

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES  
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION  
MINUTES OF MAY 19, 2016  
BERGEN POINT GOLF COURSE  
WEST BABYLON, NEW YORK**

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Kathleen Gooding	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
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
Michael Rosato	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
William B. Sickles	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

**ABSENT**

VACANT Member at Large

**PARKS DEPARTMENT**

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Tom Vaughn	County Executive Assistant V
Tony Trotta	Superintendent
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

**GUESTS**

Jenn Hann Leg. Aide to Legislator William Lindsay, District 8

**PUBLIC PORTION**

There were no members of the public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 21, 2016**

Page 3, last paragraph, first sentence – Member Pearsall commented that there were a lot of **negative** complaints at the Parks Committee meeting from some of the Legislators regarding the condition of the restrooms at Smith Point CP. (remove negative)

**A motion to approve the minutes as amended was made by Trustee White and seconded by Member of the Board Pearsall. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 12-0-0.**

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Dawson reported that a Parks Trustee is needed to sit on the committee for the RFP (Request for Proposals) for the Cedar Point Camp Store and Trustee White graciously volunteered.

**A motion to approve Trustee White sitting on the committee for the RFP was made by Member of the Board Pearsall and seconded by Trustee Gooding. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 12-0-0.**

There will be a naming of the new fully accessible ADA compliant playground that was constructed at the Cherry Avenue Dog Park. It is already being very well utilized and the funding came from Legislator Bill Lindsay, Sr. It was originally planned to be a skate park but the community expressed the preference for a playground. The funding was re-allocated for a playground and the funds were appropriated last year. A dedication will be planned in the next few weeks and the park will be named after a very active local community member, Betty Whitehouse. It was approved by the Legislature and the naming committee and also needs the approval of the Parks Trustees.

**A motion to approve the naming of the Betty Whitehouse County Park was made by Member of the Board Pearsall and seconded by Trustee McKay. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 12-0-0.**

Commissioner Dawson reported that Shinnecock East campground had to close almost 40 sites due to severe erosion on the ocean front side. All of the campers were notified. Some concerned citizens attended the last Parks Committee meeting and indicated that the Parks Department cancelled the reservations. Commissioner Dawson clarified this by reporting that the department communicated to the public by way of Facebook and sending emails to the people who were affected that if they wanted to cancel their reservations they would get a full refund, including the reservation fees. This offered them the opportunity to book other camping sites elsewhere since two sites cannot be booked at the same time.

Commissioner Dawson reported that the parks are ready for the busy Memorial Day weekend. There are still some difficulties finding seasonal personnel to staff such parks as Shinnecock Marina, Shinnecock East and Montauk. He asked if anyone knows of some potential candidates to please refer them to Suffolk County Parks. The Parks Department has already reached out to all of the local high schools and colleges on the east end, as well as every Town Supervisor.

Nick Gibbons reported that the Smith Point dredging project ended the last week in April and the beach was restored to its pre-existing condition in terms of the infrastructure that was damaged. The beach re-opened on Sunday, May 1 for outer beach driving on the whole length of the beach (5 miles). There is currently seven pair of piping plovers and the first hatch date is May 21. Parks will partially restrict outer beach access starting May 20<sup>th</sup>. There will still be 1½ miles of outer beach for day trip use. At Smith Point CP, the fish are starting to increase, the bridge is very crowded with fishermen and there will be a lot of interest to get out to the inlet, but unfortunately there will be no access due to the birds nesting near Burma Road.

Conditions are similar at Cupsogue CP. You can drive down ½ mile and the next ½ mile is closed to driving. There are 12-14 seasonal employees who will be monitoring the plover nests for the summer and they will be at Smith Point every day this weekend to monitor when the first nest hatches.

Commissioner Dawson reported that the necessary repairs to the playground at the Smith Point campgrounds were completed for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday last summer. It is planned to be completely replaced in the next few years. Parks is currently replacing the entire playground located to the west of the pavilion and it is scheduled to be open by Memorial Day weekend.

There is serious erosion at Meschutt Beach and Parks has a meeting scheduled with the DEC tomorrow to hopefully work out a plan for an emergency dredge project. Otherwise, Parks will have to truck in a couple of hundred tractor trailer loads of sand and move it manually.

The alternate septic system at Meschutt CP is near completion and will meet its deadline of Memorial Day.

Commissioner Dawson reported that he has announced his retirement this coming September. He welcomed Tom Vaughn, who has worked in the County Executive's office for a number of years. He has become very familiar with all of the issues pertaining to the Parks Department over the past several years. Everyone present at the meeting introduced themselves to Tom.

### **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Chair Hopkins requested an update on the timeframe for completion of the Homan Gerard House in Yaphank. Commissioner Dawson reported that it is presently being worked on and he will get a formal report from Richard Martin, Director of Historic Services.

Chair Hopkins asked for an update on the alternative septic system at Meschutt CP. Commissioner Dawson announced that it is near completion and plans are for it to be ready for the Memorial Day weekend.

Chair Hopkins inquired about the Smith Point restrooms. Commissioner Dawson stated that the condition of the restrooms needs to be further evaluated. They are utilized by a high volume of people and cleaned by staff at least three times per shift. Mid-season last year, signs were posted in the restrooms with a phone number to call at the East Booth, asking that campers report anything that needs immediate attention. No reported calls were made. Commissioner Dawson reported that the restrooms are outdated and have some broken tiles. Plumbers are routinely at Smith Point to fix the showers, urinals and commodes. The needs are being evaluated and there is capital funding to be allocated for some of the repairs. The Parks Department has its own staff complete projects whenever possible.

Chair Hopkins asked Nick Gibbons to give an update on the water quality issues at Goldsmith Inlet. Nick reported that for about 20 years the county dredged the mouth of Goldsmith Inlet. For the last ten years, the Town of Southold has been doing it and having more and more difficulty with it. Southold has appealed to the county to begin doing it again. Legislator Krupski, representatives of Southold Town, Nick Gibbons and DPW met and determined that Southold continue with the responsibility since it is not a navigable waterway for the county. It was determined that the major issue is that if the mouth of the inlet does not continue to flow, the antiquated septic systems of the community of homes in the area will fail. It is further complicated by the fact that the piping plover's nest there and must be monitored. An area of a couple of hundred yards would need to be dredged and because of its location, it could very possibly fill back in again overnight. The boundary of the town/county property is a rock jetty.

Chair Hopkins requested an update on the restrooms at Indian Island CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that there is a new solar panel that could be installed, but the new batteries in the current one still charge as long as it's sunny weather.

Chair Hopkins asked for an update on the state legislation for the Elwood Schoolhouse. Commissioner Dawson reported that there was a Home Rule message voted on which passed at the last legislative meeting about two weeks ago. It will now go to the state for passage.

### **ROUND TABLE**

Commissioner Dawson reported to Trustee Leudesdorf that Parks staff will be doing some work at the Cedar Beach parking area the first week in June. Several dump trucks of recycled concrete aggregate will be spread to fill in the potholes. The bond for improvements to parklands was passed, making this project possible.

Trustee Leudesdorf inquired if any progress was made with Cornell Cooperative Extension regarding a possible new dining hall at Peconic Dunes CP. Commissioner Dawson reported that a meeting was held and contract negotiations are currently under way.

Commissioner Dawson reported to Trustee White that the contract for Camp Soulgrow to return to the Third House in Montauk CP for the upcoming season has been approved.

Trustee Rosato inquired about a possible joint agreement between the state DEC and county for management of some property in Smithtown, between Meadow and Lawrence Roads, east of Indianhead Road. Nick reported that he was in contact with the DEC to confirm that they own the property immediately adjacent to the county property in this area. The county has no road frontage on its property and the DEC does have access from Meadow Road on the north which lends itself to a good cooperative agreement. Nick reported that the county already has about one dozen similar agreements with the DEC in Brookhaven and Riverhead. He has been working on an agreement at this location as well.

Trustee Rosato inquired with Tom Vaughn about the lack of funds available for the purchase of open space and the ¼% sales tax which is supposed to be set aside and used for that purpose. Tom stated that his recollection is that during the Levy administration, there was a desire to up-front money that was expected to become available and use it to make a number of very large purchases very quickly. This was with the knowledge that there would be a point in time when it would become very difficult to continue buying up open space because of having to pay off the results of front loading. Trustee Rosato asked if there is currently any plan to move forward with accessing some funding for open space acquisitions once again. Tom stated that he would look into it.

Trustee Sickles reported that the first Superintendent of Suffolk County Parks, Bud Corwin passed away in early March, while on vacation in Florida. His wife has scheduled a memorial service for him on Thursday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 1:30 pm at the Bellport Methodist Church. He asked if Parks would send out a notice to all Parks staff to notify those who may wish to attend. Bud was involved in the development of many projects in just about every park in the department from the beginning, whether at the campgrounds, picnic areas, golf courses or laying asphalt.

Trustee Sickles reported that beach access for vehicles in the Town of Southampton may become an issue. The town trustees have lost some of their influence and power due to a NYS Supreme Court decision. There are ocean front homeowners who are seeking to reduce the number of outer beach vehicles on the ocean side of the dunes for parking in the summer, and that is an ongoing issue. There may be additional pressure on Suffolk County Parkland in the area. The biggest controversial area is exactly adjacent to the eastern border of Shinnecock East County Park. There has already been talk about accessing the ocean beach on the west side of Shinnecock Inlet which is mostly county parkland and also piping plover territory. The town has always taken the position that you can drive on the beach after 6 pm, in spite of the fact that the piping plovers are there 24/7. It will be necessary to keep a close eye on the west side of the inlet this year for illegal vehicle access. Trustee Sickles inquired if there is any possibility that Suffolk County Parks will have a fulltime employee assigned to Shinnecock East CP this year. Commissioner Dawson stated that there will be two fulltime employees as well as a seasonal employee working at Shinnecock East CP. This will be a big help.

Trustee Cardillo recognized Nick Gibbons for his contributions on the taskforce for the North Fork Preserve County Park. There were repeated conflicting viewpoints expressed regarding future plans for the park and Nick was very patient and professional during the entire process.

Tom Vaughn expressed that he is excited for the opportunity to represent the Parks Department as Commissioner. He stated that Commissioner Dawson's responsibilities have often been under rated considering

the amount of parkland and challenges there are to handle. Tom is looking forward to working with Commissioner Dawson and his staff this summer while transitioning into the department, as well as working with the Parks Trustees. Chair Hopkins welcomed Tom on behalf of the Trustees.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at West Hills CP in Huntington on Thursday, June 16, 2016.

**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 12-0-0.**