

**Meeting Minutes - Suffolk County Legislature's  
Marine Industry & Revitalization Advisory Council**

**January 16, 2019**

**Committee Members Present:** *August Ruckdeschel, Tom Kehoe, Eric Kreuter, Vincent Biondo, Susan A. Berland, Kim Lamiroult, Danielle Stango-Torre, Chris Pickerell, Lisa Calla, Kristen Jarnagin, Michael Jensen.*

**Committee Members Absent:** *Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, Dr. Shaun McKay, Al Krupski, Debra Montaruli, Bridget Fleming, Vincent Pesce, Diane LaChapelle, Bill Hillman, David Wicks, Carol Wickliffe-Campbell.*

**Staff Members Present:** *Lora Gellerstein, Luann Dallojacono, Derek Stein.*

Meeting called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Lora Gellerstein, Chief of Staff to Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory, who noted that the Presiding Officer had a conflict with an event and was unable to attend.

**Review and Approval of December 11, 2018 Meeting Minutes:**

Lora Gellerstein asked those present to review the Meeting Minutes from December 11, 2018. Tom Kehoe mentioned that he met with Derek Stein prior to the meeting to discuss his changes to the Aquaculture & Commercial Fishing section. Lora Gellerstein asked if there were any other edits or comments. Seeing none, Eric Krueter made a motion to approve, seconded by Vincent Biondo.

**Public Hearing Promotion Planning:**

Lora Gellerstein presented the flier for the Marine Industry Revitalization Advisory Council's Public Hearings scheduled for February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Hauppauge and February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019 in Riverhead to the attendees. She stated that Presiding Officer Gregory's vision for the Public Hearings is not that every member would be able to attend both hearings, but that each member could attend one of the hearings. She also noted that it would be organized so that each Sub-Committee would have their own public session. Lora Gellerstein stated that the public would be able to come to the meeting, fill out a speaker card and address the Advisory Council. Chris Pickerell asked if it would be considered a formal meeting. Lora Gellerstein replied that it would not be a formal meeting of the Advisory Council and would be treated the same as previous Public Hearings for other boards, commissions, and task forces. Tom Kehoe mentioned that before the meeting he had a discussion on how the Advisory Council should promote the Public Hearings. He had suggested asking local municipalities to attend and speak on their specific issues.

Lora Gellerstein then introduced Luann Dallojacono, whom had formulated a strategy to promote the Public Hearings. Luann Dallojacono stated that the Communications team would reach out to local Elected Officials, commercial fishermen, and other interested parties via email, social media outreach, etc. She stated that she would put together a template email that Advisory Council members could send out to individuals, advocacy groups, and industry partners in order to spread the word about the Public Hearings. Luann said that they would like to promote the event through social media and would ask the Legislators to post it as well on their website. Legislator Susan A. Berland said that she would like a copy of the flier to promote the Public Hearings. Chris Pickerell asked if there would be a way for the public to submit comments even if they are not present at the event. Lora Gellerstein said that they could ask Cary Flack to set up a public email which would be linked to Derek Stein, Christina DeLisi and herself. The email address would be included on press releases.

Tom Kehoe mentioned that he wished the dates had not been on back to back days, although he noted that it was too late to change it now. Lora Gellerstein replied that since they haven't been publicized, they could still change one of the dates. Eric Krueter replied that he had already sent information about the Public Hearings to the Association of Marine Industries (AMI). Lora Gellerstein then stated that the dates could not be changed and repeated that the idea is that people located in Eastern Long Island would attend the hearing in Riverhead, while those in Western Long Island could go to the hearing in Hauppauge. Kristen Jarnigan then suggested that the group have nameplates for the Public Hearings, as she recalled speaking at the Suffolk County Legislature's Manufacturing Task Force and having a hard time knowing who was involved on the committee. Lora Gellerstein replied that they could do that.

Tom Kehoe asked if the group could bring in the company working on New York State's Offshore Wind Farm Project and noted that a new company is working on the project. Lora Gellerstein replied that while it would be good to have them and they can be invited, however they may not want to attend due to fears that they could be singled out for criticism.

Lora Gellerstein asked if anyone else had any questions regarding the Public Hearings. Seeing none, moved on to discussion of Sub-Committees.

#### **Sub-Committee Follow-up:**

Lora Gellerstein asked if any of the Sub-Committees had a report, Derek Stein replied that the Economic Development Sub-Committee had met after the last meeting. Kristen Jarnigan began by saying that they had met on December 14, 2018, a few days after the last full Advisory Council meeting. The Sub-Committee discussed the SUNY Farmingdale Sea Grant study that Derek Stein had circulated to the group which detailed the scale and scope of Long Island's Marine Industries. She stated that the Economic Development Sub-Committee would like to invite one of the professors who worked on the study to one of their meetings. August Ruckdeschel then explained that waterfront development was also a part of the meeting. It was suggested that Downtown Revitalization Projects should also take a look at developments on the

water. Kristen Jarnigan also noted that much would be learned from comparing developments at Riverhead's waterfront and Port Jefferson. She also suggested that the Sub-Committee can bring in a speaker from Vision Long Island or Dave Kappell to speak on the importance of waterfront space to a downtown revitalization project. Derek Stein added that recreational fishing was a part of the discussion. The Sub-committee discussed the promotion of little known activities or services, such as a round-trip program offered by the LIRR for visitors to Captree State Park.

Derek Stein noted that Vinny Pesce, who chairs the Environmental Sub-Committee, was unable to attend today's meeting, but he planned to schedule a meeting of the Sub-Committee in the next week. Derek Stein noted that David Wicks of the Education and Workforce Development Sub-Committee was not present. David Wicks arrived after the meeting ended, and Derek Stein met with him. David Wicks stated he would be holding a meeting of the Environmental Sub-Committee in the next couple weeks, following the Public Hearings.

Tom Kehoe mentioned that the Aquaculture and Commercial Fishing Sub-Committee would be meeting today at 11:30 a.m. and would have Chuck Westfall of the Long Island Oyster Growers Association, and Gregg Rivara of the Cornell Co-Operative Extension there to speak on aquaculture.

Tom Kehoe asked how many sites there were from the Aquaculture Lease Program. August Ruckdeschel said that there were roughly 55 to 65. Tom Kehoe said that since the Advisory Council is comprised mainly of government officials, the next meeting should have a speaker from the business side of the industry. He asked the group to consider how the government spends its money as the permitting process is complex, and that Northport Harbor hasn't been dredged in fifty years. Lora Gellerstein said that is the very purpose of the Advisory Council, since it brings government officials together with business figures to discuss funding issues. She noted that the Advisory Council began with a discussion between Presiding Officer DuWayne Gregory and Eric Krueter on how to fund and tackle dredging projects. Lora Gellerstein said that is the reason why they are having Public Hearings is to bring more business owners and workers in to get the word out about how they can potentially get more money. Eric Krueter said that while funding is important, having a place to put dredging materials is a whole other issue. Legislator Susan A. Berland said that during the 2019 Budget Working Group Meetings budgeting more money for dredging did come up, but she found that some Legislators didn't realize the importance of dredging. She feels that the Public Hearings would provide an opportunity for stories about dredging to be on the record, and that would perhaps help sway the discussion towards funding dredging properly. Lora Gellerstein added that right now the Department of Public Works' Dredging Program is understaffed and undersupplied, with only one secretary assigned to it, one currently operating dredge, with another two currently out of service, which severely limits the work they can complete.

Chris Pickerell said that another issue the dredging program faces is regulations by the US Fish & Wildlife Services, which has caused the dredging window to continue to shrink. Tom Kehoe suggested that Federal agencies come in to discuss the regulations on dredging with local leaders.

Eric Krueter said that agencies tend to just point fingers. Tom Kehoe agreed, and then asked how long is the dredging window? Chris Pickerell replied that it is about six weeks. Tom Kehoe suggested that each of the towns make a priority list of the most needed projects. Chris Pickerell and Lora Gellerstein replied that they already have a priority list.

Tom Kehoe said that the dredging window is too short, and suggested that maybe the Advisory Council should campaign for the window to be opened. He recalled how there was a prior attempt by the Federal Government to place regulations on the cultivation of the Eastern Oyster, and organizations went to Washington D.C. and spoke directly with lawmakers on the House Committee on Natural Resources. Chris Pickerell replied that one option would be to do more research on the whereabouts of protected species at a potential dredge site, so that if a protected species is determined to not be at the site, the dredge process can be expedited. He added that then the issue is then just getting onto a site and funding that research.

Kim Lamiroult stated that some situations would still require the Army Corps of Engineers as there would still be a permit pending that they would have to review, especially if they are on site with equipment. She suggested that contact beforehand with the Army Corps of Engineers would help speed up the process. Kim pointed to an example in the Town of Babylon. The Town and the Army Corps of Engineers both have a permit pending for a dredging project near Overlook Beach. Since the Army Corps of Engineers project was completed, they simply asked the contracted company doing the dredging to move the materials onto the beach, which removes some of the permitting issues but fails to address the key issue of contaminants.

Chris Pickerell suggested that the Advisory Group invite Scott Hilary of the Suffolk County Department of Public Works to the next meeting in March to speak on dredging, as he thought that Scott would be able to answer pretty much any questions on dredging, the permitting process, and on how Suffolk County organizes dredging. Kristen Jarnigan suggested that in addition to Scott Hilary, the Advisory Council can invite former Mayor of Greenport, Dave Kapell, who had been working on a number of the downtown revitalization initiatives across the County. Lora Gellerstein asked August Ruckdeschel if it would be possible to bring the Downtown Revitalization Advisory Council in to meet with members of the Economic Development Subcommittee. August Ruckdeschel replied that it would be possible. Tom Kehoe said that funding from downtown revitalization projects takes a long time such as the one visitors' kiosk project in Northport. Lora Gellerstein replied that smaller projects can turn into larger developments and often it is just taking the first step that matters in completing these projects. Kristen Jarnigan agreed, since that creates a vision that can speed up and plan development later. Lora Gellerstein said that the kiosk in Northport has been successful, and the area has seen other developments after it. Tom Kehoe then said it sounds like it is greasing the wheels with smaller grants. Lora Gellerstein suggested one idea where better scores could be given to projects that incorporate waterfront development as a way to encourage more projects in that area. August Ruckdeschel stated that it is one possibility. Tom Kehoe suggested that since there is so many layers of government involved in these projects, an inter-governmental liaison could help.

### **New Business:**

August Ruckdeschel reported he had good news and bad news. The bad news being that the Choose LI Program did not receive any of the grant money from Empire State Development awarded in December, which he said is surprising given that the Long Island Regional Economic Development Council had listed Choose LI as a priority project. He said that they will try to get a grant from the USDA, which offers a local farmers and farmer's market grant. Otherwise from now until some funding can be identified, Choose LI will be running on its bootstraps. The good news is that next Tuesday he will be presenting his commercial fishing survey at the DEC Marine Resources Advisory Council. He mentioned that the survey will focus on collecting fishermen's concerns; such as, what are their target species, storage availability and workforce issues. Lora Gellerstein asked where the meeting is and if they can share the survey with the Advisory Council. August Ruckdeschel replied that the data will be made available and that it is at the NYS DEC's East Setauket office and that the survey itself debuts on Tuesday.

August Ruckdeschel stated that the survey will end when fifty (50) fishermen respond and that he is debuting the survey at the DEC meeting since it will be the first good chance he has had to connect with fishermen so that they can fill out the survey.

Tom Kehoe suggested that a frequent complaint is that there is no landing value for their fish, since there is a very limited market. He noted that dogfish used to have a foreign market, but that has since closed off and according to Bonnie Brady, it would reach into the thousands of tons.

Lora Gellerstein asked if there was any other new business. She noted that the Presiding Officer's office will put together a template letter and an email account to allow for public testimony without appearing in person. She also noted that a speaker card will be available for speakers.

Chris Pickerell suggested again that the Advisory Council bring in Scott Hilary to the next meeting, since he can talk about the timeline of a dredging project and how Suffolk County handles the process. Tom Kehoe spoke about towns having dredging projects not having been done for years, Chris Pickerell said that town projects take years to be done between permitting, dumping, and dredging. Eric Krueter noted that he has a project in the Moriches that has been discussed since 2010. Chris Pickerell replied that he even has a list in his office of projects dating even further back to the 1940's, which just shows this has been a long-running issue.

Tom Kehoe asked the members of the Aquaculture & Commercial Fishing Subcommittee to stay for their next meeting.

Lora Gellerstein, seeing no other business, adjourned the meeting at 10:40 a.m.