

Marine Industry & Restoration Advisory Committee

Minutes of August, 21st, 2018

Suffolk County Legislature

Clerks Conference Room, Hauppauge, NY.

Committee Members Present:

DuWayne Gregory	Presiding Officer, Suffolk County Legislature
Dr. Shaun McKay	President, Suffolk County Community College
Diane LaChapelle	Suffolk County Department of Labor, Designee
Tom Kehoe	Deputy Mayor of Northport Village, Seafood Industry Designee
Kristen Jarnigan	President / CEO, Discover Long Island, Tourism Designee
Vincent Biondo	Town of Babylon, Suffolk County Supervisors Association
Kim Lamiroult	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Roger Evans	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
Eric Kreuter	President, Association of Marine Industries
Vincent Pesce	Vice President, Association of Marine Industries
August Ruckdeschel	Suffolk County Department of Economic Development, & Planning Designee

Committee Members' Representatives:

Dr. Peggy Staib	Eastern Suffolk BOCES, for Superintendent David Wicks
Catherine Stark	Legislative Aide, for Legislator Al Krupski
John Stype	Legislative Aide, for Legislator Al Krupski
Samantha Sarube	Legislative Aide, for Legislator Susan A. Berland

Others Present:

Lora Gellerstein	Chief of Staff to the Presiding Officer
Robert Fonti	Legislative Aide to the Presiding Officer
Luann Dallojacono	Legislative Aide to the Presiding Officer
John Cifelli	Town of Babylon
Lisa Calla	Assistant Dean, Suffolk County Community College
Carol Wickliffe-Campbell	Chief of Staff to President Dr. Shaun McKay

Committee Members Absent:

Michael Flynn

Chief Operating Officer, Western Suffolk BOCES

Vito Minei

Executive Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

Meeting Called to Order at 10:00 A.M.

Presiding Officer Gregory welcomed the committee by thanking everyone for coming to the meeting today and participating in a wonderful, and fruitful adventure. He recalled how the discussions started with Eric Kreuter and others everyone involved wanted to work on some important items, which gave rise to the resolution that established the Marine Industry & Revitalization Advisory Committee. DuWayne then read the #11 Resolved Clause from the adopted resolution, which states that the Advisory Council shall submit an annual written report of its findings and determinations, together with its recommendations for attracting and retaining marine industry jobs in the County of Suffolk to stimulate and grow the local economy, and to complete dredging projects to each member of the County Legislature, the Clerk of the County Legislature, and the County Executive no later than December 31 of each year, beginning in 2018. Presiding Officer Gregory noted how there was a broad array of stakeholders at the table and asked if anyone had any comments on the mission of the committee, their goals, or their perspectives.

Kristen Jarnigan stated she was happy to be involved and appreciated that tourism had a seat at the table. She thinks it's great that people are communicating, since they are the only entity that's talking about the image of Long Island, nationally, globally, so they sometimes don't think locally about when beaches close, and how that resonates on a national and global level. Whether we're talking about gangs or pollution, we need to make sure that we're communicating things clearly, but also in a way that positively promotes the destination of Long Island.

Presiding Officer Gregory noted that Discover Long Island's mission is to capture what's great about Suffolk County, along with Long Island, and that he agrees, as people would not want to come to a polluted beach or eat at a seafood restaurant that is not up to standards. He stated that Suffolk County has to have a plan for water quality, and from the industry perspective work must also be done on workforce development, creating sustainable jobs, and on making sure that the industry itself would be sustainable both for now and into the future. The Presiding Officer recalls that he initially looked at it as a representative of a Legislative District on the South Shore, where there is a major issue of dredging. While he noted that the Suffolk County Department of Public Works has done a great job, when speaking to those in the industry there are more issues than just dredging, such as a shortage of mechanics. Presiding Officer Gregory notes there was an impact slowing down this entire sector of the economy.

Presiding Officer Gregory stated that this reflected a complex issue, mentioning as an example, that Dr. McKay had also had a number of thoughts on water quality. He note that Suffolk County Department of Public Works plays a large role, just as Town governments and others. Presiding Officer Gregory then also notes that Legislator Krupski will also be a member representing the North Fork and bringing his own perspective as a farmer on how farming impacts the marine industry. Finally, he thanks everyone for their enthusiasm in joining the committee.

Presiding Officer Gregory brought up that the marine industry, tourism alone is a \$5.6 billion industry that supports 100,000 jobs, which then accounts for 54% of travelers spending, according to tourism economics on Long Island in 2016. Kristen Jarnigan interjected that the 2017 numbers just came out, and that tourism is up to \$5.9 billion now, reaching a 16 year high. Dr. McKay asked if those numbers were for Suffolk or all of Long Island. Kristen answered that the numbers came to 52% in Suffolk County and 48% in Nassau County. Dr. McKay asked if the numbers could be broken down further into specific communities. Kristen Jarnigan responded by saying that the numbers were from the New York State's own figures, and that Discover Long Island tends to only separate the numbers for occupancy and vacancy numbers.

Presiding Officer Gregory stated that while his numbers are from 2016, tourism generated \$1.8 billion in direct labor income, and accounts for 6.1% of all employment on Long Island. He added that Suffolk County alone accounted for 54.4% of the region's tourism base generating in that year, as well as \$700 million in state & local taxes. Presiding Officer Gregory further noted that growth in tourism and recreation, and recreational fishing related sectors will continue to drive Long Island's economy. Additionally, he noted that investment in water dependent, commerce industry, improving natural resources and water quality, are imperative to sustaining coastal resources and supporting three major water quality dependent activities; swimming, boating, and fishing. Presiding Officer Gregory also recounted some of his experiences when he was out on vacation just last week in Montauk, the beaches were wonderful. He noted that he personally had family all the way up from Virginia and from upstate New York, and had seen Colorado license plates among others out in Montauk, noting Long Island beaches truly are a draw.

Presiding Officer Gregory then brought the conversation over to note that the Marine Industry Revitalization Advisory Council looks to bring private industry together to work with local communities to encourage growth in the marine sector and in our economy, and therefore, asked if public feedback from a public hearing would be needed, and if so, would it be useful, or if a focus on internal data would be a better approach.

Vinny Pesce stated that he thinks the general public would have no idea what we're trying to accomplish, and that it would be better to target along registered boat owners, waterfront homeowners associations, or larger yacht clubs, for public feedback.

Dr. McKay suggested that since there was a lot of information already on the table the public side would be key since they are the ones who would be affected by any decisions the

committee makes. He also noted that he has a trove of information available from the college that along with the other information available could be a starting point. Since there are a number of different sectors there would still be a number of different notes the public could make. He asked how we could support the work of the committee, and what the unifying problem is, and looking back you could use the public as a base, but with making forward you could help to use the aggregate data, but that it shouldn't be the only option.

August Ruckdeschel added that he already wrote up two questions he thought the advisory committee may want to look into. What are the mission priorities for that particular or industry sector? What kind of workforce development, and what kind of information would be useful? He then states the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) numbers for our region are that the ocean jobs account for roughly 34,000 jobs on Long Island, \$983 million in wages and \$2 billion in goods & services. The numbers are also broken down by sector 89% of ocean jobs are in tourism & ocean recreation, 17% higher than the National average for ocean jobs in tourism & ocean recreation. Relatively speaking, Long Island's ocean based economy is therefore more dependent on tourism & recreation than other regions of the country, but less than New York State as a whole where 92% of ocean jobs are in tourism & recreation. 9.9% of ocean side sector jobs are in marine transportation. 1.2% are in living resources, including fishing. 0.2% is in shipbuilding. Mineral extraction accounts for only 0.1%. Job creation is almost entirely in tourism & recreation, otherwise largely flat since 2005.

Dr. McKay noted that the data is simply an aggregate, and does not include other issues such as the aquifers, and their impact, folks in chemistry & industry tend to have different perspectives. Different perspectives exist from the eastern end of the island and the western end regarding marine biology. He feels if we don't include those, the committee could miss this information and it would be useful to include information on students, and their experiences. Environmental issues and traffic, would also fit into the commission. These elements should be included in the discussion.

Tom Kehoe wanted to note he had worked in the seafood industry for many years. As a businessman he felt government generally impeded businesses, including the seafood industry. From an economic development side felt government should not be involved if business is doing fine. Talked about user fees, how it generally encumbers businesses, individuals. Added that 30-40 years ago there used to be 600 registered baymen, and that nowadays there aren't any. Stated that the group should look to determine how this happened in the first place, it has affected so many, it is dangerous work, and how do they make a living and have deal with the quotas. Some fishermen are concerned about wind farm development off the coast of Long Island asks how it impacts their industry as well as constituents. What is the impact of state regulations? While noting that business can build something could use more business input.

Vinny Pesce stated that the group is perhaps most helpful in that it opens the doors of communication between private industries, public and government. Noted that he and Eric Kreuter had been involved for three years in grant money for marinas through the South Shore

as an effect of Hurricane Sandy. A lot of different entities would not be communicating as much and it will be able to help business. Noted how for example Suffolk County was leasing out 100,000 acres for shellfish cultivation, August Ruckdeschel jumped in to correct Vinny Pesce and stated that the Suffolk County Shellfish Aquaculture Lease Program is leasing out 90 acres in the Peconic Bay and Gardiners Bay this year. Vinny Pesce noted how that is an example of what good the committee could do, since he didn't know that, he then mentioned that the farming would likely be on raised pods, which again prompted August to jump in to correct that a very small percentage of farmers are using floating gear and that new leaseholders would be hesitant to use floating gear due to an ongoing lawsuit and public concerns from marine owners, who would claim that this gear poses a hazard to marine navigation. Vinny Pesce hoped that this would help to open doors of communication regardless of what actual practices were even previously implemented. DuWayne spoke that perception and reality is very important and being able to dispel perceptions is also very important, as is knowing what people think.

Kristen Jarnigan then spoke that she had a different perspective as someone who did not grow up on Long Island, stating that while she agreed that communication is important, that the committee should not get bogged down on hyper-local issues, and should instead take a larger role. Thinks the group should take a SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis listing strengths and weaknesses along with threats that would impact Long Island. She notes that the red tide in Florida has crushed their tourism industry, marine industry as well. Kristen Jarnigan then states that there is a lot to analyze and discuss.

Presiding Officer Gregory asked the Town representatives had anything to add. Vincent LoBiondo stated that beach erosion is a large issue in the Town of Babylon, and is working to get permits for dredging. Noted that he sits on the shellfish advisory committee and that he works with the state directly with that.

Diane LaChapelle talked next about industries like manufacturing and that the Suffolk Department of Labor can stand to play a larger role in the fishing industries and get information from the state.

Presiding Officer Gregory then asked Commissioner Anderson if he had anything to add, Commissioner Anderson stated that dredging generally is done for navigational purposes at the County level. He was a former baymen, and that in the span of ten years on the job, he had seen the marine environment in West Islip degrade. Using the example of sea cucumbers which had been plentiful when he had started living in West Islip. Commissioner Anderson stated that dredging is not the only thing that would fix issues in the Great South Bay, as there were ongoing issues with overfishing, nutrient deficiency, and that dumping had impacted the clam industry as duck farms had once impacted the oyster industry. He suggested that each industry put together a one or two page white page, discussing strengths and weaknesses. Commissioner Anderson added that the issues in the fishing industry are not just related to dredging but are also tied to general environmental quality. He noted that the County is pushing to remove nitrogen from the bays, but that there will not be a global fix.

Presiding Officer Gregory noted that he had went fishing on a recreational ship, the Viking Star with thirty people while out on vacation in Montauk, and that the boat captain had teased him for catching the smallest stripe bass he had ever seen. Even though specific rules change with species of various fish that can be caught and not released, for a striper 28 inches is the legal length of a striper that can be kept. He added that his son, an avid fisher; had noticed how much of an issue overfishing is. Tom Kehoe noted that years ago they had not known about overfishing as fish was an abundance. Presiding Officer Gregory noted that regulations were helpful in preventing overfishing, and to assist with the repopulation of fish increasing. He stated that he felt it would be useful for each industry to write about what threats they have, so that the County and the College could provide information to the industries directly. He also suggested that there could be a sub- committee about regulations, even though most of the regulations are at the State level it would primarily be a recommendation to New York State to address these concerns.

Eric Kreuter agreed, and brought up an national article he had just seen that approximately 20% of nationwide marina jobs were unfilled, due mainly to training, simple lack of available workers, and due to that it is much harder to actively find and attract workers. Eric Kreuter states that people often would buy a boat, take it out for a couple of days on the water, and when something breaks down would be unable to get it fixed and would simply move out of the marine industry outright. Keeping boats running is a key issue in workforce development in this industry. Diane LaChapelle noted that the Department of Labor had had some events where they just bring speakers from an industry in to explain their work in order, and also that workplace development would be an excellent subcommittee. Dr. Staub seconded that and noted that since BOCES is focused on high school students and has many other trades already available, and that having presentations would be an excellent way to encourage students to look into jobs in that field.

Dr. McKay then stated today we have discussed plenty of information and wanted to get these items compiled into one document, which could help to address economic development, labor needs in marine industries, marine regulations and dredging. Also that Long Island should market itself in a way that tells the story, and that they should innovate with promoting Long Island. Shaun stated that we could find out where the jobs are and are going to be, should pass information to the Villages, Towns and Suffolk County Legislature. The subcommittee could work on this together to then bring back to the full advisory committee.

Presiding Officer Gregory brought up again the issue of dredging, and that it had been a constant issue among both recreational boaters and industry groups. Dredging is a complex issue requiring specific spoil sites as well as having a fairly high cost. Noted as well that it ties in to the County Executive's clean water act and there are active conversations about funding dredging, and wondered if more homeowners who would be impacted by dredging could be brought to the table. Presiding Officer Gregory noted that the County of Suffolk has limited areas to dredge most of the waterways are in Towns and Villages jurisdiction which they simply do not have the capacity to do all the dredging with their financial means. The County would have to

take a leading role, and that along similar lines, Sandy relief would also remain a key part of this issue. Catherine Stark noted that Legislator Krupski's office was looking to have a similar program bringing together regulatory agencies together with Commissioner Anderson office in November for a dredging summit.

Presiding Officer Gregory then turned towards scheduling for upcoming meetings. Stated that his staff will set out to couple of dates for the next meeting soon. John Stype stated that he thinks that the high school superintendents should be reached out to for inclusion on the committee to invite them to the meetings because a lot of the schools have shadow programs. Dr. Peggy Staub noted that David Wicks, the Superintendent of Eastern Suffolk BOCES will be filling that role when he returns for the next meeting. President McKay also added that he will bring it up to the School Presidents' Society at the college level, and will reach out to Ken Bossert, who chairs the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association. DuWayne added that he thinks it would be very helpful to bring in more high school training programs for boat mechanics as something that would be immensely helpful. Since many kids simply aren't into the college style of education, and could be made interested in mechanics and various other apprenticeship programs. Dr. McKay and Dr. Staub both agree, and there are certificate programs for specific areas ready for the field. Dr. McKay stated that training, certificate programs need to be sustained in Suffolk County for the workforce. Also he added that the goal should be to keep people from just visiting but should also make them want to stay.

Tom Kehoe added that there is a large diversity of geographical issues from areas from Cold Spring Harbor to Montauk. The issues will be different due to the size and the difference of west and east areas of Long Island. Kristen Jarnigan responded that perhaps creating best practices would be a way for areas to address the problem at a hyper-local level. Kristen Jarnigan noted that areas like California had been very successful in promoting tourism at a hyper-local level, and that in regards to the previous issue of fees more should be done to look at tourists as a potential source of income that could permit taxes to be lowered on residents. Vinny Pesce went on to bring up a meeting where the Association of Marine Industries was able to have a presentation on tying the boating industry to the wider tourism industry, such as with wineries. Kristen Jarnigan seconded the idea, and Presiding Officer Gregory also noted that the activity was definitely varied between different areas, with it being primarily a leisure activity itself on the Great South Bay, but while out east in Montauk people tend to be involved in fishing or in some kind of other activity besides simply being a leisure cruise. Vinny Pesce noted that the season for boating and fishing has seemed to have gotten shorter, with people only being out on their boats starting around Father's Day and only going to Labor Day. He also stated that boating in September and October is some of the best times to go out onto the water even though people do not realize it. It was also noted that people are busy through June with graduations and other events. Kristen Jarnigan noted that school plays a big role in tourism, with areas that have moved to a year round school model seeing far less tourism and an outright collapse of a dedicated tourism season. Dr. McKay notes that Long Island is not totally seasonal, since so many of the visitors simply live here, and that Long Island generally operates year round, brought up that the

committee should be viewed as a way to find information in smaller bundles as well. Dr. McKay suggests that we let the information do some of the work.

Presiding Officer Gregory stated that Lora Gellerstein, Chief of Staff will provide a schedule to each of the members of the committee of potential times to have their next meeting. Which was tentatively scheduled for two weeks from now along with when the industry projects discussed in the meeting would be finished by.

Meeting then was adjourned.

Minutes compiled by Derek Stein