

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF OCTOBER 17, 2013
HUBBARD COUNTY PARK/SMITHERS PROPERTY-DUCKS UNLIMITED BLDG.
FLANDERS, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Miles Borden	Chairman, Town of Smithtown
Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Christopher DiGregorio	Trustee, Town of Southold
Dawn Hopkins	Vice Chair, Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Deborah 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

Kathleen Gooding, Ph.D.	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
VACANT	Trustee, Town of Babylon
VACANT	Member at Large

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Greg Dawson	Commissioner
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Colleen Hofmeister	Principal Contracts Examiner
Richard Martin	Director of Historic Services
Barbara Rittman	Senior Clerk Typist
Tony Trotta	Parks Superintendent

GUESTS

Janet Longo	Land Management Specialist, S.C. Real Property Acquisitions &
Tom Young	County Attorney's Office Management

PUBLIC PORTION

There were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 19, 2013

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

Chairman Borden asked Richard Martin to give some background history on Hubbard County Park. The Hubbard family originally owned the house that is now known as Black Duck Lodge. The parkland includes two historic hunting lodges located on the preserve. The Trustees meeting was held in the old Flanders Gun Club building. There is a hiking trail that was established between the Flanders Gun Club and Black Duck Lodge. There are two manmade ponds and a mill site which was maintained by the hunting club. Back in Colonial days, the entire area was used for cordwood harvesting, much of which was shipped to New York.

The original old farmhouse section of Black Duck Lodge that the Hubbard family lived in dates back to about 1870. E.F. Hutton later added wings to it and remodeled it to be a Colonial Revival hunting lodge which he used as a private lodge strictly for himself and his guests. The Flanders Club was established in 1890 and many Long Islanders with businesses in New York City used the property. The Peters Family then purchased the land and leased the adjoining properties, as well as purchasing the Scully Estate property in Islip where the Seatuck Environmental Association was established.

The two hunting lodges and the undeveloped woodland property surrounding them were originally maintained by these families. A grey two story building on the property was built as a field lodge and the main clubhouse lodge was built between 1913 and 1920. Mr. Robert Penney later expanded the house, lived in the original section of the clubhouse and maintained the lodge. The main clubhouse lodge is still standing but in very poor condition. Cabins were built nearby later during the early 20th century.

In 1963, R. Brinkley Smithers bought out any remaining interest in the property from the other members and he owned it solely under his name. In 1971, he gifted the property to Suffolk County with the stipulation that he had a 25 year lease back so that he could remain there to use the land for hunting. He also expressed his concern for protecting the Black Duck Flyway and preserving the property. The County took complete ownership of the property in 1996. On the site currently is Ducks Unlimited who has a contract agreement with Suffolk County and offices in the building where the Trustee meeting was held. They have made some restorations and set up exhibits of duck decoys in the lodge.

Suffolk County is currently working on a Master Plan for the entire parkland, including the two historic sites. The property will probably always be viewed as a nature preserve but there is also a lot of history to be appreciated. The Black Duck Lodge and a small portion of land surrounding it, including a cemetery were initially dedicated to the Suffolk County Historic Trust. Since there is so much historic significance to the property going back to colonial days, it was later decided to dedicate the entire parkland site, including the buildings to the Historic Trust.

Nick Gibbons continued with a presentation, giving an orientation from an environmental view. He stated that there are four creeks on the property that drain into the Peconic Bay: from west to east, they are Goose, Birch, Mill and Hubbard Creeks. The land is all core preservation area of the Pine Barrens and widely considered the greatest assemblage of property on Long Island displaying a continuation of fresh water wetlands emptying into a creek, an estuary and ultimately out into the bay. It has also been recognized by the state and federal governments. The State of New York uses Hubbard Creek specifically as one of the best examples of such a system in the entire state and the federal government has designated Peconic Bay as a federal estuary. Nick stated that he views this parcel as the most ecologically significant property in all of the County's 50,000 acres of ownership because of its great variety of habitats and acreage that protects a great deal of watershed going from the shoreline up and into the woods. Were it not for the interest of the hunting clubs, the property would not exist as it does today.

Ducks Unlimited has been located there since before the County took over formal ownership of the property. Youth programs, such as the Boy Scouts Waterfowl Day and shot gunning are conducted on the premises. There have also been some environmental conservation efforts, however the parcel has remained predominantly as is. When funding eventually becomes available, Nick would like to have a consultant evaluate the ecological significance of the land as well as the historic value of the structures. There is need for a trail plan, signage plans and improvement of public access to the property and parking facilities. Waterfowling and deer hunting are currently permitted on the property, as well as an archery program that opens on November 1st. Blinds for the duck hunters that were destroyed or lost from Hurricane Sandy have been rebuilt with the assistance of Ducks Unlimited and the South Shore Waterfowlers Association.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Dawson thanked Joyce and Bill Sickles for graciously hosting the Parks Trustees meeting this month, and also Richard Martin and Nick Gibbons for their presentations on the Hubbard County Park property.

Introductory Resolution 1721 passed at the last legislative meeting. Legislator Browning secured an ATV vehicle to assist with Park Police ATV enforcement.

Legislator Krupski's IR 1606 to have the Manorville Trail Center renamed in honor of Ray Corwin was passed and signed by the County Executive. Ray Corwin was a former Chairman of the Parks Board of Trustees who made many contributions to benefit the Long Island Pine Barrens Society.

The County Executive's budget was submitted last week which includes plans to transfer the Park Police over to the Suffolk County Police Department. This will allow the County to save money on the training of Police Officers and the amount of money saved will allow the Parks Department to hire more people to cover the Parks at the times of the year when it is needed most. Presently, the Park Police are on mobile patrol and have to travel from facility to facility. The new proposal will allow placement of people at those sites on a fixed post basis. There are currently 36 Park Police officers and they will be replaced with armed certified Park Rangers. Trustee Cardillo stated that the charter requires that for every 500 acres of parkland purchased, another Park Police officer must be hired. Commissioner Dawson confirmed that and stated that State Civil Service and legislation must first approve the proposal before it would go into effect. Trustee Sickles inquired if the new Park Rangers would be retired seasonal Police Officers and not full-time year round employees. Commissioner Dawson stated that they would not be full-time year round employees and that the Department would continue to hire seasonal Park Security. They would be year-round employees, but not as many Rangers would be needed on duty during a slow month like February as there would be during the very busy summer months. Trustee Borden expressed that he believes that changing over to Park Rangers would be beneficial. In the State Park System, both Park Police and Park Rangers are utilized and he feels that the Rangers tend to recognize the parks from an environmental standpoint and the Park Police concentrate more on traffic issues and violations.

Commissioner Dawson asked Colleen Hofmeister to give an update on pending Requests For Expressions of Interest. Colleen reported that the RFEI that went out for Smith Point marina ended with no proposals submitted. It may be revisited for any interest again at some point in the future.

The RFEI for Historic Properties is in the process of being implemented and a tour of Elwood School House is planned for Friday, October 18th for the Evaluation Committee and Black Duck Lodge is planned for Tuesday, October 22nd. Debra Kolyer, Alex McKay and Bill Sickles all plan to serve on the Black Duck Lodge Committee. On October 28th a meeting is planned in West Sayville for the Committee to discuss their opinions on the proposals that were received and determine the best method in which to proceed.

A Request For Proposals is in the process of being worked on for a new Computerized Reservation System. Over the past fifteen years, the Parks Department has not had good luck with systems that were optimal due to the fact that Suffolk County Parks does so many more things than a variety of other municipal parks throughout the country. A computer system is needed that is tailored specifically to its needs and some of the programs needed are not readily available. The Department is doing its best to try to find someone with the expertise needed in this particular subject matter and get their assistance.

The end of season Golf Professionals meeting was recently held and unfortunately the figures were poor for this past season due a great deal to wet weather conditions in the spring and several oppressive heat waves during the summer. The Pros are optimistic that next season will be a much better season.

All of the other seasonal concessions had banner years. The Beach Hut concessions, horseback riding concession and Trap & Skeet facility have been seeing much higher figures than ever before.

The Contracts Unit is presently overseeing approximately 50 legislative grants. Colleen's one employee in the unit is working almost solely on those grants to make sure all paperwork is in and funds are expended by year-end.

Commissioner Dawson added that Steve Tooker and his crew at Timber Point did an outstanding job getting the golf course up and running as quickly as they did after the major damage done by Hurricane Sandy. He is also optimistic for a much better golf season next year.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Borden inquired about the status of the Bavarian Inn site. He and Trustee Hopkins were present for the large gathering on the day of demolition of the restaurant. He added that three Town Supervisors, the County Executive, representatives, two Legislators and a lot of press were also among those present to witness the event. Trustee Hopkins reported that the Town of Smithtown is holding up progress by not signing the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) due to issues with pilings that anchor a floating dock at Lake Ronkonkoma. Until the IO is signed, it would be difficult to acquire grant funding because the Towns of Smithtown, Brookhaven and Islip all share in decision making processes related to Lake Ronkonkoma and the Department of State likes to see inter-community cooperation, such as civic associations, towns and county working together. A grant is much more likely to be awarded under these conditions. Lake Ronkonkoma qualifies for consideration for a grant because it was officially declared an inland waterway by the state. This may also include some federal funding awards.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee Cardillo reported that he had been contacted several weeks ago by Ray Corwin's widow, Mindy Corwin. Ray Corwin served as the Parks Trustees Member at Large and he had worked very closely with his wife during his time of service. Mindy had expressed to Trustee Cardillo her interest in replacing Ray as the Member at Large. Trustee McKay stated that he was contacted by Trustee Cardillo who had asked him to draft a letter indicating Mindy Corwin's interest in the appointment. Trustee McKay contacted Commissioner Dawson to inform him and the Commissioner indicated to Trustee McKay that there were a few candidates already involved in the process. Commissioner Dawson reported that once the Trustee appointments to fill the vacant Town of Southold and Town of Islip positions were filled, he began researching individuals for the Member at Large appointment and two possible candidates are currently being investigated.

Chairman Borden announced that the next Parks Board of Trustees meeting would be held on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at Indian Island Golf Course in Riverhead.

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