

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION  
MINUTES OF JUNE 22, 2017  
ISAAC MILLS HOUSE  
ST. JAMES, 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**

Philip Berdolt	Parks Commissioner
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Emily Lauri	Community Relations Director
Terry Maccarrone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Tony Trotta	Parks Superintendent
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

**GUESTS**

Hon. Kara Hahn	Legislator, District 5 Parks Committee Chair
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**PUBLIC PORTION**

There were no members of the public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 25, 2017**

Page 1, Heading, line 5. **SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LONG ISLAND ANTIQUITIES, COLD SPRING HARBOR, NEW YORK**

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

## **COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Berdolt reported that the summer season had a slow start due to weather conditions but the Parks facilities have been doing well. The staffing levels are managing well, with a lot of seasonal staff returning from last year.

Several requests were approved at the Legislature this week. \$200,000 was approved for equipment. \$500,000 was approved for Historic Services to help supplement some of the work needed at Third House (Montauk CP), Cedar Point Lighthouse and Homan House (Yaphank), among others.

FEMA funds finally came through from a storm previous to Hurricane Sandy as well. It was needed to help rejuvenate the dune line. Then Sandy came and the federal government approved rebuilding the entire shoreline from Fire Island to Moriches Inlet (FIMI), and Fire Island to Montauk Pt. (FIMP).

Additional FEMA grant funds were approved for emergency response equipment for the purchase of Park Ranger vehicles, pay loaders, dump trucks, pick-up trucks and a lot of gators needed for many of the Parks facilities. Some of the funds will also go to DPW and Fire Rescue and Emergency Services.

Legislator Hahn's legislation on the Parks Watch website has been completed. New signs have been designed and posted at various locations. Some dumping occurred on Yaphank-Miller Place Road which contained grass clippings, roofing material, household items, tires, etc. The dumping was done on a parcel that is open space parkland but not an actual park. Many of the parcels are acquired through tax liens and placed into the county park system. The tax map shows this particular parcel to contain some private property, Brookhaven town property and some paper streets (owned by the town) cross-sectioning it as well. To determine whether the dumping was actually done on county property, a survey would have to be done.

Legislator Hahn stated that she has identified a lot of small county parcels that are located in the middle of residential neighborhoods. She inquired with Assemblyman Steve Englebright if these parcels could be dealt with all at once by alienating them. This could be a possibility in the near future.

The Parks Watch program includes a hot line which is now available and an email address which is [RID@suffolkcountyny.gov](mailto:RID@suffolkcountyny.gov). The public can now take photos of a site with their phones and email it to the Parks Department right away when they observe that dumping activity has occurred. When anyone observes dumping activity going on, they should call 911 immediately. Movable trail cams and flash cams (solar-powered and battery operated) are also being installed to take pictures of dumping activity. Increasing the fines for dumping is also expected to help deter people.

Trustee Rosato inquired about the status of West Hills CP. Commissioner Berdolt reported that Parks is waiting for the final approval for the DEC permit. It is expected to be approved by the end of this month and the company under the current county requirements contract will do the work so that no bidding will be necessary. The park is open, except for a small area and the riding stables. Commissioner Berdolt reported that he is hoping to put out an RFP for the stables by the end of 2017 so that a new vendor can move in by the spring of 2018.

Legislator Hahn was pleased to report that her pilot Passport Program was launched. She visited local elementary schools in her district, as well as Girl and Boy Scout troops. The children and parents both love the idea. The passports are available at Legislator Hahn's office, at the libraries in her district, the Village Center in Port Jefferson, Avalon and the Centereach pool or recreation center across the street. Legislator Hahn's district has 25 town parks, and the program includes all of the town parks in the Village of Port Jefferson, almost all of the Town of Brookhaven town parks, all of the county parks, a few DEC owned properties and Avalon, a private park. There are several different options to participate in the program. You can pick up a passport

booklet, download the whole thing and print it out at home or there's a badge system that can be checked-in upon arrival at a park. You can then select and download the badges on your phone.

There is an RFP (Request for Proposals) for a countywide version of the Passport Program which is expected to be implemented in the near future. Legislator Hahn expressed that she would eventually like to see the program include all of the town, county and state parks. It is a great way to get children into all of the parks that are available to them and learn to appreciate and take care of them.

## **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Hopkins inquired about the status of the fifty acre portion of the North Fork Preserve property. Commissioner Berdolt reported that the bidder's proposal was approved, a letter was sent out to the bidder and once accepted, it will be presented to the Legislature for review and approval.

Chair Hopkins requested an update on the piping plover season so far, and whether the fox population has had any impact. Nick Gibbons reported that the federal government deployed hundreds of cameras to do a fox study at Smith Point CP. With the natural cycle of mange that occurred, the fox population was completely decimated and not one fox has been found. Now that Smith Point is essentially an island, re-population of fox at Smith Point would only be possible in one of four ways. They could either swim across Old Inlet (not likely); cross the Smith Point bridge (possible, but not likely); swim across Narrow Bay (not likely either); or swim across Moriches Inlet. None of these are likely on any regular basis.

The cat population at Smith Point CP is mostly limited to the campgrounds and the parking lot where people illegally feed them. The Parks Department is working with FINS on a public awareness program to educate people not to feed the cats or deer population.

Nick reported that there are presently 20 pairs of plover at Smith Point CP. In the next 6-7 days there will be 8 hatches. Often, chicks will be lost from exposure to the elements and some re-nesting will occur which starts the cycle over again.

Chair Hopkins inquired if there have been any issues with gypsy moths/caterpillars. Commissioner Berdolt stated that they have not been a problem so far. However, the southern pine beetle issue continues to be a problem.

Richard Martin presented a historical background of the Isaac Mills property. He explained that the Isaac Mills House dates back to 1719 and it was acquired by the county in 2007 through a locally proposed legislative initiative by then Legislator Lynne Nowick. The Isaac Mills House is the second oldest county holding. The oldest holding is the original section of Sagtikos Manor which dates back to 1697. The approximately two acre Isaac Mills property line is immediately adjacent to town parkland (the Mills Pond property). A part of the house is currently in the housing program and rented out. The other portion of the house is reserved for an historic group or nature group that can interpret the house and open it to the public. The county maintains the lawn and exterior of the house. A new roof was added to the entire house and the wrap-around porch was recently rebuilt. The original ceiling to the porch was saved but the decking, supports and lattice work needed to be replaced. Recently, the Association of Suffolk County Historical Societies contacted Richard expressing interest in possibly using the house but an agreement is still uncertain. Two floors of the house would be available for use.

The Isaac Mills House is the second house built by the Mills Family on this property. They were the first family to purchase property from the original Smith Family of Smithtown. Mr. Smith bought the property from Gardiner of Gardiner's Island and Wyandanch of the Montaukett Indians. Smith had to negotiate with both Gardiner and Wyandanch in order to purchase the property (the Mills Pond property). It was typical in those

times to have to make a deal with both parties. Gardiner was the first white settler in 1639 and settled Gardiner's Island. He then negotiated with Smith to purchase the Mills property. Smith settled along the Nissequogue River and after he passed away, the next generation started to sell off subdivided parcels of their land in fifty acre lots.

The Mills Family moved east from Jamaica and built their first home in the late 1600s, where the current Mills Pond house is. The second house was built in 1719 for Isaac Mills (the oldest son of 12 children). They continued to expand their holdings to approximately 500 acres by continuing to purchase land from the Smith Family. They established a large farmstead on the Mills Pond/Isaac Mills property and 200 acres of it was listed on the National Register in 1973. The property stretches across 25A and over to the Flowerfield property. When the county acquired the property, the house and land was already listed in the National Register. Land listed in the National Register doesn't preclude development. However, there would have to be a strict review before a structure could be moved or taken down. One of the trees on the property is at least 200 years old and is thought to be either an American sycamore or a London planetree (which is most likely a hybrid cross between the American sycamore and the Oriental plane).

Richard stated that the Parks Department would like a group to come in to use the building for office/community use. Parks would also like to make some improvements for parking. DPW has allowed Parks to continue existing use of the house so that a tenant could move in. If a group were to use the house for public assembly such as programs or meetings on a regular basis, Parks would need to upgrade the basement and framing of the house. The requirements for public assembly at this location are for less than 50 people.

## **ROUND TABLE**

Trustee Sickles reported that he was approached by an attorney from Southampton, Wayne Bruyn who has a client who owns property on Pleasure Drive. The property is adjacent to county property, there's a right-of-way and the owner would like to install a gate on the right-of-way. Nick Gibbons stated that he is aware of it and believes a gate was already installed there, as well as a gas main.

Trustee Sickles reported that he received a copy of an emailed letter written to Commissioner Berdolt by a constituent who is not pleased with the \$7.00 weekend parking fee at Shinnecock East. Trustee Sickles also spoke with the constituent on the phone and feels that he addressed his concerns.

Trustee White reported that he received a letter from the fire chief of Montauk and on June 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:58 pm, Montauk Fire Department received an EMS call at Oyster Pond on the north side reporting injuries from a fall off a horse. There was a problem getting to the injured person. The initial response was to reach the injured person from the East Lake Drive entrance of Montauk County Park, going down Shagwong Beach and making a right on Shagwong Point but the tide was very high and up to the dune. Another rescue team was simultaneously dispatched by way of another access route at Montauk Point, east of Oyster Pond. Due to the high tide, emergency personnel had to retreat before making contact with the patient. The third and final attempt was to depart from Deep Hollow Ranch where the Montauk Fire Department used an ATV to bring EMS personnel to the patient. All of these efforts took over an hour and a half. Trustee White reported that the fire chief has requested that the Parks Department re-open the over grown road network and keep it maintained for the future. The road network should not only allow passage to Oyster Pond, but all coves and remote locations in the parkland so that emergency services can be provided if necessary.

Trustee White inquired about the status of installation of the fire suppression system at Third House. Richard Martin reported that authorities have been out to the site with DPW several times and are currently working on the design.

Trustee McKay inquired about the Wicks/Froehlich Farm property in Huntington. The county acquired two flagstaff lots from an adjacent property owner called the Riker property and there is another flagstaff property currently for sale. He asked Nick if he is aware of it and if the county is interested in that one as well. Nick stated that he would follow up with the Planning Department and let Trustee McKay know.

Trustee Cardillo reported that he has been running at Indian Island CP and Sears Bellows CP, and both parks are well maintained. He added that the ticks are very bad this year.

Trustee Rosato inquired if the county is considering a plan to control the ticks. Legislator Hahn reported that the Health Department hired a new entomologist. Commissioner Berdolt added that there is a study planned strictly to track how many and what kind of disease the ticks are carrying. The program is estimated to last 1½-2 years. In order to do any type of control or surveillance, the program would have to be presented to and be approved by the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ). Commissioner Berdolt stated that to draft a plan for that kind of program (similar to the program to control mosquitos), it would cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. At present, the program is to find out what disease is involved and wait for possible town response.

Trustee Rosato inquired if there has been any progress with the hotel/motel tax. Legislator Hahn reported that the Legislature extended it for another two years so there will be no increase for the present time.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at the Old Field Club in East Setauket on Thursday, July 27, 2017.

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Trustee Richard White and was seconded by Trustee Alexander McKay. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 8-0-0.**