

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 26, 2019
MONTAUK COUNTY PARK, THIRD HOUSE
MONTAUK, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

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
Daniel Lloyd	Trustee, Town of Babylon
William B. Sickles	Vice Chairman, Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
James W. Wright	Trustee, Town of Huntington

ABSENT

Christopher Bodkin	Member of the Board
Michael Rosato	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
VACANT	Trustee, Town of Southold

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Don McKay	Deputy Commissioner
Emily Lauri	Community Relations Director
Terry Maccarrone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Steve Tooker	Superintendent
Tony Trotta	Senior Superintendent
Barbara Rittman	Senior Office Assistant

GUESTS

Ed Yohann	Third House Nature Center
Jessie James	Third House Nature Center
Stephanie Krusa	Third House Nature Center, Montauk Point Lighthouse Museum Committee, Montauk Historical Society

PUBLIC PORTION

Kristin White spoke about Parks Department camping regulations. She stated that she uses the campgrounds regularly, thanked the Parks Trustees and stated that they are beautifully kept. She added that she and her family camp mainly at Shinnecock East CP. This summer she was contacted by the Parks Department (about the third week of August) and asked she would be willing to trade her reserved campsites to a patron who had requested them. The campsites that were requested were 102 and 103 which are very popular sites because they're right against the village/county line, there are no neighbors and there's a pretty open view. Mrs. White stated that she denied the request because it was the first opportunity that she had to be on the outer beach with her family due to the piping plover closure. When she and her family arrived on Monday, 8/26, Mrs. White

claimed an Airstream camper with large construction generator was aligned incorrectly, against the rules in a campsite all the way to

the west side and supposed to be on the east side. Mrs. White stated that the generator is supposed to be either behind your camper or on the door side of your camper. She claimed the generator was parked on the part of the campsite that was facing hers and already turned on even though it was not proper generator hours. She called and alerted the county office and was told they made note of it. The generator ran all of that night, and into the next day. The next morning she called the county office again out at Shinnecock and was once again told that they would make note of it. The family (Jimmy Fallon) that was staying in that camper arrived Tuesday afternoon and got stuck on the beach because they weren't alerted that they needed to be in 4-wheel drive and needed to air down their tires. They also didn't have a sticker either, but Mrs. White and her husband helped them out and they were able to get to their two campsites (one of which was completely empty and unused). They stayed overnight and left the next morning with the generator still running.

Wednesday morning, Mrs. White went down to the county office and reported that the generator had been running for twenty-four hours straight for almost two full days. She alleged that the employees at the Shinnecock office told her that she needed to contact the W. Sayville office because they were told that they were not allowed to enforce the rules at this campsite. Mrs. White called the W. Sayville office and was told that they would send out Park Rangers but they never arrived. She added that she was also told that the employees at Shinnecock were alerted that it would be considered harassment if they approached this individual and alerted him to the rules and regulations.

Mrs. White reported that during their stay, there were four vehicles at that site at different times, none of which had county stickers. The vehicle that came and retrieved the camper at the end of the week had Ohio State license plates, no sticker and left well after 2 p.m. which is the expected check-out time. There were a lot of upset people on the beach that week because it isn't fair that there are some campers who don't even have a generator, abide by all of the rules, and are also fearful at times of what an employee might say to them if they don't follow the rules. Mrs. White alleged that this individual did not go through the appropriate channels and was not alerted to the rules and regulations. She complained that it isn't fair to the rest of the public who purchase a sticker for \$100, pay the fees to go camping, follow the rules and then have to listen to a generator for 3 1/2 days straight.

Deputy Commissioner McKay stated that he was unaware of it, and will look into it. He added that people should not be given special privileges and rules should be abided by all. He assured Mrs. White that it would be investigated. Trustee Cardillo inquired what the generator hours are. Mrs. White stated that they are from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. She added that 24 hours/day was excessive, especially when there was nobody there the majority of the time. Another rule specifies that if there is a generator running, there must be an adult present at the site.

Bill Oliver spoke about campsite generators and the size of generators. He stated that the rules state that generator noise can't be excessive. The person next to him and the person next to them at Montauk CP this summer had a 5500 watt construction generator running. Another campsite patron notified the County and a Park Ranger was dispatched to the site. The Park Ranger questioned what is considered excessive. Mr. Oliver stated that he feels it's a rule on the books that can't be enforced and that the County needs to add a decibel to the rules. He added that another issue is that construction generators never kick down and run at a constant high whining pitch.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF AUGUST 22, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Trustee Richard White and it was seconded by Trustee James Wright. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Deputy Commissioner McKay reported that the County Executive will be holding a press event tomorrow at noon at Cathedral Pines CP where he and Legislator Sarah Anker will announce Suffolk County banning the intentional release of balloons.

Deputy Commissioner McKay reported that the Parks Department had a very good summer this year. Golf numbers are up about 3%, camping, beach and outer beach camping numbers are also up due to the excellent weather. Approximately 800 more outer beach permits were sold this year over last. Trustee Cardillo inquired how the concessions did at Meschutt, Smith Point and Cupsogue CPs. Emily Lauri distributed concession revenue reports which were reviewed.

Deputy Commissioner McKay reported that Parks will be upgrading its computerized recreation software (RecTrac) next week. It's a big project and Vermont Systems will be coming from out of town to assist in coordinating the upgrade. One of the biggest benefits of the upgrade is that it will be more user-friendly. Patrons will be able to log on, and book camping and golf reservations.

Some Parks Department staff attended a lighthouse seminar last week and Richard Martin explained that representatives from the Gardiner Foundation suggested that holding a seminar is often helpful because it offers an opportunity for lighthouse groups to get together, learn about what other groups are doing and also learn how the Gardiner Foundation can assist them. The executive director of the Gardiner Foundation, Kathy Curran and Pam Setchell, the lead contact person of the Huntington lighthouse restoration project organized the roundtable. Over the years, they have raised between \$1.5-2 million to restore the Huntington lighthouse, which had been totally abandoned.

Kathy Curran gave a full presentation on the grants that the Gardiner Foundation offers and Pam Setchell gave a good overview of the restoration program that she instituted for the Huntington lighthouse. Thirty-five to forty people attended the seminar at Coindre Hall. Pam Setchell approached both Richard Martin and Deputy Commissioner McKay to see how the lighthouse group could possibly get involved with the Coindre Hall site. It has been a consideration to possibly allow use of the county dock for their lighthouse tours because it is larger than the town dock. The possibility of a lighthouse exhibit and also possible use of an office on the top floor of Coindre Hall was discussed. The next step with the lighthouse restoration is to rebuild the scaffolding that was inside to get to the roof line so that the roof can be replaced. It is hoped that additional capital funds can be found for next year so that the restoration can proceed.

Richard reported that there is \$1.2 million in the budget for the boathouse restoration at Coindre Hall and Parks is trying to get the architect's plans completed. Plans would include foundation work on the boathouse, work on the seawall and also re-establishing the dock.

Richard reported that the three larger projects that are currently under way are Third House, the Huntington lighthouse and the Coindre Hall boathouse. Deputy Commissioner McKay added that the boathouse restoration has been discussed for more than thirty years and once it is finally completed, the uses for it will be endless.

Deputy Commissioner McKay announced that a new contract agreement is being drafted for the Long Island Maritime Museum in West Sayville and he requested the approval of the Parks Trustees to move forward with

it. Once the contract is finalized, Parks will return with a synopsis of what it entails and request final approval from the trustees.

A motion approving the Contracts Division moving forward with a draft for a new contract agreement with the Long Island Maritime Museum in West Sayville was made by Parks Trustee Chairman Peter Leis and it was seconded by Parks Trustee Vice Chairman William Sickles. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Peter Leis inquired about the status of plans at Peconic Dunes CP. Terry Maccarrone reported that preparatory work is currently being done.

Chairman Leis inquired if there are any updates about the renaming of parks. Deputy McKay stated that Commissioner Berdolt will update at the next Trustee meeting if there is any news.

Chairman Leis inquired about status of the Warrior Ranch Foundation. Emily Lauri reported that the contract with Warrior Ranch Foundation was finalized with the County Attorney's office and it was sent out for signature. She expects it back any day with further changes that Warrior Ranch has requested.

Chairman Leis inquired if there are any new projects planned. Terry Maccarrone reported that the bulkhead project at the LIMM boat basin should be starting this fall. Later in the fall or winter, reconstruction of the campsites at Field B of Cathedral Pines CP will begin.

ROUND TABLE

Vice Chairman Bill Sickles inquired if there is any explanation for why there was a drop in revenue at Bergen Pt., Coindre Hall and Cupsogue, while Meschutt and Smith Point had increases. Emily Lauri stated that there has been no explanation for Coindre Hall or Cupsogue, but that the operator at Bergen Pt. reported that he has just started to see an increase lately in sales for the fall months. They didn't book as many parties in the first part of the season as they would've liked to.

Trustee Kathleen Gooding reported that Nick Gibbons visited Shelter Island a few times and he has been assisting in getting signs for some parks and also with the opening of some combined lands. She commented that there has been a lot more activity at the parks and people have been hiking more as well. Trustee Gooding thanked Nick for all of his help with the partnership.

Trustee Dawn Hopkins thanked Parks for assisting with the two civic concerts held this summer in Lake Ronkonkoma and also with cleaning up the lake after the storm. It was very much appreciated by the community.

Trustee Hopkins reported that the Lake Ronkonkoma Management Plan from SUNY Oneonta will be out this month. Trustee Hopkins is expecting to receive a full report by the end of the month and she will share the recommendations with the Board.

Trustee Richard White reported that when he arrived at Third House yesterday, the place was a disaster. Steve Tooker gave his assurance that everything would be in order for the Parks Trustee meeting on Thursday. When Trustee White arrived at 11 a.m. today, the room and tables had been cleaned and was ready for the meeting. He commended Superintendent Steve Tooker for all of his hard work. Trustee White thanked Joyce

Sickles for making the brownies and blueberry crumble for dessert, and also thanked Ruth for helping him make the sandwiches.

Deputy Commissioner Don McKay thanked Trustee White for his hospitality.

Trustee Gil Cardillo reported that he has been spending time at Indian Island CP and Sear Bellows CP and both parks are in very good shape. He noted that the campsites have been full with campers and the grounds are being kept clean.

Trustee Dan Lloyd reported that he was invited by the American Venice Organization to join them, Councilman McSweeney and Legislator McCaffrey in a visit to Indian Island, which is located off the shore in Copiague, in the Town of Babylon. The American Venice Organization is very engaged with the community and knowledgeable about what the concerns are. A few of the things the group would like to see happen are having the park classified as a preserve, receiving more fire protection and control, receive re-plantings of the native trees that were lost in fires, and allowing only very limited passive use to specific groups. Trustee Lloyd added that they also reported that piping plovers nest there. The group would also like to see the County encouraging conservation programs by Boy Scout troops which they feel would help cut down on misuses of the property that were evident in the visit there.

Nick Gibbons stated that Indian Island (Babylon) is not piping plover habitat. Vice Chairman Sickles inquired if Indian Island (Babylon) is a former dredge spoils site and Nick confirmed that it is. Nick reported that the Parks Department has had an ongoing issue with the committee for approximately 18-24 months over unwanted waterfowl use and they would like to preclude access at Indian Island for hunting. He added that hunting is accepted as a passive recreational activity. Both Nick and Commissioner Berdolt met with representatives of the Town of Babylon on the issue and duck hunting is not permitted north of east/west channel. Indian Island is north of that channel, however being that it is County property, it is not subject to a local town ordinance. In order to come to an agreement with local law enforcement, Parks does allow hunting in front of the island but if hunters leave the island and pursue ducks that way, they are in violation.

Nick added that Indian Island (Babylon) is not an ecologically significant property, very overgrown and colonized by invasive species at the present time. It is a dredge spoil site that was turned over to the Parks Department by DPW and is not plover habitat. The island is approximately twenty acres in size, not remote and especially on the west side of the island, is about thirty feet from private homes. There are canals on all sides of it and it does relate back to the American Venice era. Nick did not dispute that it is an attractive nuisance and unauthorized activities go on there but he stated that changing the classification of the property isn't going to afford it any more protection than it already has.

Member-at-Large Joseph Kukral inquired if Commissioner Berdolt had instituted a policy yet for unruly guests in the parks. Deputy Commissioner McKay reported that he was not aware of it being completed as of yet.

Richard Martin pointed out that new sprinkler pipes have been installed at Third House and that a lot of it is going to be exposed due to the construction of the building. However, the pipes will be hidden wherever possible. The entire building (attic to basement) has to have sprinklers for there to be public assembly use, and it is an elaborate and difficult job due to the different sections of the building that were added on over many years. The sprinkler installation will be completed this fall, and the heating system is being re-established and should be up and running by November. Additional items, such as replacement of the flooring and getting the bar/chairs back to the original location are planned. Commissioner Berdolt is working with the Contracts Division to create a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a concessionaire to utilize the building. The concessionaire would occupy the east end of the building and the Third House Nature Center group would return and occupy

the west end first floor. There is also additional office space on the second floor of the west wing of the building that can be occupied by the Nature Center and/or other groups.

Trustee White introduced Stephanie Krusa, who is one of the charter members of the Third House Nature Center, a member of the Montauk Point Lighthouse Museum Committee and also a member of the Montauk Historical Society. Stephanie inquired about what the nature of the presence of a concessionaire at Third House would be. Richard stated that Parks would like to have a concessionaire that would install an entirely new professional kitchen and provide a catering/restaurant/special events operation that would be open to the public. He added that there are other ideas that are also being considered for the rest of the property. Parks would also like to have the present activities at Third House continue and be expanded upon.

Ed Yohann stated that because there is a history at Third House, it's critical that any changes to the use of the building will need to be presented to the local community in a well-structured manner. He added that anything that seems to be an effort to privatize the building will get a tremendous reaction. Richard stressed that Parks is definitely not considering turning over the entire building (Third House) to a private vender.

Trustee White suggested that possibly in the process of drafting the RFP, Parks could meet with Third House Nature group and CCOM (Concerned Citizens of Montauk) to craft the language for it that would be acceptable to everyone. Deputy Commissioner McKay explained that Parks would not be privatizing. A reputable, totally screened vender would be selected to come in, clean up the building, invest private dollars in the facility and run either a catering facility or restaurant, or both. It would be open to the public and private events (weddings, sweet sixteen parties, etc.) would be held. He stressed that this is the norm across Suffolk County within the Parks system. In West Hills CP, there is a vender that runs the horse stables. They are a private company that invests private dollars, and has restored the integrity of the property. Lessing's is a reputable company that invests money in Coindre Hall, and also West Sayville Country Club. It is the same with the vender at the Suffolk County Parks beaches. They take over an area at the beach, invest private money, and provide a service for the public at no cost to the taxpayer.

Ed Yohann stated that he understands that the idea makes a lot of sense when presented in that fashion. He stated that he is only advising that there are people in the community who will react if it isn't explained to them. Deputy Commissioner McKay reassured Ed that any vender use at Third House will be compatible to the community. It has been a long term plan to get a vender into the building to utilize the site and to make it available to the public. Terry Maccarrone pointed out as well, that every Suffolk County Park is owned by all of the residents of the County.

Richard Martin reported that restoration work has been ongoing at the Homan House in Yaphank for several years and he announced there will be a grand opening on Saturday, October 26th from 2-4 p.m. All are invited to attend, and the Parks Trustees meeting will also be held there in November.

Emily Lauri introduced Cindy Heuer at the meeting. Cindy is a Contracts Examiner for the Parks Department and she oversees the contract agreement with Deep Hollow Ranch. She came out to Montauk today for an annual site visit at Deep Hollow Ranch.

Emily reported that Commissioner Berdolt has already directed the Contracts Division to have the community be involved with crafting the RFP for Third House. The RFP will be presented to the Parks Trustees for approval before going out, and currently, the RFP is only in the discussion phase. Ideas are being gathered on how the park could be utilized, with the ultimate goal of reaching as many interesting leads as possible. Emily added that it will also be beneficial to have an added presence at the site.

A motion to adjourn the meeting, on behalf of the residents of the Town of East Hampton was made by Parks Trustee Richard White and it was seconded by Member at Large Joseph Kukral. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 10-0-0.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at Mashomack Preserve, Shelter Island on Thursday, October 24, 2019.