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**ENVIRONMENT, PARKS & AGRICULTURE COMMITTEE**  
**OF THE**  
**SUFFOLK COUNTY LEGISLATURE**  
**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Environment, Parks & 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 April 4, 2021 via in person and Zoom conference.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Leg. Kara Hahn, Chairperson  
Leg. Al Krupski, Vice Chair  
Leg. Sarah S. Anker  
Leg. Bridget Fleming  
Leg. Leslie Kennedy  
Leg. Anthony Piccirillo  
Leg. Nicholas Caracappa

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:**

Presiding Officer Robert Calarco, 7th Legislative District  
Sarah E. Simpson, Counsel to the Legislature  
Dan Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk/Legislature  
Lance Reinheimer, Director/Budget Review Office  
Laura Halloran, Budget Review Office  
Nicole Amendola, Director/Intergovernmental Affairs, CE  
Sarah Lansdale, Director/Department of Planning  
Derek Stein, Aide to P.O.  
August Ruckdeschel, Farmlands Administrator  
Dr. Carmen Fuentealba, LIU  
Joseph Schaefer, LIU  
Bikram Chadha, PFM Asset Management

**MINUTES TAKEN BY:**

Diana Flesher, Court Stenographer

THE MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER AT 10:03 AM

1  
2  
3  
4 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

5 Hello everyone. Welcome to the Legislature's Environment, Parks &  
6 Agriculture Committee. If we could all rise for a salute to the  
7 flag led by Legislator Anker.

8  
9 **LEG. ANKER:**

10 I knew you were going to do that and my phone's ringing but I think  
11 we're okay. (Phone ringing) All right, so, Kara, can you go  
12 ahead?

13  
14 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

15 Yes, I'll go ahead.

16  
17 **SALUTATION**

18  
19 Thank you. Sorry about that, Legislator Anker. Okay. Welcome.  
20 To the Clerk, did we have correspondence that needed to be  
21 mentioned today?

22  
23 **MR. DUBOIS:**

24 We do not.

25  
26 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

27 Thank you. And public portion, in-person public comments are not  
28 permitted during this meeting because of the pandemic restrictions.  
29 Those interested in addressing Legislators may do so. We have not  
30 received any request to do so over Zoom. Anyone wanting to submit  
31 testimony may send written testimony by e-mail to  
32 clerk.legislature@suffolkcountyny.gov or via regular mail to the  
33 attention of the Clerk's Office at the Suffolk County Legislature,  
34 P.O. Box 6100, Hauppauge, New York 11788. We also can take audio  
35 testimony via voicemail, if you call 631-853-3685. And the callers  
36 who do this can leave a three-minute message. And all submitted  
37 comments are distributed to Legislators.

38  
39 **APPOINTMENT RESOLUTIONS**

40  
41 So we will begin with Appointment Resolutions, which go first.  
42 **Introductory Resolution 1195, Reappointing Kathleen Giamo as a**  
43 **member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission Trustee**  
44 **No. 13. (Pres. Off.).** I'll make a motion to approve; seconded by  
45 Legislator Anker. All those in favor? Oh, I'm sorry, roll call.

46  
47 **(Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)**

48  
49 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

50 Thank you, roll call. Yes.

51  
52 **LEG. ANKER:**

53 Yes.

54  
55 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

56 Yes.

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10:05AM

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10:06AM

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Yes.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Yes.

**LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

Yes.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Yes.

**MR. DUBOIS:**

Seven. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0)

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Thank you. Okay, next we have Introductory Resolution 1196, Reappointing Steven H. Gittelman, Ph.D., as a member of the Suffolk County Vanderbilt Museum Commission Trustee No. 11. (Pres. Off.).

**LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

Motion.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Motion by Legislator Piccirillo; seconded by Legislator Anker. Roll call.

(Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)

**LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

Yes.

**LEG. ANKER:**

Yes.

**CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

Yes.

**LEG. KRUPSKI:**

Yes.

**LEG. FLEMING:**

Yes.

**LEG. CARACAPPA:**

Yes.

**LEG. KENNEDY:**

Yes.

**P.O. CALARCO:**

Yes.

**MR. DUBOIS:**

Eight. (VOTE: 8-0-0-0. PO INCLUDED IN VOTE)

1  
2 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
3 1196 is approved. **Introductory Resolution 1197, Reappointing**  
4 **Stephen F. Melore as a member of the Suffolk County (Vanderbilt)**  
5 **Museum Commission Trustee No. 12. (Pres. Off.). I'll make a**  
6 **motion.**

7  
8 **LEG. ANKER:**  
9 **Second.**

10  
11 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
12 **Seconded by Legislator Anker. Roll call.**

13  
14 **(Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)**

15  
16 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
17 **Yes.**

18  
19 **LEG. ANKER:**  
20 **Yes.**

21  
22 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**  
23 **Yes.**

24  
25 **LEG. FLEMING:**  
26 **Yes.**

27  
28 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**  
29 **Yes.**

30  
31 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**  
32 **Yes.**

33  
34 **LEG. KENNEDY:**  
35 **Yes.**

36  
37 **P.O. CALARCO:**  
38 **Yes.**

39  
40 **MR. DUBOIS:**  
41 **Eight. (VOTE: 8-0-0-0. PO CALARCO INCLUDED IN VOTE)**

42  
43 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
44 **Thank you, 1197 is approved.**

45  
46 **PRESENTATIONS**

47  
48 We move on now to presentations. We have with us Investment  
49 Advisor Bikram Chadha form PFM Asset Management LLC, who will  
50 provide an update on the Vanderbilt Museum Trust Fund. Thank you  
51 so for being here.

52  
53 **MR. CHADHA:**  
54 Thank you. Good morning to all the Legislators. I hope everyone  
55 is doing well, remains safe and healthy, too, given the ongoing  
56 challenges and current environment. Before I do get started, I

1 know that I will be sharing my screen so I'll do that momentarily.  
2 I just wanted to make sure audio's okay that everyone can hear me.

3  
4 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

5 Yes. Thank you.

6  
7 **MR. CHADHA:**

8 So let me just get the screen up here. And can everyone see the  
9 presentation that's up? Okay, wonderful. All right. So I will,  
10 you know, over the next -- certainly not entire hour, but, you  
11 know, next 20, 30 minutes or so, you know, provide an update on the  
12 Vanderbilt Museum endowment, you know, looking back at 2020, which  
13 was a very challenging year across multiple lanes both  
14 health-related for the museum itself as it pertains to their  
15 operations, the markets, etcetera. But really look back on how the  
16 portfolio performed, some of the steps that we at PFM took to  
17 protect capital as markets were selling off; and also to capture  
18 opportunities as markets started to rebound during the second half  
19 of the year. And I know that we had started to talk a little bit  
20 about that when I was there in person last July, which feels like  
21 moons ago, but at the same time the time has really flown. And  
22 then really talk a little bit about our outlook and current  
23 positioning and, of course, importantly answer any questions that  
24 any Legislators on the Committee may have related to the current  
25 positioning of the portfolio.

26  
27 So with that, we'll start with the review of the portfolio.  
28 Importantly these numbers are a snapshot as of the end of December.  
29 And you can take a look for the quarter. For the fourth quarter of  
30 the year the portfolio returned 8.66%, in excess of the benchmark  
31 of 8.01%. But notably for the year you can see that the portfolio  
32 returned 14.83% versus the benchmark of 13.23%. So to provide some  
33 context around this number, you know, 2019 as we all know was a  
34 tremendous year in the markets as well. We saw strong returns out  
35 of most capitals markets in that year and we saw continued momentum  
36 into 2020. Everything came to a grinding halt come February as a  
37 result of COVID and markets actually fell 34% from their highs in  
38 February to the bottom at the end of March.

39  
40 Now, following swift action both by the Fed as well as Congress and  
41 the Administration to really support the markets, we started to see  
42 a rebound in the capital markets overall and we ended the year  
43 really on a solid note with fixed income up about seven-and-a-half  
44 percent with equities up, you know, about 20% for the year. And as  
45 this being a 50/50 portfolio between equities and fixed income, you  
46 know, certainly realizing the benefits there of about 14 point, you  
47 know, 8% return. You know I think it's notable not just the  
48 absolute result but also seeing, you know, relative to the  
49 benchmark that the actions we were able to take at PFM allowed an  
50 additional 1.6% in value for the portfolio to earn over and above  
51 the market. And much of that had to do, we'll talk about some of  
52 the attribution in the following pages. And then you can see  
53 longer term solid results from the endowment portfolio going out  
54 three years, five years and since inception, which is, you know,  
55 about ten years, a little bit more than ten years that we've had  
56 the opportunity to work with the Legislature on this opportunity

1 for the endowment about an 8.63% return versus the benchmark of  
2 7.9.

3  
4 When we take a look at what drove -- or rather the portfolio  
5 line-up I should mention as of the end of the year, you can see,  
6 you know, for domestic equity we continue to remain largely passive  
7 in the sense that we used a lot of indexing in the domestic equity  
8 line-up. And the reason for that is, you know, domestic markets  
9 over -- really since the global financial crisis have been very  
10 efficient and it's been challenging for active managers to out  
11 perform. And so we choose to manage investment costs and lower  
12 costs by employing a good bit of indexing for the domestic line-up.  
13 We did make an additional change to the lineup on domestic equity  
14 at the tail end of the year. You can see that there's a small cap  
15 ETF that we added in January of this year.

16  
17 So as we come out of the current environment, as we expect economic  
18 expansion, stronger employment and continued growth, small caps  
19 data has pointed both currently and historically smaller companies  
10:12AM 20 are poised to perform better. And when you also take a look at  
21 where the run up we experienced last year was, it was primarily in  
22 the large cap space, it was primarily in technology. And so, you  
23 know, valuations in those areas of the market are a bit elevated  
24 and so we've chosen to overweight small caps just to provide some  
25 good growth opportunity moving forward. So that's an addition we  
26 toward the tail end of the of the year. I just wanted to make  
27 mention of. But once again largely passively-managed across  
28 domestic equity.

29  
10:12AM 30 International, we're about split between passive and active. As  
31 you can imagine international markets, different regulatory  
32 environments, different economic environments, you know, all  
33 handling and coping with COVID very differently. And so, you know,  
34 we've chosen to -- not just to use passive to provide just broad  
35 exposure of the market, but used active managers to provide  
36 opportunity to add value and also to protect on the downside. And,  
37 I think, you know, we've seen some terrific results out of your  
38 international managers. And to I just want to make some notable  
39 comments here for specifically J.O. Hambro International Select.  
10:13AM 40 And you can see for 2020, almost a 30% return for the year versus  
41 its benchmark of 10.65%. But even in the context of the domestic  
42 markets, you know, where we earned 20%, they just added tremendous  
43 value to the portfolio at a 4% weighting.

44  
45 And so that's an example of where, you know, we try to use active  
46 management where it makes sense. And you will also recognize, or  
47 rather I should make mention, that we did add, too, hopefully  
48 you're seeing kind of my highlighting here, through Artisan  
49 International Small-Mid and Virtus KAR International small cap, we  
10:14AM 50 added two small cap actively managed funds to the international  
51 line-up as well. So that was done in January. And similar to  
52 domestic equity where we have growth outlook and we feel that small  
53 caps are poised to perform well similarly in the international's  
54 space, too. So those are two new managers to the line-up from the  
55 last time that I was there meeting with the committee.

1 All right? Any questions with the domestic line-up at this point?  
2 I'll just transition to fixed income and, you know, we'll just talk  
3 about a couple other comments. Okay?

4  
5 So, looking at fixed income, overall fixed income as an asset class  
6 returns seven-and-a-half percent. The allocation here for the  
7 museum did return slightly less than that, about 7.3%. The primary  
8 reason for it is that when we were going through the sell-off,  
9 every area of the fixed income market outside of treasuries and  
10 government backed fixed income securities sold off significantly.  
11 So really anything associated with "risk": Corporate bonds, high  
12 yield emerging markets; any area of the market outside of  
13 government-backed securities who was in the red. And, you know, we  
14 do have an overweight to corporate bonds in the portfolio. And  
15 that has been very helpful overtime. But during the sell-off when  
16 we saw fixed market markets seize up, you know certainly hurt.  
17 We've seen a tremendous recovery since then and we anticipate to  
18 continue to see that recovery. But still overall the fixed income  
19 allocation did perform well, slightly underperform the benchmark  
20 but on an absolute basis about 7.3%.

21  
22 We continue as I mentioned to remain to overweight corporate bonds,  
23 we feel, especially coming out of the short-lived recession last  
24 year as we experienced the continued recovery that corporations  
25 domestically will continue to perform. And we feel that the risk  
26 is worth the reward by way of additional income. And also when we  
27 overlay the fact that the Fed is really committed to continuing to  
28 provide fiscal support, monetary support, I should say, and when we  
29 take a look and see that interest rates on the short end of the  
30 yield curve are essentially at zero, you know, you do need to look  
31 a little bit out of the risk spectrum for some additional income.  
32 And given that this endowment relies on a combination of both  
33 capital appreciation and current income, you know, we feel that  
34 that corporate overweight makes a lot of sense right now.

35  
36 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

37 Okay. Any questions from Legislators? I don't see any.

38  
39 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

40 I have a couple, Madam Chair.

41  
42 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

43 Okay, Legislator Piccirillo, thank you.

44  
45 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

46 Thank you so much. Hi, how are you? Good morning. Thank you for  
47 coming today.

48  
49 **MR. CHADHA:**

50 Absolutely.

51  
52 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

53 I just heard you say a couple of things and obviously the portfolio  
54 is performing, I think, you would say above and beyond what you  
55 thought it was going to perform looking at your estimations instead  
56 of your actuals; would you agree with that?

1  
2 **MR. CHADHA:**

3 Yes, yeah, if we take a look at what we expect capital markets have  
4 returned and where they've come, yes, we do see that. The actual  
5 results have been in excess of what was expected.

6  
7 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

8 And what do you think -- steps that you can take or your fund can  
9 take dealing with inflationary tailspin coming in the future from,  
10 like you have already said, artificially low interest rates and  
11 pumping in 4 to 5 trillion dollars into the market?

12  
13 **MR. CHADHA:**

14 Yeah, no, there's no question that we're starting to see some  
15 inflationary pressures. I mean, quite frankly that's really why  
16 the fixed income market year to date is down about 3%. And so, you  
17 know, there are certain -- certain things that we can do, certain  
18 levers we can pull with the portfolio to manage around that. The  
19 first kind of lever we can pull is asset allocation. And when you  
20 think about inflation, inflation impacts fixed income far more than  
21 equities directly. And so what we've done to position the  
22 portfolio today is we're actually underweight fixed income. So you  
23 can see that we have about a 5% underweight as you can see from the  
24 difference to fixed income as an asset class. Both in recognition  
25 of some of the headwinds expected moving forward as well as just  
26 the fact that we are in a very low interest rate environment and we  
27 aren't going to expect income. And we know that this endowment  
28 relies on appreciation.

29  
30 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

31 Right.

32  
33 **MR. CHADHA:**

34 And so one of the steps there. And then the other -- the other is  
35 within each asset class, to take a look at inflation hedging  
36 opportunities. And so one area that you see that is real estate.  
37 Right? So real estate typically benefits from higher inflation by  
38 way of increased rents, etcetera. And so we've actually made an  
39 allocation to publically-traded real estate by way of two active  
40 managers recently. And in addition to real estate, we're actually  
41 evaluating commodities at this point to see whether or not it makes  
42 sense. And by commodities, I should say liquid commodities. Not,  
43 you know, we're going out and -- so by way of an ETF or mutual  
44 fund --

45  
46 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

47 Oh, so, we're not going to the gold standard? I just wanted --

48  
49 **MR. CHADHA:**

50 (Laughter) Certainly. But, you know, as ways to hedge the  
51 inflationary risk. And then lastly is TIPS: Treasury Inflation  
52 Protected Securities to access that area of the market as well.

53  
54 And that is -- and I'll close with this comment, you know, part of  
55 our entire investment process, right, we start with the portfolio  
56 with an allocation that is prudent for the needs of the endowment,



1 50/50. But then we dynamically allocate based on market  
2 conditions. And you can see all that we did last year to manage  
3 risk and capture opportunity. And just as this year will present  
4 its challenges and its dynamics, you know, it'll continue to look  
5 to be the same.

6  
7 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

8 Thank you so much. I appreciate it. Thank you, Madam Chair.

9  
10 **MR. CHADHA:**

11 Any other questions?

12  
13 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

14 I do not see any other Legislators with hands raised. Is there any  
15 other questions? Okay.

16  
17 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

18 Madam Chair, I'll ask a question.

19  
20 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

21 Legislator Krupski.

22  
23 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

24 Sure. So, you know, I know that the Vanderbilt for a long time has  
25 been a challenge because of the, you know, infrastructure there and  
26 maintenance needs on the infrastructure certainly. It never seems  
27 -- it does never seem to end. I wonder -- and I see that, you  
28 know, this is -- could be a help in the long-term strategy from  
29 managing that infrastructure. I wonder how is this -- like your  
30 company, sir, do you get paid on performance or do you get paid a  
31 flat rate?

32  
33 **MR. CHADHA:**

34 We get paid on assets under management. So there's a fee schedule  
35 and whatever the assets of the portfolio are, we just get a  
36 percentage of that.

37  
38 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

39 Okay. I was curious because obviously you're -- just thinking  
40 about the conversation you had with Legislator Piccirillo, you  
41 know, it's a long-term strategy. We're in for the long haul here  
42 with this County asset. So I appreciate that. Thank you.

43  
44 **MR. CHADHA:**

45 Yeah, absolutely.

46  
47 **LEG. ANKER:**

48 Hey, Kara.

49  
50 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

51 Oh, yes, Legislator Anker.

52  
53 **LEG. ANKER:**

54 Well, I think Rob had his hand up.

10:20AM

10:21AM

1 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

2 Sorry. Legislator -- Presiding Officer Calarco.

3  
4 **P.O. CALARCO:**

5 Thank you, Chairwoman Hahn, and just to Legislator Krupski's point  
6 to let him know that we are actually, I think, putting out an RFP  
7 now. The contract with PFM is coming up and so we are going out to  
8 RFP to make sure that we solicit bids and continue to have an asset  
9 management company gone through the proper process.

10:22AM

10  
11 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

12 Okay. Thank you. Legislator Anker.

13  
14 **LEG. ANKER:**

15 Okay, so you mentioned a fee schedule. What's your percentage on  
16 that fee?

17  
18 **MR. CHADHA:**

19 Yeah. So, the fee schedule for the first \$10 million is 45 basis  
20 points. And for the next \$10 million it's 35 basis points. So  
21 it's a cliff schedule and it's weighted based on assets under  
22 management. I can say, as Presiding Officer Calarco had just  
23 articulated that the County is out to bid for the management of  
24 this portfolio. We have -- actually last -- late last year we did  
25 revise our fee schedule and lowered our fees. And so any new, you  
26 know, new contracts that we established following the new fee  
27 schedule, you know, we applied. So the County will see what that  
28 revision is. It is -- it will be lower than where the County is  
29 today. And a lot of that is a reflection of, you know, where we've  
30 come as a firm and the scale that we've been able to apply to our  
31 resources.

10:23AM

32  
33 **LEG. ANKER:**

34 Right. You mention four, five something points. So what is that  
35 in terms of how much money has the County spent?

36  
37 **MR. CHADHA:**

38 So, yeah -- how much the County has spent? That is a good  
39 question. It's about point four, five percent for the first ten,  
40 you know, about -- I'd say point four percent overall if you think  
41 about it based on \$16 million would be the rough estimate.

10:23AM

42  
43 **LEG. ANKER:**

44 So how much have we spent on your service. I'm sorry, I'm just  
45 trying to get right to it. That's actually not a bad amount  
46 because usually it's between three and one percent. Point four,  
47 five is not -- is not terrible, yeah.

48  
49 **MR. CHADHA:**

50 Yeah. So I can say last year it was about \$60,000, around there,  
51 for our advisory fee. But I think what's worth noting obviously is  
52 that as you can see from this slide, the asset value of the  
53 endowment has not been at \$16 million ever, at least since we've,  
54 you know, had the opportunity to work with the County. And so, you  
55 know, back in 2011, it would have been, you know, point four, five  
56 percent of \$9 million. But I'd be happy to follow up with a total

1 kind of aggregate amount if that makes sense.

2  
3 **LEG. ANKER:**

4 Oh, that's fine. All right, thank you.

5  
6 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

7 Okay. Legislator Fleming.

8  
9 **LEG. FLEMING:**

10:24AM 10 Good morning. Thank you. Good morning, Mr. Chadha. And thank you  
11 for the clarity of your presentation. I just want to take a minute  
12 to recognize how responsive the Vanderbilt has been to our concerns  
13 that kind of came out of financial difficulties that we seem to be  
14 emerging from for a variety of reasons. But in the end the  
15 responsiveness of Vanderbilt and this recognition that it is  
16 appropriate for the museum and the endowment to take on additional  
17 responsibilities and sort of be as transparent as we're seeing this  
18 morning and accountable as we're seeing this morning rather than  
19 just continuing to try to rely on the County's Capital Program to  
10:25AM 20 support the museum.

21  
22 This is a big change from a couple of years ago. I want to thank  
23 the Presiding Officer for his leadership and all the Huntington  
24 Legislators, but also the museum itself has done a remarkable job.  
25 I know this is a very difficult time whether as you mentioned at  
26 the beginning of your remarks the illness, various, you know, folks  
27 being affected within the Vanderbilt organization or, you know, the  
28 drastic reductions in revenue and participation in what the museum  
29 does best which is entertain and provide education to people is  
10:26AM 30 very real. And to be discussing things in a way this morning that  
31 really reflects a healthy outlook is something, I think, that  
32 shouldn't go unnoticed. We should probably remark on that. So I  
33 just wanted to put that on the record.

34  
35 I did have a question for you, your presentation was so clear and,  
36 you know, it does appear that the endowment is in very good hands  
37 in a difficult time for international finance, but I'm not a  
38 finance person and so this is probably a stupid question but, you  
39 know, a year ago when the markets froze and we saw plunging of  
10:26AM 40 employment and economic contraction, now we're in a very different  
41 space and I wonder if you might just comment generally, because we  
42 don't often have these conversations with someone who manages an  
43 investment like this, you know, an endowment like this, could you  
44 just comment on where we are with regard to the support that we've  
45 gotten from the Federal government? You know, we're talking about  
46 economic expansion, which is a little bit hard to wrap your mind  
47 around when you see, you know, plunging employment figures and  
48 everybody going into their homes and, you know, not -- how is it --  
49 could you -- it's a little bit beyond this discussion obviously,  
10:27AM 50 but how is it that international financial markets, you know,  
51 corporations that you're overweighting now or -- really even  
52 government are sensible investments when we consider where we were  
53 a year ago.

54  
55 **MR. CHADHA:**

56 Yeah, so what I would say is there's no such thing as a silly

1 question. Every question has, you know, has its merit. And I  
2 think that that's a very important one especially if you think  
3 about okay, if we're overweighting certain areas of the market,  
4 well, how are you substantiating that view? And so I'll just point  
5 to a couple of things and we want to be -- just be mindful of a  
6 time, is first and foremost, you know, we want to recognize 70% of  
7 the economy, economic growth is driven by the consumer; the  
8 consumer spending. And so what drives consumer spending, super  
9 confidence. What drives super confidence, the employment market.  
10:28AM 10 And so when we take a look at the employment market where it was,  
11 you know, at about almost 15% unemployment to where it is today,  
12 you know, below 6's, and you couple that with the fact that savings  
13 rates across the country have actually increased. So, you know, if  
14 you think about if, household net worth has increased; a  
15 combination of the capital markets, a combination real estate. I  
16 think we can all agree that when we look at real estate in our  
17 local communities, homes are going for far more than we thought.

18  
19 Couple that with just behavioral finance during periods of  
20 uncertainty, we don't necessarily spend as much. And so you have  
21 this gap, this savings gap that is then created. And that savings  
22 gap as the economies start to reopen, you know, start to see, you  
23 know, you start to see spending.

24  
25 You know, I was at my parents' over the weekend in Port Washington  
26 and, you know, Louie's is a local restaurant on Main Street. And,  
27 you know, there were no spots in the parking lot, you know,  
28 everyone is trying to get out. And so first you have consumer  
29 demand and consumer spending poised to take place. That's on the  
10:29AM 30 consumer side.

31  
32 On the corporate side you then have tremendous fiscal support and  
33 monetary support from the Administration and from the Fed,  
34 essentially free money to borrow, spend, build infrastructure,  
35 build business, expand your balance sheet. And also, you know, a  
36 third tier, a third tranche so to speak for relief by way of the  
37 the American Rescue Plan is the last tranche.

38  
39 So, you're getting support from government to help you stay afloat  
10:30AM 40 as businesses through PPE loans and whatnot, but you're also at the  
41 individual level, you know, you have a larger balance sheet, you  
42 have greater wealth. And so a combination of those two coupled  
43 with the fact that we are, you know, seeing an increased rate of  
44 vaccinations, we're seeing individuals start to get out there, we  
45 then have this expectation here, and I'll close with this slide, of  
46 where we see the economy.

47  
48 And so you see 2021 six-and-a-half percent expectation for economic  
49 growth. You get to more of a longer term study stated overtime,  
10:31AM 50 but this year we feel is going to certainly be a year of growth.  
51 And you can see unemployment, you know, getting back to more longer  
52 term numbers over time as well. But there's no question that it  
53 has really been the swift action by government and aggregate to  
54 allay and alleviate the stressors of what the conditions were last  
55 year that have been able to get us out as much as we can. And when  
56 you compare this to the global financial crisis, action was not as

1 swift. So it's almost like, you know, excuse my metaphor here,  
2 but, you know, kind of the enemies were in front of you and  
3 basically just, you know, used all the ammo you had right out of  
4 the gate and, you know, were able to successfully, you know,  
5 address the problem versus using a couple pieces at a time.  
6 Hopefully that answers the question.

7  
8 **LEG. FLEMING:**

9 No, it definitely does. And I thank you, Kara, for indulging me.  
10 I just think that it's very important to recognize that that is, in  
11 fact, where -- you know we're here, yes, because of pent up demand;  
12 yes, because, you know, after most contractions you see, you know,  
13 that kind of pent up demand, but also that the assistance by the  
14 Federal government has put us in a completely different place from  
15 where we would have been. And I'm just trying to understand how if  
16 -- you know, because it has so much impact, the whys and wherefores  
17 are really important in that the support for the lower end of the  
18 economic spectrum is almost as important if we're looking at  
19 spending and households, savings and household income, I think,  
20 it's more and more important to recognize that that support for the  
21 lower end of the spectrum is going to have a long-term effect that,  
22 for instance, support just for big business, you know, has had a  
23 different effect in the past, 2008 in particular.

24  
25 But, anyway, I really do appreciate your insights and thank you,  
26 Kara, but Vanderbilt is, I think, certainly to be applauded for a  
27 very careful approach to a difficult time for museums. And I do  
28 wish them all the best as we continue to move forward. So, thank  
29 you, sir. Thank you, Kara.

30  
31 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

32 Thank you, Legislator Fleming. Important points to make. We had a  
33 hand raised from Legislator Piccirillo. Is that a new one?

34  
35 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

36 It is, but I'm going to yield back. This isn't an economics debate  
37 and I don't want to take the gentleman's time up. So, thank you,  
38 Madam Chair.

39  
40 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

41 Thank you, Legislator Piccirillo. And thank you, Bikram, we  
42 appreciate you being here. I know you have to be, but it's always  
43 very informative. And we are appreciative of what you do to make a  
44 clear and concise understandable presentation for us. Thank you.

45  
46 **MR. CHADHA:**

47 Happy to do it. And thank you for giving me the time this morning.  
48 And if anything comes up, please don't hesitate to reach out. I'm  
49 always happy to provide support as needed.

50  
51 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

52 Thank you.

53  
54 **MR. CHADHA:**

55 Thanks.

**INTRODUCTORY RESOLUTIONS**

1  
2  
3 Okay. We are going to move on with the agenda. I guess we can  
4 stop sharing the screen. Yes, there, thank you. Next there are no  
5 Tabled Resolutions. Moving into Introductory Resolution **IR 1156,**  
6 **Authorizing appraisal of land under the Suffolk County Drinking**  
7 **Water Protection program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007**  
8 **Mastic/Shirley Conservation Area (SCTM No.**  
9 **0200-980.70-09.00-008.000) Town of Brookhaven. (Co. Exec.). I'll**  
10 make a motion to table.

10:34AM

11  
12 **LEG. ANKER:**  
13 Second.

14  
15 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
16 Second by Legislator Anker. Anyone on the motion?

17  
18 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**  
19 Can we get Director Lansdale to explain the map, show that -- it  
20 seemed to be in a neighborhood. A lot of the parcels that have  
21 been purchased on the Mastic Peninsula were kind of clearly wetland  
22 intertidal or adjacent to intertidal areas. And this one seemed to  
23 be more further to the north upland in the neighborhood. Of  
24 course, there's no benefit of topography from the picture that was  
25 shown or elevation. So it's unclear where the -- you know, maybe  
26 Director Lansdale could tell us why that line was drawn there and  
27 what are the plans for, like, in the future for those homes that  
28 are included in that area.

10:35AM

29  
30 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**  
31 Thank you, Legislator Krupski, happy to answer your questions.  
32 Specifically your question about whether there are wetlands on this  
33 property, there are. If you look at the map that was provided to  
34 the members of the Legislature, you will see specifically there is  
35 a line indicating on that specific parcel and in that area that  
36 most of the property is -- contains wetland as mapped or as  
37 indicated by the New York State DEC. There's a blue line, and I  
38 know that might be hard for some Legislators to delineate but it is  
39 noted on the map.

40  
41 Specifically also the Legislature approved last year the  
42 reformulation of the Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area. And that  
43 was a Legislative request to change that boundary. We changed the  
44 boundary; Legislature adopted it. The boundary is two blocks or a  
45 block north of this particular parcel. There are no grand plans  
46 that I'm aware of to purchase the adjacent homes in the area, but I  
47 will note that there are two parcels on that block that the County  
48 has acquired previously, one lot away from this subject parcel.

49  
50 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
51 And so --

52  
53 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**  
54 I'm sorry.

1 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

2 I'm sorry, Legislator Krupski, go ahead.

3  
4 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

5 Sorry, just to follow up on that, if there are parcels purchased by  
6 the County, is it the town that -- is there a partner for removal?

7  
8 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

9 Yes. I'm unaware that there's a structure on this property. My  
10 notes indicate that it's wooded.

11  
12 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

13 No, but I mean, if -- so there's other -- there are homes in that  
14 Conservation Area. Are they occupied? And then the intent is to  
15 purchase all those and then deconstruct the site and restore the  
16 site? Is that the long-term plan here?

17  
18 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

19 The long-term plan, this is a voluntary land acquisition program.  
20 The County has for years made the Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area  
21 a priority for acquisitions. So as homeowners become interested,  
22 usually we purchase lots that are like this one vacant and adjacent  
23 to or contain wetlands. It's something that I can have further  
24 conversations with members of the Legislature and others as to the  
25 strategies to acquire the homes that have -- or the properties that  
26 have structures on them. At this time we don't have a plan.

27  
28 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

29 If we were to buy this, who would be responsible for the  
30 maintenance?

31  
32 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

33 We are -- currently it would be Suffolk County Parks. However --  
34 however, we have had a conversation not on this particular parcel  
35 but on other parcels that are in the County's inventory in the  
36 Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area and we are looking to introduce a  
37 resolution at an upcoming legislative cycle to transfer ownership  
38 of parcels that are in the County's inventory to the Town of  
39 Brookhaven. So that, therefore, they would be responsible for the  
40 maintenance of the properties.

41  
42 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

43 All right, thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

44  
45 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

46 Thank you, Legislator Krupski. We have several hands up. I know  
47 that there are several concerns that we have as we move forward  
48 with very limited funds as we have a very long list of appraisals  
49 to be completed. And if this is just going to end up -- has there  
50 been proposal of partnership with the Town of Brookhaven? If  
51 everything in the Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area is going to wind  
52 up being the responsibility of the Town of Brookhaven, is the Town  
53 of Brookhaven prepared, you know, to be a partner in the purchase,  
54 maybe these sorts of parcels which are very important from a -- we  
55 understand the importance from a storm surge, from a stormwater  
56 runoff perspective; we understand from a rising sea level

1 perspective why it's important in these areas. But we are  
2 dwindling funds. And there's, you know, a real concern that we  
3 have been authorizing appraisals without, you know, giving the real  
4 hard look first. And so this one, you know, being essentially a  
5 small lot, you know what is the Town of Brookhaven saying in terms  
6 -- if it's an empty lot, not even being used at this time  
7 essentially functioning as it would, is this something the Town of  
8 Brookhaven -- is it buildable? You know, I'm trying to understand  
9 the Department's perspective on this one.

10:42AM 10

11 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

12 I will have to get back to you on whether the town -- what the  
13 town's response is and if they've even been engaged. I don't have  
14 an answer to that. I will let you know.

15  
16 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

17 Yeah, I think it's important that we engage the town. It's  
18 wetlands. It won't be buildable, I imagine, if it's as much  
19 wetlands as you talk about. The amount, you know, it probably  
20 would be a small amount cost to purchase, but here we are with  
21 very, very, very limited dollars. The appraisals will get put at  
22 the end of a very, very long list of the properties that have to be  
23 appraised. You know, looking at it on a map, you know, it's  
24 important -- appears limited, but we do have many other questions  
25 here. I think Legislator Kennedy was first and then Legislator  
26 Fleming.

10:42AM 20

27  
28 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

29 Thank you. I'm concerned about this being tabled and I'll tell you  
30 why. Coming from an area that has a seven to nine year cycle of  
31 elevated groundwater level in, I would say, 55 percent of my  
32 district, I understand why it is imperative that they pass this  
33 bill. I'm checking right now if it's a buildable lot. If it is a  
34 buildable lot, we need it to be appraised as soon as possible so  
35 that someone doesn't get stuck with what half my district gets  
36 stuck with. During the times where the groundwater is low and  
37 there is no flooding, some real estate comes in, puts in a little  
38 house, doesn't take any precautions. And within a couple of years  
39 that house is completely flooded and useless. (Off the record  
40 comment) Oh, okay, all right. I just found out because someone  
41 said it is not a buildable lot so then maybe we can table it for  
42 one round. But it is important for percolation.

10:43AM 30

43  
44 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

45 Yes, as I prefaced my comments with understanding its importance,  
46 but we are at a place where the money is short.

47  
48 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

49 Right.

50  
51 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

52 And so we have to decide are we gonna -- are we gonna, you know --  
53 again, the argument on these when we have an area where we try to  
54 fill in all the pieces, that doesn't fit here because there's no  
55 neighboring, you know, it's not like we're completing an assemblage  
56 so that the maintenance is easier because all the parcels next to

10:44AM 40



1 it are owned by the County and, you know, will understand this.  
2 All the parcels next to this are homes. So, you know, you can't  
3 make the assemblage argument from a maintenance perspective with  
4 this one. You can make the it-should-stay-wild argument, but we  
5 just found out it's not buildable so it will be staying wild.  
6 Probably. So, you know, we --

7  
8 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

9 But to the benefit of --

10  
11 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

12 Yes, I --

13  
14 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

15 -- the neighboring houses, the purchase of it by the County, was  
16 maintenance either by the County and, no, I want the trees to stay  
17 because they absorb 20 gallons of water per hour at least in a full  
18 grown tree and that is what is -- it is important that it stays  
19 that way. Your -- I understand it doesn't go according to the  
20 cookie cutter page, but there were a lot of homeowners there that  
21 desperately need that. That's just my point. I will go with  
22 tabling it for one cycle.

23  
24 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

25 And I understand that. And I think you're on the -- you're on this  
26 committee so you know what we're dealing with in terms of the  
27 backlog of appraisals.

28  
29 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

30 I do, I do.

31  
32 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

33 So, you know, the ones that move forward right now need to be our  
34 real priority parcels and, you know, to get on that list. And so  
35 we want, you know, to make that argument. Next we have -- were you  
36 done, Legislator Kennedy?

37  
38 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

39 Yes.

40  
41 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

42 Legislator Fleming.

43  
44 **LEG. FLEMING:**

45 Thank you. And I certainly appreciate all your points, Kara, with  
46 regard to the scarcity of resources in our Open Space Program. I'm  
47 glad to hear that Brookhaven is looking at this. And I just had a  
48 question for Sarah, we had one meeting of the RFP Committee for the  
49 coastal resiliency planning. And just wondered, you know, there's  
50 some terrific ideas being floated there terms of proactive  
51 approaches to the flooding that you see in this neighborhood, for  
52 instance. And I'm just wondering if -- do we know if Brookhaven, I  
53 suspect they are, but if they're on board with looking at recharge  
54 areas like this with creative eye in terms of, you know, how to  
55 proactively invest and reduce some of the flooding, for instance,  
56 in these areas looking at some port of nature-based solutions to

1 prevent the regular flooding that happens over here?

2  
3 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

4 Thank you. I participated in a couple of meetings with the Town of  
5 Brookhaven and I don't -- certainly don't want to speak for them,  
6 but they have -- in those meetings, we've worked together to  
7 re-draw the Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area boundary so that it  
8 could reflect the changes of scientific data that we see related to  
9 sea level rise and coastal resiliency. So from that perspective  
10 there's been a great partnership with the Town of Brookhaven and,  
11 you know, to work with the County.

12  
13 **LEG. FLEMING:**

14 That's so good to hear. I support the tabling and I do want the  
15 record just to show that there's a lot of interest in approaching  
16 this from an up-to-date scientific perspective in terms of  
17 nature-based solutions and recharge, which is so critically  
18 important in this neighborhood. Thank you. Thank you, Kara.

19  
20 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

21 Thank you, Legislator Fleming. I know how hard you've work on that  
22 issue and your expertise there and we appreciate that. Legislator  
23 Anker.

24  
25 **LEG. ANKER:**

26 Okay. Yep. So, again, I think these parcels -- I understand the  
27 -- trying to preserve parcels that are close to, you know, water  
28 bodies and but, you know, this is such a small parcel, you know.  
29 And also you cannot build upon it. Kara, again, I'll just  
30 reiterate, you know, we're down to our pennies here and we need to  
31 be careful what we're spending our money on, especially acquiring  
32 open space. And, you know, I think, you know, when I've submitted  
33 smaller parcels, I thought there was a rule, maybe it's farmland  
34 development rights, that you cannot acquire something less than  
35 five acres, you know, because most of these parcels, these smaller  
36 lot parcels are acquired by the town and they're created into  
37 little pocket parks. And the town from what I understand they  
38 don't want them anymore because they're hard to maintain. They  
39 become, you know, overgrown with, you know, weeds and whatever and  
40 then the neighborhood folks complain about these smaller lots. So,  
41 I mean, I see both sides. But is there something in the county law  
42 that does not allow us to acquire such small lots other than --  
43 unless they're foreclosed for not paying their taxes.

44  
45 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

46 Thanks. Thanks for the question. You're right in thinking it's  
47 associated with farmland. Not these lots. The County has had a  
48 long history in preserving small lots in this area. And you can  
49 actually see on the map that we sent over, all of the, you know,  
50 just a sample of lots --

51  
52 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

53 Sorry. I was hoping we could maybe bring it up on the screen for  
54 people to see the map that was sent. We're working on that. I  
55 apologize.

1 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

2 No problem. And you can see there's even smaller lots that the  
3 County acquired, you know, a block south on Elm Road or on Beaver  
4 Drive or Cyprus Drive, smaller than the subject parcel. So we have  
5 acquired small. But you're right, it's farmland that is -- was the  
6 five-acre.

7  
8 **LEG. ANKER:**

9 Go ahead, Sarah.

10  
11 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

12 That's it.

13  
14 **LEG. ANKER:**

15 You know, so, again, just to me, it just doesn't make sense for the  
16 County to spend you know, hundreds of thousands of dollars,  
17 whatever it may be, to acquire these small lots because they're  
18 there, in particular because they're unbuildable. So, you know --  
19 and then there's the issue of who has the headache of maintaining  
20 these lots. So, again, I understand because they're close to water  
21 bodies we're looking to preserve whatever we can. But, you know,  
22 we do need some more affordable housing. And these lots may be,  
23 you know, provide housing in some way. Of course we're looking to  
24 work on the sewerage, working to, you know, preserve property. But  
25 I think there's a better way to prioritize, you know, the spending  
26 of these funds. So, you know, I can't support this resolution at  
27 this time, but I do appreciate the department in their efforts,  
28 again, in trying to preserve what we can. Thank you.

29  
30 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

31 Yeah, I mean, I know -- I know this is an important -- I'm going to  
32 disagree just a little bit, Legislator Anker. Like I think these  
33 lots need to be preserved. We need to figure out the money piece.  
34 We need to have a revenue stream coming in that doesn't make us  
35 choose between an unbuildable lot in Mastic-Shirley Conservation  
36 Area where there's a really good reason to preserve and the -- you  
37 know, and all the other large -- larger parcels with -- you know,  
38 that meet other needs that we have in terms of preservation. And  
39 so it's -- you know, it's -- you know, there's a real problem here  
40 with the lack of funds when we want -- we want to and know we need  
41 to preserve everything we can living on an island next to the  
42 ocean, you know. So, next we had Legislator Piccirillo and then  
43 Legislator Kennedy. And Legislator Krupski after her.

44  
45 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

46 Thank you, Madam Chair. Sarah, this is in the conservation zone;  
47 correct?

48  
49 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

50 Yes.

51  
52 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

53 And the Legislature set a policy to redraw the lines of the  
54 Mastic-Shirley Conservation zone which is now this parcel's  
55 included in and we do these appraisal steps all the time. Didn't  
56 we just have a conversation about doing all these appraisals in our

1 last meeting?

2

3 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

4 We did and we ordered --

5

6 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

7 And don't we always do appraisals like this no matter how big the  
8 property is? This is a hundred by a hundred, if I'm correct. I'm  
9 trying to read this here; hundred by a hundred lot point two two  
10 five zero acres.

11

12 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

13 But, Anthony, that's the point we're making, is that we always do  
14 it and it's caused us a problem where we're backed up dozens of  
15 appraisals because we don't have the -- didn't have the money to do  
16 the appraisals.

17

18 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

19 I understand. It's coming out of 477 money, right? It's not  
20 coming out of the General Fund.

10:54AM

21

22 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

23 Yeah, yeah. We didn't have it to do the appraisals.

24

25 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

26 I understand, but I'm saying maybe there are appraisals in the  
27 hopper that aren't in conservation zones that we can move this up  
28 since it's in the conservation zone so close to a body of water. I  
29 mean, I'm just saying as far as prioritizing the appraisals that we  
30 may do or that we're going to do, this seems like exactly what the  
31 program was designed for, this parcel.

10:54AM

32

33 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

34 And that's exactly why we need to table and figure out how we're  
35 going to prioritize these, you know, going forward.

36

37 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

38 Yeah, well, they just did legalize marijuana so maybe we can green  
39 into green space and use some of that money to do appraisals and  
40 buy land and make it work for us. Just a suggestion if anybody's  
41 listening.

10:55AM

42

43 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

44 Thank you.

45

46 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

47 You're welcome.

48

49 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

50 I'm glad you're open to new revenue for land purchases.

10:55AM

51

52 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

53 God bless.

54

55 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

56 We will have that discussion. Legislator Kennedy.

1  
2 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

3 Okay, this is a request of Sarah and a request of the entire  
4 Committee. So President Biden's money that he has delivered or  
5 will be delivering to the County appears to me to be more than we  
6 need for the specifics that we spent. So how about, Sarah, you  
7 make a request and us as a committee do a bill that a certain  
8 amount, once we find out what is applicable of this Biden funding  
9 goes towards our land purchase. That's just an idea. So Sarah  
10 and Kara.

10:56AM

11  
12 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

13 Worth looking at for sure.

14  
15 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

16 Yeah, that should be an idea.

17  
18 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

19 Thank you. Thank you.

10:56AM

20  
21 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

22 You're welcome.

23  
24 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

25 And it's always good to have an ongoing recurring revenue stream  
26 for these ongoing recurring needs. And, you know, also, I think,  
27 as we start to look longer term, look multiple decades into our  
28 future, you know, taking back land, and that's exactly what we're  
29 trying to do here and what we discussed when we talk about built  
30 parcels, there are all kinds of different locations across Suffolk  
31 County and across all of Long Island where land was built on  
32 improperly. And if we could reclaim our land and if we could have  
33 funding that will help us demolish in areas where there never  
34 should have been built, Mastic-Shirley Conservation Area is a  
35 perfect example, but so are some of our corridors that are suburban  
36 sprawl. You know, if we can reclaim the edges of the corridors and  
37 move development into either transportation nodes or downtown  
38 areas, we could, you know, have real planning that happens. And so  
39 recognizing that this is an area that does need to be preserved, as  
40 there are many others, and we do need to reclaim the land that  
41 should have never been buildable. That's my soap box. And  
42 Legislator Krupski is next.

10:56AM

10:57AM

43  
44 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

45 Thank you. So I would like to second Legislator Kennedy's motion.  
46 I think that's a very good idea and easily supportable. The time  
47 to buy land is when you can. And so this is an opportunity. But  
48 having said that, I would definitely support a tabling motion for a  
49 cycle because to Director Lansdale's point about our partners in  
50 Brookhaven, we need to have -- and the towns have always been good  
51 partners as far as the maintenance and operation of open space.  
52 And I think that, you know, we need to sit down with Brookhaven  
53 sooner rather than later and talk about long-term especially where  
54 you got a conservation zone, long-term maintenance and operations  
55 of these parcels.

10:58AM

1 Because I don't have a problem, you know, buying this parcel.  
2 That's how you build blocks, you start -- you start buying them and  
3 then eventually you're filling them in. But we should have a more  
4 -- I know every time we buy a piece of open space whether it's for  
5 active or passive, it's always a big debate over the maintenance  
6 and operation with the local municipality. And I think it's  
7 something like this we should have a sit-down with them and kind of  
8 sort out responsibilities. Thank you, Madam Chair.

9  
10 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

11 Thank you, Legislator Krupski. Okay. I do not see any other  
12 hands. We do have a motion to table and a second. Roll call.

13  
14 (Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)

15  
16 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

17 Yes.

18  
19 **LEG. ANKER:**

20 Yes.

21  
22 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

23 Yes.

24  
25 **LEG. FLEMING:**

26 I'm going to vote yes on the tabling. I would like to be listed as  
27 a cosponsor because I do support this acquisition moving forward.  
28 But because of the fact that it's not buildable and the financial  
29 circumstances, I'm supporting the tabling. But please list me as a  
30 cosponsor as I'm very excited about moving forward with this  
31 acquisition as soon as we can. Thank you.

32  
33 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

34 Yes.

35  
36 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

37 Yes.

38  
39 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

40 Yes.

41  
42 **MR. DUBOIS:**

43 Seven. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0)

44  
45 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

46 Okay. So Introductory Resolution 1156 is tabled hopefully just for  
47 a cycle. Introductory Resolution 1165, Authorizing approval of a  
48 License Agreement with Long Island University for the operation and  
49 maintenance of a portion of the Suffolk County Farm for raising of  
50 livestock and agricultural educational purposes in Yaphank, NY  
51 (SCTM No. 0200-665.00-01.00-001.004 (p/o)). (Co. Exec.). I'm going  
52 to make a motion to approve. And if I'm not already a cosponsor,  
53 I'd like to go on this one. I think it's such a great idea. And  
54 we did have a letter of support that came in for this. Maybe Augie  
55 would know.

1 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

2 Second.

3  
4 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

5 Seconded by Legislator Krupski. And so on the motion, Augie, are  
6 you here to talk about for the department?

7  
8 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

9 I am. But first maybe can I turn it over to the Dean of the  
10 Veterinarian school from LIU Carmen Fuentealba? And then I could  
11 add to or expand upon what they're looking to do at the farm.

12  
13 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

14 Absolutely. Welcome, Doctor.

15  
16 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

17 Thank you.

18  
19 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

20 Thank you for being here. I've heard so much about this  
21 partnership. I think it's a tremendous synergy, you know, with  
22 Cornell Cooperative Extension with our work at the farm. And so,  
23 you know, we're just really pleased to have you here today to talk  
24 about it and explain it, not only to the Legislators who are here  
25 for this Committee, but all those residents watching at home to  
26 understand how this partnership will proceed.

27  
28 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

29 Thank you. Thank you very much for having me and thank you to the  
11:01AM 30 County for all the support and this potential new partnership. So  
31 we are very excited. As you may know, we are number 33 veterinary  
32 school in the country and the first in this particular area only  
33 two in New York and four in the northeast. So we start with our  
34 inaugural class in August of last year. What a time to start a  
35 veterinary program with everybody in the middle of a pandemic. And  
36 I'm so proud of my students and the support that we received from  
37 everybody. And we have been able to deliver the program in person  
38 with a lot of precautions.

39  
11:02AM 40 So this partnership will fulfill one of the mandates of our  
41 accreditation employees so that our students will have access to  
42 farm animals and at the same time we feel that along with the  
43 students learning how to handle farm animals and how to do physical  
44 exams and preventive care, vaccinations and so on, that we would be  
45 able to partner with the County in different sections and the  
46 community to help be farmers on Long Island. That is, as you are  
47 aware, a problem of access to veterinary care in this particular  
48 area. And we are happy to help with that. And very grateful for  
49 the partnership with Cornell Cooperative. And we have been looking  
11:03AM 50 forward to doing things together. And this is going to be a really  
51 exciting opportunity to do new things. And so I would not take  
52 more of your time. I'll be happy to answer any questions.

53  
54 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

55 Thank you. I also want to note that we have Joe Schaefer as well  
56 who I thought I was letting in in the waiting room earlier when I

1 let you in, Doctor. And I must not have clicked on the button  
2 properly so I apologize, Mr. Schaefer, COO of LIU University.  
3 Thank you for being here. I apologize that you came in a little  
4 bit later. I don't know if you wanted to add to what the Doctor  
5 just explained to us at all.

6  
7 **MR. SCHAEFER:**

8 Well, Carmen and I had spoken prior and I want to echo what she  
9 said. I didn't hear exactly what she said, but I'm sure I'm  
10 aligned with it and we look forward to the connection with Suffolk  
11 County. We want to thank Suffolk County for engaging us in this  
12 opportunity as well as Cornell with regards to the partnership that  
13 we are looking to establish. And in addition to just leasing the  
14 property, we also plan to put a substantial amount of capital into  
15 the facility to help facilitate caring for the animals. And I'm  
16 sure Carmen had mentioned most of that. So, I appreciate the  
17 opportunity today.

18  
19 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

20 All right, Augie, did you want to add anything?

21  
22 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

23 Sure.

24  
25 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

26 In terms of any more specifics?

27  
28 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

29 Yeah, I'll just highlight some of the additional benefits that  
30 LIU's going to bring to the arrangement here, to the partnership.  
31 One, you were alluding to a letter of support from Cornell  
32 Cooperative Extension.

33  
34 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

35 Yes.

36  
37 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

38 Cornell's been engaged in every step of this process. Multiple  
39 site visits where I brought LIU over to the farm, walked the  
40 grounds with Vanessa Lockel, the Executive Director, with Vicki  
41 Fleming, the farm manager. There's not a single idea being thrown  
42 about, asked for that Cornell hasn't about engaged in. So, I want  
43 to make sure they're excited about this project; they're happy to  
44 work with -- and we're excited about the new potential  
45 collaborations that could come from these experiences.

46  
47 So they're looking to license approximately 72 acres on the west  
48 side of the farm -- of the Suffolk County farm. It is designated  
49 as part of the Honor Farm so it is designated for exclusively ag  
50 purposes. And that's what they'll be doing. The proposal is to  
51 host approximately 50 animals, again, for the veterinarian  
52 services, for the agricultural educational experiences, you know,  
53 experience for their students. They are also offering to host two  
54 events probably say a spring or fall event or something along those  
55 lines to engage the community about the kind of lessons that  
56 they're offering there to highlight local farming and so on, to



1 work with our Cornell Cooperative Extension or the Farm Bureau or  
2 Peconic Land Trust, whoever it may be to highlight agriculture and  
3 ag education.

4  
5 The contract makes reference to working with the Sheriff's Office  
6 to potentially offer some adult education classes to that community  
7 as well. There's internship program that they hope to get up and  
8 running, which is also another important component of it. And  
9 they're also going to offer free veterinary services for the  
10 animals that Cornell is hosting there that the Suffolk County Farm  
11 already has. So we're really building this experience of, again,  
12 giving people the opportunity to work with animals and to hopefully  
13 save the County some money in vet services because we have LIU on  
14 site there that's going to help us with those -- help us with those  
15 costs. So just want to highlight some of those other additional  
16 public benefits that's part of this contract.

17  
18 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

19 And when I was briefed about this project, I was really surprised  
20 to hear how few veterinary schools there are along the eastern  
21 coast. It was incredibly surprising to me. And, you know, it's  
22 really wonderful to have this on Long Island; have Suffolk County  
23 play such an important role and to be able to support our  
24 communities that love their animals. And we do have a large horse  
25 community here in Suffolk County, so. Anyone -- I do see hands.  
26 Legislator Kennedy.

27  
28 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

29 Okay, thank you, Doctor, and Mr. Schaefer for coming out to speak  
30 on this. I tried to get some information last week from inside but  
31 I was unable to. I don't want to come off as not being thankful  
32 that you people are even considering this, but I had a past  
33 experience with Marion Carll Farm that I was not thrilled with. So  
34 I'm going to ask some direct questions. Will you be strip mining  
35 the dirt and doing whatever was done with it over there on 72  
36 acres?

37  
38 **MR. SCHAEFER:**

39 So I believe that the land is very different in that the land as it  
40 sits today is already set up for farming, which lends itself to  
41 being able to almost be turn key except for the structures that  
42 will be put on there such as the barn.

43  
44 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

45 And, Legislator Kennedy, I can tell you that it's part of their  
46 rotational grazing plan, we've asked them to consult with our  
47 Suffolk County Soil & Water Conservation District and also the USDA  
48 to make sure they're following best practices. And that is a  
49 condition that's listed in the contract as well. And we do believe  
50 rotational grazing is actually, when done correctly, is a  
51 restorative version of farming that we expect -- that we will be  
52 expected to be performed on the farm to restore the soil health and  
53 not to dilute it in any sense.

54  
55 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

56 Definitely. But that's not what I was talking about. I wasn't

1 talk about grazing. I was just talking about taking good soil.

2

3 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

4 We won't let them take the good soil.

5

6 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

7 Yeah. Children will still be allowed to visit at Cornell. Will  
8 they be allowed to walk back, say, on the weekends and take a peek  
9 at the animals that you have?

11:10AM 10

11 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

12 Yes, they will be.

13

14 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

15 Or will -- they will be. Okay. What were the rest of my  
16 questions. I had like 40 of them and now they're all gone. Oh,  
17 back when this farm hundreds of years ago or close to, when the  
18 Honor Farm was established, I think we got 50% -- New York State  
19 agreed to 50% funding and Cornell was paying the rest; is that  
20 correct?

11:10AM 20

21

22 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

23 I'm not sure where that's a reference to. We fund -- the County  
24 funds all the expenses associated with the farm through Cornell  
25 Cooperative Extension.

26

27 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

28 So Cornell doesn't contribute at all?

29

30 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

31 No.

32

33 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

34 And the State does not contribute at all?

35

36 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

37 Correct.

38

39 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

40 What happened to that? I'll have to go back and look, Augie.

11:11AM 40

41

42 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

43 Okay.

44

45 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

46 Because I remember that. I remember that we got state funding in  
47 there.

48

49 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

50 So we did get -- Legislator Kennedy, we did receive \$350,000 for  
51 the Ag Visitor Center, which still has not been built.

11:11AM 50

52

53 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

54 Yeah.

55

56

1 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

2 But we did receive a grant for that and we hope, perhaps in 2021 is  
3 year we get -- we begin construction on that Ag Visitor Center.  
4 But beyond that, I'm not familiar with any other state funding and  
5 I do oversee the Cornell Cooperative Extension Management of the  
6 Farm contract as well as the 4-H contract as well.

7  
8 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

9 Okay. All right. I want to look into that and see. So, I don't  
10 know the exact amount. What will -- what is the trade financially  
11 for the 72 acres for the 10 years or the 20 years and then another  
12 10?  
13

14 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

15 Sixteen thousand dollars a year.  
16

17 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

18 We got it cheap.  
19

20 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

21 Seventy -- don't you wish we could buy land for that price, 72  
22 acres for 16,000. Yeah.  
23

24 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

25 It is in line with what traditional farmland leasing rates are here  
26 in Suffolk County as per the USDA's -- US Census of Agriculture.  
27

28 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

29 Okay. I know, Doctor, that we can do excellent -- you can do  
30 excellent work. I know. I just don't want to see our property  
31 destroyed or damaged. I really don't. If there is a problem,  
32 Augie, we can cut the contract, if there is something --  
33

34 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

35 Yes.  
36

37 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

38 -- that is done destructively, not that I think you're going to do  
39 it, but we can cut the contract.  
40

41 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

42 Yes, we can.  
43

44 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

45 Okay. All right. So then I support you a hundred percent.  
46

47 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

48 Thank you. It's always important to ask those questions,  
49 Legislator Kennedy. Next we had Legislator Caracappa.  
50

51 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

52 Good morning, everybody. This sounds like a really great program.  
53 I just want to make sure that all the livestock here, these are all  
54 protected livestock; right? There's nothing -- because here in the  
55 farming business here, these are all protected animals that we're  
56 having here. And would this farm be open to rescue animals, say,

1 that if there's another farm out there that can no longer hold up  
 2 the expenses or the proper care of these horses or sheep or  
 3 whatever it may be, where are we getting the livestock from anyway?  
 4 I mean just some questions I want to make these animals are all  
 5 protected and not being, you know, they're not going to be -- end  
 6 up on the butcher somewhere, you know, I just want to make sure  
 7 that everything's protected and we're doing the right thing by  
 8 these animals. And where are they all coming from? And can we  
 9 bring new animals in from areas that they're not being properly  
 10 raised or cared for?

11:13AM

11  
 12 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

13 Yes, so, at the moment we have been working with farmers in Upstate  
 14 New York where we are bringing -- at this point we have eight. So  
 15 six heifers and two males in the Marion Carll Farm that has been  
 16 totally remodeled. And we have a hundred percent commitment to  
 17 have a system that is environmentally friendly and, of course, we  
 18 will take care of rescue cases. But because the farm is intended  
 19 to show the different stages of development, particularly in a cow  
 20 calf operation, it is important to keep that part of the production  
 21 in mind so that we can do things according to best practices. So,  
 22 yes, to rescue up to certain level. It wouldn't be rescue horses.  
 23 So this is predominantly a cow calf operation. But it would be of  
 24 interest to the students to have access to rescue cases because  
 25 those are hugely the animals that are abandoned, they are not  
 26 productive anymore.

11:14AM

27  
 28 So, I don't know if I answered your question, you know. We are not  
 29 aware of sources within Long Island where we could populate, you  
 30 know, the 50 cattle, cow calf. But, you know, we know that if we  
 31 have access to the land, we would be able to partner. And once the  
 32 farming community is aware that we are there, I think, that we can  
 33 do a lot of good things. But the health of the environment -- you  
 34 know, we have a one health philosophy: The health of people, the  
 35 health of animals, the health of the environment; everything is  
 36 enter-connected so we wouldn't neglect one for the other.

11:15AM

37  
 38 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

39 I understand that. So if I hear you correctly, this is going to be  
 40 just for cows and calves? This is not -- all I heard you mention,  
 41 you said not horses so --

11:16AM

42  
 43 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

44 Right.

45  
 46 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

47 No sheep. So this is cows and calves. Okay.

48  
 49 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

50 Right.

11:16AM

51  
 52 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

53 Have we notified any of the farmers in Suffolk County to see if  
 54 they want -- if they want to contribute any of their livestock to  
 55 this cooperative effort here in Suffolk County? I mean, sometimes  
 56 they have some older ones or maybe they're overpopulated that they

1 can't -- for whatever reason, have you reached out to Suffolk  
2 County farms over in Al's area or Legislator Fleming's area or in  
3 any area across Suffolk County, if they want to have an opportunity  
4 to donate any kind of cow, calves or livestock?  
5

6 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

7 Well, Legislator Caracappa, I can speak to a couple of those  
8 points. One, I did want to return, you were worried about kind of  
9 the safety and responsibility of the animals. LIU will be required  
10 to install fencing. And I just want to read a section from the  
11 contract that I think speaks to some of your concerns. "The  
12 licensee in compliance with all applicable laws shall be  
13 responsible for providing adequate animal care including nutrition,  
14 hydration, upkeep, security and daily maintenance of all applicable  
15 stalls, shelters and pens and medical treatment. Any violation of  
16 this provision shall be grounds for which the County may terminate  
17 this agreement in accordance with paragraph 2 (d) of article 3 of  
18 this agreement."  
19

20 So, I do want to reenforce, you know, the expectations of the  
21 County and the circumstance. You were also kind of talking about  
22 have we engaged the farming community? We actually did at the last  
23 Suffolk County Farmland Committee. The Dean was able to attend and  
24 give an update of the project to members of the Farmland Committee.  
25 I believe that was Legislator Krupski's recommendation, which was  
26 an excellent one.  
27

28 And, yeah, so I think there almost certainly shall be opportunities  
29 for collaboration in the future once the operation gets up and  
30 running. And I think the farming community will be supportive  
31 particularly since these type of veterinarian services are needed.  
32

33 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

34 I understand. I have no doubt that the safety of the animals  
35 including all the provisions you use right off, I have no doubt  
36 about that. My genuine question was are these -- are these -- is  
37 this livestock going to be sold and farmed out or anything like  
38 that? And you guys obviously are going to breed; that's part of  
39 being a veterinarian is to have birth of these livestock. At what  
40 point are we overpopulating these 72 acres and then what do we do?  
41 We're not going to sell these livestock for --  
42

43 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

44 The County is not going to be in the business of acquiring any of  
45 these animals. That will be the responsible of LIU, but they could  
46 perhaps expand upon how they intend on acquiring and caring for  
47 those animals.  
48

49 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

50 Not just acquiring, I want to make sure none of these animals that  
51 we're going to be, you know, that's going to be in this  
52 cooperative, is going to be farmed out, is going to be for, you  
53 know, for edible purposes, you know, will be butchered, you know.  
54 I don't know if I'm making myself clear, but this is just for  
55 science purposes and veterinary purposes; not for -- you know,  
56 we're not selling these animals, you know, once they get full size

1 or there's no longer a need for them, off to the nearest butcher.

2  
3 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

4 Well, Legislator, it is important to note that previously Cornell  
5 Cooperative Extension had been processing some of the animals that  
6 they hosted onsite. There is a meat processing facility located at  
7 the Suffolk County farm. Now I do not believe LIU has intention of  
8 getting into that business, but there is a processing facility  
9 onsite and that's traditionally what has occurred at the Suffolk  
10 County farm in the past.

11:19AM

11  
12 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

13 Okay. So are we feeding the hungry? Are we selling these things  
14 for profit? What are we doing -- I mean it opens up a line of  
15 questioning for me. I'm just curious if we're going to be paying  
16 for this, I mean, how do our residents benefit from it?

17  
18 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

19 They are paying us. We are not paying them. They are paying us.

11:20AM

20  
21 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

22 Okay. What was Legislator Kennedy's question about getting funding  
23 from the State? We're not getting funding?

24  
25 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

26 No, she was asking just a broader question about how the farm is  
27 funded overall, if I am correct; if I understood her --

28  
29 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

30 This is going back to the original times. We were getting money, I  
31 think, from the State, from Cornell and us. So must have changed  
32 over the years. That's it.

33  
34 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

35 Okay. Listen, I don't want to hold this whole proceedings up, I  
36 just want to make sure that -- I think -- I think Legislator  
37 Krupski's gonna answer a few of my questions. So, I'll defer my  
38 time. Thank you.

39  
40 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

41 Legislator Krupski, were you offering to answer a question or -- we  
42 do have a Legislator on the list.

43  
44 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

45 Take whoever's on the list next. I'll wait. Thank you.

46  
47 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

48 Okay. I don't know if -- okay, Legislator Anker.

49  
50 **LEG. ANKER:**

51 Yeah, just a few questions. You know, I think this is a great  
52 idea. And Cornell Extension is just a phenomenal place. They've  
53 done so much good for the County. And, you know, I grew up with  
54 cattle in my backyard, down the road. I mean, you'd enter the  
55 heifer at the fair and get 500 bucks for it to pay for college, you  
56 know, this is a great -- I think this is a great project.

1  
2 I do have a couple of questions regarding, you know, I guess like  
3 former Legislators whether we -- well, let me ask, are the cows or  
4 the types of animals, are they going to be used for their meat and  
5 for the milk to sell? I don't know who can answer that. Augie,  
6 maybe?

7  
8 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

9 I haven't known them to have the intention to milk or use the  
10 animals for meat but I would ask LIU to answer that.

11  
12 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

13 And I do think --

14  
15 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

16 This is a prototype, you know, if this was for business purposes,  
17 you know, a 50 cow calf operation would normally have animals  
18 either sold after seven months are they are released and they come  
19 in and out of the property. So, there is a formula for how many  
20 animals can you have depending on the food system are you using.  
21 So I am not a large animal veterinarian. I am a pathologist. So I  
22 don't have my large animal veterinarian with me to answer more  
23 specific questions. But what I do know is that we start the  
24 conversations with Cornell Cooperative. And they are interested in  
25 being partners so they will be taking the calves once they are, you  
26 know, weaned after seven or eight months.

27  
28 So we are at the beginning of the process. We have the plan. Now  
29 we need to hire an additional large animal vet and we need to  
30 develop the plan for five or ten years and so on. But I do know is  
31 that it has never been the intention of the university, and Mr.  
32 Schaefer can correct me, please, if I'm wrong, but it has never  
33 been our intention to make money out of this enterprise. So we  
34 will never put more animals that is needed. It should be enough  
35 animals to provide a good educational experience to our students  
36 and to collaborate with the community, but it is not a fit there.

37  
38 **LEG. ANKER:**

39 The reason why I ask, I just ask, you know, if that is the case,  
40 you know, let's look to do organic, organic beef, organic milk,  
41 organic -- and, you know, again maybe this is something you're  
42 doing research on. The other part as far as with research is that  
43 I know there's, you know, there's been an understanding between the  
44 milk protein so there's the A one and there's the A two. And this  
45 is the beta-casein and, you know, what has happened, and I don't  
46 know if you can elaborate just a few minutes on it, that previously  
47 when we were drinking cow's milk, it was a much more digestible  
48 protein. Now it has morphed or evolved, I'm not really sure what  
49 the word is, into something that's very hard to digest. Is this  
50 some type of research that you may also be working on?

51  
52 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

53 Not in this particular property, you know, the cow calf would not  
54 be a dairy farm so the milk from the cows would go to the calves.  
55 But we did consider having an organic dairy farm. It still a  
56 possibility with having an entrepreneurship center that may develop

1 that idea in the future. We do have a board certified nutritionist  
2 that will be better suited to answer that particular question. But  
3 definitely, I mean, we have considered the pros and cons of dairy  
4 farming. One of the reasons why in the case of dairy cows, it's a  
5 little bit questionable is because if you have a cow that is sick,  
6 you treat that cow, it needs to be taken out of the herd and it  
7 needs to be destroyed. And that is something that is probably  
8 difficult to deal with and explain to students that this is a  
9 practice, right.

10  
11 So if you send it to a rescue organization, that is a different  
12 structure. But, you know, there are pros and cons for any type of  
13 practices that you may want to implement and this one is the less  
14 complicated from an educational point of view and it would allow  
15 the students to follow the life span from, you know, the cows to  
16 artificial insemination and detecting gestation, different type of  
17 gestations stages, how to treat the babies, preventive medicine,  
18 vaccinations, antibiotics, that type of thing. It is interesting  
19 that, you know, the idea of doing research was brought up because  
20 research from the point of view of different type of feeding  
21 structures and all that, that would be okay. We wouldn't do  
22 research with, say, infectious diseases or anything that would be  
23 damaging to the environment.

24  
25 **LEG. ANKER:**  
26 That was the next question.

27  
28 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**  
29 Yeah, that is no -- this is an island.

30  
31 **LEG. ANKER:**  
32 Right.

33  
34 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**  
35 You know, things go into the water. Then they come back.

36  
37 **LEG. ANKER:**  
38 Right. That was the other question. Well, again, good luck and I  
39 will be supporting this resolution. Thank you.

40  
41 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
42 Thank you. Legislator Krupski, did you want to add something?

43  
44 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**  
45 Yeah, thank you. So I just wanted to ask some questions and it  
46 kind of ties into the whole conversation this morning about the,  
47 you know, the farming economy out here and long term soil health,  
48 which ties into long term food security. And especially, you know,  
49 given climate change and it's sort of a worldwide conversation  
50 about soil health and food security.

51  
52 So you're going to be practicing -- and I know I had a very good  
53 conversation with Dr. Fuentealba, I guess, in March about the  
54 rotational grazing. There's very little large animal agriculture  
55 left on Long Island. It was a matter really of economics. But  
56 when you do the rotational grazing, will it be available to the



1 public to come and look at it and learn from it?

2  
3 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

4 Yes, absolutely. And, you know, keeping in mind that, you know,  
5 we're at the beginning of our program so we do have a lot of  
6 additional faculty to hire that are experts. And so we need that  
7 input as well. Again, I'm a pathologist. And, you know, you don't  
8 want my input when it comes to sort of farm animals and help to run  
9 a farm. And so I think that that -- this will evolve and it will  
10 get better. I think that this is a good partnership with Cornell  
11 Cooperative and also with Cornell University; that relationship has  
12 been evolving from the moment that we got a little at least now of  
13 assurance and we are now in the way to be fully accredited.

14  
15 So, you know, we will bring in experts. And the idea is that this  
16 is the proper time and that it would be there to help the  
17 community. We would like to have children involved K through 12,  
18 people of different areas and walks of life, understanding, you  
19 know, how a farm operates. And so it would be open. And we intend  
20 to have programs for children. We have a very -- actually looking  
21 for schools that will allow us to go in and talk about veterinarian  
22 medicine. So if you have anybody that would like us to go there,  
23 we have a program NAH funded that is to promote careers in science.  
24 So the agriculture is out there, yes.

25  
26 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

27 Thank you.

28  
29 **MR. SCHAEFER:**

30 In addition, in our conversations and walk-thrus with Cornell,  
31 we've incorporated the plan of a perimeter road around the farm to  
32 ensure that the tours and through the various events that Cornell  
33 will be having in conjunction with LIU, they will be able to see a  
34 360 view of the farm and the grazing that goes on there. So we are  
35 looking to incorporate that as a major asset.

36  
37 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

38 Thank you. I think that's an important component going forward;  
39 the accessibility of something that was -- I know rotational  
40 grazing, it's a science that's been, you know, worked on for  
41 decades. And so you got different grasses, different forage  
42 grasses, it's going to be very interesting certainly to a lot of my  
43 neighbors, so, thank you.

44  
45 **MR. SCHAEFER:**

46 And the placement of these structures by which we're going to put  
47 up, that incorporates that as well to ensure that there would be --  
48 the operational side of the farm will also be seen.

49  
50 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

51 Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

52  
53 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

54 Thank you, Legislator Krupski. Legislator Kennedy, is that hand up  
55 an old hand or a new hand?

1 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

2 I do have a question but Sarah Lansdale had raised her hand before  
3 and she was before me. No, you're done?  
4

5 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

6 It was a response to Legislator Caracappa's questions which Augie  
7 responded. We did engage LIU at the Farmland Committee. And note  
8 that the Long Island Farm Bureau is a member of the Farmland  
9 Committee. So they're working to help spread the word about the  
10 effort.  
11

11:32AM

12 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

13 Thank you, Doctor, for talking about bringing children in. I will  
14 certainly send out to all my school districts to have them  
15 involved. It's vitally important.  
16

17 My question quick is you're choosing cattle. Is it because cattle  
18 is a large animal? Is it because you can do so many things during  
19 the study? Or is it because they're used for meat and milk, and,  
20 therefore, they are very popular and we need more veterinarians to  
21 work on them. And if it's that reason, so why aren't using goats?  
22 Because with the allergies that are around as of late, goat's milk  
23 -- everyone should have a goat in their backyard for their infants  
24 and for whatever. It's becoming very important. Or sheep is also  
25 used and lambs for food. Where are they going to study those  
26 things?  
27

11:32AM

28 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**

29 Yes, thank you for that question. I love that question. Thank  
30 you. So when we developed the program, we felt that we were  
31 meeting all the criteria standards from our creators, the Council  
32 on Education of the the American Veterinarian Medical Association.  
33 And we went around the Island and we found that from the point of  
34 view of a small (inaudible) our students would have a very good  
35 education. And so we decided that that's what we were going to do  
36 because there are goats and there are sheep on the Island and  
37 farmers that were willing to collaborate and work with us. And for  
38 large animals, for cows, we had planned on sending our students  
39 Upstate New York or New Jersey and even Pennsylvania. And our  
40 creators didn't like that. And they felt that Long Island is in  
41 the middle of Manhattan and Cornell is here and only cows and  
42 calves and no farming at all.  
43

11:33AM

44 And so we were able to make them change their mind. And as I start  
45 to sort of planning around the Island, I realized that there are a  
46 lot of opportunities. And that in a small scale, again, being  
47 friendly to the Island and the soil and the water, that there are  
48 opportunities, things that we could do to provide good education,  
49 but also there is a need from the farmers. The farmers want  
50 veterinarians. They have programs they have to bring them from  
51 other places. There are farmers that call us that have to bring  
52 people from Philadelphia, from, you know, other states, fly people  
53 to see their animals. So this was a good opportunity to do  
54 everything we need to do and have our students competent in all the  
55 different aspects of veterinary profession. So it's a combination  
56 of things. And we would have been happy taking our students

11:34AM

11:34AM

1 elsewhere, but the ideal solution was in front of us, that we can  
2 do this with the resources that are here; that we would never go  
3 into an expansion that would make it, you know, a money-making type  
4 of operation.

5  
6 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

7 Thank you. One more question. Augie, this land you said the  
8 western end, does it include the two fields that you can see from  
9 the Expressway or not?

11:36AM 10

11 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

12 Good question. So there is a triangular piece north of the  
13 Expressway that is not included.

14  
15 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

16 Okay.

17  
18 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

11:36AM 20

19 And then there's a portion that's south of the Long Island Railroad  
20 that's also not included. This is exclusively for that west end  
21 piece. There's kind of like a tree-line and it's points west of  
22 that.

23  
24 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

25 Okay. Thank you.

26  
27 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

28 You're welcome.

29  
30 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

31 All right. Thank you. We have a motion and a second, if we can do  
32 a roll call.

33  
34 (Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)

35  
36 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

37 Yes.

38  
39 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

11:36AM 40

(No response)

41  
42 **LEG. FLEMING:**

43 Yes.

44  
45 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

46 Yes.

47  
48 **LEG. ANKER:**

49 Yes.

11:36AM 50

51 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

52 Yes.

53  
54 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

55 Yes.

1 **LEG. ANKER:**  
2 On the motion.

3  
4 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
5 Oh, there he is.

6  
7 **LEG. ANKER:**  
8 Okay, on the motion. Okay, never mind. I changed my mind. Go  
9 ahead. Looks like we have one more Legislator showing up.

11:37AM

10  
11 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**  
12 Yes.

13  
14 **MR. DUBOIS:**  
15 Seven. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0)

11:37AM

16  
17 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
18 Thank you. So Introductory Resolution 1165 is approved and will be  
19 before the full Legislature next week. Thank you, Dr. Fuentealba,  
20 and Mr. Schaefer and Augie. Thank you.

21  
22 **DR. FUENTEALBA:**  
23 Thank you very much.

11:37AM

24  
25 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
26 Okay, next we will move along to Introductory Resolution 1172,  
27 Authorizing appraisal of land under the Suffolk County Drinking  
28 Water Protection program, as amended by Local Law No. 24-2007,  
29 Turturro Property Town of Smithtown (SCTM No.  
30 0802-004.00-00.03-003.000). (Trotta). I'm going to make a motion  
31 to table.

32  
33 **LEG. ANKER:**  
34 I'll second.

35  
36 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
37 Second by Legislator Anker. Anyone on the motion? I don't see any  
38 hands but I see --

39  
40 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**  
41 Yeah, Madam Chair, I just have a couple of questions.

42  
43 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
44 Sure.

11:38AM

45  
46 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**  
47 Are we going to meeting -- is EDP going to meet and set a new  
48 policy here of what we want to do moving forward? I think that's  
49 probably the most prudent thing we should do as a committee to  
50 figure out A) are we going to make a priority list, which I believe  
51 we have a quasi priority list; but B) are we going to halt new  
52 appraisals and do ones that we have in the hopper because of short  
53 funds? I mean, I guess maybe this is something to talk about in  
54 executive session, but I was just wondering, you know, I'll work  
55 with the Chair or whoever on the Committee with this policy.

56

1 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

2 Yeah, we have -- we certainly need to figure out how to move  
3 forward, but it seems not prudent to keep adding --

4  
5 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

6 Yeah, I agree.

7  
8 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

9 -- adding to the long list at a time when, you know, we're going to  
10 be over flooding our appraisers to begin with. And, you know, so  
11 we can -- we should discuss this in detail what to do, how to move  
12 forward, you know, where can we get other funds, where we can get  
13 revenue coming in to pay for appraisals maybe, you know, something  
14 that'll help us instead of just, you know -- right now we are so  
15 backed up on the appraisal front. And it's a problem.

16  
17 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

18 Yeah, I just -- you know, I think the Committee should make the  
19 policy decision. We shouldn't leave it to anyone else.

20  
21 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

22 Yes, I agree. We all agree on that.

23  
24 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

25 Thank you so much.

26  
27 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

28 Legislator Kennedy.

29  
30 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

31 Just a question, I don't know if anybody here can answer it, how  
32 long does it take our appraisers to do an appraisal, both the  
33 physical part and then the written part follow-up?

34  
35 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

36 That's probably to Director Lansdale. I think she'd be best  
37 prepared to answer that one. Did you hear the question, Director  
38 Lansdale?

39  
40 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

41 Yep, I did hear that. It takes a series -- it takes a few months  
42 to get the appraisals once they're ordered and I can tell you that  
43 staff has informed me that all of the appraisals have been ordered  
44 that were -- that we were directed to order.

45  
46 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

47 Okay. Thank you.

48  
49 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

50 Thank you. Legislator Anker.

51  
52 **LEG. ANKER:**

53 Sarah, how much does it cost to do an appraisal? I guess it  
54 depends, but roughly what's the average cost?

1 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

2 I believe staff has quoted to me, ballpark it depends on the scope  
3 of the appraisal but anywhere between 2500 and north of that.  
4 Augie, do you want to --

5  
6 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

7 And we need to -- if it's expected to cost more than 300,000, if  
8 it's expected to come in at or above 300,000, correct? Or was it  
9 250,000? I can't remember.

10  
11 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

12 It was my understanding between \$2500 to \$5,000 an appraisal.

13  
14 **LEG. ANKER:**

15 So, we have about 30, I think, in the hopper so that's 90,000,  
16 figure --

17  
18 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

19 Remember, most of them require two appraisals.

20  
21 **LEG. ANKER:**

22 So that's \$200,000. That's a lot of money. Let me ask you another  
23 question. Have there been properties that are on their second  
24 round of appraisals?

25  
26 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

27 On the list? On the appraisal list?

28  
29 **LEG. ANKER:**

30 On the 30 list because of COVID? Because I know we had to  
31 completely stop due to COVID and other issues.

32  
33 **DIRECTOR LANSDALE:**

34 You know what, that is a question that I will investigate and get  
35 back to you on.

36  
37 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

38 Sarah, I can answer that. I'm sorry.

39  
40 **LEG. ANKER:**

41 Sarah and Sarah, go ahead.

42  
43 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

44 (Laughter) None of these appraisals have been ordered. These are  
45 not -- these are not expired or stale appraisals. These would all  
46 be first appraisals for these. Now there may be two or three  
47 parcels on the list that had approved planning steps like years  
48 ago, say, seven years ago or five years ago that are back in.  
49 There might be two or three that meet that criteria, but none of  
50 these are appraisals that have grown stale. These are all new  
51 appraisals.

52  
53 **LEG. ANKER:**

54 Okay. And with that in mind, too, though, have we contacted those  
55 property owners before we are starting this round of appraisals  
56 just to make sure they're still interested because our real estate

1 market has been flooded. I mean, you know, you know, mainly houses  
2 but it could be also vacant property. So have we double checked to  
3 make sure they're still interested before we do the \$5,000 expense  
4 per property?

5  
6 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

7 Yes. So that's Janet Longo who takes care of that, but she has  
8 reengaged. In fact, one or two of the parcels have come off the  
9 list as I understand it because the landowner is no longer  
10 interested in moving forward.

11:43AM

11  
12 **LEG. ANKER:**

13 Hey, Nick, you were talking.

14  
15 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

16 Oh.

17  
18 **LEG. ANKER:**

19 (Laughter) No problem.

20  
21 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

22 Sorry.

23  
24 **LEG. ANKER:**

25 Okay, so --

26  
27 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

28 Just have to remember to mute.

29  
30 **LEG. ANKER:**

31 Okay, no problem, no problem. Hey, so we're pretty much in a good  
32 place, though. We're not wasting money, going after people that  
33 may not be interested. We're following up on those. So every  
34 parcel that we're sending out for an appraisal, we're calling up  
35 and we're saying, "hey, you still interested? We're going to go  
36 through with this appraisal." Is that what's happening right now  
37 with the 30 properties that are in the hopper? Augie, you're on  
38 mute.

39  
40 **MR. RUCKDESCHEL:**

41 Sorry about that. Yeah, as I understand it, Janet reaches out  
42 first before ordering appraisals.

43  
44 **LEG. ANKER:**

45 Good to know. All right, thank you.

46  
47 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

48 Okay, we have a motion and a second, roll call.

11:44AM

49  
50 (Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)

51  
52 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

53 Yes to table.

54  
55 **LEG. ANKER:**

56 Yes.

1  
2 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**  
3 Yes.

4  
5 **LEG. FLEMING:**  
6 Yes.

7  
8 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**  
9 Yes.

11:44AM 10  
11 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**  
12 Yes.

13  
14 **LEG. KENNEDY:**  
15 (No response)

16  
17 **LEG. KENNEDY:**  
18 Sorry. Yes for one cycle.

19  
20 **MR. DUBOIS:**  
21 Seven. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0)

22  
23 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
24 Thank you. 1172 is tabled. Introductory Resolution 1174, Amending  
25 the Green Key Rate for Suffolk County Parks for a limited period in  
26 appreciation of healthcare workers. (Piccirillo).

27  
28 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**  
29 Madam Chair, I made an amendment. It was sent out. I just want to  
11:44AM 30 make sure everyone got it.

31  
32 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
33 I must have missed that.

34  
35 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**  
36 That's what I was talking out when I shouted out.

37  
38 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
39 If we can turn to our Counsel, maybe she can explain the amendment  
11:44AM 40 for the Committee.

41  
42 **MS. SIMPSON:**  
43 So, the amendment was an expansion on what constituted a health  
44 care worker. The initial definition did not have a specific  
45 definition. And Parks requested that the sponsor put in more  
46 detail and include specifically health care worker as defined by  
47 the CDC so that there's more clarity on who would qualify.

48  
49 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
11:45AM 50 Thank you. Legislator Piccirillo, do you want to --

51  
52 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**  
53 Motion to approve.

54  
55 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**  
56 -- give your justification. Okay. Motion to approve.



1  
2 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

3 Yeah, sure. We've known now since the beginning of the pandemic  
4 that people flock to beaches and open space to get away from the  
5 maddening sights of everything they've had to deal with, whether it  
6 be a doctor's office, hospitals, popup clinics, vaccination sites.  
7 This is a gesture that I believe is necessary for these people that  
8 need a break. The pandemic is still going; how they're still  
9 dealing with, you know, people who have Corona virus, people who  
11:45AM 10 are recovering from Corona virus. And I think it's a gesture by  
11 the County.  
12

13 And this really to me isn't about the money. BRO did send out a  
14 sheet about what they thought. I thought the number was a little  
15 high where we could be taking in a little less money than we've had  
16 in previous years. But I do believe that once -- if we can get  
17 this out there with the educational piece, that more people will  
18 sign up for this green card especially since it's only for one year  
19 and we'll have more people using the beaches and parks especially  
11:46AM 20 in the health care field that may need that break away from their  
21 job on a regular basis.  
22

23 So I'm hoping that the Committee can support this today and to move  
24 it to the General Meeting on 4/20 to give just a little helping  
25 hand to the people that put their lives at risk to help us through  
26 the pandemic.  
27

28 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

29 Second on the motion.  
30

11:46AM 31 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

32 Do we have a second already? I can't remember. Oh, we didn't.  
33 Okay. Seconded by Legislator Kennedy. I see that we have -- we do  
34 have some hands up but BRO was referenced. Your Fiscal Impact  
35 Statement, I'm just curious, you know, we have reduced fees for  
36 other groups for our parks. Have we seen -- do you know if we've  
37 seen upticks in usage after the parks fee has been -- the green key  
38 fee has been reduced, do we see upticks in usage as per Legislator  
39 Piccirillo is suggesting could happen.  
40

11:47AM 41 **MS. HALLORAN:**

42 I did include in the Fiscal Impact Statement that that could be a  
43 factor because when prices go down, there could be an increase in  
44 purchasing. As far as past history, though, I would have to  
45 research that. I don't have any information on that.  
46

47 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

48 Thank you. Yeah, you know, I mean I'd love to eliminate all of our  
49 charging for parking at all of our parks, you know, it certainly  
11:47AM 50 would be wonderful. And this is a laudable intent, which will be  
51 hard not to support. But we do have to remember there have been  
52 claims about our fiscal situation. And this is just, you know,  
53 reducing our revenue as per Budget Review Office. Next we have  
54 Legislator Anker.  
55  
56

1 **LEG. ANKER:**

2 So what is the fiscal impact?

3  
4 **MS. HALLORAN:**

5 Well, you know, there's a lot of variables that will come into it,  
6 but we did use several assumptions basically that -- based on Parks  
7 Department information on how many green key cards have been sold  
8 and based on New York State Department of Labor statistics that  
9 approximately 20 percent of workers are health care workers. So  
10 based on that we came up with a range of 52,000 to 72,000 impact  
11 annually. But that is an estimate and it's hard to be exact on  
12 that.

13  
14 **LEG. ANKER:**

15 Okay. You know, that's a pretty large amount. Now, how many other  
16 discounts are there? I mean, we have seniors; we've got fire  
17 departments.

18  
19 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

20 Veterans, disabled veterans. I know we have a number of groups  
21 that been provided discounts in the past. I don't know if they're  
22 all still applicable. Is there a sunset on this one, Anthony?

23  
24 **MS. SIMPSON:**

25 Yes, it's a one-year period. It's only going to be available to  
26 individuals from May 1st of this year through April 30th of next  
27 year. So it's a one-year reduction.

28  
29 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

30 Interesting. I don't see anyone from Parks present. Okay.  
31 Legislator Anker, did you have another question?

32  
33 **LEG. ANKER:**

34 You know, again, I think it's a great idea in general. It's just  
35 that, you know, we're being criticized dramatically about our  
36 fiscal budget and dealing with, you know, how to, you know, not  
37 increase fees and all that, all these items. I just hate to see,  
38 you know, Parks lose money when they really need to gain money  
39 because you're right, people are going to our parks; they're, you  
40 know, getting into their kayaks; they're, you know, they're able to  
41 use our parks in such great ways especially during this COVID  
42 pandemic. I'm concerned about the fiscal impact right now. And  
43 then, you know, again, it's wonderful our health care workers have  
44 done a phenomenal job, but then there's also the volunteers,  
45 there's first responders, there's so many other people that could  
46 use us also, so.

47  
48 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

49 Yeah, and, you know, to your point, Legislator Anker, I actually  
50 walked a couple parks in Legislator Piccirillo's district recently  
51 and, you know, trash pickup has increased with the use, you know,  
52 the need for trash pickup at our parks, the need for maintenance  
53 because of the increased usage has gone up. So, you know, our need  
54 for revenue is going up at a time when -- because of the  
55 over-usage. And this would decrease them, granted for a laudable  
56 cause and for a very worthy population, no doubt. And so I just

1 hope, Legislator Piccirillo, especially you recognize that you are  
2 reducing probably, according to our Budget Review Office, reducing  
3 revenues by doing this.

4  
5 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

6 Sure. So, Madam Chair, happy to just chime in here since I was  
7 mentioned. I'll save through my own cuts in my office probably  
8 over 180,000 to 200,000 by not filling a part-time position; not  
9 having to give them health benefits; not taking a county car; not  
10 taking a county cell phone. So I'll be happy to transfer any money  
11 saved from my District Office to pay for any downside that this  
12 bill would present for the one-year period that it's presented. I  
13 think it would more than cover it for what I've saved the County  
14 from not having a full staff, so. Anybody -- I'll talk to Budget  
15 Review and I'll talk to Counsel to make sure that I can transfer  
16 those funds if there is a deficit from this program.

17  
18 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

19 Thank you.

20  
21 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

22 You're welcome.

23  
24 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

25 And I know how much your parks and the maintenance, you know, means  
26 to you as well. Every resident in your district, in my district  
27 that uses our parks wants to come and see them in pristine  
28 condition; wants them to be open and available; wants bathrooms to  
29 be open; wants trash to be removed and not piling up; wants our  
30 parks' security to be present when needed; you know, wants the  
31 website to work when they're scheduling the campgrounds. You know,  
32 these are all really important pieces of what it takes to run a  
33 parks department. And every resident wants us to properly fund the  
34 Parks Department and wants us to make sure that we can give them  
35 the best face of our -- of what our 50,000 plus acres of county  
36 parks in absolutely spectacular place on Long Island -- places on  
37 Long Island. Looks like, Legislator Anker, you've already asked  
38 your questions, correct?

39  
40 **LEG. ANKER:**

41 No. I have another follow-up with Anthony.

42  
43 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

44 Follow-up. Go ahead.

45  
46 **LEG. ANKER:**

47 So, the Office of Budget Review, you said you have a part-time  
48 worker, they're making \$180,000?

49  
50 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

51 No. I saved 180,000 by not filling a part-time position and a  
52 full-time position; plus the health care benefits; plus the fact I  
53 don't take a county car or a county cellphone. I donated that  
54 money back to the Presiding Officer.

1 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

2 Are there county cellphones? I don't even know about it.

3  
4 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

5 There are. But that's probably at a low cost. But the salary and  
6 health benefits save the County over \$100,000 this year just from  
7 my office alone. So, I'm willing to take 40% of that money if it's  
8 going to be, what they're saying it's going to be 40 to 50,  
9 whatever thousand and cover the cost.

11:54AM 10

11 **LEG. ANKER:**

12 So you're down a full-time staff and a part-time staff?

13  
14 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

15 Yeah, I'm a full-time Legislator so I like to answer my own phone.

16  
17 **LEG. ANKER:**

18 Okay, great. That works. All right, again, I commend you on your  
19 efforts here, but I honestly -- I don't know if I could support  
20 this because I will take a fiscal conservative position saying that  
21 we really need this money to put back into our parks. I mean, we  
22 are at a fiscal, you know, impasse here. You know, yes, hopefully  
23 we're getting money from other entities from the federal and the  
24 state, but we are so being criticized by, you know, a number of  
25 people for, you know, spending too much money or not having enough  
26 money. We need to take care of the County and we need to take care  
27 of the county parks. And this is why, you know, again, you know, I  
28 have concerns supporting this particular resolution.

11:54AM 20

29  
30 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

31 Yeah, so, Madam Chair, I guess I wasn't clear on the fact that  
32 there would be no deficit from this bill since I would be covering  
33 it from what I didn't spend going forward. I wish we would have  
34 had this fiscal prudence all along and then we wouldn't even have  
35 this conversation. But I digress, I yield back.

36  
37 **LEG. ANKER:**

38 Well, I don't think -- again, if the Office -- if the Budget -- if  
39 BRO could go ahead and let us know, can we do that? Can we take  
40 funding from the Legislature to put into the Parks Department? And  
41 how is that done?

11:55AM 40

42  
43 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

44 Inter-fund transfer?

45  
46 **MS. HALLORAN:**

47 I would have to look into that.

48  
49 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

50 Well, certainly, like I said from the beginning, this is hard --  
51 it's hard not to support because of the nature of the group and the  
52 population that you're looking to benefit because of its short-term  
53 nature with the sunset. But I think we want to make clear that  
54 every dollar we remove from the Parks' budget may have a  
55 consequence that is certainly unintended. And that will be to the  
56 detriment of all parks' users if there's a decrease in the amount

11:56AM 50

1 of money available to our Parks Department at a time when usage is  
2 up.

3  
4 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

5 So, Madam Chair, does this money go to Parks? Doesn't it go into  
6 the General Fund?

7  
8 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

9 Parks fees?

11:56AM 10

11 **MS. HALLORAN:**

12 It's attributed to the Parks Department revenue.

13  
14 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

15 Right.

16  
17 **MS. HALLORAN:**

18 But it does go to the General Fund.

19  
20 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

21 It all like -- the Parks -- the Parks Department gets funded from  
22 the General Fund.

23  
24 **MS. HALLORAN:**

25 Correct.

26  
27 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

28 Legislator Krupski.

29  
30 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

31 So, you know, I've been listening to the whole debate here and I  
32 understand all the sides about it, and especially where the parks  
33 are move heavily used this year, or this past year because of the  
34 pandemic and people appreciated them. But to Legislator  
35 Piccirillo's point, if these health care workers need, you know,  
36 need that kind of contact with nature to help them do their job and  
37 help us through, you know, what was the pandemic, you know, maybe  
38 this will help a few families get out into the fresh air and get  
39 out into nature and get a little peace of mind. So, because it's  
11:57AM 40 sunsetted, I would support this certainly for a year.

41  
42 But I think going forward when we start to consider discounts on  
43 fees for different county services, we do have to consider, you  
44 know, the big picture. And maybe not 50 percent discounts all the  
45 time. So, thank you, Madam Chair.

46  
47 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

48 Thank you, Legislator Krupski. Always the voice of reason.  
49 Legislator Kennedy, was that a new hand up?

11:58AM 50

51 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

52 That's a new hand. I just have to say that as a nurse for 30 years  
53 that worked in hospitals, there were times where after a long shift  
54 I went to Sunken Meadow; I went to even Lake Ronkonkoma when they  
55 had two car parking spots; I went to wherever I could go to just  
56 sit and chill out and be prepared for eight hours from that time to

1 go back in during the AIDS crisis, during other times where things  
2 were bad.

3  
4 In order to have a good health care worker, they have to have good  
5 mental health. And whatever it takes, a year is not -- it's a  
6 year. We are already -- I will tell you that night nurses  
7 traditionally do not get to go parks because they're dragging their  
8 behinds back into work with little sleep. I don't think it's going  
9 to be as much as -- as many people as the Financial Impact  
11:59AM 10 Statement says, but I will tell you that our nurses and our aides  
11 and our unit clerks and our people that come into assist in nursing  
12 homes and in hospitals really need this. They have been heroes.  
13 We do not -- we say it, but this is a small amount of time that we  
14 can show it to them.

15  
16 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

17 And I want to echo your comments. There was a wonderful article in  
18 the Wall Street Journal about the importance of forest bathing and  
19 how important it is two hours a week for mental health and  
12:00PM 20 rejuvenation and the number of trees is super important in the  
21 calculus on how much time you need to spend; but really getting  
22 into a forest alone, away from the sounds of cars and life is  
23 important to everyone's mental health. And especially those under  
24 stress.

25  
26 The, you know, health care workers obviously, first responders, and  
27 we've always, you know, made that a priority. And that as we've  
28 all said has not been the -- the neediness or the worthiness of the  
29 population targeted is not at all what anyone here is suggesting as  
12:00PM 30 you all well know. And as I said, this would be hard not to  
31 support, but I think we need to -- also remember we need to  
32 increase our parks' expenditure line. We need to increase the  
33 number of park employees that we have when there's an incredible  
34 increase in the usage.

35  
36 And so I look forward to your support when we propose increasing  
37 expenditures in the Parks Department because of how important our  
38 parks are to our residents of Suffolk County's mental health. And  
39 I look forward to that, Legislator Piccirillo and Legislator  
12:01PM 40 Kennedy, as we work on our operating budget this year and look to  
41 increase spending for our Parks Department. Thank you.

42  
43 Okay, we have a motion to approve and a second.

44  
45 **LEG. FLEMING:**

46 Kara, excuse me.

47  
48 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

49 Sorry, I didn't see -- you didn't raise your hand. Is that  
12:01PM 50 Legislator Fleming?

51  
52 **LEG. FLEMING:**

53 Yeah, I had my hand raised digitally, sorry.

54  
55 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

56 Oh, I had my cursor over your line and so it hid it. I apologize.

1 Go ahead.

2

3 **LEG. FLEMING:**

4 A new wait to mute someone. Just wanted to quickly mention while I  
5 appreciate this nominal support, you know, this symbolic support  
6 for health care workers and the, you know, talking about supporting  
7 health care workers, but I don't want us to forget the bond  
8 resolution for the mental hygiene software completion that this  
9 Legislature was not able to pull across the finish line for our own  
10 health care workers.

12:02PM

11

12 I'd love to continue to show real support to allow them to do their  
13 work and to reduce their stress by allowing them to do their work  
14 by supporting them in the way that our primary responsibility lies,  
15 which is supporting the budgets of these folks. This was a \$50  
16 million completion of a project that had been underway for many  
17 years. And we couldn't pull it across the finish line despite the  
18 fact that our debt service is under 7%, well within our debt  
19 service policy and well within best practices. So I'd rather see  
20 us support health care workers in a way that our responsibility is  
21 most directed to and that is supporting the work of our county  
22 health care workers like we could have in 1074, the bond resolution  
23 for the mental hygiene software system. Thank you.

12:03PM

24

25 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

26 Thank you.

27

28 **LEG. ANKER:**

29 And, Kara, I have another question.

30

31 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

32 Legislator Anker.

33

34 **LEG. ANKER:**

35 How do you prove -- what is the documentation that is used as proof  
36 to prove that you are a health care worker?

37

38 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

39 That's to our Counsel.

12:03PM

40

41 **MS. SIMPSON:**

42 So you would need to provide valid proof of current health care  
43 employment. That would be -- I mean, if they show like a hospital  
44 ID, that's valid, something along those lines would be, I think,  
45 reasonable.

46

47 **LEG. ANKER:**

48 Okay. And that's in the legislation.

49

50 **MS. SIMPSON:**

51 The valid proof? Yes, that's in the legislation.

52

53 **LEG. ANKER:**

54 Could the health care worker be, oh, I don't know, a chiropractor,  
55 a therapist? It could be a dentist?

56

1 **MS. SIMPSON:**

2 There's an extensive list that was requested by the Parks  
3 Department. That list includes nurses, nurse assistants,  
4 physicians, respiratory technicians, dentists, hygienists,  
5 pharmacists, plasma and blood donation staff, mortician, public  
6 health nurses, mental health clinicians, home health aides, school  
7 nurses, optometrists, COVID testing staff, dialysis staff, urgent  
8 care workers, correction's nurses and aides, long-term care  
9 facility staff, group home and residential staff, home aides and  
10 care givers, hospice and palliative care staff, community health  
11 workers when acting as health aides or health translators.

12:04PM

12  
13 **LEG. ANKER:**

14 Okay. Thank you.

15  
16 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

17 Thank you. Legislator Fleming, was that a new hand or did it not  
18 go down?

19  
20 **LEG. FLEMING:**

21 No.

22  
23 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

24 Okay. I moved my cursor away. All right. We have a motion to  
25 approve and a second. Roll call.

26  
27 (Roll call by Mr. Dubois, Chief Deputy Clerk of the Legislature)

28  
29 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

30 Yes.

12:05PM

31  
32 **LEG. KENNEDY:**

33 Yes.

34  
35 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

36 Yes.

37  
38 **LEG. KRUPSKI:**

39 Yes.

12:05PM

40  
41 **LEG. FLEMING:**

42 Yes.

43  
44 **LEG. CARACAPPA:**

45 Yes.

46  
47 **LEG. ANKER:**

48 Yes.

49  
50 **MR. DUBOIS:**

51 Seven. (VOTE: 7-0-0-0)

52  
53 **CHAIRPERSON HAHN:**

54 Okay, 1174 is approved. And with no further business before the  
55 Committee, we are adjourned. Thank you.



**THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 12:05 PM**

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