

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF MAY 21, 2015
SOUTHAVEN COUNTY PARK – SUFFOLK LODGE
YAPHANK, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
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

Kathleen Gooding, Ph.D.	Vice Chair, Town of Shelter Island
Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

GUESTS

Marisa Schifano	Senior Assistant County Attorney
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PUBLIC PORTION

Town of Southampton resident Kristin White spoke regarding a Memorial Service she organized and held for her father-in-law at Shinnecock East County Park. Several guests arrived for the service in full active duty United States Marines uniforms to conduct a Veteran Flag ceremony. They were advised by a Parks employee that they had to purchase a Green Key card and outer beach pass to enter the park for the service. Mrs. White expressed that she felt the employee was inappropriate in holding to park rules so rigidly, under the circumstances. Commissioner Dawson stated that he will look into the matter and take appropriate action.

Port Jefferson Station resident Elizabeth Emmel spoke regarding her July 5, 2014 family camping experience at Indian Island County Park last year. A meeting is to be arranged with Mr. & Mrs. Emmel, Commissioner Dawson and several other County representatives to further discuss this issue.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 16, 2015

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

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

In anticipation of the upcoming Memorial Day weekend, Commissioner Dawson gave an update on preparations that have been arranged at Cupsogue County Park. The temporary concession stand and deck are completed, and temporary restroom trailers have been set up and piped directly into the septic system. All permits to operate are in place.

The golf courses are doing well. There was an issue with the reservation system and people not being able to make online tee time reservations. The issue was resolved and is now operating.

The reservation system for camping is working but still doesn't have the interactive maps. That is due to be restored in a short time.

Legislatively, there were three capital projects put through for construction. One was \$250,000 for improvements to parks, one was \$75,000 for fencing and the third was \$220,000 for heavy equipment. While the appropriations were passed at the Legislative meeting, the bond appropriations were not. The heavy equipment was brought forth once again at a later meeting and was passed. The other projects will be brought forward again at a later date.

The 2016 capital budget process is in full swing and hearings were held last week. Commissioner Dawson will report on the results at the next trustee meeting.

The operating budget is currently being worked on and is due to be submitted to the County Executive's Office in mid-June. Once it has been completed, it will be brought before the Parks Trustees for review and approval. It will likely be very similar to last year's budget.

The Park Ranger program is fully operational. It is headed by Park Security Director Dodd Amhrein who has been excellent in recruiting officers to fill the positions. They are all New York State deputized Peace Officers who are armed and patrol all of the County Parks. All of the part-time shifts have been set up and staffing during the peak months is equivalent to what it was in the past. Park Security Aides working five day weeks have been added to fixed posts within the parks and they will handle all general rules and regulations. Ten 4-wheel drive vehicles have been added to the force and will be helpful for beach access patrol. All radios were kept from the old program for use in communications. Assistant Security Director Artie Pendzick is on board part-time and is an expert in the Pine Barrens Law Enforcement Commission and the ATV Task Force.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Hopkins inquired about the possibility of having John Pavacic attend a trustee meeting to give an overview of the southern pine beetle infestation issue. Commissioner Dawson reported that John would be giving a presentation at the Legislative Parks Committee meeting in June and that he would invite John to also speak at a Parks Trustee meeting.

Chair Hopkins inquired about the Seatuck Eco-Carnival. Commissioner Dawson reported that it was well attended and a lot of school groups participated. Interactive stations were set up to provide children with hands-on learning about nature, wildlife and the environment.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Cardillo inquired about the dredge spoil situation at Indian Island CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that the plans are ongoing to re-establish a saltwater marsh area. It involves removal of old dredge spoil material, taking it off sight and re-connecting the bay with this area.

Trustee Cardillo inquired also about a restroom repair at Indian Island CP. A fire had been set in the building and the interior needs to be cleaned up. Commissioner Dawson will check into it.

Trustee Leudesdorf thanked Trustee White for his help in arranging a biking/RV outing to the Montauk Point Lighthouse for his residents at Peconic Landing in Southold. It was enjoyed very much and appreciated by all.

Trustee White shared a visit he had made to the Shinnecock East CP last year and his encounter with a Parks employee upon entering. He explained to her that he was a Parks Trustee for the Town of East Hampton and inquired if he might do a site visit. He didn't have any proof of being a trustee with him but the employee did allow him access to drive out onto the beach. She did state that it would be allowed only for that one time. Trustee White visited for fifteen minutes and left the park. He brought up the point that the Parks trustees do not have anything to identify themselves as Park Trustees for the purpose of making site visits or inspections, not for the waiving of any fees. Commissioner Dawson stated that he will bring this point to Deputy Presiding Officer and Parks Committee Chairman Jay Schneiderman for his consideration.

Trustee White added that he in no way condones the situation that Mrs. White's guests encountered on the day of the Memorial Service for her father-in-law.

Trustee Sickles reported that he spent a day with Nick Gibbons, Richard Martin and consultants out at Hubbard CP and was shocked at the amount of southern pine beetle activity there. Site surveys were done on the bay side of Route 24 and Trustee Sickles noted that there appeared to be a pattern of damage looking like a hopscotch board, with some sections unaffected and others totally destroyed. Commissioner Dawson reported that Legislator Calarco organized a committee with representatives from each of the townships to study options of getting control of this problem which has spread all over Long Island.

Trustee Sickles remarked about an article he read in Newsday reporting that over one hundred dead diamondback turtles were found in the Riverhead/Flanders Bay area. He noted that a good portion of County park land on the Flanders side of the water borders on the Flanders Bay area and questioned whether the Turtle Rescue of the Hamptons had surveyed the large area of beach front all along Hubbard CP because more turtles could possibly be found there as well. Commissioner Dawson stated that he would check with Nick Gibbons to see if he has any information on it.

Trustee McKay requested a current report on status of the piping plovers so far. Commissioner Dawson reported that six pair have nested at Smith Point CP. One nest is expected to hatch in mid-June. Great Gun was cleared of all vegetation which has created 100 acres of new habitat.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at the Shelter Island Historical Society on Thursday, June 18, 2015.

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.