

COUNTY OF SUFFOLK



STEVEN BELLONE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
DIVISION OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Tom Gulbransen
Chairperson
CEQ

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: June 13, 2023
TIME: 9:34 AM – 11:06 AM
LOCATION: Microsoft Teams Video Conference

PRESENT:

Frank De Rubeis
Thomas Gulbransen, Chair
Mark Haubner
Michael Kaufman, Vice Chair
Mary Ann Spencer
Herbert Strobel

ABSENT:

Rob Carpenter Jr
Anthony Graves
Kaetlyn Jackson
Hon. Anthony Piccirillo

CAC REPRESENTATIVES:

None

STAFF:

Andrew Freleng, Chief Planner, Suffolk County Dept. of Eco. Dev. and Planning
John Corral, Environmental Projects Coordinator, Suffolk County Dept. of Eco. Dev. and Planning
Elisa Picca, Deputy Commissioner, Suffolk County Dept. of Eco. Dev. and Planning
Richard Martin, Director of Historic Services, Suffolk County Departments of Parks, Recreation and Conservation

Jennifer Kohn, Asst. County Attorney, Suffolk County Department of Law

GUESTS:

James Tullo, Commissioner of Planning, Town of Brookhaven

David Wilcox, Director of Planning, Town of Southampton

Janice Scherer, Town Planning & Development Administrator, Town of Southampton

Molly Graffam, Water Resource Geochemical Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

Mike Brusseau, Senior Environmental Planner, Nelson Pope & Voorhis

Ben Wright, Principal Engineer, Suffolk County Department of Public Works

Bob DeLuca, President, Group for the East End

Ken Zegel, Chief Office of Ecology, Suffolk County Department of Health, Division of Environmental Quality

Mikael Kerr, Farmland and Open Space Supervisor, Suffolk County Dept. of Eco. Dev. and Planning

Caitlin Curry, Legislative Aide, Suffolk County Legislator Bontempi, District #18

Lucas Stahlmann, Intern, Suffolk County Department of Economic Development & Planning, Division of Planning & Environment

Olu Fajolu, Permit Section Manager, NYS DOT

Tom Lembo

Michelle Dibrita

Tom Gulbransen, Chair, called the June 13, 2023 CEQ Meeting to order. Mr. Gulbransen stated that a quorum was present and read the following opening statement:

“This is the regularly scheduled CEQ meeting for June 13, 2023 meeting of the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality and for the record we do have a quorum present.

In accordance with Suffolk County Local Law No. 26-2021, the CEQ, as an Advisory Body to the Legislature, will hold this meeting electronically via Microsoft Teams. Instead of a public meeting open for the public to attend in person, members of the public may listen to or log into the video conference. Public comments may be provided during the Meeting’s public portion. We will be using Microsoft Teams and will be recording the entirety of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will also be posted on the Suffolk County CEQ website.

Additionally, we will be following the voting protocol used by the Suffolk County Legislature at its March 17, 2020 meeting. All voting on Board Actions and Resolutions will be done via a roll call and we ask that all Board Members clearly state their name when making a motion and clearly state their vote when their name is called.”

Minutes:

Mr. Gulbransen noted that because CEQ staff is still finalizing the May CEQ Meeting Summary the CEQ will delay its review of the May CEQ Meeting Summary until the June CEQ meeting.

Correspondence:

Mr. Gulbransen stated that CEQ had received a June 12, 2023 dated correspondence from the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. Mr. Gulbransen noted that the CEQ will address this correspondence during the Project Review section of the meeting.

Public Portion:

During the public portion Bob DeLuca, President for the Group for the East End, spoke in regards to Suffolk County Legislative Introductory Resolution 1573-2023 – “Adopting Local Law No. -2023, To Adopt a Charter Law pursuant to the Suffolk County Water Quality Restoration Act (Chapter 58 of the New York State Laws of 2023) to amend Article XII of the Suffolk County Charter to extend the Suffolk County Drinking Water Protection Program and to establish a new Water Quality Restoration Fund supported by an additional one eighth percent (1/8%) sales and use tax.” Mr. DeLuca noted that he believes this policy rightly and closely follows the comprehensive environmental review process that was conducted for this action. The review process included the completion of a Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Subwatersheds Wastewater Management Plan. Mr. DeLuca said he believes that this proposed policy represents a generational improvement in water quality and he strongly urged all Involved Agencies to support putting this issue before the voters. In regards to the SEQRA review, Mr. DeLuca noted that the extension of the Drinking Water Protection Program involves extending an existing Program and so this aspect of the law is clearly a Type II Action. In regards to the new Water Quality Restoration Fund, Mr. DeLuca said that this program is new but that it clearly reflects the recommendations and guidelines of the Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Subwatersheds Wastewater Plan and therefore no further SEQRA review is required.

Historic Trust Docket:

Director’s Report:

Updates on Housing Program for Historic Trust Sites:

Richard Martin, Director of Historic Services with Suffolk County Parks, provided the CEQ with an update on the Housing Program. Mr. Martin informed the CEQ that all the housing properties that have recently been reviewed by the Parks Housing Committee have been filled. The last housing property that was filled was the residence at Coindre Hall where a Suffolk County Police Officer is moving in. Mr. Martin noted that the Police Officer will be able to help with security at the property.

Updates on Historic Trust Custodial Agreements

Mr. Martin noted that he did not have any new updates regarding the custodial agreements.

However, Mr. Martin wanted to provide the CEQ with information of the following resolutions that are on the May 23, 2023 and June LADS report:

- IR 1456-2023 which will authorize a custodial license agreement with the Babylon Town Historic Society in regards to the house at Van Bourgondien County Park. This introductory resolution is to renew and extend a custodial agreement for 20 years. Mr. Martin noted this Babylon Town Historic Society is helping the Parks Department restore the buildings and provide programing for the public.
- IR 1443-2023 which is in regards to appropriating funds for improvements to the house at Commerdinger County Park. Mr. Martin noted that through a Gardner Foundation Grant the County was able to complete the restoration plans and that this resolution would allow for the restoration work to begin.
- IR1459-2023 which will provide additional funds for the ongoing restoration and renovation of the Sagtikos Manor Carriage House.
- IR1570-2023 which will add an additional 10 million dollars in capital funds for county historic projects. Mr. Martin noted that this is a very positive development that will allow the County to complete a number of County Historic preservation projects. This funding includes 4 million dollars to allow the County to finish the Cedar Point Lighthouse restoration, 3.5 million for the Coindre Hall Boat House restoration, 875,000 for restoration work at the Millers House and Mill Building at Blydenburgh County Park and 150,000 to improve the entrance roadway at the Meadow Croft Estate. Mr. Martin noted that planning still needs to be completed for Meadow Croft project and that it will require a NYSDEC permit and will be brought to the CEQ for review.
- IR 1578-2023 which will allow the County to move forward to create a custodial agreement contract with New York Tamil Sangam for the restoration and repair of the County's Elwood Schoolhouse (aka Little Red Schoolhouse). It is intended that the building will be made available for community use on the first floor and the group's office use on the 2nd floor.

Project Review:

Recommended Unlisted Actions:

A. Proposed Port Jefferson Station Sewering Project – Extension to Suffolk County Sewer District #2, Town of Brookhaven.

Ben Wright, Principal Engineer with Suffolk County Department of Public Works and Mike Brusseau, Senior Environmental Planner with Nelson Pope and Voorhis gave a presentation with regards to the proposed project.

This proposed sewer district extension will include the construction of a sewage collection system in designated areas of Port Jefferson Station which will connect to a pump station on the south side of Hallock Avenue and then by force main to the existing Tallmadge Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) (Suffolk County Sewer District #2-Tallmadge). The location of the proposed sewer district extension area, the pump station and the 4,850 foot long sewer line connecting the sewer district extension area to Suffolk County Sewer District # 2 is shown in EAF Figures 1 through 4.

The proposed pump station will collect and convey an average of 156,000 gallons of sewage per day (55,000 gallons on the first day of operation) from the proposed sewer extension. Utilization of the Tallmadge STP for this extension is intended to support both connection of existing uses as well as potential future redevelopment and area revitalization to achieve objectives of publicly-vetted, goal-oriented, long-range planning initiatives. No improvements to the exiting Tallmadge STP are necessary to accommodate the additional sanitary flow and the facility has ample capacity for the proposed extension.

As part of his presentation, Mr. Brusseau discussed the potential environmental impacts involved with the project and the reasons why it is not anticipated that the project will result in a significant adverse impacts on the environmental. The potential impacts addressed included potential impacts to groundwater, drinking water, ecological resources, the road network and historic/archeological resources. Mr. Wright also confirmed that this proposed sewer connection will require approval from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

After the presentation, the CEQ asked whether this project would impact the ability of other properties in close proximity to Sewer District # 2 to connect to the District. Mr. Wright noted that when Sewer District # 2 was first created there were a number of developments that connected to the district but there have not been recent requests for connections to Sewer District # 2. Additionally Mr. Wright noted there still would be capacity available for the potential small connection requests that could occur in the future.

After the above noted CEQ discussion, Mr. De Rubeis made a motion to recommend that the proposed project be classified as an Unlisted Action with a Negative Declaration. The Motion was seconded by Ms. Spencer. Motion Carried. Mr. Kaufman recused.

B. Proposed Riverside Maritime Park and Permeable Reactive Barrier Project, Town of Southampton

Before the presentation on the project, the CEQ reviewed the June 12, 2023 Correspondence sent to the CEQ by the Suffolk County Health Department regarding the Permeable Reactive Barrier portion of the project.

Janice Scherer, Town Planning & Development Administrator with the Town of Southampton, David Wilcox, Planning Director with the Town of Southampton and Molly Graffam, Water Resource Geochemical Specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County, gave a presentation regarding the proposed Riverside Maritime Park and Permeable Reactive Barrier (PRB) Project.

The proposed project involves the construction of a low maintenance passive recreation park and permeable reactive barrier in the Town of Southampton, hamlet of Riverside. As proposed, the Town of Southampton and County of Suffolk will enter into an inter-municipal agreement to allow the Town of Southampton to construct the proposed Park on County owned parkland.

The park is composed of 6 contiguous tax parcels consisting of 2,200 linear feet of Peconic River frontage and 1.3 acres of tidal and freshwater wetlands. As indicated in the Riverside Maritime Trail Park – Conceptual Features Plan in the EAF, the Maritime Park will provide for outdoor education, exercise and water access for kayak, fishing and nature observation and provide a mix of ADA, multi-use and natural surface trails as approved by the Suffolk County Park Trustees. The parking area for the park will be limited to a 15 space parking lot with no designated trailer parking and no curbing.

The CEQ noted concerns with using a gravel parking lot and a gravel parking lot's compatibility with ADA accessibility. The Town of Southampton indicated that they understand this concern and that they will definitely take this concern into consideration as they finalize the parking lot plans. The Town noted that the intent is to create a permeable, ADA accessible parking lot.

The proposed project also involves a subsurface Permeable Reactive Barrier (PRB) designed to treat legacy nitrogen moving through groundwater toward the Peconic Estuary. The (PRB) is proposed to be conducted by Cornell Cooperative Extension through a grant provided by NYSDEC. Ms. Graffam provided the CEQ with information on the proposed PRB. Ms. Graffam also responded to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services correspondence which indicated that the PRB had the potential to result in changes to the groundwater chemistry which could result in the leaching of metals from the soils into the groundwater. Ms. Graffam also voiced concern over the potential cost of conducting a pre-design test as recommended by the Suffolk County Health Department. Mr. Zegel, with the Suffolk County Health Department, also provided some additional information in regards to the PRB and the Health Department's recommendations.

The CEQ discussed the PRB and the Health Department's recommendations. The CEQ discussed how a motion could be made indicating that the project would not have a significant adverse impact on the environment provided that the project sponsor coordinate with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services regarding the development of the design plans and that the project sponsor submit the Final Design Plan and a Long Term Monitoring Plan to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services for review and comment prior to the construction of the PRB barrier.

After the above noted CEQ discussion, Mr. De Rubeis made a motion to recommend that the proposed Riverside Maritime Park and Permeable Reactive Barrier Project be classified as an Unlisted Action with a Negative Declaration. The motion included that the project sponsor will coordinate with the Suffolk County Department of Health Services regarding the planning and development of the Final Design Plan and the preparation of a Long Term Monitoring Plan and that the project sponsor will submit the Final Design Plan and Long Term Monitoring Plan to the Suffolk County Department of Health Services for review and comment prior to the construction of the PRB barrier. The Motion was seconded by Mr. Kaufman. Motion Carried.

Project Review:

Recommendations for LADS Report:

Recommendations for Legislative Resolutions Laid on the Table May 26, 2023

After a discussion, Mr. Kaufman made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on Legislative Resolutions Laid on the Table May 26, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Rubeis. Motion carried.

Recommendations for Legislative Resolutions Laid on the Table June 6, 2023

After a discussion, Mr. Kaufman made a motion to accept the staff recommendations on Legislative Resolutions Laid on the Table June 6, 2023. The motion was seconded by Mr. De Rubeis. Motion carried.

Other Business:

None

CAC Concerns:

None

The CEQ adjourned the Meeting