

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



ROBERT J. GAFFNEY
SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Theresa Elkowitz
CHAIRPERSON

James Bagg
CHIEF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYST

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MINUTES

DATE: Wednesday, April 19, 2000

TIME: 9:40 A.M. - 10:45 A.M.

PRESENT: Voting Members - Theresa Elkowitz, Chairperson, Presiding; Larry Swanson, Vice-Chairperson; Sharon Kast, Michael Kaufman, Barbara Van Liew

Staff: James Bagg, Chief Environmental Analyst
Kathleen Rigano & Gail Calfa, Secretaries

Departmental Staff:

Suffolk County Executive's Office
Chris Nuzzi, County Executive Assistant
Suffolk County Legislature
David Bishop, Legislator, District #14
Elizabeth Nostrand, Legislative Aide to Leg. Fisher
Meghan O'Rielly, Legislative Aide to Presiding Officer
Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation & Conservation
Peter Scully, Commissioner
Judy Gordon, Assistant Deputy Commissioner
Richard Martin, Director of Historic Services
Nick Gibbons, Environmental Analyst

Conservation Advisory Councils:

Joy Squires, Chairperson, Huntington CAB
Steve Brown, Brookhaven CAC

Guests:

Robert Conklin, NYS Forest Ranger
R.W. Parris, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

The CEQ meeting was called to order at 9:40 a.m. by Chairperson Elkowitz. In attendance were 5 voting members and the Chairpersons of the Huntington Conservation Board and Brookhaven Conservation Advisory Council.

MINUTES:

On a motion by Michael Kaufman, seconded by Sharon Kast, the minutes of the March 15, 2000, CEQ meeting were approved with the following correction:

Page 4, paragraph 3, should be amended to read "...at Brookside on Brook Street..."

CORRESPONDENCE:

Letters from Margaret M. Edgar, Mr. and Mrs. Kostis and Mr. and Mrs. Kulick regarding the EPA's temporary use of the field at Deepwells were discussed. It was the opinion of the Council that this matter had been discussed at an earlier meeting and was voted on as a Type II action.

A letter from Charles E. Eggleton, Chairman of the Smithtown Conservation Board, regarding the County's dredging policy was discussed. It was the decision of the Council that policy matters do not fall under the jurisdiction of the Council on Environmental Quality and no further action should be taken.

PROJECT REVIEW:

1. Recommended Type II Actions
 - a. Ratification of Staff Recommendations for Legislative Resolutions Laid on the Table March 28 and April 18, 2000.

Mr. Bagg pointed out to the Council that numerous resolutions in the packet indicate where SEQRA has been completed or is in the process of being completed. Resolution 1381-2000 makes a new appointment of John Finkenberg to the Council filling an existing vacancy. Mr. Finkenberg worked for the Department of Health Services when employed by Suffolk County and is an Environmentalist. Larry Swanson made a motion to approve the resolutions as presented. The motion was seconded by Michael Kaufman and passed unanimously.

b. Proposed Installation of a Playground at Sears Bellows County Park, Flanders, Town of Southampton

Presentation was made by Mr. Gibbons of the Parks Department with regard to the proposed playground at Sears Bellows County Park. The project involves relocating the playground as well as replacing the old and antiquated equipment with more modern equipment of steel and plastic construction. This project would also involve minimal clearing of trees. The playground is currently at the beach area whereas the replacement would be in an area with less traffic and close to a picnic area. This playground would also be accessible without crossing the road. A motion was made by Michael Kaufman to classify this project as a Type II action which was seconded by Sharon Kast and passed by unanimous vote.

c. Proposed Installation of Two Playgrounds at Southaven County Park, Town of Brookhaven

Mr. Gibbons of the Parks Department also made a presentation on the proposed playgrounds at Southaven County Park. The project would involve expansion of the present playground using the same equipment as previously discussed. This playground would be located between the two picnic areas. It is presently 750 feet from the river. A smaller playground will also be constructed and will be located in a family area. There will be some clearing of trees. A motion was made by Larry Swanson to classify this project as a Type II action. The motion was seconded by Barbara Van Lieu. The motion passed by a majority vote with one abstention by Michael Kaufman.

2. Proposed Acquisition of Property at New Highway for Active Recreation under the Greenways Program, North Amityville, Town of Babylon.

An EAF was reviewed and discussed by the Council. The overall property is 25.3 acres. Approximately 11.6 acres of this property is a cemetery. The Town of Babylon wants to subdivide the site so that the 11.6 acres is retained as a cemetery and the 13.7 acres remaining is acquired by the County of Suffolk under the Greenways Program for active parkland. It is presently a sparsely wooded area and requires clearing to develop it for soccer fields.

Legislator Bishop addressed the Council and stated that the Town of Babylon is in need of field space for its youth leagues. Last year, the Legislature approved over 100 acres in the Town of Babylon for acquisition to be used for soccer, however, only 10 acres have been purchased. This property is presently for sale and Legislator Bishop has been in touch with the owners, Catholic Cemeteries, who would be willing to entertain an offer from the County of Suffolk for the appraised value. It is presently zoned for residential development by the Town which will permit the construction of 22 houses on the property under the existing zoning.

A motion was made by Michael Kaufman to classify this project as a Type I Action and recommend a Negative Declaration. The motion was seconded by Sharon Kast and passed by unanimous vote.

3. Proposed Prescribed Burn at Robinson Duck Farm County Park, Shirley, Town of Brookhaven.

The Council was addressed by Judy Gordon of the Parks Department who stated the property to be discussed is now owned by the County of Suffolk, but is scheduled to be transferred to the Federal government as part of the Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge. She introduced speakers Robert Conklin, NYS Forest Ranger, and R.W. Parris, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service who gave an overview of prescribed burning. .

The property was described as being 86 acres and dominated by goldenrod and ragweed. It contains orchid grass as well. This parcel is surrounded by the Wertheim Refuge. The primary purpose of this burn is to protect and enhance the old field habitat at the site, as well as its grassland wild life populations. The intent is also to convert the field to a warm season grassland which eventually might serve as a future transplant site for the endangered plant *sandplain gerardia*.

The burn crew uses a combination of gasoline and diesel fuel and burns the field in strips. Mr. Swanson raised a question regarding air pollution since Long Island is in an Air Quality Non-Attainment Area. The method of the burn allows small strips to burn in the direction of a previously burned strip which controls the fire and the smoke. Mr. Parris pointed out that the smoke is mostly carbon. Burning is done in the spring or fall during dryer periods when the winds in the atmosphere mix it up and carry it away.

A motion was made by Michael Kaufman and seconded by Sharon Kast to classify this project as a Type I Action with a negative declaration. The motion was passed by majority vote with one nay by Larry Swanson.

HISTORIC SERVICES REPORT:

Mr. Martin, Director of Historic Services, briefed the Council on the following historic trust properties:

a. The Old Field Farm. - 1600 feet of Hurdle fence has been installed replacing the existing fence. The grandstand and main stable building have been restored. The Nassau/ Suffolk Horsemen's Association Show is scheduled for August 20, 2000, at the site.

b. Blydenburg Park - Wall and ceiling repairs have been completed. Painting of the house exterior will begin very soon. Repair of the north wall of the foundation will be the next project on the site. The archeology dig is to be shut down because the soil contains lead paint around

the house and the repairs being done. The roof will be replaced on the Gothic Cottage along with the wood gutters.

c. Farmingville - The Association of Suffolk County Historical Society's tour of Farmingville will include looking at the Bald Hill Schoolhouse on April 29.

d. Deepwells - The Spirit of St. James Day Art Show will be held on the front lawn of Deepwells on June 17, 2000, and is sponsored by the St. James Chamber of Commerce. The water tower at Deepwells has been completed.

e. Mrs. Barbara Van Liew advised the Council on the Volker House on Yaphank Avenue. Renovations have been made and the house preserved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Chairperson Elkowitz advised the Council that Peter Scully has become the new Commissioner of the Parks Department.

Mr. Scully noted that he is currently trying to negotiate the relocation of the EPA staging area at Deepwells to a more appropriate area. This is in response to the recent letters from the community.

Larry Swanson raised the question about the status of the property behind the Stony Brook Post Office and the Detmer Farm. Commission Scully advised the CEQ that negotiations are continuing.

CAC Concerns

Joy Squires advised the Council that the Town of Huntington is now planning a Smart Growth Charrette for Huntington Station. The Town only had positive comments on the Gerard Street Smart Growth Charrette.

Steve Brown gave an update on the Brookhaven Town Open Space planning. The Town has over \$10 million for open space acquisition and will be purchasing land jointly with the County. Mrs. Squires also noted that Huntington closed on Manor Farm which used to be Cider Mill Farm.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 A.M.