

General Meeting - July 28, 2015

**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**

**GENERAL MEETING**

**TENTH DAY**

**July 28, 2015**

***Verbatim Transcript***

**MEETING HELD AT THE WILLIAM H. ROGERS LEGISLATURE BUILDING**

**IN THE ROSE Y. CARACAPPA LEGISLATIVE AUDITORIUM**

**725 VETERANS MEMORIAL HIGHWAY**

**SMITHTOWN, NEW YORK**

**Minutes Taken By**

***Alison Mahoney & Diana Flesher - Court Stenographers***

General Meeting - July 28, 2015

**MR. RICHBERG:**

*Eighteen.*

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Okay, if we go back to Environment and Planning, page ten, **IR 1493, Approving and adopting the Suffolk County Comprehensive Master Plan 2035. (Co. Exec.)** Legislator Hahn? Legislator Hahn? Legislator Hahn?

**LEG. HAHN:**

Motion.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Okay, motion by Legislator Hahn; second by Legislator Anker. Okay. I think we're going to have a quick presentation by some of the members of the board or the Director or comments.

**MR. CALONE:**

Thank you, Presiding Officer, and thank you, members of the Legislature. My name is Dave Calone and I Chair the Planning Commission for the County; and joined here by, of course, our Planning Director Sarah Lansdale. Also here with us today are the Vice Chair of the County Planning Commission Adrienne Esposito and one of our key Planning Commission members, who's worked very hard on this project, Michael Kaufman.

So I want to just take a moment to thank you -- all of you for your work and input on this plan. I remember -- we started working this plan about six years ago. And, in fact, I remember having breakfast at the Peter Pan Diner with Legislator Cilmi actually when he was new and I was new at this job. We started talking about how it was crazy, that there was no sort of, like, comprehensive plan, what we're doing with our County and the challenges we face. And we started working on this under the leadership of Tom Isles, when he was the Planning Director; and has continued under the very able leadership of Sarah Lansdale, along with Dr. DeWitt Davies.

Suffolk County has not adopted a comprehensive plan in over 40 years. Since that time we are now bigger than 11 states. We are now the largest suburban County in the United States. And it's time for us to have a plan that knits together the critical issues that all of us are dealing with on a daily basis. And that was the genesis for this plan here today. I could tell you that I -- what speaks to me more than anything about the challenges we face as an Island is the fact that it took me almost as long to get from LaGuardia Airport in the last hour to here as it did from Chicago to LaGuardia this afternoon.

We do clearly face real challenges as a result of our geographic location. But we all separate assets. And we know that; whether it's the water that surrounds us and is underneath our feet; whether it's our research laboratories; whether it's the amazing people who live here. The key is taking advantage of those assets and growing the next version of the economy. And with the policies this County has put in place and will put in place, we will be able to capitalize on those assets in furtherance of our goals.

You know, planning is important. But what you have in front of you today is titled "Framework for the Future," because it's just that. It's a roadmap to where we need to go. But at the end of the day doing is more important than planning. And so while this is a snapshot in time, a look at what, we think, needs to be done in Suffolk County. What's important is that this County Legislature and this County Executive and future County Legislators and future County Executives work together to implement this plan and the different challenges that we know will face us going forward.

## General Meeting - July 28, 2015

I want to particularly thank one Legislator who's been particularly helpful in leading this effort and putting this all together and that's Legislator Kara Hahn, who's, of course, not only chaired your committee but has been incredibly helpful in helping shape this document. I want to thank the Presiding Officer and really all the members of the EPA Committee who've engaged with us on this over -- particularly the last year, but going over the last few years as we worked to put this together.

This is a bottoms-up plan and topdown plan. It took all the plans that are going on, that have been implemented and passed around Suffolk County at the village level, the town level and synthesized the goals from the local level; and also took the goals from a regional level, whether through Long Island Regional Planning Commission and others and said what does the County, as the meat of the sandwich, what does the County need to do to help implement the local goals and also the regional goals? And so that's been the major focus.

And we're happy to -- both Director Lansdale and I are happy to answer any questions you might have on the plan. But more than anything, I wanted to stand here and thank you for the work that many of you have done with us on putting this together. So, thank you, Presiding Officer.

### **P.O. GREGORY:**

All right. And, thank you, Dave, for your work, and the Director and everyone that's been involved in this process. You know, it's critically important that we have a vision for our County. We have -- we play an important role in the region. And to have people who are at the helm ensuring that we're putting the structure in place to look out for our future, our future generations, our children's children, oh, God, and then for me when I'm in our -- you know, our forty somethings, when we -- in our middle -- you know, when we're going golfing and fishing and all the other things that we do in our retirement years, that we actually have a place that we can still remain to be proud of and joy and not take an hour to get to the airport or from the airport. And, Legislator Hahn, and her leadership is, you know, tremendous advocate. I know she had a lot of questions going through this process and she really took it to heart and was very diligent in her research and very critical in kind of pulling everything together. Legislator Hahn?

### **LEG. HAHN:**

Yeah, you know, I want to thank Planning Division, you know, Director Lansdale and DeWitt and all the members of the team from the Planning Commission as well. I'll try to make a football analogy here. I think, you know, there were -- some planning that had happened prior. And, you know, the ball kind of was moving down the field. But as many watch -- maybe your fans of football know, it's always hard to just get it over that -- get it into the end zone, right, that last yard at third and goal, or whatever. And --

**(LAUGHTER)**

It's really hard. And I made it -- you know, some of us might have made it even harder, you know, but I think that in the end the team, you know, that was -- that pulled together to really get it -- get it in, it was just so important that we all kind of worked together. And the team, not just being those in the room and those around this horseshoe, but even, you know, going out to the towns and taking all the time it took to really get the input from everyone, I think, made those last several yards -- no, really important work happened there; really important work. And I think the hardest, you know -- I could keep on going with this analogy here, but the plays that were called -- any ways, I think that -- I think that we really -- I think that there really was teamwork here that was important. And we got the input from everyone. And I really appreciate all that you guys did. And I know some of us made it harder and took our time and really, you know, read the details and got in it. And we had productive discussions that I think were really important to have. And especially -- if we're going to have to pass it, I think it was -- it was super important we had those discussions.

## General Meeting - July 28, 2015

And I think we have a better product for it. And I'm really pleased. And I thank you for taking it on and the County Executive for being willing.

You know, our Planning Commissioner Chair -- Planning Commission Chair, Mr. Calone, you know, I think the willingness of the County Executive and you to really move this and say we're going to get this done, and this is important to have this plan, I think -- I think it's -- in the end we have a product that the -- you know, future generations of our County will benefit from. So thank you so much for all your efforts.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Would you say we hit a home run? Not a field goal but a home run? All right.

**LEG. HAHN:**

Touchdown.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

Legislator Cilmi.

**LEG. CILMI:**

Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I came very close to deciding to vote against this plan today until David said that I was really the inspiration for it and then how could I vote no then? (Laughter) Very happy to take credit for anything.

But in all seriousness, reading through it, you know, philosophically I have -- I have a problem with the thinking that government can solve all the world's problems. And throughout this plan, I get the feeling that government thinks it can solve all of these problems. But that being said, I sort of took a step back and looked at a -- from a higher level. And if I look at the goals of the plan, healthy environment, convenient transportation, improved economy, safer streets, a mix of housing options for our residents, streamline government, these are all things that I can support completely.

How we get there may be a different story, you know. I mean, certainly there are things that this plan talks about that I am totally opposed to in terms of government's role in being involved in those things. But by and large, I think, the objectives that I just kind of enumerated, which the plan enumerates, and I may have paraphrased some of them, but I think I hit most of them, I think are good goals. And I recognize the need to have some sort of a roadmap to get to those goals and I recognize the fact that I may not be here forever -- and certainly won't be here forever, and this whole Legislature will be -- will have changed in ten years' time. And there may be -- there may be, you know, somebody's GPS may show a different road to get to these places. But getting there is important.

So I will be supporting the plan today, but I'll be doing so noting for the record that there is some things in there that I'm very much opposed to. But I do oppose (sic) all of the -- the end goals and I congratulate you on all the hard work to put this plan together because despite, you know, my feelings one way or the other towards some of the things that are in there, I recognize what a herculean effort it was to put it all on paper. So, good job.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

All right, thank you. Legislator Krupski.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Yeah, I, too, would like to thank Dave Calone and Director Lansdale for the efforts here and all your staff and everyone on the Suffolk County Planning Commission for all the work. It is -- I mean, it's an interesting title, Comprehensive Master Plan. In a county this diverse, it's really hard to be

## General Meeting - July 28, 2015

comprehensive. But I think the way that you approached it was comprehensive. And I really appreciated -- you came out to my office and we met with the planners from the East End towns, and you made sure that their comments were included. You know, and -- so there's acknowledgment that the East is different from the West; and that redevelopment is critical, you know, to both areas. And you acknowledge the importance of agriculture and clean water to the economy and to the cultural fabric of the East End. And so, you know, for that, you know, I think everyone -- all the planners were happy to support this. And I really appreciate that effort. And, like I said, the effort was comprehensive. Thank you.

### **P.O. GREGORY:**

Okay. Legislator Anker.

### **LEG. ANKER:**

I also want to thank you. And, you know, understanding the ability to prioritize future government infrastructure, we need to consider the cost of the investment. And that's what this framework is all about. You know, you think about how does Europe stay so beautiful in certain areas? Well, you know, they been through, you know, hundreds, thousands of years of civilization, you know. Now we're at a point where we want keep the character of the community and the quality of life. And we have the ability to do that right now.

Legislator Krupski had mention the farming communities and how our landscape is continuing to change. Well, my district is that transitional point right now. Mount Sinai, when I moved there 20 years ago, there were farms there. We've got two farms left; significant farms. We need to find -- we need to have a better understanding of what the future's going to look like. And I do want to commend your efforts. You know, you had Robert Moses, you know, designing the future of infrastructure; Lee Kopelman designing, contributing to the future of infrastructure for Long Island. And, you know, Dave Calone, you're up there. So I just want to thank you. And also Sarah Lansdale. You both deserve equal credit as well as your staff and the Commission, yes, and everyone that has been involved.

And just one last thing I want to mention, thank you for including the Legislature with your final submission. Because, you know, that didn't have to happen. I think originally this framework was mainly about infrastructure with transportation. You've included open space, education, affordable housing and all those dots connect, of course, with transportation. But, you know, we're seeing the bigger picture of things.

And, so, again, I commend your efforts. And I hope we can use this as a true road map to the future. It will change, no doubt, depending on the economy, depending on the trend of social issues, but we need to know where we're going and now we have a plan; a good plan. Thank you.

### **P.O. GREGORY:**

Okay. Legislator Schneiderman.

### **D.P.O. SCHNEIDERMAN:**

Well, I certainly echo everybody's compliments. Yeah, great job to all of you and to AKRF and everybody who was involved with this. It's a great document. I mean, I think you've done somewhat of an impossible task just to get, it seems, consensus on what our future ought to look like, to provide us this menu of options for the future, which -- it's really remarkable. How do we get this document out there now? So that's really my question for you, is, you know, every planner ought to have access to it. Every town official, village official, everyone in a decisionmaking position as well as, I think, our residents ought to at least have electronic access to it in a relatively easy way. So can you talk a little bit about that? I know it's -- I'm looking at it on the website, but maybe I'll let Mr. Calone answer.

**MR. CALONE:**

Well, not to prejudge anything, because as the Seattle Sea Hawks know, the last yard can be the longest yard. So if you all decide to adopt this here today, our charge is then under the law is to get it out to all the municipalities, the school districts, etcetera. Comprehensive Planning is actually set up under the State law. And each county is supposed to put one together and the County Charter requires the Planning Commission to propose one to all of you. And that's what we've done; again, first time in 40 year so we had a big of catching up to do in terms of the planning.

But I want to -- I want to just talk for just a second about -- reflect on something that was said earlier. I think at the end of the day the role of government is to enhance economic capacity. And I think this plan tried to be careful not pick winners and losers, but rather to try to enhance capacity, physical infrastructure, human capital infrastructure; those kinds of things that we can make sure that whatever businesses are here in the future have a chance to thrive because the employees can afford to live here, because we can get to -- get to our places of business, whatever those places of business are.

I'm in the business world myself. I just came from a board meeting in Chicago this morning. And all of the companies I'm involved with have business plans. They have strategic plans about how -- what our goals are and how we're going to get there. And those change over time, right? I mean, the plans evolve year after year after year based upon the struggles, the new issues in the marketplace or new factors. And so this will also need a change over time. What needs to happen is every couple of years, the Planning Commission, the County Executive and the Legislature need to relook at it and adjust as we go. Because as Legislator Cilmi said, I mean there'll be different people sitting at these seats in the future; there'll be different people standing at this podium in the future. But the future of the County depends upon consistently knowing where we want to go and aiming our efforts at getting there, all the efforts that all of you make, all the staff, and, of course, the taxpayers' money, aimed towards goals, which will obviously evolve over time.

So that's why it is important to get it out. And certainly doing that through school districts, through the towns and municipalities, putting it on the website. And we can talk about other ways also to help get it out and certainly welcome your suggestions.

**P.O. GREGORY:**

As my good friend Legislator Lindsay once said, if you fail to plan, you plan to fail. And that's what this is about, putting a plan in place. And that we are -- we're actively looking towards our future and how we vision it. And I hope that we do this in other venues and other areas within government. I know there are municipalities, like Miami Dade County and Boulder, Colorado where they have a vision plan how they're going to address homelessness. I mean, there are different ways that we can provide a similar constructive framework to address the issues of the day. But certainly on this issue, it's very important and thank you for your leadership in this. Okay. Anyone else? All right. We have a motion and a second. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?

**MR. RICHBERG:**

*Eighteen.*

**P.O. GREGORY:**

All right. Going to the manila folder we have two -- all right.

**(APPLAUSE)**

We have **IR 1614, Accepting and appropriating additional funds for a 100% State funded Summer Youth Employment Program. (Co. Exec.)** Motion by Legislator Schneiderman; I'll second. Anybody have any questions on it? Nope. Okay. All in favor? Opposed? Abstentions?