

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF JULY 17, 2014
VAN BOURGONDIEN COUNTY PARK
WEST BABYLON, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
Kathleen Gooding, Ph.D.	Vice Chair, Town of Shelter Island
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
Terrence Pearsall	Member of the Board
William B. Sickles	Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton

ABSENT

Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Christopher DiGregorio	Trustee, Town of Southold
VACANT	Trustee, Town of Babylon
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist

GUESTS

Carrie Gaffei	Babylon Town Historical Society
Martin Himes	Babylon Town Historical Society
Thomas B. Smith	Babylon Town Historical Society
Chris DeLuca	Legislative Aide to Legislator Thomas Cilmi
Terence McSweeney	Newly Appointed Trustee, Town of Babylon
Marisa Schifano	County Attorney's Office

PUBLIC PORTION

John Ford was present and requested that attention be given to renovation of the colonial era farm building south of Ketcham Inn in East Moriches.

Richard Martin responded that the county has a contract with the Ketcham Inn Foundation. The Parks Department and the Department of Public Works are currently waiting for a full set of building plans from the Foundation to be submitted before the project can begin. A building permit is also needed because it will be used for public assembly. It isn't designated as an historic building but the property surrounding it is historically significant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF JUNE 19, 2014

A motion to accept the minutes was made by Trustee Alexander McKay and seconded by Trustee Peter Leis. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

Chair Dawn Hopkins welcomed and congratulated Terence McSweeney as the newly appointed trustee representing the Town of Babylon.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Dawson turned the first portion of his report over to Richard Martin for a brief overview of the facility and thanked Carrie Gaffei of the Babylon Town Historical Society for her hospitality. Richard reviewed the handouts that he provided showing the publicity the county received for the exhibit of items taken from the Sagtikos Manor and currently on display at the Suffolk County Historical Society in Riverhead. Dean Failey, an expert and appraiser of American furniture and decorative arts was a guest curator for the project and was very helpful. The exhibit has been extended to November and some programs and lectures are being planned.

Richard introduced Carrie Gaffei, president of Babylon Town Historic Society and remarked that the Van Bourgondien building and the property immediately surrounding it is dedicated to the Suffolk County Historic Trust as a county landmark and the county has a contract with the historic society to maintain the site and run programs there. Carrie continued by stating the society looks for speakers to talk about Babylon Town and educate the public. Carrie volunteered for Babylon Village Historic Society for about eight years prior to coming to the Babylon Town Historic Society and the Van Bourgondien Farm House has become its headquarters. Most of Babylon's history started in the Village and over time it expanded. There are a lot of hamlets within the town: Wheatley Heights, Deer Park, West Babylon, Lindenhurst, Copiague, Amityville, and North Babylon. Many of the villages have historic societies of their own but there aren't many historic societies that cover an entire town. Many times there is no official location to meet and Carrie stressed her appreciation for being able to use the Van Bourgondien Museum as a home base where programs and exhibits can be held.

The Van Bourgondien home was built in 1929 by Cornelius J. Van Bourgondien who was an importer/exporter of flower bulbs. Cornelius came from Holland and bought the property in 1919. He later stopped importing/exporting and started growing flower bulbs himself and his business in West Babylon became very successful. By the 1960's, the family business outgrew the property so they bought a large parcel of land in Peconic and moved the whole operation out there. Suffolk County bought the Van Bourgondien land in West Babylon in the early 1970's. For several years, the farm house was lived in by retired nuns from the Diocese of Rockville Centre and then later for a short time it was used by Mercy Hospital in Rockville Centre to house Philippino nurses brought to the United States to assist with the nursing shortage.

Carrie stated that the farm house is in its original condition and very few changes have been made. A sink in one of the bathrooms was replaced with a wheelchair accessible pedestal sink when the retired nuns were living there and the kitchen cabinets were replaced in the 1970's.

Commissioner Dawson thanked Carrie for taking good care of the building and that the group's presence also helps to minimize the likelihood of vandalism. Carrie reported that they've developed friendships with residents living in the neighborhood who also keep an eye on the grounds and report to her if they see anything suspicious. In addition, the Town of Babylon takes care of the soccer fields and grounds, and installed cameras to help with security.

Commissioner Dawson reported that Colleen Hofmeister will be out again for a period of time due to fracturing her ankle which required surgery. He stated that she is still in contact with the Parks Department and assisting from home. He asked that all please keep her in their thoughts.

The outer beach is still closed at Smith Point due to a pair of plover within ¼ mile of the day trip area. Hopefully, they will fledge in the next couple of weeks and it can be re-opened to the public again. Cupsogue, Shinnecock, Cedar Pt. and Montauk are all currently open for outer beach access. Outer beach camping at Shinnecock East was curbed this year due to erosion. There are 103 spots there and 22 needed to be closed on the ocean side. Commissioner Dawson stated that we lose sand in the winter and then regain some back in the spring. The Parks Department allowed people to make reservations at the sights in the hopes that enough sand would come back. People were forewarned that those sites were in jeopardy and that there was a possibility that they'd have to be closed. The necessary amount of sand that usually returns was not sufficient. People who made reservations were notified that their sites would probably be closed and it was suggested that they change their sites to a different facility. Over time, enough sand is expected to build back up and the sites will be reopened as soon as possible. This is being monitored very closely.

At the next Parks Committee Legislative meeting, the contracts for both West Sayville and Timber Point will be voted on. The Commissioner gave an overview of the terms and conditions of both contracts which were based on the results of the RFP.

A motion to recommend support of these two contracts with Lessings, Inc. was made by Trustee Miles Borden and was seconded by Trustee Alexander McKay. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Miles Borden inquired about the latest information on the Park Police change over to Park Rangers. Commissioner Dawson reported that it passed in the Senate and is awaiting the Governor's signature and a plan will go into place to implement the transition in the fall. As part of the plan, a Security Director will be hired and report to the Parks Commissioner. Seasonal and part-time positions will be filled which will allow for security personnel to be located in fixed positions in a number of county parks. Coverage in the parks will be increased and/or decreased seasonally as necessary.

Chair Dawn Hopkins inquired about how "Discover Suffolk County Parks Day" was. Commissioner Dawson reported that he believed the number of residents was down from last year and the number of non-residents stayed the same. Chair Hopkins also asked if there was any update on the Grace Presbyterian property. Commissioner Dawson reported that the Grace Presbyterian parcel is presently owned by the County and we have a contract negotiated with the Town of Brookhaven. The Boyle Road property is owned by the school district and that parcel is ready to be closed on with the county. The two parcels are located right next to each other and plans are in place to join them to create one large sports complex.

Trustee Kathleen Gooding reported that she visited the Suffolk County Preserve and enjoyed it very much.

Trustee William Sickles reported that he read an article stating that the NYSDEC has identified four ponds on Long Island that are diseased with a type of bacterial infection. Big Reed Pond in Montauk is one of them and it's a very popular site for freshwater fishing. He inquired as to how this is being monitored for public safety. Commissioner Dawson stated that the Suffolk County Board of Health posts signs when there is any type of caution to be taken at county facilities and that he would contact the state to see what their procedure is in cases like this. Trustee Richard White stated that the Concerned Citizens of Montauk have been monitoring Big Reed Pond and asked him to get signage to alert anyone who uses a kayak in Big Reed Pond must decontaminate their kayak so that they don't infect other ponds. Nick Gibbons gave him signage to post in appropriate

locations for users of kayaks to see. Commissioner Dawson will look into whether signage should be posted regarding consumption of the fish.

Trustee Peter Leis reported that he was sorry about being out for a few months due to shoulder surgery but that he is glad to be back.

Member of the Board Terrence Pearsall reported that the resolution recommending Terence McSweeney be inducted as the new Babylon Town Parks Trustee will be laid on the table at the next meeting and then go before the Parks Legislative Committee for approval. The full Legislature then finalizes the position officially. Everyone welcomed Terence to the new appointment.

Member Terrence Pearsall reported that the Parks Trustee position representing Southold Town is now officially vacant due to the fact that the appointee failed to attend seven meetings. After being absent at the sixth meeting, the presiding officer declared the position vacant under the Charter. A new replacement will be sought from the Town Supervisor.

Legislative Aide Chris DeLuca reported that he visited Cupsogue County Park and stated that he saw a small boating area on the bayside (with no docking permitted) and there was also RV camping there. The Commissioner stated that the Parks Department would like our Suffolk County residents to have as much public access as is possible. However, federal monitors do not approve of people landing their boats by the beach because they feel it causes a disturbance to the birds nesting nearby. In order to keep this type of access, Park Police were asked to give additional attention to these areas in both Smith Point and Cupsogue County Parks to ensure patrons were respectful of the boundaries delineated by our staff.

Commissioner Dawson reported that it was suggested at the last meeting that dog waste bags be made available at Gardiner County Park in West Bay Shore. Superintendent Tony Trotta authorized the installation of a depository for people to donate their supermarket bags to use for dog waste. This has worked well in a number of other parks so it is being tried at Gardiner County Park.

The next meeting will be held at Sears Bellows County Park in Hampton Bays at the pavilion by the lake (weather permitting) on Thursday, August 21, 2014. In case of poor weather, the meeting will be changed to the Smithers property - Ducks Unlimited building at Hubbard County Park in Flanders.

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 9-0-0.