

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION  
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 20, 2008  
COINDRE HALL, HUNTINGTON, N.Y.**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Gil Cardillo	Vice Chairman, Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Ray Corwin	Member at Large
Gregory Dawson	Trustee, Town of Islip
Scott Hilary	Trustee, Town of Southold
Alexander McKay	Trustee, Town of Huntington
Bill Shilling	Member of the Board
Amy Engel	Member of the Board
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
Edward Walters	Trustee, Southampton

**ABSENT**

**PARKS DEPARTMENT**

John W. Pavacic	Commissioner
Tracey Bellone	Deputy Commissioner
Lillian Fais	Historic Services
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Tom Hroncich	Director of Parks Foundation
Terry Maccarrone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Karen Nicholson	Superintendent of Parks
Ann Rothenberg	Assistant to the Commissioner

**GUESTS**

Lauretta Fischer	Principal Environmental Analyst, Planning Department
Roz Gazes	Legislative Budget Review Office
Lora Gellerstein	Office of Legislator Cooper
Janet Longo	Deputy Director, Real Property Acquisitions and Management
Jill Moss	Legislative Budget Review Office
Thomas Ryan	Office of Legislator Viloría-Fisher

Vice Chairman Cardillo called the meeting to order. Best wishes were extended to Bill Sickles for a speedy recovery.

**RESOLUTION 2094**

Tom Ryan reviewed a bill submitted by Legislator Viloría-Fisher: Introductory Resolution 2094 to amend the user fee schedule for Suffolk County Parks. This would be the first increase since 2001 (which

went into effect in 2002). There have been some minor adjustments from 2001 to the present. These funds, at least for this one year, will help the Vanderbilt Museum.

Commissioner Pavacic mentioned the County Executive's opposition to the fee increases. At this time of fiscal crisis Commissioner Pavacic thinks it is unfair to raise fees and create an undue hardship on residents and opposes the fee increases.

**A motion to table this resolution was made by Trustee Walters and seconded by Trustee Borden. Trustee McKay opposed. The motion was approved by a vote of 8-1-0.** (Trustee Corwin was not present for this vote).

#### **COMMENTS FROM LEGISLATOR COOPER'S OFFICE**

Lora Gellerstein, Chief Legislative Aide for Legislator Cooper, read a statement regarding the Legislator's support of L.I. Dog's proposed "Share the Parks" pilot program at a County park deemed appropriate by the Parks Commissioner. The letter also urged the Parks Department to continue to work with L.I. Dog to find suitable locations for off leash dog runs across Suffolk County.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 16, 2008**

**A motion to accept the minutes was made by Trustee White and seconded by Trustee McKay. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.** (Trustee Corwin was not present for this vote).

#### **PRESENTATION BY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND REAL ESTATE**

Lauretta Fischer proposed one acquisition. A colored site map was distributed describing the property.

#### **Dwarf Pine Plains County Preserve – Kunz & Stuart Property – PINE BARRENS CORE, Westhampton, Town of Southampton**

The acquisition of 1.34 acres in Westhampton, Town of Southampton. This will be acquired under the Old Suffolk Drinking Water Protection Program (C12-5(E)(1)(b)).

**A motion to approve this acquisition was made by Trustee Walters and seconded by Trustee White. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.** (Trustee Corwin was not present for this vote).

#### **ACQUISITION OF THE SOUTH BAY STREET PROPERTY, VILLAGE OF LINDENHURST**

Janet Longo gave an update on the South Bay Street Property. She attended a full Legislative meeting where this subject was on the tabled agenda and got passed by the Legislature.

Trustee McKay responded that according to the Suffolk County Charter, this acquisition should not have been approved by the Legislature without the prior approval of the Parks Trustees. He questioned the Legislature's action and also commented that money cannot be expended on this acquisition without the Trustees approval. A few months back the Trustees tabled a motion to deny the acquisition of this property to allow them time for due diligence. They visited the site, listened to a presentation by Legislator Horsley and another presentation by the Village of Lindenhurst. Trustee McKay mentioned he would be willing to put the tabled motion to deny this acquisition back on the table. Trustee Engel said the County Executive has expressed his opposition to this acquisition and it would be helpful if the County Executive knew the position of the Parks Trustees.

**A motion to put the tabled motion back on the table was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee Borden. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.**

**A motion to deny the acquisition of the South Bay Street property due to its location, isolation from other parkland and environmental condition was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee Engel. The motion was approved by a vote of 9-1-0. Trustee Schilling opposed.**

Some of the Trustees will be attending the Parks Committee meeting this afternoon and will voice their concerns.

## **PUBLIC PORTION**

### Jacqueline Rappel

Resident of Huntington, full time attorney, mom of two children and has three dogs. Has been coming to Coindre Hall for 11 ½ years and utilizing it as a dog park to exercise her dogs as a tax paying citizen. Her children grew up in this park and she has never experienced a problem with dogs and people or dogs and children.

### Peter Gollon

Has lived on Eleanor Place for 29 years which is within walking distance to Coindre Hall. He no longer owns a dog, but when he did he often walked to Coindre Hall. He enjoyed the ability to watch his dog and have her run in the park without having to worry about cars. He enjoys the open space and sense of freedom for the dogs.

### Dave Gambardella

Owns a fairly large, rambunctious dog and own a small house. He enjoys taking his dog to Coindre Hall. It's an amazing experience.

### Bea Hartigan

Native of Huntington and until January she owned two dogs. The 7 year old dog is a field dog and needs the opportunity to run. The dog park is a wonderful socializing opportunity. With pleasure, she looks back and remembers that a few days before their dog passed in January, he spent two hours at Coindre Hall with his human and canine friends.

### Richard Robbins

Has been coming to Coindre Hall for over 20 years and has made life-long friends. The dog owners are good people and he invited the neighbors who are against the park to come down and meet them and see what goes on. The dog owners love and care for the park and would like a solution once and for all.

### Joseph Plonski

Has lived in his house, which is one of the closest to Coindre Hall, for 57 years and has been a lawyer for 57 years. He thinks it's a big mistake to entertain the idea of unleashed dogs at Coindre Hall. It's an insult to the people who have lived there a lifetime. In the 57 years he has lived there he has seen at least 57 problems.

### Robert C. Wood

Co-Chairman of the Alliance for the Preservation of Coindre Hall. They have been able to oust drug dealers, vandals and other unspeakable people from this area to preserve the area for people, not dogs. It is a designated historic site. The rules for historic sites prohibit dogs, even on leashes.

### Phil Plonski

Was born next door from Coindre Hall and now lives around the corner. Has been a local resident 55 years and has enjoyed the property for his entire life. He is opposed to the proposal to open the park to unleashed dogs. He is a dog lover, former dog owner, but is against using this lovely property as a dog run.

Mrs. Plonski

Has been living in Huntington for 30 years. There are dogs that are misbehaved and there have been children that have been badly hurt by the dogs. She wants this park to be a people park, not an unleashed dog park. This is an historic site and should be preserved as such.

Nick Coello

Has been in Huntington for 21 years. The dog owners keep the vandals out. There are 4-wheel drive vehicles that go through the park and trash the area and they tend to keep them out. The dog owners clean up after themselves and clean up the park.

Karen Ball

Has been a resident of Huntington for 16 years and has 2 dogs. "Dogs need a place to run. If they run sufficiently, they will be well balanced dogs. Please preserve the park – it's good for the dogs and good for us. We love this land and want to keep it – with our dogs."

John Fulton

Is a neighbor of Coindre Hall whose main concern is having a natural border to contain animals. People do not always clean up after their dogs. This is a beautiful property with a natural border and if a dog gets loose they could go wandering into neighborhoods and cause problems.

John Ratay

Has been a resident for 30 years and submitted, for the record, documents previously given to the Trustees at their meeting on January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006 by key representatives of The Alliance to Preserve Huntington Harbor. There are multiple uses for this property and unleashed dogs provide a conflict of interest for all the uses of the property. His daughter loved the area so much that they had her wedding at Coindre Hall. The morning of her wedding, while pictures were being taken out front, dog owners and their dogs were running around the front of the building. His wife had to ask them to please stop. How will Parks enforce any policies going forward?

Lynn Kiraly

Has lived around the corner from Coindre Hall for 28 years. There is an historic precedence here and this beautiful property should be preserved. "We're supposed to be a tolerant society so why can't we come up with a multi use plan like the rest of the civilized world? Unleashed dogs are not an issue in the rest of the world so why is there such a problem with the issue of unleashed dog parks in New York?" She said that 10 years ago she was walking her dog at the bottom of the hill and had her dog not been with her she would have been the victim of sexual molestation.

Susan Glaser

Lives in the last house on the street next to the property. Her dog passed away last January. Having had an old, sick dog, she could not leave the dog out on her property because dogs and owners from the park come onto her property all the time and most of her property is fenced. Has concerns about how Parks will ever be able to enforce a policy when there is no fence on this property. "I don't want to leave little kids outside because dogs run onto my property – the property should be fenced in."

Frank Megder

Has a hunting dog and feels dog owners should be allowed to use this park.

### Michael Sullivan

Submitted a letter and signatures of people who live on Abbington Drive. He has been living on Abbington Drive since 1985. He, along with his neighbors, has encountered dogs loose on their lawns, defecating on their property, and owners shouting from a distance for their dogs to return to their sides. There are packs of dogs running loose in limited space. Owners and dogs are often in the park at 6:00 AM, dogs barking. He cannot barbeque because dogs smelling the food constantly invade his property and children are frightened.

### William Milanese

Earlier today he delivered a petition to the Commissioner from the neighbors on Browns Road. He's seen the saga of Coindre Hall a long time. He said Coindre Hall is an unleashed dog park and it has an impact on their quality of life and that dog owners don't adhere to any of the laws. "Dog owners can come here, run their dogs and go home, but we live here 24 hours a day." He reported he can't even read his newspaper on his front porch and feels it's not an issue about dogs, but about people's quality of life...people who have been displaced from this park.

### Mary Liz Dickerson

Lived on Browns Road from 1957 to 1978. Now she lives in Huntington. Her parents still live in the house on Browns Road. There used to always be a wonderful echo at Coindre Hall but now the echo is untenable at dawn on any day of the week, especially when it's magnified 50 to 100 times later in the day. "People matter too."

### Liz Zundel

Registered nurse who lives in Northport. In early 2007 she and her dog, Maggie, came to the park in search of a new sense of community. Three months later she met Michael Marcott and his dog, Raven. "We are now a pack of 4. I am so grateful for meeting Michael and the friends for life I have met at Coindre Hall. The concept of an off leash dog program, without fences, is difficult to understand unless you've actually seen it so we'd like to show you this video so you can see for yourself how it can work."

A video presentation of how this program would work was shown.

### Ginny Munger-Kahn

President of L.I. Dog. A packet of information, signed statements and petitions in favor of a dog park at Coindre Hall were distributed. Also included was background information on off-leash programs across the country. The Trustees already have a proposal that was submitted to the Parks Commissioner in April. She said there are many parks on Long Island that dog owners cannot step foot in with their dogs, including right here in the Town of Huntington. That's why Coindre Hall is so important.

### Barbara Buscareno

Has been trying to get a legal solution to Coindre Hall since 1988. She was on Legislator Cooper's Advisory Committee as well. "I'm a human being that pays town taxes and pays county taxes. This is a program for dog owners." The program will have seasonal hours – summer hours and winter hours. If the dog owners weren't here and the dogs weren't loose, this building would be trashed. L.I. Dog has been working very hard on this issue for the last ten years.

### Ralph Verrill

A retired attorney who has been a Huntington resident for 40 years. He is at Coindre Hall almost every day and has not experienced the noise. He believes the claims of interferences and noise made by the neighbors are exaggerated. People that he meets at the park in the morning are seniors. The park offers a special benefit to seniors that you cannot get at a senior center. Some of the users of the park can't walk too well and it's a big advantage to come into the parking lot and be able to get out and let their dogs run.

Avrum Rosen

A Huntington resident for 25 years and an attorney that helped form L.I. Dog. He has been coming to Coindre Hall for 5 years and understands the competing interests that the Trustees are required to balance. Not all dogs are perfect....not all people are perfect. This park serves a dramatically underserved group of people. He believes that the homeowners have a right not to have dogs walk on their property. He walked the property with the last Commissioner and at that time suggested Parks run a storm fence along the property and along the houses without affecting the historic nature. At that point, and now, L.I. Dog said it was willing to come up with the money and he, personally, will put up the first \$2,500.

John Esposito

Has lived in Huntington since 1958 and is a volunteer park steward for Gold Star Beach. There have been repeated problems with dogs on the beach in spite of signs posted around every entrance of the beach and across the front of the beach area. This summer, when he identified himself as a park steward, he was verbally abused and the lifeguard had to call Public Safety. Years ago there were multiple uses at the park, but not anymore. He objects to an off-leash change in the law.

Ann Gunthner

A member of the public stated Ann Gunthner had to leave but was in favor of the proposal for a dog park at Coindre Hall.

Donald E. Payne

Both he and his wife grew up in Huntington and moved into their present neighborhood in '79. They feel this park is a wonderful place for dogs to run free.

Pamela Meurer

Lives across the street from Coindre Hall. When her dog passed on, she was grieving and came to Coindre Hall just to watch the dogs run. It's such a great place to socialize and to share their grief whether it's the loss of an animal, or the loss of a family member.

Michael Raspantini

Stated the Alliance for the Preservation of Coindre Hall came together in the 80's. He has watched this place go to various interest groups. He has seen people attacked by dogs and opposes a dog park at Coindre Hall.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Deputy Commissioner Bellone reported Legislator Vilorio-Fisher put in a resolution creating a Housing Advisory Board and we need an appointee from the Parks Board of Trustees to serve on that Board. The Advisory Board will review fair market appraisals done by the Division of Real Estate for Parks rental units. The Advisory Board is meeting on December 1<sup>st</sup> 2008. Trustee White expressed interest in serving on this Board before he had to leave the meeting.

**A motion to approve the appointment of Trustee White to the Housing Advisory Board was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee Cardillo. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.**

(Trustee White was not present for this vote).

**VICE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

Smith Point Fishing Pier

Vice Chairman Cardillo mentioned that the naming of the fishing pier in honor of John Fritz has been put on hold by the Legislature.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone reported that before the Legislature can vote on this, the Naming Rights Committee has to meet and review the request. The Naming Rights Committee requires a 6-month waiting period after an individual passes before they can consider naming something in honor of someone.

## **ROUND TABLE**

Trustee Engel reiterated that the County Executive is opposed to any fee increases.

Terry Maccarrone reported the dredging has been done at the Maritime Museum thanks to DPW.

Tom Hronicich invited the Trustees to a Parks Foundation seminar on December 11<sup>th</sup> at Touro Law Center. The Parks Foundation is still waiting for their contract to be fully drafted by the County Attorney's office.

Trustee McKay said we should include new elections for Chairman and Vice Chairman on next month's agenda. It should have been taken place at today's meeting.

Deputy Commissioner Bellone said it will be the first item on the December 18<sup>th</sup> meeting agenda.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, Meadowedge in West Sayville.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee McKay and seconded by Trustee Borden. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.**

(Trustee White was not present for this vote).