the job done. Many thanks as well to Nick Gibbons and the Parks staff for their contributions to the project.

Chair Hopkins inquired about completion of the Homan Gerard House. Commissioner Dawson reported that it has not been completed yet but they are working towards it. Parks had to spend \$300,000 of its funds in order to receive an additional \$300,000 grant from the Gardiner Foundation. Bob Kessler and the Historical Society also received many in-kind services and they stabilized the chimney as well.

Chair Hopkins inquired if there are any updates on the legislation for the Elwood Schoolhouse. Member of the Board Pearsall reported that no action has been taken. Commissioner Dawson stated that he spoke with Legislator Stern about it at yesterday's committee meeting and he believes it will be re-submitted next year. It already went to CEQ on Wednesday.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Cardillo reported that all facilities are now working at Indian Island CP and the new check-in building is coming along well.

Member of the Board Pearsall inquired how much the Assemblyman Englebright grant was and Terry Maccarrone reported that it was \$550,000.

Legislative Aide to Legislator Lindsay, Jenn Hann inquired regarding the status of the building plans for the Michael J. Murphy Sea Cadets training facility. Commissioner Dawson explained that the original legislation authorized Suffolk County to enter into an agreement with the Sea Cadets to make modifications or improvements to existing buildings on the LMM property. The Sea Cadets planned for a fairly large structure (approximately 8,000 sq. ft.) which wasn't appropriate for the location. The Michael J. Murphy Navy Seals Museum organization took over plans for the project and Suffolk County Parks officials have been reviewing the plans with an architect to see what the museum will look like and where it will be located. It is planned to be built off of West Avenue, north of the greenhouse and behind the driving range. These plans need to be approved by the CEQ and the Parks Trustees prior to moving forward. There have also been several meetings with the historic trust to review the requirements. A new resolution will authorize the Parks Department to enter into an agreement with the Navy Seal Museum organization.

Trustee Gooding inquired about an article she read stating that funding would be cut for Cupsogue CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that the 2016 funding has not been appropriated. The Parks Department built a temporary structure at Cupsogue CP last spring. DPW and the Parks Department did an excellent job providing a restaurant, new decking with a beautiful vista of the bay and new portable restrooms. There was no decline in patrons visiting the park last year and everyone was satisfied with the provisions. A cost of \$3 million for an entire new concession building would most likely not be approved. Space for lifeguards, EMTs and maintenance crew is still necessary and a scaled down version of the original is being planned. Terry added that the handicapped ramps and grand staircase at the back parking lot are still being worked on. The same concessionaire is still located at Cupsogue CP and the kitchen has been better equipped than the original one.

Trustee Sickles reported that he contacted Supervisor Schneiderman to request support on Legislator Hahn's behalf for the blueway trail and he indicated that he would provide a letter of support to the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council. Commissioner Dawson added that he would like to be copied on any letters of support so that he is up to date on who has approved of the plan.

Trustee Sickles reported that he appreciates placement of the fulltime staff out at Shinnecock East CP. In addition, Trustee Sickles reported that he was contacted by two Southampton Town Trustees regarding interest in discussing with the Parks Department access for residents on county parkland and beaches. Residents who

have homes on the ocean in an area where the town and village allow 4 x 4 vehicles near the private properties has become an issue. Commissioner Dawson stated that he has not been contacted.

Trustee Leis inquired if a date has been set for the renaming of the Cherry Avenue Park. Commissioner Dawson stated that it is being planned for September at the Whitehouse family's request. Legislator Lindsay's office will be scheduling the Elizabeth Whitehouse dedication ceremony.

Trustee Leis inquired about the status of the pine beetle infestation. Commissioner Dawson reported that the infestation has been severe and the Parks Department has been working very closely with the DEC.

Trustee McKay stated that the land is very dry from the drought and there is a lot of potential for fires. He inquired if there are any restrictions in place at the county campgrounds. Commissioner Dawson reported that he is notified every day from FRES on the threat levels for fires. Depending on the threat, the Parks Department places restrictions on camp fires and any open flames in county parks. There are also warnings posted in the parks notifying patrons of low, medium or high threat levels.

Trustee Sickles inquired about the RFP for a concession at Cedar Point CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that there was only one bidder and that the RFP will be re-issued in the beginning of August, once approval is received from the County Executive.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at Sagtikos Manor County Park in West Bay Shore on Thursday, August 18, 2016.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee White and was seconded by Trustee McKay. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.