

**Board of Trustees  
Suffolk County Department of Parks,  
Recreation and Conservation**

**Minutes of May 19, 2005 at Indian Island Restaurant, Riverhead**

**BOARD MEMBERS  
PRESENT:**

Ray Corwin	Member at Large
Matthew Kruger	Vice Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Alexander McKay	Chairman, Town of Huntington
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
Aurelio Colina	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Joseph Miller	Trustee, Town of Islip
Todd Stebbins	Member of the Board
Charles Bender	Member of the Board
Gary Olsen	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven

**ABSENT:**

John Fritz	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Christopher C. Drake	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Thomas J. McCaffery	Trustee, Town of Southold
Vacancy	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Tracey Bellone	Deputy Commissioner

**PARKS DEPARTMENT:**

Ronald F. Foley	Commissioner
Colleen Hofmeister	Contracts Manager
Bill Sickles	Sr. Superintendent of Parks
Tom Hroncich	Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator
Nick Gibbons	Sr. Environmental Analyst

**GUESTS:**

Thomas Isles	Director of Planning
Lauretta Fischer	Principal Planner
Patricia Zielinski	Director, Real Estate
Janet Longo	Assistant to the Director, Planning
Jennifer Kohn	Assistant County Attorney

## **PUBLIC PORTION:**

There were no persons present for the public portion of the meeting. Chairman McKay began the meeting by welcoming new Secretary to the Commissioner Mary Simonsen.

## **ADOPTION OF THE APRIL 21, 2005 MINUTES:**

- In the whole text of future minutes, replace all instances of the abbreviation "CE" to County Executive.
- In the whole of text of future minutes, address Trustees with last names only, i.e. "Trustee White" for consistency.
- Page 3 - first paragraph, correct the sentence that read "perhaps interest is golf" to read "interest in golf."
- Page 5 - second to last paragraph, change the sentence beginning "Chairman McKay asked" to read "It was asked".
- Page 6 – Under Froehlich Farm, remove the question mark from the last sentence.
- Page 6 - Under Open Questions, second to last paragraph, change "IT" to Information Technology and "ETU" to Executive Technology Unit.

All members present voted in favor to approve the minutes as amended.

### **Tom Isles – Planning Department**

Chairman McKay asked Tom Isles if he had any new acquisitions to present. Mr. Isles said that there were four acquisitions before the Suffolk County Legislature:

#### **Third Creek Woods** (aerial map distributed)

- Located on Shelter Island
- Comprised of 17.1 acres
- Some parcels are owned by the county, some by the public
- To purchase, the county would incur 50% of the purchase price, the town 25% and the Village of Dering Harbor 25%.

This parcel was on the Master List last year presented by the County Executive and Real Estate has been proceeding with the acquisition. It was presented under the Multifaceted Land Preservation Partnership. It sits atop a critical groundwater area and a County purchase would minimize development in that area.

The motion was made to recommend acquisition proceedings and approved by all Board Members.

#### **Emerald Estates** (aerial map distributed)

- East Northport, town of Huntington
- Parcel comprised of approximately 27 acres
- The northernmost section is also presented under the Multifaceted Land Preservation Partnership
- 50% of the acquisition cost would be paid by the town of Huntington. They would also manage the property in joint ownership with Suffolk County as part of a trail system and try to consolidate the areas indicated and add it as part of a larger trail system.

Chairman McKay asked if there were any negotiations with neighboring landowners. Janet Longo replied that there were with all of them. Trustee Corwin asked if the southern section would or could be connected to the north and Mr. Isles replied that their intent is to eventually do so.

Chairman McKay motioned to proceed with the acquisition. It was seconded and the motion to proceed with the acquisition was approved.

#### **Sanford Pines Property** (aerial map distributed)

- Bayport, Town of Islip
- Four acre closed acquisition
- The town Planner suggested a purchase price of \$1.25 million.
- If the county acquires it, the town would manage and maintain it. It would require a Trustee review.
- The parcel is in a drainage soil area that runs north to south in the vicinity of Browns River. If it were to be developed it could have adverse affects on drainage in the surrounding properties.

Trustee Miller said he would be against this acquisition because it goes against everything that the Board has been doing in the last 15-20 years and went on to say that he would be opposed to this acquisition because of the nine requirements for acquisitions, this only meets one. He said that if the Legislature wants to proceed, ok, but that he is opposed to it for the reasons that it is located on Elm Street, which is a dead-end street and that it's bordered by 4 houses, no one would be able to park there and commented that if the town wants it, let them pay for the purchase.

The Commissioner then asked if there were more Islip properties coming, to which Mr. Isles replied that there a few and that the County Executive has two right now. Chairman McKay asked that if they voted against it, does that impede the acquisition process. Mr. Isles replied that from his understanding, the Board vote is mandatory.

Chairman McKay asked Trustee Miller what he recommends and he replied that since it does not meet the nine requirements, he would be opposed to the acquisition and moved not to recommend it. The Trustees took a vote and Chairman McKay announced that the acquisition was voted down by a vote of 7-2.

#### **Dwarf Pines** (aerial map provided)

- Located in West Hampton in the Town of Southampton, at the intersection of Sunrise Highway and county road 31.
- 154.37 acres.
- Being in the Pines Barrens makes it qualify for drinking water protection purposes.
- Acquisition is proposed in partnership with the State of New York and Southampton Town.
- It would be a full fee acquisition.

Mr. Isles pointed out that, as shown on the map, the top areas indicated are owned by New York State which makes up about 154.36 acres, and Suffolk County is looking to acquire the bottom area indicated which is 154.37 acres.

Trustee Colina moved to approve the acquisition. All Trustees voted to approve the recommendation.

At this time Mr. Isles stated this concluded his presentation of acquisitions and Chairman invited Bob Brown from **Three Village Boys and Girls Club** of Setauket to make his presentation.

Mr. Brown stated that there had been meetings approximately a year ago on their proposal and it had been agreed upon, including the proposition of a 35,000 square foot building. However, the 36 acre deal was made without consideration for having a buffer on the road and the idea for the building was struck. He said they could still meet the needs for recreational fields and would have a smaller building for lockers, bathrooms, storage, etc.

He said that right now school districts are being pressed to focus more on education. The Boys and Girls Club is looking for field space in their community for the children as such space is lacking in their schools. So a smaller building of about 5,000 square feet could still meet their needs for the above mentioned uses. He said they have had discussions with Deputy Commissioner Bellone about the building issues and have submitted drawings to Legislator Fischer.

Chairman McKay asked if there would be any areas of unused land to which Mr. Brown replied a large section would be solely woodland left for re-vegetation and re-growth. Chairman McKay then stated that since so much time had lapsed since the previous discussions, it would have to be reviewed and reevaluated once again and requested the submission of drawings and specific details for further discussion.

Trustee Corwin asked if this had gone through the CEQ (Council on Environmental Quality) Mr. Brown said that it had gone through CEQ, the Department of Health, the Parks Department, the Trustees and all the necessary processes 1-1/2 years ago. The Commissioner confirmed Chairman McKay's statement that it would have to be reevaluated by the necessary departments due to the lapse in time and changes in the plan.

Chairman McKay told Mr. Brown to return to the Board with a written proposal and maps and then motioned that further discussions and considerations would be take place, which was agreed upon by all Board members.

#### **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:**

The **Environmental team** has been hard at work and they will be moving to the renovated offices at Timber Point.

The **Indian Island Fuel Pumps** are nearly complete. We are working on getting them dressed up to make them look nicer and less obvious.

The subject of the lack of grease traps in the **Septic Systems at Cupsogue** that was brought up by Trustee Miller at the previous Trustees meeting was readdressed by the Commissioner by saying the Parks Department has the tanks pumped twice per year, not daily. There doesn't appear to be a problem, but the Department is continuing to evaluate the system. Trustee Corwin asked if this problem exists at other kitchen facilities, to which the Commissioner replied that is something we can look into.

Coindre Hall – Dog Run Park: In 2002, the Legislature and County Executive approved working with the Town of Huntington to build a fenced in area for dogs that the Town would maintain. Based on constituent complaints, it seems that dogs are overrunning the park. The Commissioner said he's met with Legislator Cooper and the Huntington Dog Owner's Association. For now, the leash laws are being enforced until an acceptable solution is found.

The Commissioner said we are in preliminary stages of forming a plan to restore the **Boathouse at West Neck Farm** following historic standards. The Suffolk County Police Department also wants to station three of their police boats there and use part of Coindre Hall for office space. Chairman McKay asked if Legislator Cooper is involved on this and the Commissioner replied that yes, he is.

The Commissioner then brought up a letter of commendation and gratitude he received from a constituent regarding the members of the **Environmental Stewardship Team** who had cleaned up a pond and wetlands area near his home in Babylon. The constituent said not only did they do a fantastic job in the cleanup but also commended them as heroes for taking action when the team members noticed a house fire nearby. He said not only did they call 911, but they ran over to the house and banged on the windows and doors, rousing a sleeping resident inside and getting her out of the house before it was consumed by smoke. Trustee Corwin requested if there could be a more detailed account of the event for the next meeting and perhaps possibly passing a resolution for commendation and recognition for these members of the environmental team to be part of their permanent record.

Trustee Miller inquired about the **new auditors** and how the **cash handling** procedures were coming along. The Commissioner replied that there were new cash registers on order, that new auditors start June 6th, and that a number of things were going to be changed and improved.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:**

Chairman McKay stated that he only had two items to discuss. From what he knew, only three Trustees had RSVP'd to today's meeting. He asked that Trustees please RSVP to be sure we have a quorum to vote at future meetings.

The second item was in regards to the health of Trustee Fritz and that he is receiving treatment for a health condition. In speaking with him, Trustee Fritz had asked the Chairman to bring up Oak Beach at this meeting. Mr. Fritz said he had noticed there hasn't been much progress, and asked if there was an update. The Commissioner replied that he will talk to the Town to find out the status and commented that he had not received an update in quite some time but would inquire.

#### **OLD BUSINESS/NEW BUSINESS:**

Under Old Business, Chairman McKay invited Skip Medeiros of **Brookhaven National Lab** and Project Manager of the **Peconic River Cleanup** project to present. Mr. Medeiros began by thanking the Trustees, the Legislature, the Commissioner and his staff for their help in the cleanup effort and distributed a printout with charts and graphs showing the work that had been done. Several thousand confirmation samples had been taken during the project dating from March 2004 – April 2005. Their goal was an average mercury concentration of .75 parts per million (ppm) or less with no one sample exceeding 2 ppm. The data on the graphs distributed showed this goal to be successfully completed. Their other accomplished goal was to remove sediment from ponded areas where methylation occurs, thus providing greater flexibility in Suffolk County parkland use.

Trustee White asked how we would know the data was accurate and if there would be an independent audit. Mr. Medeiros said that through the entire process, all information was shared with the Suffolk County Department of Health and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, offering split samples to those agencies and will continue to do so for several years to be sure the levels do not increase, and that if they did, appropriate actions would be taken.

It was asked whether mercury was the only contaminant being tested for, Mr. Medeiros replied that lowering mercury was the cleanup goal but that as they went along all contaminants found were cleaned up, such as silver, copper and other heavy metals and PCB's.

He said the sediment, surface water, wetlands and fish will be monitored long term. This data will be reviewed annually and at five year intervals with the Environmental Protection Agency, the New York State Department of Environmental Control, the New York State Department of Health and Suffolk County. In order to prevent recontamination, the following steps have been put in place:

- Brookhaven National Lab now has an active pollution prevention program.
- Compliance with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation discharge limits to the river has exceeded 99% since 1995.
- The Brookhaven National Lab Sewage Treatment Plant was upgraded to tertiary treatment in 1997.
- The source was remediated in 2002.

Mr. Medeiros said he was greatly pleased with the results and that they had left nothing from the cleanup effort behind. He went on to show how the areas of the cleanup were contoured, replanted and restored. He thanked the Parks Department, especially the Environmental group, and the Trustees for the cooperation and assistance they provided in the clean up effort.

Chairman McKay opened the discussion back to old business. Trustee Colina wished to discuss his thoughts on **RFPs (Requests for Proposal)** after attending a meeting regarding Sears Bellows Stables. He said in his opinion that the documents are too long, daunting and confusing. At the above mentioned meeting he said that in attendance were representatives from Parks, Budget, a part-time employee and an attorney from Smithtown. He asked Contracts Manager Colleen Hofmeister if the RFP's submitted for Sears Bellows were even complete. When she replied no, Trustee Colina asked why they were even there, wasting time and money. He suggested some kind of shorter form or an easier process.

The Commissioner commented that Sears Bellows would always be marginal and that originally two proposals were received and had been rejected. So we had gone back out with a new request to try and get something worthwhile. Trustee Colina suggested the idea of creating an oversight committee and getting equestrian groups involved. Trustee White said that Sears Bellows had been being run by a competent "horse person" but they could not fulfill their contract and suggested using that area for something else if there is not enough interest in horses, such as perhaps using it for nature trails or an interpretive center. The Commissioner replied that if word got out that we were rejecting or closing the stables there would be a backlash in the equestrian community so we would continue to work on an acceptable solution.

In response to a query as to what to do about the "stables" at Sears Bellows, Trustee Colina submitted his recommendation that the structures used as stables should be donated to the Riverhead Fire Department for fire training and further, the County should focus its limited resources on Southaven to develop an equestrian facility which we can all be proud of.

Bill Sickles, Senior Parks Superintendent said that there seems to be more people interested only in the trails and not the stables for boarding, riding lessons or tack shop, etc. But that the users of the park would still need to be given space to park, load and unload their trailers and access to the trails. Trustee Corwin asked that if there are no acceptable RFP's, how would we find someone to run it. It's costing the county time and money to receive and process the proposals. The Commissioner said we have to see what kind of interest there is for this activity and everything will have to be reevaluated. He said that one thing that is noticeable is that as you

travel west (on Long Island) there is a much greater demand for equestrian centers because of intense development. As you go east, the market begins to die off significantly. Chairman McKay said we should allow the Commissioner more time to work on this. He then opened the discussion to other business topics.

Trustee Miller brought up the subject of **marine pump-out stations**. Bill Sickles said Suffolk County began installing pump-out stations, including two at Shinnecock canal and two at Great River for the general public to use for emptying their holding tanks at no charge and that this protects the water quality because the boats used to dump out their holding tanks right into the water. Additionally, the town of Southampton purchased two pump-out boats to go around town waters and collect the pump-out from the holding tanks of boats in the bay. When those pump-out boats are around Shinnecock, they have an agreement with Suffolk County to empty their holding tanks into those at the Shinnecock station.

Mr. Sickles continued, saying that an agreement was made that over a period of a season, Southampton would reimburse Suffolk County for their share of material dumped into our holding tanks, but that became difficult to measure because there are no gauges to measure accurately. So it was a "best guess" on the cost and the Parks Department felt it was incurring a cost to have the tanks pumped out, but the town was also paying a cost for fuel, repairs and salaries for the pump out boat operators. Over time, it proved that the cost per gallon was minimal so we called it a wash.

The Commissioner commented that for the small amount of money we're talking about, they (the pump out boats) are helping us out by delivering the material all at once rather than individual boats being lined up at our docks. Trustee Miller agreed that if the impact was de minimis the arrangement is acceptable.

With the closing of the meeting impending, Trustee Colina wanted to have a few more words about RFP's and asked if there is anything that can be done to shorten them, and asked if a two page contract could be acceptable. The Commissioner replied that it's not our sole authority to make changes to RFP's, everything currently in them is required by County law and it could be detrimental if we were to try and condense them and inadvertently leave something vital out.

Jennifer Kohn stated that as far as the attachments that are included with RFP's are concerned, that is mandated by the Suffolk County Legislature. But in taking steps to shorten RFP's, anything in them that refers to the Suffolk County codes, we now refer applicants to the Internet rather than attaching them. But as far as the other items included, we're talking about concessionaires, disclosure forms, insurance documents etc, those are vital.

Trustee Corwin asked if it was possible to have an initial shorter form with the understanding that if they are chosen a longer, more detailed application will be required. Ms. Hofmeister replied that what they have been receiving in recent cases are not even valid financial statements, what we are getting is unusable. The Commissioner added that if applicants can't figure out the proper way to fill out these forms, how would we be able to trust them to run a successful business, and added that we'll take a look at it and see what we can come up with.

Trustee White asked what the status of **Third House Restoration** is. The Commissioner replied that it was with DPW and to be out for bids May 25th, and if all goes as is hoped work should begin in the fall. He said it would be fine for the summer and also that the Shakespeare Festival will be there over the summer.

Trustee White also wished to compliment the Commissioner for his efforts on the GATR site. The

Montauk Fire Department EMS cell tower is moving forward and should be up and running shortly.

**DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:**

With the closing of the meeting, Chairman McKay asked the Members where they would like the next meeting to be held. It was decided upon that the next meeting on June 16, 2005 would be held at Coindre Hall. However, due to a scheduling conflict, Coindre Hall was not available and it was decided by the Commissioner's office that the meeting on June 16th would be held at the Lodge at Southaven Park.

With that, Chairman McKay announced the meeting adjourned.