

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION  
MINUTES OF JUNE 16, 2016  
WEST HILLS COUNTY PARK  
HUNTINGTON, NEW YORK**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Dawn Hopkins	Chair, Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
Peter Leis	Trustee, Town of Islip
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Michael Rosato	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
William B. Sickles	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

**ABSENT**

Kathleen Gooding	Vice Chair, Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Arthur Leudesdorf	Trustee, Town of Southold
Terence McSweeney	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
VACANT	Member at Large

**PARKS DEPARTMENT**

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Tom Vaughn	County Executive Assistant V
Tony Trotta	Superintendent
Terry Maccarrone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

**GUESTS**

Honorable Kara Hahn	Legislator, District 5
Zach Baum	Leg. Aide to Legislator Kara Hahn, District 5
Jenn Hann	Leg. Aide to Legislator William Lindsay, District 8

**PUBLIC PORTION**

There were no members of the public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2016**

**A motion to approve the minutes was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee Cardillo. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Dawson thanked Legislator Hahn for attending the meeting to give a presentation on a Blueway Trail project. He also thanked Jenn Hann and Zach Baum for attending. The Commissioner went on to explain that the county is planning to file a grant application with the state to develop a Blueway Trail. It involves

creating a proposal which includes a comprehensive list of all of the places you can canoe and kayak along the north and south shores.

Legislator Hahn continued by stating that she is seeking support for comprehensive plans for a Suffolk County Blueway Trail modeled after a grant that Nassau County received for its new Blueway Trail. A Blueway Trail is a route for non-motorized boats along a waterway that combines recreational and environmental awareness while including such land based attractions as parks, historic sites and natural areas. While there is no infrastructure, a Blueway Trail is a map which points out access points that are available while also displaying difficulty levels relative to such things as water currents. A trail around Suffolk County is being sought so that access points may be identified, maps and websites created, as well as adding applications on the phone. Legislator Hahn suggested that a Blueway Trail would help improve tourism, while offering the ability to recreate on our waterways. She expressed that she is pleased that the Parks Department has shown interest and support for this proposal.

Legislator Hahn stated that she is hopeful that the Parks Trustees will support the grant application to the state which will help fund a full plan for the trail. This proposal fits into the Long Island Regional Economic Development Plan for Nassau and Suffolk Counties and there is a Blueway Trail already created in the Town of Babylon, as well as the one in Nassau County. The Blueway Trail would be a way to link recreational parks together with the walking trails and biking trails. There is one thousand miles of coastline in Suffolk County so there would be many access points similar to the one in Nassau County. Patrons could choose a three-mile loop, a ten-mile loop, and wherever they would want to enter the water based on the type of scenic geography being sought. There are differences between the north and south shores and the east and west ends. Patrons could park and launch from any number of beaches or other sites. Commissioner Dawson added that there are many local townships and villages in Suffolk County where one could launch a kayak or canoe and the grant would allow for an all-inclusive comprehensive list to be compiled.

Legislator Hahn stated that she has received letters of support from the Village of Port Jefferson and a Legislator from Patchogue, as well as many verbal commitments to get letters of support. She asked for the trustees' support and encouraged them to go to their town supervisors to secure letters of support from them. Commissioner Dawson added that in order for the county to actually apply for this grant, it needs support from the villages and townships. The Parks Trustees are the county's representatives to the Town Supervisors and if they can get the support from the local municipalities, it will make it that much easier to gain acceptance for the grant.

Legislator Hahn stated that these types of initiatives are being sought in many locations. If more access sites are needed, they can be added. Follow-up grants are also possible for capital improvements on such things as kayak launches, storage facilities, signage, etc.

Trustee McKay inquired if there has been contact with the State Parks Department. Legislator Hahn stated that she originally planned to start small with the plan, and mimic the ones completed in Babylon and Nassau County, by trying a pilot trial in her Stony Brook, Setauket and Port Jefferson Districts. The planning team task force that was formed included the DEC, some representatives from their local assembly and also state parks. She plans to reach out to Wayne Horsley, Brian Foley and others for this initiative as well. Zach added that they already have the support of Vanessa Lockel, who is the Governor's Regional Representative. Legislator Hahn stated that after she spoke with representatives from Economic Development, Planning and the Parks Department it made better sense to do the project all at once rather than in small portions.

**A motion to support the Blueway Trail grant application was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee McKay. It was unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**

Commissioner Dawson gave an update on Smith Point County Park. At the last meeting, there was 1¼ miles of beach open. There was a nest hatch last week so outer beach access had to be limited until further notice. It is posted on the county website and there is also signage posted stating the current conditions at all of the locations where outer beach stickers can be purchased.

The erosion problem at Shinnecock East CP has not improved. Everyone who had camping reservations there was given the opportunity to either cancel them or move to a different site. Three sites were re-opened about 1½ weeks ago and rather than put them on the website, Parks reached out to the parties who originally held those sites to give them an opportunity to re-book them.

The DEC issued the permit for the emergency dredging operation at Meschutt CP. Parks is asking for permission from the Army Corps to place 5,000 yards of sand on the beach to help for right now and then the balance of 15,000 yards in mid-September.

The Girl Scout Annual Light Show will be held for the first time this year at Smith Point CP. It was voted on and passed at Parks Committee yesterday and approved by the full Legislature since it is a fund raiser. It had been held at Camp Edey for the past 10-12 years heavy traffic was causing problems with the Town of Islip. Consequently, they would no longer issue the necessary permit to hold the event. Superintendent Tony Trotta suggested that Smith Point CP which has 200 camp sites, electric service and a traffic flow pattern would work. The Girl Scouts will be able to continue to benefit from its fundraiser, the county will receive its special event fees and the event will open up the park at a time when it would not ordinarily be frequented. Meter reading will be taken so that the group will pay for their own electric usage. The group will be given usage of the East Booth for check-in and it also has a gate to assist with the traffic flow pattern.

Commissioner Dawson reported that the necessary work at both of the playgrounds at Smith Point CP was completed and opened for the children by Memorial Day. He added that Tom Vaughn has been making an effort to meet with maintenance, administrative and operations staff to make some improvements at Smith Point CP.

Tom Vaughn stated that Smith Point CP is one of the county's most widely used parks and that it needs sprucing up and TLC. He reported that he did a walk-through of the park, starting at the traffic circle and continued down through the campgrounds. It is his intention to give the park some attention to give it a nicer appearance since there are so many patrons who use it. He added that he and Tony discussed the possibility of putting in some new volleyball courts, and some painting has been done to the façade of some of the buildings which has already helped to make an improvement.

Legislator Hahn agreed with Tom and stated that there ought to be a Master Plan for a major overhaul of Smith Point CP and renovations in some areas, as well as for upkeep and maintenance. For an important park such as Smith Point, Legislator Hahn stated that she feels the Legislature would support some capital improvements there. Terry Maccarrone stated that there is already a Master Plan for Smith Point CP. Commissioner Dawson stated that he is appreciative when the Legislators show their commitment to the financial needs of running a park system.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Hopkins requested an update on the Cherry Avenue renaming dedication ceremony. Commissioner Dawson reported that it was supposed to be scheduled before the school year session ended but the family of Betty Whitehouse asked if it could be postponed so that their entire family would be able to attend. He added that the grass has grown in nicely and proposals are coming in for an asphalt parking lot which Parks has funding to pay for. Chair Hopkins asked for notification when the ceremony is scheduled so that a Parks

Trustee can attend. Commissioner Dawson assured the trustees that he will notify everyone once the ceremony has been scheduled so that they may attend if they wish to do so.

Chair Hopkins asked for an update on the timeframe for completion of the Homan Gerard House. Commissioner Dawson stated that it was estimated at about one year. He will get an update from Richard Martin. The Yaphank Historical Society has committed \$200,000 and has already done some work on the chimney. Parks also has a \$300,000 grant from the Gardiner Foundation for use on windows, doors and other historic finishing.

Chair Hopkins inquired about passage of state legislation for the Elwood Schoolhouse. Commissioner Dawson stated that he believes they are still in session.

Chair Hopkins inquired about the Smith Point Bridge reconstruction. Terry Maccarrone reported that the project is still in the conceptual stage right now. The bridge will be replaced in between the existing bridge and the Smith Point Marina. Chair Hopkins stated that there was some community discussion about the installation of solar panels, as well as the height of the bridge. Terry stated that when it gets to that point, he expects that DPW will hold some community hearings when the design is completed in order to get some feedback. The intent is to create a bridge similar to the Ponquogue Bridge in Hampton Bays and eliminate the draw bridge to save on cost of operations and maintenance.

## **ROUND TABLE**

Trustee Leis inquired whether the north side entrance to the new bridge would change. Terry stated that there will be a shift in recreational areas, a dedicated pedestrian/bike lane, and possibly fishing piers.

Trustee Rosato reported that he was contacted by Bob Sikora from the Forestwood Civic Association regarding two storage containers (crates) and a sign at Blydenburgh CP. Commissioner Dawson explained that Bob had a list of things that he asked to have taken care of at Blydenburgh CP. The Parks Department has accommodated by adding wood chips in the playground, replacing the fencing around the playground and repairing some lights. Bob was not in favor of the use of kayaks in the north lake and Parks compromised by allowing kayaks in the southern end. The two other outstanding issues were the sign at the entrance to the park and the two storage containers on site. Parks agreed to remove one of the storage containers that was in poor condition. Bob was advised that the other container, which is in the back woods and not out in the open, stores lawn mowing equipment and parts from the Old Mill building (water wheel, etc.) would remain. It is necessary that the remaining container be painted but will stay on the premises.

The sign at the entrance to the park used to have a planter box around it. The town highway department continually plows snow into the area where the planter box is and knocks it over so Parks removed it. The Civic Association expressed interest in building a new planter box and Commissioner Dawson advised Bob that it is fine to do that as long as they show Parks their plan first before moving forward with it.

Trustee Sickles reported that he received an advertisement flyer in the mail from the Evelyn Alexander Wildlife Rescue Center located in Munns Pond County Park in Hampton Bays. The glossy brochure expresses that the center is seeking funding and it does not state anywhere in it that the center is affiliated with Suffolk County Parks. Commissioner Dawson stated that it is part of the contract that before any advertising is done, the center has to discuss the plan with the Parks Department. Trustee Sickles also noted that the brochure has a photo of a doe in distress. Commissioner Dawson stated that last year there were some issues with the center regarding the rehabilitation of deer for a number of reasons. However, legislation was passed that now allows them to rehabilitate deer. Recently, New York State sent out a letter to all of the wildlife rehabilitation centers statewide directing them not to rehabilitate deer and that they will not sanction it. The Wildlife Rehabilitation Center obtained a restraining order and is currently suing the state.

Trustee Sickles reported that in 2016, there have been at least two press conferences at Meschutt Beach County Park that he found out about afterward by reading it in the newspaper and/or from a constituent. He expressed that the Parks Trustees should be advised about such events prior. Commissioner Dawson apologized and stated that he is absolutely right.

Trustee McKay welcomed all to the Town of Huntington Parks Trustee meeting at West Hills CP. It was noted that Jayne's Hill is located within the West Hills CP, on Walt Whitman Trail which is the highest spot on Long Island.

Trustee White inquired about the latest progress at the Third House. Terry Maccarrone reported that Lou Johnson (DPW) is working on filing the RFP for the sprinkler systems. Trustee White noted that he is also on the Montauk Historical Society Board of Directors and that the Town of East Hampton owns Second House. They are currently contemplating a \$2 million capital project to rehabilitate Second House to bring it back to the condition it was in back in 1908.

Trustee Cardillo was glad to report that the new camp office project appears to be making progress and the campgrounds at Indian Island CP have been full. He added that the fans in the women's restroom have been fixed since the solar panel was replaced, but the men's room solar compostable toilets are not yet working. Commissioner Dawson stated that the fixtures are solar powered, so sometimes they work and sometimes not depending on how much sunshine there is.

Legislator Hahn reported that she is pleased that a six spot parking area was added at McAllister CP about 1½ years ago and she hopes to eventually add some additional parking spots. Prior to the parking spots being installed, residents of the Village of Belle Terre were discouraging patrons from using the park and contacting the village police to ticket anyone parked in the area to use the park.

Legislator Hahn added that a paved parking lot and new walking trail was also completed at Forsythe Meadow CP.

Trustee McKay reported that the Town of Huntington acquired an acre of land at the end of Makamah CP to create a parking area to access the southeastern part of the park. There was a great deal of opposition from neighbors about the installation of that parking lot. Trustee McKay suggested the possibility of the Parks Trustees supporting the idea of getting a parking lot installed to provide access to the county owned portion of the park. Commissioner Dawson stated that he will speak with Nick Gibbons about the suggestion.

Terry Maccarrone reported that the bulkhead construction project at Hole 5 in the Indian Island GC has been completed and DPW did a beautiful job. The bulkhead and boat ramp at Northwest Harbor have been completed, with the exception of the small floating dock. The irrigation system and pump house at West Sayville is now online and have been completed. Sagtikos Manor work is making progress and the observation deck at Cupsogue CP is beautiful.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at Smithers County Park in Flanders on Thursday, July 21, 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 8-0-0.**