

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF NOVEMBER 21, 2019
HOMAN HOUSE
YAPHANK, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Christopher Bodkin	Member of the Board
Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Kathleen Gooding	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Dawn Hopkins	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
Joseph Kukral	Member at Large
Peter Leis	Chairman, Trustee, Town of Islip
Michael Rosato	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
William B. Sickles	Vice-Chairman, Trustee, Town of Southampton

ABSENT

Daniel Lloyd	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
James W. Wright	Trustee, Town of Huntington
VACANT	Trustee, Town of Southold

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Philip Berdolt	Commissioner
Don McKay	Deputy Commissioner
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Emily Lauri	Community Relations Director
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Tony Trotta	Senior Superintendent
Barbara Rittman	Senior Office Assistant

GUESTS

Hon. Kara Hahn	Legislator, District 5, Parks & Recreation Committee Chair
Melissa Kangas	Suffolk County Department of Planning & Real Estate
Tim Rothang	Aide to Legislator Rudolph A. Sunderman, District 3

PUBLIC PORTION

John Lesser	Town of Brookhaven
Edward DeGennaro	President, Mastic Peninsula Historical Society
Richard Oldham	Member, Mastic Peninsula Historical Society
Rosemary Oldham	Member, Mastic Peninsula Historical Society
Bill Roache	Trustee, Mastic Peninsula Historical Society

PUBLIC PORTION

Ed DeGennaro, president of Mastic Peninsula Historic Society distributed pamphlets pertaining to the Hawkins House in Moriches. Commissioner Berdolt stated that at the last Parks Trustees meeting in Shelter Island there was discussion regarding concerns about the purchase and restoration of the Hawkins House. Since that time, a

meeting was held and Deputy Don McKay attended as representative for the Parks Department. Legislator Sunderman's office organized the meeting and representatives of the Mastic Peninsula Historical Society and the Town of Brookhaven were present at the meeting. The concern is that in the past, agreements pertaining to other historic sites that the County has had with various municipalities have not lived up to the requirements of their contract agreements. At the last Parks Trustees meeting, it was expressed that the Parks Department would like the Town of Brookhaven to commit that they will be fully responsible for restoration of the Hawkins House. Legislator Sunderman discussed it further with the Town at the meeting on Monday in order to get that commitment. Commissioner Berdolt expressed that the Parks Department experienced a similar situation with the Town of Smithtown at the Commerdinger property. The Town eventually backed out of the agreement and the Parks Department ended up with responsibility for the maintenance. At the Monday meeting with Legislator Sunderman it was agreed that the Town of Brookhaven Attorney and the County Attorney would work on a pre-closing agreement that the Town would take care of the structure on the property.

Legislator Hahn suggested that there may be a way to work through the legal issues to make a permanent purchase transfer that would make it acceptable for all involved if the Town would be interested in doing that. Commissioner Berdolt inquired if an amount of funding for the budget line to spend on the building was committed to at the meeting. It was reported that it was discussed at the Monday meeting but an amount was not settled upon. Parks Vice-Chairman Sickles inquired if the proposal that the Parks Trustees are being asked to vote on is the same as what was requested at the last meeting, except that there has now been a meeting that was held where it was discussed if the Town of Brookhaven would be stepping up and putting funds into restoration of the building, but nothing else in writing. Commissioner Berdolt stated that there is nothing in writing as of yet, but the Town of Brookhaven did commit to working with the County Attorney to come up with a legal agreement aside from the resolution.

Parks Vice-Chairman Sickles commented that the biggest concern that the Parks Trustees have, which the Parks Department has experienced many times before, is that the Parks Department simply doesn't have the financial resources to do all of the restoration work of structures that it continues to get over and over again. The Parks Trustees are hoping to see a commitment that the Town of Brookhaven and the Mastic Peninsula Historical Society will be responsible for all of the restoration of the building.

Trustee Cardillo inquired how much it cost to restore the Homan House. Richard Martin stated that the property was acquired in 1967 and the Parks Department is just getting to restorations of purchases that were made in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The condition of the building was very poor and a lot of framing had to be replaced due to severe water damage. The project started in 2012 and the ribbon-cutting was held one month ago.

Within the Historic District in the Town of Brookhaven, going east is the Ketcham Inn and the Bell House which was recently opened. The various structures are restored by different groups using a combination of grants, government and private funds depending on each individual building and how it was purchased. The Hawkins House is a smaller structure than the Homan House with no rot or water damage, and the roof is tight. There has been periodic damage by vandals breaking in but since members of the Mastic Peninsula Historical Society have been checking on the building it occurs less frequently with more of a presence on the property. Additionally, Bert Seides, with the Ketcham Inn Foundation works with the county and town to maintain a lot of properties in the Moriches area.

Brookhaven Parks Trustee Dawn Hopkins stated that she feels that the Parks Trustees need to see the final agreement from the Town of Brookhaven before doing anything further. It was agreed to hold the **December Parks Trustee meeting on December 19th at West Sayville Golf Course, Meadowedge Estate. The meeting portion will begin at 11 a.m.**

A motion to table approval of the acquisition of the Hawkins Webb House property until the next Parks Trustees meeting in December was made by Commissioner Berdolt and it was seconded by Parks Trustee Dawn Hopkins. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

Commissioner Berdolt stated that all concerned are moving in a positive direction towards an agreement. He also inquired if the Mastic Peninsula Historical Society is registered as a 501© (3) not-for profit agency and members confirmed that and will provide the documentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF OCTOBER 24, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Vice-Chairman William Sickles and it was seconded by Trustee Dawn Hopkins. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Berdolt reported that the season went very well.

The Peconic Land Trust submitted a grant application for costs associated with the acquisition of the Reese property in Southold and would very much appreciate Parks Trustee support of this effort. Legislator Hahn inquired if the property is surrounded by any county property and Commissioner Berdolt stated that it is not but he feels it's a good purchase for the group.

A motion in support of this effort by the Peconic Land Trust was made by Vice-Chairman William Sickles and it was seconded by Trustee Gilbert Cardillo. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

Commissioner Berdolt stated that the Parks Trustee representing the Town of Huntington is not present at the meeting but reported that there are plans to build some condominiums adjacent to Parks property. Commissioner Berdolt distributed a map of the site which is at Indian Hills in Northport. Nick Gibbons stated that there are concerns about a road that is proposed for access to the site but that the county property is across on the river side of the road. Deputy Commissioner McKay stated that the property is an existing private golf course and Nick added that he is in contact with the Planning Commissioner to determine if there should be any concerns with the plans.

Commissioner Berdolt reported that the weekend following the last Parks Trustees meeting in October there was another breach off of Dune Road in Southampton. It was near the west of Shinnecock Inlet and it was a wash over. DPW and Parks Department responded and luckily at the end of Altenkirch Park there was a huge pile of sand which was used to rebuild the dune. Just the other day there was another wash over as a result of a moon tide and high surf which completely wiped out the dune that they had rebuilt. The ocean came across to the bay, but the road is still intact. There has been an emergency dredge project to help Parks rejuvenate the beach and it was all swept away. There's about another 45,000 cubic yards left to use. DPW sent an email to the NYS DEC because the same thing has been repeatedly happening for several years and it was requested that the Army Corps of Engineers assist with this issue. Nick Gibbons added that the Shinnecock Inlet is a federal navigation channel and maintenance of the beach down drift of the channel is the responsibility of the Army Corps of Engineers. The project repair has been neglected by the Army Corps of Engineers every year when they come out to inspect the problem. The NYS DOT, State Parks and Southampton Town have all tried to assist with this problem.

Commissioner Berdolt reported that the summer went very well weather wise and the Parks staff did a great job. Outer beach passes and horseback riding permits were up in sales. Commissioner Berdolt commented that he

has had staff attend riding shows to sell Parks horseback riding permits to increase sales. Legislator Hahn added that Discover Long Island has been doing a lot more promoting and including horseback riding in their advertisements. Commissioner Berdolt reported that Parks has increased its social media outreach, made additions to the Parks website and also the upgrade in the RecTrac system now enables the public to purchase gift cards and renew Green Keys online.

Cell towers will be coming soon to several Parks sites. The Parks Department received the commitment from the County that there will be a separate line for Parks in its operating budget for maintenance which will be a great help. The style of the tower can be selected as well, based on the venue.

Legislator Kara Hahn stated that she would like for everyone to be in contact with their own local home town Legislator because there may now be problems getting bonds and capital projects passed. She stressed that it's important to express to them that it's very important that the bonds don't get held up. Commissioner Berdolt stated that hardening and building the living shoreline at Indian Island just recently came up and there were some concerns but Parks was able to get through committee and hopefully it will be passed with the full Legislature. The engineering firm will be available to answer any questions and address any concerns.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Peter Leis wished all a Happy Thanksgiving.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Kathleen Gooding reported that Shelter Island will be having its first park opening to the public and a ribbon cutting tomorrow, Friday, November 22nd. Commissioner Berdolt reported that this park is 50% County, 25% Shelter Island and 25% Dering Harbor. Mildred Flower Hird is celebrated as an icon in Shelter Island for making it possible to preserve 30.8 acres of land that will forever remain as open space. 13.8 acres are on the west side of Manhasset Road, adjacent to a pond that flows into Dering Harbor and another 17.1 acres to the east are considered pristine woodlands.

Trustee Gilbert Cardillo inquired about the four poster deer feeders that were referred to at the October Parks Trustees meeting. Nick Gibbons stated that Vector Control is going to do a pilot program at Indian Island County Park on deer management and a part of the program includes the use of four poster deer feeding stations. When the deer reach in at the stations for food, a pesticide is applied onto the deer which has been found to be effective in killing ticks.

Commissioner Berdolt reported that he received a letter from Southampton Town Supervisor Jay Schneiderman recommending reinstatement of Vice-Chairman William Sickles for another term as Parks Trustee representing the Town of Southampton. A letter from Shelter Island Town Supervisor Gary Gerth was also received in support of the reappointment of Parks Trustee Kathleen Gooding.

Trustee Michael Rosato

Commissioner Berdolt reported that he received an inquiry through Legislator Kennedy's office regarding Forestwood Civic Association in Smithtown having concerns about a deer management plan. He stated that at this time, the only thing that could be considered to control the deer is to open the area to hunting. Trustee Rosato stated that there are people who currently hunt on their own property with a bow which is permitted. He added also that a few years ago, state parks culled a herd of approximately 77 deer, but the deer population still continues to explode. Unless something similar to that is done every year he commented that it's uncertain how much progress would be made. Commissioner Berdolt stated that there is a management plan for the deer,

but there are no funds to move forward with it at this time. Trustee Rosato offered to be in contact with a representative of Forestwood Civic Association to discuss it.

Member at Large Joseph Kukral commended the Parks Department for the great job of staff this year working at parks offering camping. He sits on the Board of the Suffolk Committee for Camping and at the last meeting there were a lot of positive comments made about park maintenance, such as cleaning up after campers vacate sites, fire rings, etc. He added that he and President David Lipman would like to possibly offer some input with implementing a hard rule policy to deal with eviction of campers due to excessive behavior. Commissioner Berdolt stated that the Parks Department has been working on a formal disciplinary policy to address that. Incident reports are now being documented in patron reservation records for every different park that they camp at and cause problems.

Parks Committee Chair/Legislator Hahn also thanked the Parks Department staff for all of their assistance and hard work. She added that she has been running at the Old Field Farm walking path and she has been getting a lot of positive feedback from the community.

The County Executive's staff has been working on the drafts for the county-wide Parks Passports and Legislator Hahn commented that she has reviewed them and is impressed with the graphics. She hopes to be bringing the finished product to the Parks Trustees by January or February and then hopefully launch it for Memorial Day 2020.

Legislator Hahn thanked the District Attorney's office and the Parks Department for the coordination to cut down on the vandalism, tree cutting and dumping issue. The crimes that occur in our parks are being taken very seriously and it is greatly appreciated. Commissioner Berdolt commended the two detectives who have been working very closely with the Parks Department to apprehend those committing violations.

Vice-Chairman William Sickles asked for an update on the 3-4 week tree cutting project to work on the southern pine beetle infestation at Hubbard and Sears Bellows County Parks. Nick Gibbons reported that the job was completed last week and it was the last of the \$75,000 grant. It was noted that a lot of the wood has been stacked up along Flanders Road.

Richard Martin reported that the Homan House restoration has now been completed and is open to the public. An open house has been planned with the Yaphank Historical Society on December 15. This restoration was second on the list of priority projects that was identified in a survey taken back in the early 2000's to determine which historic sites needed work most urgently. First on the list was the mill in Smithtown and the structure component at that site was restored. There were a lot of structural issues with the Homan House such as framing because the roof hadn't been maintained. These two sites were acquisitions from the late 1960's. Priorities are now moving to acquisitions from the early 1970's and include the Cedar Point Lighthouse in Sag Harbor, Third House in Montauk and the boathouse at Coindre Hall in Huntington. These are all major projects.

Richard Martin reported that restoration work at the Homan House was completed in conjunction with Bob Kessler, president of the Yaphank Historical Society. The County paid for all of the framing work and the full set of plans that was required to receive the Robert D.L. Gardner Foundation grant of \$300,000 which was sent directly to the Yaphank Historical Society. Bob Kessler reported that his group did all of the stone work around the foundation of the house and the work needed to support and rebuild the chimney. They restored all of the windows, all of the flooring, all of the wood work, plaster work, rebuilt the staircase on the first floor and replaced the staircase on the second floor of the house. Inmates from the Yaphank Correctional Facility painted the entire house. Stepping stones, ramp and grading of the property outside was also completed.

Richard added that this is the third house that the Yaphank Historical Society has restored. The Hawkins House, the Mary Booth House and now the Homan House have been completed and are open for tours. More work is planned on the landscaping at Homan House. The property is at the north end of Southaven County Park and everything north of the Long Island Expressway is dedicated to the historic trust. The Yaphank Historical Society also has a hiking trail through the woods on the premises. The Yaphank Historical Society recently received another grant from the Gardner Foundation to work on an interpretation and video program to explain the history to the public. Preservation Long Island has already visited the site and the Parks Department has been receiving very positive comments.

Richard invited all to the Big Duck Lighting on Wednesday, December 4th at 7 p.m.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Member of the Board Chris Bodkin and it was seconded by Trustee Michael Rosato. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 7-0-0.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at **West Sayville Golf Course, Meadowedge on Thursday, December 19, 2019 at 11:00 a.m.**