

ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE
OF THE
SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MINUTES

A meeting of the Environment, Planning & Agriculture Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on July 20, 2015.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Leg. Kara Hahn, Chairperson
Leg. Al Krupski, Vice-Chair
Leg. Sarah S. Anker
Leg. Thomas F. Barraga
Leg. Thomas Muratore

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Steve Bellone, Suffolk County Executive
George M. Nolan, Counsel to the Legislature
Lora Gellerstein, Chief of Staff to the Legislature
Jason Richberg, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature
Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office
Alyssa Turano, Aide to Legislator Hahn
Catherine Stark, Aide to Legislator Krupski
Amy Ellis, Aide to Legislator Anker
Sarah Lansdale, Director/Suffolk County Planning Department
Lauretta Fischer, Chief Environmental Analyst/SC Planning Department
Dr. Lee Koppelman, Recipient/Suffolk Medal for Distinguished Service
Kim Shaw
Scot Curatolo-Wagemann
Rick Brand, Newsday
And all other interested parties

MINUTES TAKEN BY:

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

MINUTES TRANSCRIBED BY:

Gabrielle Severs, Alison Mahoney - Court Stenographers
& Denise Weaver - Legislative Aide

And we will now hear from our --

MR. NOLAN:

(Inaudible)

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Yes. We're going to now -- why don't we go back to IR **1493-15 - Approving and adopting the Suffolk County Comprehensive Master Plan 2035 (County Executive)**. And I'll make a motion.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Second.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Seconded by Legislator Krupski. So on the motion, we'll bring forward our Planning Commissioner, Dave Calone. Welcome.

MR. CALONE:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

This is a huge accomplishment to get us here after such a long time waiting for a new plan. And it takes a lot of work, as you've learned, to pull the whole County together to agree on points of where we'd like to go and what are our priorities.

MR. CALONE:

Thank you, Legislator Hahn.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

I'm sorry if we added a lot to that.

MR. CALONE:

No, no. In fact, it's been a great process, it really has been, and sometimes taking some time to do something is the right thing to do.

You see in front of me here all the different pieces that have gone into the plan over the last few years, including the one that was mentioned earlier which is the original. This was the 1970 plan, and given the technology in the day, they did a pretty good job with all the maps and everything in here. But this is the plan that Dr. Koppelman helped and led, and surprisingly it is the last one that we've had here for the County in a wholistic way. And so when I became Chair of the Planning Commission about six or seven years ago, we saw that the Planning Commission is ultimately responsible for proposing to you the comprehensive plan and so we started moving forward on this latest effort.

And it's been a process, but it's been a process where we've actually been able to take into account a number of the initiatives, both of the last administration and particularly this one. And we're moving forward on a lot of the goals within the plan, even as we were kind of putting it together, which I think is important because planning is critical, but doing is more important. At the end of the day, plans are there to help guide or provide a road map for doing. And what's important is we're not waiting for a plan, we're working consistent with the plan and many of the initiatives that all of you have been working on, the County Executive has been working on, are very much consistent with that plan.

So I have a brief overview just to show you where we've been, some highlights from the plan to share with you. So as was mentioned earlier, the 1970 plan was the last one more than 40 years ago. I think it's important to remember -- to note, as we all know, that much has changed since the last comprehensive plan. Suffolk County is now the largest suburban County in the country, and our population is larger than eleven states. The impact of our recent storms has made us acutely aware of our vulnerabilities, and on an Island like ours, we certainly know that how we use our limited land is a reflection of our values, our expectations and our goals.

The purpose of this new plan is to create a strategic road map for the County, determine where we are as a region and where we want to go. Over the last several years, the County Planning Commission has identified six critical County-wide priorities that will impact the future of our County and that require regional policy solutions to get us where we want to go, and those include environmental protection, economic development, housing diversity, transportation, energy and public safety.

From fostering economic growth to ensuring housing options for all of our residents, and from increasing our energy efficiency to providing adequate infrastructure and preserving our natural resources, Suffolk County's challenges are interconnected, and that's why we need a comprehensive, strategic plan to address them and to help us evaluate what should come next.

I want to thank the staff, especially all of my fellow members of the Planning Commission; in addition to myself, I want to recognize our other officers, Adrienne Esposito, our 1st Vice-Chair, and Michael Kelly, our 2nd Vice-Chair; Mike Kaufman, who's here today with us, another member of the County Planning Commissioner who has been instrumental in all of this. But we certainly wouldn't be here without the leadership of Director Sarah Lansdale who's sitting next to me. Sarah has gotten this across the finish line, has made sure over the last few years that we have gotten this done. On her team, DeWitt Davies has been instrumental, Andy Freiling and many others, and as was mentioned earlier, the team at AKRF, the private consultants, were very helpful as well.

I'd like to flip and just show you some of the proces we've had. So up on the upper left you see the preexisting plan. So the top left was the first step in this plan, and to give credit, this effort, this initial effort started when County Executive Levy was County Executive, about five years ago, and our Planning Director at the time was Tom Isles and our Deputy Director, Dan Galizzio, and Dan is here as well today and deserves a lot of credit for helping get this initiative off the ground. The plan incorporates -- many of the plans you see before you, different discrete plans, focusing on, for instance, the Multi-hazard Mitigation Plan, the Water Resources Management Plan and others.

The first step in the plan, the one with the Montauk Lighthouse there, we put out about five years ago and what that was was mostly a synthesis of all the existing plans at the Town and Village level at the time, trying to take all of the goals, the aspirations of individual communities and help that start to inform our regional thinking. Because of course the County's in a unique situation; we're sandwiched between sort of the most local level with our towns and villages, and above us, of course, the State and Federal Government. So we tried to be both up taking a grassroots approach, getting input from below as we thought about what our regional goals should be.

If you follow around clockwise to the right, we then went -- you know, the County Planning Commission worked on this, along with certainly the County Planning Department. More recently, over the last I would say year or so, the Legislature has been involved and has substantially helped improve the plan based upon the leadership of Legislator Hahn and others to help make sure we have input from all the Legislative Districts. We also met with all the towns more recently to make sure they've had input, stakeholders like Erase Racism, like Long Island Builders Institute and others helped provide input on -- the civics, we met with a number of civic groups as well to make sure that we were getting everyone's input on what our regional goals should be. And the result, therefore,

was *Framework for the Future*, which you see sort of in the bottom, right-hand corner.

Following the diagram along, the next step there was the County Planning Commission had a public notice and two hearings. It was actually -- we actually had two hearings back when we started the process way up in the upper left-hand corner, just to get the first feedback from the community about what the aspirations of Suffolk County residents were. At the end of the process we had two more hearings to hear from the public about ideas and issues that they thought should be included.

And now here we are over in the yellow box, the Planning Commission Consideration/Recommendation of the Legislature. The County Planning Commission unanimously adopted this plan and recommended it to you just a few weeks ago, and here we are today at the bottom left-hand corner with the County Legislature's public notice and hearing, and then with this committee, and then if you send it along to the full Legislature for consideration, and then finally the process would end with a Legislative -- a vote of the full Legislature. So that's the process we have and that we're going through right now.

A couple of things I want to show you. One of the key goals here, of course, is how do we accommodate future growth in the region. This is 1930, so you can see how the urbanization of our region, you have 1930 and then Sarah will show us 1960, and then today. And you can really see how Long Island, of course Nassau County, but then feeding into Suffolk County has developed. And the question, of course, for us was how do we accommodate this growth. And I think it's also interesting to see how you see line in Suffolk County. One of the most interesting things about being on the Planning Commission is we see -- we're involved with policy and we see projects from Montauk to Melville, and you really can see. We have, in some ways, a bifurcation of the County somewhere right around the William Floyd Parkway, Expressway shows Suffolk County East and Suffolk County West. We have different challenges in Suffolk County East and Suffolk County West and we have different goals, and so this plan needed to incorporate both the sensibilities of western Suffolk County as well as the sensibilities of eastern Suffolk County.

You can see our population, we are right now at the -- it's not the aqua blue, it's sort of the deeper blue right next to the purple. We're right at about 1.5 million residents of Suffolk County, and you can see that we're starting to flatten off, mostly driven by land use considerations. We've increased about 10% of our population in the last 15, 20 years, and the projections are that we will increase by another 10% in the next 15, 20 years. But nothing like the kind of growth we saw, you know, since the 60s and 70s, and that's why having a plan that's up-to-date and reflects our next steps is critical.

So what are the long-term goals? I mean, at a very high level, it's to provide a foundation for sustainable growth and resiliency of Suffolk County. Sustainable growth means making sure that we can protect the great resources, natural resources that we have while growing in the way that we need to; make sure we have jobs for the next generation of folks, to make sure that we have the kinds of economy that will support the cost of living that we have here which we know is a challenging cost of living; and make sure that we're focusing on job creation in that sustainable way.

The report itself, the plan itself is organized around HUD's livability standards, there are six of them. And I won't repeat them, but they are up there for you and that's how we divided out the report itself, focused on that, on those key objectives; and I'll mention each of those objectives just briefly in the next few minutes.

One is building that 21st Century Transit Network. Strengthening our transit system, you see certainly Connect Long Island, as was mentioned earlier, is a critical part of that. Fostering walkable and bikable communities, I would particularly mention Legislator Hahn's efforts with the Setauket Greenway, Legislator Anker's efforts with regard to Rails & Trails, and those are great

examples of exactly the kind of new way of thinking, about supporting bicycles and, you know, bike commuting. And you will see also mentioned here the explore the feasibility for alternative means of ingress and egress. Legislator Barraga was asking a question about that, that it certainly -- this report does not draw conclusions about it but makes a recommendation for further looking at that because I think it is important. Certainly connections, whether they are expanding existing connections or creating new connections, are how we expand economic capacity. But we also need to recognize that our existing roads have limitations on them, there are parts of our County which do not -- certainly did not want more traffic, none of us want more traffic. So balancing that and figuring out what makes sense from an economic capacity perspective, while also keeping in mind quality of life issues is the important balance there.

In fact, NPR interviewed me about a year ago about -- because the TV show *House of Cards*, which is an HBO series, the President in that proposed that there be a bridge from Port Jefferson to Bridgeport. So NPR called me and said, "*Is that even feasible?*" So I did an interview with NPR talking about that and the answer to that is really no. I don't know where you'd drive a bridge to the middle of downtown Port Jefferson. But certainly the issue is certainly one that's worth talking about; not a bridge in Port Jefferson, but perhaps other access, particularly further west on the western part of our County that may make some sense going forward. Again, it should be discussed. And we recognize that as something that needs to be think about, this Legislature and the County Executive and the Planning Commission, over the next, I would say, decade or two.

As was mentioned earlier, Connect Long Island critical, and I know you all have been very much involved with that. The railroad, our transit systems are all near east/west, we have limited to no north/south connections and making those connections to create more of a grid-like aspect to public transit is very important; important now, but critically important in the future. We need to make choices now that will dictate what Long Island and Suffolk County are going to look like ten and twenty years from now. So the need is important now, but it will be much more increasingly important in the decades to come, and that's why Connect Long Island is so important to get the ball rolling on new connections between our assets in a north/south linkage way, and so certainly this plan is -- reflects that importance.

Key objective two out of the six, housing. As Dr. Koppelman said, a limited role that the County can play, but we do think that there are things that we can do to incentivize housing. We're right now, actually, the Planning Commission is just in the process of putting out a survey to all the towns and villages so we get better housing data. We actually don't have on a regional basis, other than the Census which is a crude way of measuring it, an analysis of how many housing starts we have each year. What kind of housing is created? Is it multi-family? Is it single-family, etcetera? So we need that data to be able to provide you with the information you need to make good policy decisions. And I would submit to you that the County does have an important role to play in housing, and using financial incentives and other tools with regard to the towns and villages which do have that ultimate land use authority, the County can incentivize the kind of housing we need for the future. You're seeing that right now with the sewer extension potentially to the Ronkonkoma Hub. Ronkonkoma Hub obviously has the kind of housing we need; transit-oriented housing, more apartments, more rentals and those kinds of things. So the land bank, another great example of how the County can play a role in using its resources and using its regional vision to support the renewal of housing and the kinds of housing we need.

The next objective is enhancing our economic competitiveness and capacity, and I think capacity is the key word for governments. Our role as governments is not to dictate who should win or lose in the economic battle and the competition of ideas, but rather to enhance economic capacity generally. How do we increase the pie as much as possible from a governmental perspective, and we do that by increasing infrastructure, physical infrastructure, human capital infrastructure, financial infrastructure; so the County has an important role to play in all of those.

Coming up with new ideas. Talking about financial infrastructure, we worked with the County -- the County Planning Commission worked with Legislator Krupski and some of the farm organizations regarding the Agricultural Capital Equipment Grant Program that you see on the right. That came out of a meeting that we held in East Hampton Town Hall where we brought together all the young farmers and said, *You know, we need to get new farmers, more younger farmers into the field. How do we do it? What are the obstacles?* And what we heard from the younger farmers is, *You know, you guys have done a great job of preserving land, but unlike -- like if someone's starting a business in the computer industry where it costs a thousand bucks to buy a computer, we actually have to go buy tractors, we've got to go buy irrigation equipment, we've got to go buy hoop houses or whatever else we need to buy.* Start-up costs for young farmers to become farmers is very high, and so we came up with the Agricultural Capital Equipment Grant Program, which has just launched in the last month or so, to help young farmers afford to be able to get into the field.

Those are the kinds of things that the County could do to increase our economic capacity and to address economic issues about -- you know, that will provide the future growth for our County. Whether it's through an agriculture or through from our innovation and technology companies as well.

Support vibrant communities. Certainly, I mentioned the land bake earlier. The County, using its resources and its -- and the authority it does have to help put together innovative programs like the land bake that helped repurpose sites, get them off -- get them from tax delinquent to tax-paying, getting rid of zombie homes, etcetera. So important things that the plan addresses.

Objective No. 5, streamlining government and coordinating policies and leveraging our investment. The County Planning Commission has been probably most active in this role, bringing together the towns to work together on policy. The theory there is nothing we can do apart can have as much impact as what we can do together. When we bring the towns together, work together on policy, we're better off. One of the best examples of that actually is the one that's listed on the bottom which is the Unified Solar Permit Initiative. That was something that we started, the Planning Commission started about five years ago and we got all the towns to adopt the same processes; streamline the process and make it uniform. We actually won a national County Innovation Award for that effort. And in fact, I was actually asked to fly to Chicago to brief Counties in the Chicago area about how we now helped, you know, streamline the process and helped to create jobs in the solar industry. I said I think it might be the only time that someone from Suffolk County, or Long Island at least, had gone somewhere else to teach them about how we could cut down on red tape. But the good news is that is happening, and it continues to happen with the leadership of the Legislature and the wastewater permit process is an excellent example of that. In the last year or two, under the County Executive's leadership, helping to make government do the role it should do but get out of the way when we can get government out of the role is critically important, and so we want to continue moving on those items.

Our sixth and last key objective is protecting our environment. And in some ways it is not last, it's last only on this list and not in our hearts or in the goals as a County, because our environment is critically important to our economy. Much of the work, particularly the County Executive and this Legislature have led the way on with regard to reclaiming our waters, the Water Resources Management Plan and others are critically important to our future. We know that we are a County at risk, we have a great asset in the fact that we have water that we control under our feet, but it's only ours if we keep it. It's only an asset if we keep it an asset, and we need to make sure that that remains true for future generations.

I would just mention with regard to facilitating cooperation with local energy utilities, an example there, we recently put together some of the towns to work on utility solar. We want to be a supporter of renewables and this County has a great track record in that, but we also are trying to balance land use issues there. And Legislator Anker was critical in helping bring PSEG to the table, and PSEG now talking with the County on how we can actually kind of streamline their process and make it reflective of community needs. So these are the kinds of things we want to be working on and the County needs to be working on going forward.

Our last slide or two mostly focuses on water issues. This Legislature has been obviously a tremendous leader in that. Recognizing that we need to have different solutions for our different parts of our County. Sewer infrastructure financing; critically important, that's something all of us around this -- we've all worked on together. Very important for certain parts of our County, particularly western parts of our County and near transit. And the more eastern parts of our County, very important that we have distributed wastewater treatment systems. And certainly the effort in the Legislature and the County Executive to get hopefully, you know, 19 pilot properties installed, we learn what works, we need to build on that and treat our water bodies out east based upon what works for the communities out east in particular.

Of course, all this relates to coastal resiliency and sea level rise. Here in Suffolk County we are on the front lines in the war -- the climate change war and battle. We are a thumb sticking out into the ocean. No one will feel -- no one in this country will feel the impact of sea level rise and global warming more than we will, and so we need to be ready for it, we need to be advocating for policies that address it, both obviously nationally as well as locally. And when it comes to sea water rise, we have not only the coastal impacts, but also because so many of our wastewater -- our cesspools, etcetera, are along our coasts because that was the area that was developed first before the technology, before we realized the impact that nitrogen was having on our water bodies. As the sea level rises, it also raises the groundwater table which means that more and more of our homes, even those inland, will be touched by the groundwater table and makes it even more important that we focus on our water as a critical issue.

In conclusion, our goal here -- and we know this is consistent with the goal of the County Executive as well as this Legislature -- is to revitalize, to rebuild and reclaim. A plan is not an end point, but today and this effort is an important milestone in regional strategic planning. As I said, it provides a road map, and planning is important but doing is really the most important thing.

I have certainly enjoyed working with all of you in setting goals, identifying our assets and figuring out our priorities, and look forward to working with all of you in not just adopting this plan, but then implementing it going forward. So thank you very much.

And also, I think our last slide recognizes all the folks who helped to this, particularly DeWitt Davies, obviously members of the Planning Commission. The County Legislature, thank you all for the time you've taken to work with us on this, particularly Legislator -- Chairwoman Legislator Hahn. So thank you all.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Do we have any questions here? Legislator Barraga.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Thank you very much for your presentation.

MR. CALONE:

Thank you, Legislator.

LEG. BARRAGA:

You know, in reviewing the comprehensive plan, just looking through it, I wanted to key in a little bit about the comments made by you and your group with reference to bus service in Suffolk County. I thought those comments were pretty interesting, A-23, A-24 of the plan. And you point out that Suffolk County has a route system of 52 different routes and you make the statement that of the 52 routes, if I recall correctly, six routes account for better than 50% of the ridership, and five of those six routes are in decline as far as ridership is concerned. So when I read something like, I said, you know, what about the other, you know, 46 routes? Should we as a Legislature take a second look in terms of the rider capacity of some of those routes to see whether or not they're economically feasible? Especially when we have six routes that account for better than half of the so-called 6.7 million riders. And even the ridership over a three-year period continues to decline: In 2011 we had 6.7 million; 2012, 6.5 million; 2013, 6.4 million. So as we have a situation where the population continues to increase in Suffolk County, bus ridership continues to go down.

And I think there's enough in the way of the statement for us maybe to take a second look at the strategy associated with the bus routes in Suffolk County. Because we've spent -- as my colleagues will tell you, we've spent quite a bit of time, especially at the behest of Legislator Schneiderman, to expand bus service, especially on the East End as far as Sunday service is concerned. But the comments in the Master Plan would seem to indicate that maybe we're not on the right approach with this. I don't know; why would the ridership continue to go down when the population goes up and most of the routing is in six areas and five of the six are even going down?

MR. CALONE:

Yep. So a couple of things. One, I mean, certainly the recession that we saw a few years ago obviously impacted those numbers quite a bit. But look, we always need to be vigilant about what makes sense from a cost perspective and from a community impact perspective with regard to bussing and the bus routes. So I think this Legislature, along with the Department of Public Works, the County Executive, needs to constantly look at what makes sense from that regard.

One thing I think that the County needs to continue to do and really do better is something that actually Mr. Horn brought to our attention. To give Mayor credit, because we did actually take a few of his points into consideration for sure, we do need to do a better job of making people aware of it, of the options of the bus. But quite frankly, people use buses when -- it's a chicken and an egg problem, because you need to increase the frequency to make it actually worth people using it. So that obviously becomes a cost issue that needs to be balanced by the Legislature and by policy makers like you, the County Executive and others.

But certainly looking at what makes sense -- and it's going to change. I mean, we constantly are getting projects before the County Planning Commission where we're saying where's -- this could be a sizeable development, we may have a bunch of people coming here, Where's the bus route? The bus route doesn't always match because the bus routes obviously come in after the development, but we're constantly needing to analyze that and shift the bus routes. And bus routes are not just paths, but also the question is how frequent are the service along each of those paths? And so I think it's going to have to be a continual view of that.

Also important is matching those bus routes up with the Connect Long Island Program, once that's put into place over the next couple of years. Because connection timing is very important, as well as put that together with the Long Island Railroad. A lot of our bus routes don't necessarily match with the Long Island Railroad a lot of times, so that's another issue that needs to be worked on, because buses are great, but if they get you to the train station a few minutes after the train leaves, no one's going to take that bus. So those are constantly being worked on, but we need to be vigilant about that. And I know Director Lansdale wanted to add a few points.

(*The following testimony was taken & transcribed by
Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer*)

MS. LANSDALE:

I just wanted to add that from time to time, the Department of Public Works does look at the service capacity of the existing lines and reviews that and evaluates it and makes adjustments accordingly.

LEG. BARRAGA:

It's just that I would think, you know, you talked about a recession. During a recessionary period, if anything, I would think your ridership should be going up, and the figures you're quoting in the Master Plan deal with '11, '12, and '13. We were really coming out of the recession, but there's a decline, yet your population continues to increase. I think it's worth a second look. I know we made a big commitment financially with reference to the additional bussing, and I understand the Long Island Master Plan here that the County Executive is proposing, but I'm reading articles also with reference to, like, the 110 corridor where there's a lot of vacant buildings over there. Does that affect bus service? I mean, you know, things beyond just the bus routes are happening that maybe we should take a second look at.

MR. COLONE:

I think that's fair. And I also would point out with regard to -- there are different forces that come into play with regard to economic downturns. You have fewer people having jobs, which means fewer people, probably, taking the bus to work, and at the same time you have few people affording cars, so maybe you might see an uptick. I think you see the countervailing forces there. My judgment was that the impact was more significant because of the lack of jobs dropping the ridership a bit. But as you said, '09, '10, '11, we're starting to crawl out of it, but, you know, it's really only now --

LEG. BARRAGA:

Your figures were '11, '12, and '13.

MR. COLONE:

Sorry. I was saying '09, '10, '11 was sort of the heart of the recession. I think '12, '13 is just when we started to come out, and obviously now I think we're getting there.

LEG. BARRAGA:

But even in '12 and '13, there's a decrease in the ridership.

MR. COLONE:

Agreed.

LEG. BARRAGA:

I'm just --

MR. COLONE:

I think it's a fair point, actually.

LEG. BARRAGA:

It's there, you made the statements. Now the legislature, maybe we should take a bit of a look at this.

MR. COLONE:

Agreed.

LEG. BARRAGA:

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Krupski.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Thank you. And I'd just like to acknowledge the work that everyone's put into this. I know there's a lot of people involved in the Office of County Planning and Economic Development who spent years on this, and I just wanted to acknowledge that it was a well-thought-out document, and they should be recognized. And my comment really is, you know, my concern when we started to review this, as a kind of a finished draft was that there was acknowledgement of local land use and zoning and also acknowledgement of the difference of land use and zoning on the east end versus the west end, and I appreciate all the efforts on that behalf. And I really appreciate the efforts from Director Lansdale coming out to Riverhead, to my office with my staff to meet with Planning people from the east end towns and from Brookhaven to make sure they understood the document and that their comments were welcome and taken into consideration. So I really do appreciate that effort. To me, it makes it more of a comprehensive plan when you have that kind of input. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Legislator Anker.

LEG. ANKER:

And I also want to commend the whole commission, the departments, all the people that were involved in this plan. When we first started talking about this -- well, you guys have been working on this for quite a long time, but maybe it was, what, four or five months ago, we saw the draft planned, and had it was focusing a lot on infrastructure and transportation. Now you've taken that draft plan and you've added, I feel, very important parts, including, you know, thee educational components, a little bit more of the environmental components. That will steer this county into the future direction, and those components are so vital, and I think, again, that's a point I just wanted to bring up. And I think, as Dr. Koppelman had said, including everyone's input, because without everyone's input, we won't get the big picture of what our future will look like.

You know, I've known Dr. Koppelman for years, and I was -- back when I was working as an environmentalist, an advocate, you know, with my kids at home, and, you know, he's the Robert Moses of, you know, of today, and he's living, and I do encourage everyone here, listen to him. He has the most invaluable information and the wisdom of anyone that I know of that could provide insight into what our future will look like.

And so my question to you is did you work with him when you produced this document?

MR. COLONE:

Sure. It's always great to call on the wisdom of a hall-of-famer, and we have one right here in Suffolk County, and certainly having him involved and his input was tremendous and seeing him here today, kudos to the legislature and chairwoman and others for hosting this tribute to him because, as you said, it was well-deserved.

But certainly his input is all over this. In some ways, we do this honoring him. I mean, Legislator Hahn's been advocating us on the four years she's been on the legislature to get -- work on this comprehensive plan to move this thing forward, but we also look back to Mr. Koppelman and saw that, you know, we -- Suffolk County deserves the kind of planning that he gave us for so many years, and we need to finish this plan and get this plan done in some ways as a tribute to the work that he did to continue on. So I think it's great to have him here today, and, yes, his wisdom has

been appreciated.

LEG. ANKER:

And also I just wanted to bring up the fact that, you know, without a vision, Suffolk County would not be where it is today. And we've seen those as in Dr. Koppelman and yourselves, so you can also write yourselves in the history and vision of Suffolk County. So thank you.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Thank you. Okay. Any other comments? We have a motion and a second for approval. All those in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? It is approved.

We are up to -- I think we're at 1537, we were in the middle. Laretta Fisher was up here, and -- okay. I think we have a motion and a second for 1537, correct?

MR. RICHBERG:

Yes, we do.

CHAIRPERSON HAHN:

Okay, we'll start off from there. We'll hear -- Laretta passed around a bunch of items, so thank you.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

Laretta, can you describe the project, the property?

MS. FISCHER:

Sure. This is a property in Mastic/Shirley, in the Mastic/Shirley Conservation Area along {Pattersqua}. It's .14 acres and predominantly wooded with wetland -- fringe wetland along the western portion of the property.

It received 37 points -- I'm sorry, 57 -- it should be 57 points.

No, 56 points, I'm sorry -- as being part of the Mastic/Shirley conservation area. This area was identified as part of our Master Plan. This property was not specifically included in that list, but certainly was -- is considered as important as the other properties within this conservation area.

We're looking to acquire this along with other properties that we identified under the NRCS proposed acquisition area that's moving forward with 62 parcels within the Mastic/Shirley Conservation area, specifically in the {sheep-end} creek, but also north of this property outlined in the dotted green parcels to the north.

LEG. KRUPSKI:

What's the elevation in relation to this flooding that they experienced during Super Storm Sandy.

MS. FISCHER:

This is a low-lying area. You can see that just south of here is the high marsh, the {Toural} Zone, wetlands of the tidal influence up this river, as well as it is very low-lying within four to six feet elevation of surface water. So we're within a very low-lying area within the conservation area.

VICE-CHAIRMAN KRUPSKI:

Thank you. Does anyone have any questions? If there's no questions, we have a motion and a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions? So moved. **(VOTE: 4-0-0-1 Not Present: Chairperson Hahn).**