

**RESOLUTION NO. 959 -2014, ESTABLISHING A PARKS RX
PROGRAM AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

WHEREAS, an obesity epidemic, among both adults and children, is plaguing the United States; and

WHEREAS, many people have unhealthy habits that lead to chronic illness and a diminished quality of life; and

WHEREAS, chronic illness and obesity put a significant strain on the nation's healthcare system, with 10% of medical costs in the United States being directly attributable to obesity; and

WHEREAS, as our population becomes more sedentary, fewer people venture outdoors to enjoy nature; and

WHEREAS, government bodies at every level preserve land for open space and park purposes to provide individuals with access to the great outdoors; and

WHEREAS, recent research shows that exposure to nature and exercise outdoors has significant health benefits, including improved mental health, reduced stress and lower blood pressure; and

WHEREAS, there are tens of thousands of acres of parkland in the County of Suffolk; and

WHEREAS, the County should establish a Parks Rx program to encourage the use of park properties, whereby healthcare practitioners will be encouraged to prescribe outdoor activity and direct their patients to parks in close proximity to their home or workplace; and

WHEREAS, an advisory committee should be established, comprised of healthcare professionals, County officials and community representatives, to guide the development of the Parks Rx Program and ensure that providers received information on this innovative program; now, therefore be it

1st RESOLVED, that the Suffolk County Parks Rx Program is hereby established to encourage healthcare practitioners to prescribe outdoor activity to improve the health and wellness of County residents; and be it further

2nd RESOLVED, that, as staff is available, the Planning Division of the Department of Economic Development and Planning is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to map the locations of all Federal, State, County and Town parks within the boundaries of the County, and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation is authorized, empowered and directed to gather information concerning exercise opportunities within the parks (i.e., the presence of biking or hiking trails), with each Department providing the compiled data to the Department of Information Technology; and be it further

3rd **RESOLVED**, that the Department of Information Technology is hereby authorized, empowered and directed to develop an online database which will allow the public to access the mapping and exercise information compiled by the Planning Division and be searchable by town, hamlet or address; and be it further

4th **RESOLVED**, that receiving a prescription for the Parks Rx Program does not entitle the recipient to free or discounted parking or entrance to parks, nor does it entitle one to a discount for a Green Key pass; and be it further

5th **RESOLVED**, that an advisory board (“the Board”) comprised of the following members is hereby established to aid the County in the development, implementation and advocacy for use of the Parks Rx Program by healthcare professionals:

1. the Commissioner of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation, or his or her designee;
2. the Commissioner of the Department of Health Services, or his or her designee;
3. the Director of Planning Division, or his or her designee;
4. the Director of the Office for People with Disabilities, or his or her designee;
5. the Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Committee of the County Legislature; or his or her designee;
6. the Chairperson of the Health Committee of the County Legislature, or his or her designee;
7. a representative of the Suffolk County Supervisors Association
8. a representative of the Suffolk County Pediatrics Society;
9. a representative of the Suffolk County Medical Society;
10. a representative from Cornell Family Health and Wellness;
11. a representative from Concerned Long Island Mountain Bicyclists;
12. a representative from the Long Island Greenbelt Trail;
13. an individual, who is either a certified dietitian, certified nutritionist or certified dietitian-nutritionist, to be selected by the County Legislature; and
14. a practitioner of bariatric medicine, to be selected by the County Legislature.

and be it further

6th **RESOLVED**, that the Board shall meet within thirty days of being established for the purposes of selecting a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson; and be it further

7th **RESOLVED**, that eight (8) members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of convening a meeting; and be it further

8th **RESOLVED**, that the Board shall advise on the development and implementation of the Parks Rx Program, with a focus on increasing awareness of the Program in the healthcare community; and be if further

9th **RESOLVED**, that the Board shall meet on a quarterly basis for a period of one year following the date of its establishment; and be it further

10th **RESOLVED**, that this Legislature, being the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) lead agency, hereby finds and determines that this resolution constitutes a Type II action pursuant to Section 617.5(c)(20), (21) and (27) of Title 6 of the NEW YORK CODE OF RULES AND REGULATIONS (6 NYCRR) and within the meaning of Section 8-0109(2) of the

NEW YORK ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW as a promulgation of regulations, rules, policies, procedures, and legislative decisions in connection with continuing agency administration, management and information collection, and the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is hereby directed to circulate any appropriate SEQRA notices of determination of non-applicability or non-significance in accordance with this resolution.

DATED: November 18, 2014

APPROVED BY:

/s/ Steven Bellone
County Executive of Suffolk County

Date: December 1, 2014