

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 19, 2015
DEEPWELLS FARM COUNTY PARK
ST. JAMES, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
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
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

Kathleen Gooding	Vice Chair, Town of Shelter Island
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Tony Trotta	Parks Superintendent
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

GUESTS

Michael Rosato	Parks Trustee-Elect, Town of Smithtown
Christina DeLisi	Legislative Aide to Dep. Presiding Off. Jay Schneiderman
Chris DeLuca	Aide to Legislator Thomas Cilmi

PUBLIC PORTION

There were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 15, 2015

Page 2, 1st line – **She** added that there are lost assessed property taxes.....

Page 3, Round Table, 1st paragraph, 2nd sentence – Add: **Chair Hopkins supported the request.**

A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Trustee Borden and seconded by Trustee Leudesdorf. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 11-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Dawson reported on the latest Legislative agenda. IR 1794, appropriating \$75,000 in planning funds for spillways in County Parks passed the full Legislature. IR 1800 calling for an agreement to have a county employee move into the residence at Cedar Point CP was passed. IR 1822, calling for additional oversight for County Park violations and the formation of a committee to be created that directs the Parks Trustees to create an appeals process was tabled. IR 1833 authorizing an agreement with Sagtikos Historical Society was passed and a contract is currently being worked on. IR 1823 appoints Michael Rosato as a member of the Suffolk County Parks Board of Trustees, representing the Town of Smithtown. This bill was approved unanimously at the Legislature and Commissioner Dawson welcomed Michael to the Board. He added that the County Executive would be signing the Legislation into law very shortly and Michael would receive an Oath of Office. Outgoing Trustee Miles Borden added that he has known Michael Rosato for many years through his community activities. He stated that Mike has been very active in the Nissequogue River State Park Foundation, the Kings Park Civic Association and various environmental concerns, and expressed that he will be a great asset to the Parks Board of Trustees.

Voted on at yesterday's Parks Committee meeting and also up for a 12/1 vote was IR 1793, amending the capital project for stabilization of the seawall bluff at Indian Island CP. IR 1922 is pertaining to the Parks Fee Schedule and the Commissioner would address it later in the meeting.

Commissioner Dawson asked Richard Martin to give an overview of Deepwells Farm County Park. Richard stated that Deepwells is one of the larger county-owned historic sites. The house and property includes the field across the street and the St. James General Store down Taylor Lane, on Moriches Road. St. James General Store is one of two museum shops that are county-run. The other gift shop is at the Big Duck in Flanders. The Deepwells house was opened to the public in 1995 and there have been several design showcases held there for fundraising purposes. Active use of the house has been continued by the Deepwells Farm Historic Society. The large size of the rooms at Deepwells makes it ideal for public events such as music programs and holiday boutiques (to be held this year December 5-6 and December 12-13). Funds retained go back toward maintenance of the building and property.

The Greek Revival style house was built in 1845 by Joel Smith of the Smith Family of Smithtown. Years later, the property was placed on the National Registry of Historic sites. When a grant to acquire and restore the property was quickly retained, it was placed on a priority list to preserve the house. The county fully restored the house with a matching grant from New York State.

Other famous owners of the property were Mayor William Jay Gaynor who purchased it in 1905 and later became mayor of New York City in 1910. It was a working farm both when the Smiths and the Gaynors owned it. Winthrop Taylor later purchased it from the Gaynors in 1924 and he established a dairy across the street. He also built a new barn in the 1920's which later burned down in 1956. When Winthrop Taylor passed away in 1975, his son didn't have any interest in living there and wanted to develop the property. Local residents petitioned, took it to the County Legislature and it approved the county purchasing the property in 1989. Deepwells Farm County Park is about 13 acres in size but the entire property was approximately 50 acres at the time of petitioning and even larger than that prior. The St. James General Store was a separate acquisition after the purchase of Deepwells Farm, also through a state grant and matching funds.

With another state grant through Assemblyman Englebright's office, a new sprinkler system was installed in the house just recently. The Parks Department maintenance crew has also just completed a new wood roof on the garage nearby.

Commissioner Dawson was happy to report that the Yaphank Historical Society applied for a \$300,000 grant with the Gardner Foundation and the state has recently approved it. The county will be matching that grant.

The Smith Point CP dredging project has been continuing.

The Parks Department is currently installing a fully accessible ADA compliant playground at the Cherry Avenue Dog Run Park in West Sayville. Construction started last week and a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be planned for the spring.

Commissioner Dawson added that another bill, IR 1767 which calls for improvement of wastewater treatment in County Parks was approved at committee and will go before the Legislature on 12/1.

A 10% increase in fees across the board at County Parks was proposed and Commissioner Dawson requested approval of the resolution by the Parks Trustees. Commissioner Dawson reported that even with the increase, the county fees would still be lower than state fees at golf courses, beaches and camp grounds. Trustee McKay commented that the commercial bus fee has always been too low and feels it should be raised. Otherwise, he is in agreement with the increase.

A motion to approve the fee increase schedule at County Parks was made by Trustee Borden and seconded by Trustee McKay. It was approved by a vote of 10-1-0. Trustee Cardillo stated that he voted no, feeling he needed more time to review the fee increase schedule.

Member Pearsall commented that the wood removal permit fee was lowered by almost one-half. Commissioner Dawson stated that he would check into it but he believed that a resolution a few years back lowered it and the county hasn't charged anything since Hurricane Irene. There's a secondary resolution giving the Commissioner the ability to waive the fee and Parks has done that because of past storms. Currently, there is the issue of the southern pine beetle infestation and those trees being cut down. If the public is interested in taking any of that wood, it is permissible and appreciated.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Hopkins inquired about the 40' sailboat at Smith Point CP and the Commissioner reported that it has been removed. Parks Superintendent Tony Trotta reported that it was removed about two weeks ago. It was broken down into parts with machines, placed into three dumpsters on the beach and then taken out. As of November 30th, public beach access will be closed.

ROUND TABLE

Speaking as Trustee representing the Town of Brookhaven, Dawn Hopkins stated that she strongly opposes renewal of the contract between Hunter Sports and the County. It has been an issue with the town for a long time and the local residents spoke very passionately at the last meeting so in good conscience Chair Hopkins is opposing it. Chair Hopkins reported that the town has offered to sell its trap & skeet facility in Ridge to the county so that it could move its location away from Southaven CP.

Trustee Cardillo reported that he has been to several meetings regarding future use of the North Fork Preserve County Park and it appears to him that the residents who live on property abutting the park are against doing anything with the land, other than them walking their dogs there. At the last meeting, Trustee Cardillo reminded these residents that it was a county and not a town purchase. He added that Carmella Masem, Suffolk Committee for Camping also attended the meeting, as well as a number of members of the camping community who spoke about the need for more camping in Suffolk County and that many of the present county camping facilities are normally filled to capacity. There will be one more meeting on future use of the North Fork Preserve County Park and then recommendations will be made.

Commissioner Dawson reported that an order has been placed for parts to repair the compostable toilets at Indian Island CP.

Trustee Sickles thanked the Parks Department for efforts that were made with the South Shore Waterfowlers Association to complete the fully accessible waterfowl duck blind at Penny Pond in Hubbard County Park. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was recently held. Commissioner Dawson added that the blind was funded by the South Shore Waterfowlers Association and built by Chris Lane, a Suffolk County Parks Department employee.

Richard Martin announced that the annual Big Duck Lighting will be held on December 2nd at 7 pm. The gift store will be open, as well as a new exhibit in the old barn behind the Duck which will be open for viewing. It is a professionally designed exhibit on the history of duck farming in Suffolk County.

Aside from the holiday events at Deepwells Farm on December 5 & 6th, there will be a holiday showcase at Meadowcroft in Sayville. Sagtikos Manor will have holiday tours on December 12 & 13th. The St. James General Store will also be open throughout the holiday season for gift purchases.

Member Pearsall inquired if the concessionaire of Hunter Sports has abided by all of the many guidelines expected over the years at the trap and skeet facility. Commissioner Dawson stated that it has.

Trustee Leis inquired about the well project at West Sayville Golf Course. Commissioner Dawson reported that there were some issues with the turbidity of the water and the project was delayed. Some tests needed to be run and chemical cleaning of the well head. Commissioner Dawson will check into when completion is expected. The new irrigation system was completed.

Legislative Aide Christina DeLisi reported that Legislator Schneiderman is co-sponsor of Legislator Hahn's bill on park violations and he expects to attend the meeting tomorrow pertaining to that. Commissioner Dawson commented that he believes there is a good solution for it that will be discussed.

Trustee Leudesdorf inquired regarding the funding for Peconic Dunes CP. Commissioner Dawson stated that he believed that funding had been appropriated but not bonded for the dining hall and that he would check into it. A contract renewal is currently being worked on for Peconic Dunes CP.

Trustee McSweeney inquired on the environmental study conducted at Van Bourgondien CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that as a part of a water quality project, the main building would be hooked up to the sewer system there. The Parks Department had applied for a \$40,000 water quality grant for the project and it was approved by the Legislature.

Trustee Borden stated that he has enjoyed his ten years as Parks Trustee representing the Town of Smithtown. Commissioner Dawson thanked and was appreciative for Trustee Borden's service on the Board. Trustee-elect Michael Rosato added that Commissioner Dawson praised Miles' service and contributions over the years at the Legislative meeting last week. Michael stated that Miles is greatly admired by the Smithtown community for his compassion as well as devotion to several organizations over the years.

Trustee White added that he will greatly miss Miles as a fellow volunteer firefighter with more than 60 years of service. He stated that he will also miss a good friend and Montauk resident, Legislator Jay Schneiderman.

Trustee Sickles added that Miles fits the description of a "true gentleman" and he will surely be missed on the Board.

Legislative Aide Chris DeLuca wished Miles good luck and all a Happy Thanksgiving.

Superintendent Tony Trotta wished good luck to Miles.

Trustee McKay added his appreciation to Miles for his good work as chairman and years of service on the Board.

Chair Hopkins added her appreciation for Miles' service and it being a pleasure serving as co-chair with Miles on the Board.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at Meadowedge in West Sayville on Thursday, December 17, 2015.

A Happy Thanksgiving was shared by all.

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 11-0-0.