

**Meeting Minutes - Suffolk County Legislature's  
Marine Industry & Revitalization Advisory Council  
Tuesday, December 11, 2018**

**Committee Members Present:** *Tom Kehoe; Eric Kreuter; Vincent Biondo; Susan A. Berland; Kim Lamiroult; Danielle Stango-Torre; August Ruckdeschel; Chris Pickerell; Vincent Pesce; Diane LaChapelle; Lisa Calla*

**Committee Members Absent** *Dr. Shaun McKay; Al Krupski; Debra Montaruli; Bridget Fleming; Kristen Jarnagin*

**Staff Members Present:** *Lora Gellerstein; Christina DeLisi; Derek Stein; Nancy Jacobsen; Nick Palumbo; Craig Horowitz; Sharon Wyman;*

Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory.

**Review and Approval of October 23, 2018 Meeting Minutes:**

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory asked those present to review the Meeting Minutes from October 23, 2018. August Ruckdeschel noted a typo regarding the date of the Minutes. Presiding Officer Gregory asked if there were any other edits or comments. Seeing none, Vinny Pesce made a motion to approve, seconded by Tom Kehoe.

**Review and Approval of November 13, 2018 Meeting Minutes:**

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory then asked those present to review the Meeting Minutes from November 13, 2018. He asked if there were any suggested edits or corrections. August Ruckdeschel asked for one edit which clarified that the survey circulated by the Department of Economic Development and Planning to commercial fishermen was a separate project entirely from the Aquaculture Lease Program Ten Year Review. Presiding Officer Gregory again asked if there were any edits. Seeing none Vinny Pesce made a motion to approve, seconded by August Ruckdeschel.

**Sub-Committee Meeting Discussion:**

Presiding Officer Gregory then stated that since the last meeting the Sub-Committees had their first meetings and asked for reports from Sub-Committees.

### **Environmental Sub-Committee Meeting Discussion:**

Vinny Pesce introduced himself as part of the AMI (Association of Marine Industries) and as the Chair of the Environmental Sub-Committee and noted that the Sub-Committee had a teleconference on December 5, 2018. He stated that they spoke for about 45 minutes and focused on topics such as dredging, material sites, permit expediting, and how dredging is important for waterfront homeowners and marinas. He reported that having material sites was key and noted that, Derek Stein identified two County-owned sites that could have space for storage of materials. Vinny Pesce noted that outside of actual dredging Eric Kreuter and his biggest obstacle with dredging has been what to do with the dredged up spoils. He noted that since it is expensive to test and move debris upstate, a local site where it could dewater would save money. Presiding Officer Gregory asked if there was a specific permit a site would need to keep the spoils. Derek Stein replied that he had identified the two sites based primarily on if they had open dry space. Presiding Officer Gregory asked what the sites would do with the material itself. Vinny Pesce replied that was the question, he stated the committee had discussed what could be done with the material and how best funds could be raised to transport and test the material regularly. He noted that one idea was to reintroduce the material post-testing and use it to restore wetlands and natural habitats which is being done in Rhode Island and Maine. He stated the material would still need to be dug out and what is finally done with it comes down primarily to funding. He mentioned that grants remain important and that he wants to set up a meeting with Congressman Lee Zeldin to discuss dredging.

Vinny Pesce said they had also discussed permits. He noted that a new general permit exists which allows for dredging and backfilling of a space up to 10 feet from a bulkhead up to 4 feet deep. He mentioned that the goal should be to get people to the navigable channels. Vinny Pesce mentioned that he would like to see more permits expedited and is pleased that the area covered by the general permit has been extended eastward.

Vinny Pesce noted that the biggest roadblock they see with permitting is the Health Department, along with Fish and Wildlife. He suggested that they look into if dredging windows could be expanded, instead of shrinking. Presiding Officer Gregory asked why they are shrinking, and Chris Pickerell replied that the shortening of the window is primarily due to National Marine Fisheries Service's Red Knot regulations and added that any of the important protected species will restrict the dredging window. He noted that it is presently two months but due to the upcoming Red Knot protections, the window will shrink. Vinny Pesce added that the window currently sits during months when weather can be an issue and pointed out there is another window in May, but that window opens when marinas start business.

Presiding Officer Gregory asked what is tested with spoils. Chris Pickerell replied that the test is to determine how much of the spoils are sand. If it's above 90% there is no further testing. If it is under 90%, tests must be done for contaminants. He added that the Commercial Fishing Sub-Committee also spent a good deal of time discussing dredging. Vinny Pesce added that out east the question is what can be done with the spoils as some are contaminated from the old

duck farms. Chris Pickerell added that New York State will have a pilot project next year reusing dredged-up sand for wetland preservation, but will avoid using silts and clays where the contaminants can be found. He added there are bigger issues in determining what to do with the non-sand spoils, not just the permitting or the windows. Tom Kehoe said that the EPA regulations were a huge burden and mentioned how even salt in the street for winter was required to go through the EPA's dumping process. He asked Presiding Officer Gregory to look into these regulations and added that Northport Harbor despite being a federal waterway has not been dredged since 1965. He noted that Britannia Marina has lost business due to debris piling up in the Harbor which has blocked access for larger boats outside of high tide. Eric Kreuter recalled how the owner of the Marina had lost a 65 foot yacht and \$2,700 in revenue due to the material piling up in the Harbor. Tom Kehoe mentioned that a meeting they had with Federal, Local and State officials largely consisted of pointing fingers saying that it wasn't their job and that there wasn't money to dredge. Eric Kreuter noted that if a boat is wrecked, any revenue from it is gone and the diesel mechanic job that revenue pays for disappears as well. Tom Kehoe said that they have heard for years that the money just isn't there.

Presiding Officer Gregory asked if there are places utilizing funding that Suffolk County is not. Vinny Pesce said they are looking into it and are continually looking for additional funding. Presiding Officer Gregory asked if there was an alternative to a one-shot revenue source like a grant. Vinny Pesce replied that there has to be maintenance tied into dredging projects, since waterways can clog up in only a few years. Legislator Susan A. Berland stated that if there was some kind of dedicated dredging fund that could be created, where a fee for boaters could be collected and directly reserved for dredging projects. She said that she considers dredging to be the most requested development but also the most expensive prospect. Eric Kreuter recalled that years ago New York State had earmarked money from boat registrations for ramp maintenance, which worked well before the money was then moved elsewhere. He said that he liked the idea, but was unsure of how that would work with the County. He said that registered boat owners would probably support the proposal. He added that non-registered boats, such as kayaks, canoes and others have become an issue in the industry, and account for a significant number of fatalities. He noted how motorized boats currently are the only ones which have to be registered and that it could be possible to put a registration fee on non-motorized boats by household.

Chris Pickerell said that the Advisory Council should look to invite Scott Hilary from the Suffolk County Department of Public Works to a meeting as he is responsible for the Department's dredging projects. Tom Kehoe asked how to ensure that the money from this proposal cannot be used elsewhere. Chris Pickerell responded that money alone will not solve the issue since there are still the issues of sediments and the short dredging window. Chris Pickerell explained that the process begins when the County receive funds in to identify the sites, then hires a contractor to handle permits and then runs their priority projects. He noted that currently there is only one vessel, while previously there were three. Tom Kehoe said that the County should make an effort ahead of time to determine if there are any endangered species in a dredging site in order to speed up the process. Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory said that

there is an annual list and a maintenance list. Tom Kehoe replied that the list is nothing. Chris Pickerell stated he had spoken to an official in Southold who said that money would not solve their dredging problem. He added that the East End towns had looked at buying a dredge together, but he thought it would only solve some of their problems. He also suggested that the Advisory Council invite Scott Hilary to come to the next meeting in order to explain local issues.

#### **Education and Workforce Development Sub-Committee Meeting Discussion:**

Diane LaChapelle began by introducing Craig Horowitz, who is the Director of Education Training at the Suffolk County Department of Labor. She said a few members could not attend their first meeting yesterday. She said that BOCES discussed their enrollment issues with the Marine Mechanic Class. She suggested that they use the Department of Labor's career exploration program. She contacted Eric Krueter to ask if he could meet with BOCES and speak about the industry as part of the program. She added that previous events had been successful and that her Department would work to advertise the program. Craig Horowitz said that the Department of Labor currently has received federal funding reserved to send individuals back to school through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. He noted that there is currently a contract between Western Suffolk BOCES and the Department of Labor and, therefore, a larger push could be made. Craig Horowitz said that they will secure a contract with Eastern Suffolk BOCES as well. He added that if promotion of the marine industry could begin it would be a win-win for the entire industry. He also spoke to a representative from Hunter Business School who advised him that they are looking to start a Marine Tech Program. The representative expressed interest in being involved with the committee.

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory asked how much of a difference there is in training an auto-mechanic versus a boat mechanic. Craig Horowitz replied that it is similar but many of the diagnostics are different and while there are similarities, it is a niche subject with major differences such as handling saltwater. He said that the classes at BOCES run between 500-600 hours. He noted that there are differences with horsepower, saltwater, and maintenance due to long periods of inactivity. Eric Krueter agreed, and noted that the base knowledge has overlap. Diane LaChapelle added that automotive mechanic courses are always packed and suggested that there just needed to be more awareness. Legislator Susan A. Berland asked that the Department of Labor send over the program information to the Legislature so that the Legislators themselves could promote the programs on Facebook or through their District Offices. Craig Horowitz said that High Schools could also promote these programs better since at the moment they do not stand out and they could work to target students.

Presiding Officer Gregory asked if it would be worth advertising at marinas or other marine related-businesses. Eric Krueter said that AMI had been working with BOCES and had advertised in marine publications. He added that it is a job where you're outdoors but can make good money, and that smaller yards often have employees take on multiple roles, such as sales and storage in addition to engineering. He said that the lack of a cohesive training is a problem for the industry. The standards present in automotive mechanic training do not exist in the

marine tech field. Eric Krueter added that New York State's Department of Labor currently has a Marine Apprentice Program through Kingsborough Community College and suggested that if a cohesive plan is available, additional sites in Suffolk County would help. He said an Apprentice Program could be an option, which according to his program outline would require 5000 hours as a Marine Mechanic. If the program could be taught at BOCES' facilities then the time could count towards that requirement. Presiding Officer Gregory asked if the State Department of Labor would have oversight, Eric Krueter replied that the program is just in the final stage of review, and that he expects it to be approved by the State. Presiding Officer Gregory spoke about how there are a number of people who work with engines or being on the water may do it for the sake of knowledge, Eric Krueter agreed. Eric Krueter said that it is not tied to an engineering school or manufacturer. The goal of the program would be to teach students how to do the secondary skills and not major repair projects. He also added that AMI continues to reach out to marinas to encourage them to convince employees to pursue advancing with engineering courses.

#### **Aquaculture & Commercial Fishing Sub-Committee Meeting Discussion:**

Tom Kehoe said that their discussions were mostly about dredging and its impact on commercial fishing. Presiding Officer Gregory asked if the lack of dredging had the same impact on commercial fishermen as it does on marinas. Tom Kehoe said that large-scale commercial fishing has been pushed out to only a handful of locations in the East End, while smaller boats are spread out across the county and are less impacted by the shallow waterways. He said that dredging, while important, is not as critical to commercial fishing as it is to marinas and recreational boating. Presiding Officer Gregory asked how long the permitting process would take. Chris Pickerell said that the review goes through Federal, State and Local review and the timeline is due to the complexity of the permit. August Ruckdeschel noted how the permit agencies' missions do not align and that conflict can arise in some sectors. Tom Kehoe said that commercial fishing can be a person's secondary income so the long permitting process can be prohibitive. Chris Pickerell replied that documents must go through steps and are not reviewed at one time. Tom Kehoe added that the State and Federal level will talk to themselves and not each other.

Tom Kehoe discussed the fragmentation of the seafood industry, and that all the baymen, commercial fishermen, and shellfish aquaculture operators do not talk to each other because of the nature of their work. He said that the commercial fishing industry has long ran to the New York State DEC and that NYSDEC was the only group fishermen would contact. Tom Kehoe said the NYSDEC mostly is a regulator and has no role in promotion and that some fishermen don't make a distinction between the regulators and policy makers. He said that the whole seafood industry needs some kind of renewable income stream, similar to Discover Long Island, which would act to preserve it as a heritage industry. He also discussed how zoning and residents have also pushed commercial fishermen out, such as in Lloyd Harbor. He discussed the possibility of this coming through the County's existing Hotel-Motel Tax revenue stream. Presiding Officer

Gregory asked if there was a database available to contact fishermen. Tom Kehoe said that he and August Ruckdeschel could put together a list narrowing down from the list of County residents who possess a permit.

**Economic Development Sub-Committee Meeting Discussion:**

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory mentioned that the Sub-Committee will meet on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018 and that their report will come at the next full Advisory Council meeting.

**New Business:**

Presiding Officer Gregory asked if there was any new business and there was none.

**Discussion of 2019 Schedule & Public Hearings:**

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory asked everyone to review the 2019 Meeting Schedule. Chris Pickerell asked, what is the purpose of the Public Hearings? Presiding Officer Gregory mentioned that it came out of previous discussions. Tom Kehoe replied that he thought a wide open public hearing would not be helpful. Presiding Officer Gregory responded that they could change it, but he thought it would provide a forum for people to discuss the industry. Since it is a fragmented group, a Public Hearing could allow for the Advisory Council to compile some ideas and complaints across the industry. Tom Kehoe mentioned that the proposed windfarm projects will be a major complaint. Presiding Officer Gregory mentioned that they could put together a public hearing on that project. August Ruckdeschel suggested that the public hearings be held in place of regular meetings. Chris Pickerell discussed having a single topic for each public hearing. Presiding Officer Gregory mentioned that they could reach out to stakeholders and interested parties directly. He added that if fishermen feel the offshore wind farm is an impediment to the industry, they should be able to discuss it at a public meeting. Tom Kehoe mentioned that there could be pushback and Presiding Officer Gregory replied that jurisdiction could also be an issue. Tom Kehoe noted Governor Cuomo's support for the wind farm and Chris Pickerell asked what County Executive Steve Bellone's position on the project was. August Ruckdeschel replied that County Executive Bellone supported the project, but that they also feel a full accounting of the impact of each project should be done in order for money from the project to be given to impacted industries in order to make them whole. August said he felt this project is likely to go forward and that the conversation should move towards accommodating fishermen and its impact on existing infrastructure. He said that while he doesn't know what that the exact reparation could be, he felt it can be done. Tom Kehoe mentioned that he wondered if that could go towards the creation of a 501 (c) 3 like Discover Long Island.

Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory stated that the dates can be changed. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

These Minutes compiled by Derek Stein