

COMMITTEE MEETING

**MINUTES**

A meeting of the Economic Development, Planning, and Housing Committee of the Suffolk County Legislature was held via Zoom in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York on February 24, 2021.

**Members Present:**

Legislator Kara Hahn - Chairman  
Legislator Susan A Berland - Vice Chairman  
Legislator Sammy Gonzalez  
Legislator Kevin McCaffrey  
Legislator William Spencer  
Legislator Jason Richberg  
Legislator Robert Trotta

**Also in Attendance:**

Presiding Officer Robert Calarco  
Sarah Simpson - Counsel to the Legislature  
Amy Ellis - Clerk/Suffolk County Legislature  
Derek Stein - Aide to Presiding Officer Calarco  
Rosalie Drago - Commissioner of Labor  
Natalie Wright - Commissioner of Economic Development  
All Other Interested Parties

**Minutes Taken By:**

Gabrielle Severs - Court Stenographer

(The meeting was called to order at 12:31 p.m.)

**VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the February 24 Economic Development, Planning, and Housing Committee. I am the vice chair, Susan Berland, of the committee. Our chair, Kara Hahn, is with us but is unable to chair the meeting today. If everybody could please rise and join Legislator Spencer in the Pledge.

(Pledge of Allegiance)

Okay. Thank you. Let's see. Based on the governor's ruling, in-person public comments won't be permitted during this meeting. Those who are interested in signing up may do so over Zoom at the legislature.us-committeepublicportion. Speakers are limited to three minutes. You can also attend via written testimony by e-mailing that to the clerk of the legislature, and you can also leave a voicemail at (631) 853-3685 and leave a three-minute message.

Mr. Clerk, do we have any cards, any public portion for this meeting?

**MR. DUBOIS:**

We do not.

**VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

Okay. Thank you very much. So we will turn our attention to our appointed resolutions We have **Resolution 1049, To reappoint member to the Suffolk County Citizens Advisory Board for the Arts (Lynda A. Moran).** (Cilmi) Do I have a motion?

**LEG. RICHBERG:**

Motion to approve.

**VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

Motion by Legislator Richberg. Do I have a second? Second by Legislator Gonzalez. I believe this is a re-appointment, so Ms. Moran did not have to attend today. Does anybody have any questions, comments? No? Can we take a roll call vote, please, Mr. Clerk.

(Whereupon, the roll was called by Mr. Dubois)

**LEG. RICHBERG:**

Yes.

**LEG. GONZALEZ:**

Yes.

**D.P.O. HAHN:**

Yes.

**VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

Yes.

1 LEG. TROTTA:

2 Yes.

3

4 LEG. MCCAFFREY:

5 Yes.

6

7 LEG. SPENCER:

8 Yes.

9

10 LEG. CALARCO:

11 Yes.

12

13 MR. DUBOIS:

14 Eight.

15

16 VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:

17 Resolution 1049 is approved (VOTE: 8-0-0-0). We do have a  
18 presentation, but we are just going to skip down first to our  
19 introductory resolutions and do that one.

20

21 Resolution 1062, Reconstituting the Gabreski Airport Community  
22 Advisory Board for a new limited purpose. (Fleming).

23

24 LEG. RICHBERG:

25 Motion to table.

26

27 VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:

28 No, actually I'm going to take a motion to table at the request of  
29 the department. Legislator Richberg, you can make that motion and I  
30 will second. Any discussion? Roll call.

31

32 (Whereupon, the roll was called by Mr. Dubois)

33

34 LEG. RICHBERG:

35 Yes.

36

37 LEG. GONZALEZ:

38 Yes.

39

40 D.P.O. HAHN:

41 Yes.

42

43 VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:

44 Yes.

45

46 LEG. TROTTA:

47 Yes.

48

49 LEG. MCCAFFREY:

50 Yes.

51

52 LEG. SPENCER:

53 Yes.

54

55 LEG. CALARCO:

56 Yes.

1  
2 **MR. DUBOIS:**

3 Eight.

4  
5 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

6 Resolution 1062 is tabled. (VOTE: 8-0-0-0).

7  
8 So today we are very lucky to have Rosalie Drago with us, the  
9 wonderful commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Labor,  
10 Licensing, and Consumer Affairs, and she is going to be giving us a  
11 presentation on the department's work assisting business during the  
12 pandemic. So, Rosalie, the floor is yours.

13  
14 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

15 Thank you, and Commissioner Wright did just join from maternity  
16 leave.

17  
18 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

19 Ah, there she is. Commissioner Wright, let me --

20  
21 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

22 Hi. Hello, everyone.

23  
24 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

25 You're on maternity leave, right? Congratulations.

26  
27 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

28 I am on maternity leave. I had a wonderful sleeping baby until,  
29 like, the minute before I joined this meeting, so if you see me  
30 rocking, it is only because I have a baby in my arms just below our  
31 Zoom meeting.

32  
33 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

34 Can we see?

35  
36 **MS. DRAGO:**

37 Yeah, we need to see the baby. Sorry.

38  
39 **MS. WRIGHT:**

40 So she's sleeping. Little girl.

41  
42 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

43 My little girl is now 30, so just wait for that to happen.

44  
45  
46 **MS. WRIGHT:**

47 Oh, my goodness. I know.

48  
49 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

50 Congratulations. Only good things. That's wonderful. Thank you  
51 for joining us, and we hope she sleeps through it. So, Legislator  
52 Trotta, you can't be yelling at this meeting. You can't wake the  
53 baby up, okay?

54  
55 **LEG. TROTTA:**

56 I won't, I don't want her to know how bad of a shape the county is

1 in.

2  
3 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

4 Now you're going to have somebody bring a baby to every legislative  
5 meeting.

6  
7 **LEG. TROTТА:**

8 Should we tell her that she is going to be paying for the mess we  
9 created?

10  
11 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

12 No, that will probably wake her up, so you don't want to do that.

13  
14 **LEG. MCCAFFREY:**

15 Let her find out on her own.

16  
17 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

18 Commissioner Drago, the floor is yours.

19  
20 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

21 All right. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to speak.  
22 This pandemic, for all its hardships, has created an opportunity to  
23 expand our ability to partner within the county, and it's a great  
24 opportunity to talk about that partnership. I do want to start off  
25 by saying that it was a year ago at this time that you all voted to  
26 give Commissioner Wright and I the ability to serve as  
27 commissioner, so the timing is amazing, and I think I can speak for  
28 both of us saying that even in the midst of the pandemic, it has  
29 still been an incredible gift and honor to serve so thank you for  
30 that.

31  
32 In addition that this has hurt our business community in Suffolk  
33 and even with the emergence of our community from the pandemic and  
34 sort of on the healing side of it, there are a lot of things we  
35 don't know and a lot of conditions that will still remain changed  
36 and changing, so what we talk about today is what we've done so far  
37 and continue to do, but there will be a lot more required of us in  
38 the future and a lot of changes that we need to respond to.

39  
40 So I also want to make sure that I mention here that to serve  
41 businesses in the county, in addition to what you do in your own  
42 offices in your own district, it's a collaboration between Economic  
43 Development and Planning, which has the business development unit,  
44 Suffolk County Department of Labor, which has a businesses services  
45 unit and consumer affairs, as well as the Office of Minority Women  
46 in Business, Women's Affairs. It's a collaboration between all of  
47 those entities to produce much of what we'll talk about today.

48  
49 So from March 2020 to the present, we still have standing the  
50 Business Response Unit that was put up within a couple of days of  
51 the pandemic so we still have the web portal that is managed by  
52 Economic Development and Planning, which is an essential portal for  
53 COVID-related information, resources, financing, webinars,  
54 information, Executive Orders, and any current guidelines, and the  
55 call center which is operated out of the Department of Labor  
56 Business Service Unit is also functional with live operator

1 assistance related to information and guidelines which continue to  
2 change.

3  
4 We did since the beginning and continue to have stakeholder  
5 outreach. We did direct mail and text with businesses regarding  
6 any updates or changes to guidelines, and we've been doing that by  
7 industry; so if it's restaurant industry or now event industry.

8  
9 I think one of the other really critical things that we've been  
10 doing, that we will continue to do far beyond the pandemic, is have  
11 industry intelligence and listening sessions. So we host sessions,  
12 sometimes you are in attendance with the specific industries to  
13 understand what their challenges are, and those have evolved from  
14 the beginning, but they continue to be in place. We are listening  
15 to understand what the challenges and one of the incredible  
16 benefits has been creating briefs to advocate for changes to the  
17 guidelines that we've presented to the Control Room for COVID, and  
18 also using that feedback, you know, we have compliance  
19 investigation and enforcement of some of those guidelines and a lot  
20 of the ways we've been doing that investigation and enforcement has  
21 been with the input with businesses into the process, so it's been  
22 collaborative across the board. And we've been working the  
23 chambers of commerce, educational institutions and business  
24 associations as well to align on that.

25  
26 We did the Business Impact Report with Nassau and Suffolk County  
27 together and the IDAs and, Natalie, we're going to do a second  
28 round of those in this year, is that correct, do an update?

29  
30 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

31 So we were considering doing an updated survey year, probably not  
32 an updated impact report, since that was quite a cost.

33  
34 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

35 So our initial survey was to that onset of this and we will do  
36 another one this year, so if you have questions or information you  
37 want to make sure we get into that survey, please let us know.

38  
39 And I think we're sort of looking at this in a couple of baskets.  
40 There were ways we identified opportunities to provide new  
41 resources, so the Main Street Initiative in partnership with Stony  
42 Brook University, to help build the digital capability and digital  
43 literacy amongst small businesses that were really struggling to  
44 reopen; IDA sales tax extension programs, and any time if you want  
45 greater detail, both Natalie and I can go into it, but I'm going to  
46 list them initially for you.

47  
48 The PPE exchange: So a portal was put up for any company on Long  
49 Island that is manufacturing PPE, both to promote local businesses  
50 and to help people shop local if they wanted to, so I will ask that  
51 if you know any business in your district that is making PPE,  
52 please make sure that they're registering for that exchange.  
53 People can also identify if they are a woman owned, minority owned,  
54 veteran owned business, so if people want to do business with a  
55 specific group they can search.

1 New York Loan Program: The EDC contributed \$250,000 that leveraged  
2 five million in State funding for support for Suffolk businesses,  
3 and the BACKSTOP Grant Program, which was business assistance and  
4 venture assistance, which is still in the process of closing out.

5  
6 And then in terms of some of the leveraging of existing programs  
7 and services, we've conducted a Department of Labor 68 virtual  
8 hiring events. Yesterday we did one with Estee Lauder. They have  
9 68 positions open and we had 99 people register for that event, so  
10 we're doing virtual events with employers.

11  
12 We have continued to provide workforce training even in the virtual  
13 environment. So while we have assisted 10,000 customers through  
14 our Job Seeker Services Division, we have done training for about  
15 360 individuals in the virtual environment and we have a fully  
16 functioning virtual Job Seeker station at this point, so if someone  
17 has resume needs they can do it virtually and in-person by  
18 appointment.

19  
20 I think the other critical part of that has been Novartis, for  
21 example, just laid off 60 people and we're connecting those people  
22 laid off that are interest in working with Estee Lauder, who is  
23 hiring. So that's a really critical service. I want to highlight  
24 again if you are aware of a company that's laying off or hiring,  
25 please, more importantly on the laying off side, have them contact  
26 us so we can do individual one on ones with those people who are  
27 being let go and connect them with new employment, because there  
28 are a lot of companies hiring on Long Island now.

29  
30 And we've also done work to have employers go into the classroom to  
31 build that talent pipeline and talk about the careers that are in  
32 demand, and we are still doing internship and work experience paid  
33 for opportunity youth.

34  
35 The last thing I would just add on the Labor side and then I'll  
36 turn it over to Commissioner Wright, we extended license renewal  
37 dates for folks getting licenses with Consumer Affairs, however,  
38 most people have continued to renew their license on time and we  
39 continue to get new businesses opening up, which I think is good  
40 news.

41  
42 We are shouldering a lot of the COVID complaints, but that has  
43 really reduced, even though there were, you know, thousands and  
44 thousands initially it's reduced and we've really focused on  
45 business education and reopening.

46  
47 So I think that's sort of a broad overview, I don't know which one  
48 of those parts after Commissioner Wright talks about EDP  
49 specifically, you can drill down into anything that you'd like to  
50 go through.

51  
52 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

53 Thanks, Rosalie. So Rosalie mentioned a lot of the new initiatives  
54 that we put forward. A couple of EDP specific items that I wanted  
55 to just address and list off are some that you're probably already  
56 aware of. One, we changed the parameters on the Arts and Cultural

1 Grant Program to allow those grant to be used for payroll and other  
2 operating expenses. We also held a food truck webinar. This was  
3 back when restaurants were closed down, understanding that people  
4 maybe were going out of business and looking for a lower cost  
5 alternative to sustain their business that doesn't have some of the  
6 restricts around social distancing occupancy. So we did a food  
7 truck webinar on how to start up and operate a food truck here in  
8 Suffolk County. That posted online so it can be viewed at any  
9 time.

10  
11 We also, and this is something that Legislator -- the Legislators  
12 have been partnering with us on is reviewing opportunities for  
13 reuse for vacant retail. So this is something that was sort of pre  
14 -- it was an idea pre-pandemic, but I think it's even more  
15 prevalent now and more at the forefront of something that we should  
16 really be focussing on. So how do we reuse sites such as our  
17 indoor malls or other strip malls that could be redeveloped into a  
18 more meaningful use at this time given the landscape that we have  
19 and we're kind of coming into post-pandemic. And that also allows  
20 us to preserve open space and not do any greenfield development,  
21 which is also obviously a priority of the County.

22  
23 We've also looked at alternative options for holding the County  
24 auction, understanding that the mass gathering is not something  
25 that's really feasible at this time, and then just continual  
26 movement forward of our capital improvement programs. So whether  
27 those are awarded Jump Start awards, downtown revitalization  
28 programs, and continuing to support those initiatives and projects  
29 that are coming from those programs.

30  
31 So I guess I would open it up to if you guys have any questions on  
32 any particular specifics for either Commissioner Drago or myself.

33  
34 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**  
35 Any questions? Legislator Richberg.

36  
37 **LEG. RICHBERG:**  
38 Thank you. Well, first, Commissioner Wright, congratulations on  
39 the record.

40  
41 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**  
42 Thank you.

43  
44 **LEG. RICHBERG:**  
45 I know you're going to have a lot of sleepless nights ahead of you.

46  
47 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**  
48 Yup, there's been a few so far, and there are many more to come.

49  
50 **LEG. RICHBERG:**  
51 I'm three years in and I'm still have sleepless nights. And  
52 Legislator Berland says, and so does Legislator Kennedy, that it  
53 keeps going.

54  
55  
56 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

1 There's different reasons to keep you up.

2  
3 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

4 There you go. But I want to thank you both for your work and your  
5 diligence on this, and especially just keeping us, I guess,  
6 pivoting and right in different directions.

7  
8 So I guess my question is in your work so far, where do you see  
9 that we need to go next? And I know that's, you know,  
10 prognostication is not necessarily anybody's forte but, you know,  
11 you two seem to be, you know, sort of pivoting in the right  
12 directions.

13  
14 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

15 You go ahead, Natalie, and then I'll talk on the Labor side.

16  
17 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

18 Yeah. So I would say, you know, the landscape has changed over the  
19 course of this pandemic and the needs have changed as we've gone  
20 through the last year. Right away it was really a need for  
21 information, right, and then it became a need for resources, and  
22 we're still in that need for resources and information, but I think  
23 the exact needs and the specific needs have sort of all been  
24 clanged over time.

25  
26 We definitely need resources, right, we need resources to support  
27 our businesses. We need resources to try and identify ways for  
28 businesses that closed that were profitable and operating prior to  
29 the pandemic, but due to purely the pandemic, not because of an  
30 ability to operate or a demand for their services, had to close, it  
31 would be nice to try and build a path forward for those businesses  
32 to either restart or to identify a new business opportunity. And I  
33 think that's happening, you know, should happen in coordination  
34 with all the agencies in Suffolk County, the departments in Suffolk  
35 County, but also our other partner agencies that we've been  
36 coordinating with, whether that's the SPDCs, you know, other  
37 business groups, industry representation groups. So it's really  
38 providing an opportunity for businesses to flourish once again,  
39 whether that's starting a new business, regrowing your business or  
40 continuing to bolster the growth that has occurred as a result of  
41 the pandemic in particular industries.

42  
43 So I think those are all things that I would like to see us focus  
44 on and ensure that the changing nature of many of our downtowns and  
45 our business districts remain active, vibrant communities, and so  
46 continuing to watch that is certainly a priority as well.

47  
48 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

49 You know, jumping off of that, we -- since all of the sectors are  
50 not operating at full capacity there's a couple of windows of  
51 opportunity that we're looking at here so on the Eco Dev side  
52 there's still a lot of vacancy. It's a great opportunity to help  
53 provide, you know, if they're going to be vacant anyway, if the  
54 landlords are struggling anyway, it's a great opportunity to help  
55 build-out our women, minority, veteran owned business and  
56 entrepreneurs and give them an opportunity maybe for programs where

1 there's rent breaks and, you know, ramping up and to fill those  
2 vacancies and give people a chance. So I think there's a lot of  
3 opportunity in this moment in time and that's something that EDP,  
4 Labor and Office of Minority Affairs are working on and looking at  
5 what the community organizations are doing that work.

6  
7 I think in addition, there's an incredible need for our money that  
8 we provide workforce training and youth training is Federal  
9 dollars. So I've been spending a lot of time, in fact, this  
10 afternoon I'm meeting with State Senators asking them to -- and  
11 Federal Legislators, to increase the amount of workforce money  
12 flowing into the State so it can get down to us. We need more  
13 flexibility.

14  
15 Right now there are people on hold, people who think that whenever  
16 these restaurants reopen, or hospitality reopens, their waiting to  
17 see if their business or sector of origin is going to return to  
18 full capacity, and there's a little bit of pause. The minute that  
19 is sort of decided, that's when people are going to be coming in  
20 and asking for training. If one industry doesn't go to full  
21 capacity and another one does, we're going to need to very quickly  
22 retrain people. I'm sorry if I've said this before because I  
23 probably say it on every Zoom that I'm on, Estee Lauder is hiring  
24 but they only interview on Zoom, so if you don't have an accessible  
25 laptop, accessible internet, and the ability to interview on Zoom,  
26 you're not getting a job, so we need more flexible funding from the  
27 state, from the federal government, so that when we are able to  
28 pivot and start preparing people, those things don't stand in the  
29 way, and right now that funding that comes down from the state and  
30 federal channels has not been flexible in allowing for equipment  
31 for this sort of digital divide issue. So that's something we've  
32 been advocating for because it impacts our ability to deliver on  
33 the ground.

34  
35 So I just think we're still, as Commissioner Wright said, we're  
36 still waiting a little bit to see what happens, and people are  
37 still waiting, but as these industries open, we're going to have to  
38 be able to respond quickly and shift, so when we look at  
39 unemployment, you know, it's very different for each community.  
40 The level of education, the level of certification is different for  
41 each community, and we need to have an approach that's ready to  
42 address those issues community by community rather than by Suffolk  
43 County. There's no blanket solution for Suffolk County. That's  
44 where that stakeholder engagement comes in. We are constantly  
45 keeping in touch to see how things are shifting and address them.

46  
47 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

48 You just talked about access, and I'm hoping that we can get some  
49 broadband dollars into the county because maybe we could use those  
50 broadband monies to reach out to those folks who don't have access.  
51 But I guess the other question is -- and I apologize for  
52 monopolizing the time with my questions -- the governor has put  
53 forward some initiatives or some ideas for getting health -- or  
54 companies into the state -- or producing for the state gowns and  
55 masks and shields and things like that post-pandemic, right; so  
56 when there is another pandemic, we don't have to wait and buy

1 things from another country. But if I wondering if the Department  
2 of Labor -- and, Commissioner, I apologize for not reaching out to  
3 you about this before -- but I wonder if we're looking into that  
4 and if not, or if there's any way we can help out, please let us  
5 know.

6  
7 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

8 Sure. So we are already working. The portal is up on local PPA  
9 and EDP and labor are both working on the employers that are doing  
10 that. Dederio is one of them. Clear Vision Optical is one here in  
11 Hauppauge. There is a federal legislation on the table to require  
12 -- I think it's federal. I'll get you guys the number -- to  
13 require a percentage of PPE manufacturing to be local. That would  
14 help the state procure locally and use our local manufacturers, so  
15 I'll get you that information. To the extent that we can push that  
16 forward or write letters of support, that would be helpful because  
17 that will mean -- I think it was something like 30 percent has to  
18 be produced locally, which would increase the capacity and need.  
19 Most of the time what happens is that it's hard for our local  
20 businesses on Long Island because of operating costs to compete  
21 globally, but if we make a local mandate, it enables a larger  
22 portion of what's purchased to be, regardless of cost, to be  
23 purchased here, so we're certainly looking into those opportunities  
24 and we'll share them with you.

25  
26 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

27 And I would just add to that, Legislator Richberg, we also, as a  
28 separate initiative not related directly out of the pandemic, the  
29 IDAs did put forth the coalition of doing some more targeted  
30 recruitment advertising, whether it was in Site Selector magazine,  
31 putting stuff up on the Discover Long Island Website to really try  
32 and recruit new businesses to the county, and so one of sort of  
33 those subsectors could be the PPE manufacturing. We certainly have  
34 a manufacturing cluster here, we have a pharmaceutical,  
35 neuroceutical basehold here, which serves well to try and attract  
36 additional new business to the county which had previously not been  
37 one of the focal -- forefront focal points of the IDAs here in the  
38 county. It was really more focused more on a retention effort  
39 rather than a recruitment effort.

40  
41 **LEG. RICHBERG:**

42 I want to thank you both for answering the questions and for this  
43 presentation and for the work you're doing.

44  
45 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

46 Thank you, Legislator Richberg. Legislator Hahn, do you have some  
47 questions?

48  
49 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

50 Yes. Thank you, Legislator Berland, and thank you for chairing  
51 today. I am not able to be there. I did invite Rosalie and  
52 Natalie to be here today. There's so much going on. There's so  
53 much that our businesses should know that we're doing. They have  
54 been incredible with flexibility as everyone has had to be during  
55 these tough times with new guidance that comes out every day. And  
56 I appreciate you mentioning the recycling retail initiative that I

1 have been working on with your department, and, Rosalie, you  
2 mentioned the work with Stony Brook University and helping small  
3 businesses to virtualize or to improve their electronic digital  
4 offerings during times like this. Can you talk a little bit about  
5 the success of that?

6  
7 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

8 I don't have the numbers with me. I apologize, but I can  
9 definitely get them to you, and I apologize for not having them.

10  
11 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

12 I think there are some things that we stood up because of the  
13 pandemic but that really are evergreen, and certainly that's one of  
14 them. There are so many small mom and pop businesses that never  
15 thought they would need an e-mail or a website. They just have had  
16 customers for the forty years they have been operating and it's  
17 never been a problem. Those customers, obviously many stuck  
18 around, but now they need to have an e-mail list and social media  
19 presence and recognize that that's sort of the wave of the future  
20 and moving forward; and so everybody knowing that we have kind of  
21 assistance through Stony Brook is helpful.

22  
23 Can you talk maybe a little bit about what we did with the  
24 restaurant industry? A big piece of tourism is our restaurant  
25 industry and talking about the outdoorsing of our tables. So much  
26 -- obviously we have certain months where it's really hard for  
27 people to sit outside, but we were able to extend that time period.  
28 We were able to expand the space outside and how you see that  
29 continuing into the future and are there ways that the county or  
30 the state or even the towns -- I know the towns were helping, but  
31 are there ways to help that industry a little bit, keep that? I  
32 think people enjoy eating outdoors when it is possible. I don't  
33 know if you can speak to that a little bit.

34  
35 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

36 I can jump in there. I think the outdoor eating, the most  
37 beneficial thing that can happen right now, honestly, in my  
38 opinion, is to have the weather warm up and I think we're going to  
39 see outdoor events, activities, including restaurants, continue  
40 throughout this spring, summer, and fall because of the trajectory  
41 that we're on. Hopefully indoor events and dining will be able to  
42 resume at more increased capacity over the coming months here, but  
43 it's certainly, I believe, going to be a staple of the next several  
44 months. I think that's going to be a stronghold. Look,  
45 restaurants have been invested fairly significant and sometimes  
46 very significant amounts of money to convert outdoor spaces to  
47 outdoor eating areas, and so continuing to support that when we're  
48 able is certainly something we would want to do. I know the  
49 county did assist with the towns in terms of permitting to allow  
50 outdoor dining, either on sidewalks or parking lots or various  
51 bases to increase their footprint to help generate revenue for  
52 their businesses.

53  
54 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

55 And programs like BACKSTOP were really helpful there, right,  
56 because the larger restaurants have the capacity -- you know, had

1 enough business -- the business to be able to afford the additional  
2 insurance for expansion or a heater outside, but the smaller  
3 businesses did not have the capital and the additional thousand  
4 dollars needed to get the insurance to extend their outdoor dining  
5 or to buy a heater would really have been a barrier to resuming  
6 operations so -- in addition any partnership on that.

7  
8 Legislator Hahn, you mentioned evergreen programs. I did forget to  
9 bring one up. Is it okay if I screen share for a second with you?  
10 We put up during the pandemic our job board that I want to share  
11 with you. Hopefully you can see the Suffolk County forward job  
12 board. Can you see that?

13  
14 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

15 Yeah, I can see it, Rosalie.

16  
17 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

18 Okay. Good. This is the inside portion of it. I'll show you the  
19 outside customer facing portion in a second. This job site  
20 aggregates every job opening on Long Island in one place, so if  
21 it's on Zoom or it's on their website, it's here for you and for  
22 your team. It provides a view of what industries are hiring. I do  
23 all of Long Island here because, you know, we have employers like  
24 Novartis that have one venue in Suffolk and one in Nassau, right,  
25 so I just want to make sure that we have all these incorporated but  
26 you can go in here and see what are the in-demand occupations,  
27 who's hiring, how many job postings, what are required, and your  
28 team can access this. So this is all of Long Island as of now.  
29 Top employers by job openings currently on Long Island, and this  
30 changes every single day, DoorDash, Northwell, CVS.

31  
32 If if I scroll down, you can take a look at some general  
33 comparisons. I think what's important for you -- let me try  
34 pulling this up for you -- so you can go in at any time and see who  
35 is hiring, if you -- you can encourage your constituents to create  
36 a profile on here. What it will do is if they put a resume up on  
37 here, A, they can do this if they don't want to talk to a  
38 counselor, they can put a resume up, look at a job opening, and  
39 click a button and see what they are missing. If it's training,  
40 they can go to a list of all training providers and educational  
41 institutions on Long Island that do that training. If they're  
42 income eligible, they can be funded through the Department of Labor  
43 to get that training.

44  
45 It also, while I'm waiting for this to load, it also, for veterans  
46 it is going to make the connection between their military  
47 occupations categories and civilian occupations. So when we pick  
48 an occupation they're interested in, they can also click a button.  
49 It'll bring up by branch of military service, how it aligns with  
50 military occupations, and of course this isn't going to load  
51 because I'm doing it live with you. Oh, look. So this is -- let me  
52 show you. These are top advertised job skills for today. It'll  
53 change tomorrow. Top advertised technologies, industries on Long  
54 Island, hiring in the top 10s. So manufacturing is eight today.  
55 Some days it's 10, but this is the number of jobs posted online  
56 right now for every industry and you can click on it and see that

1 list, and then you could also see who. You could do this just  
2 Suffolk County if you want. So I wanted to make sure you knew this  
3 was available. It's available to all residents, and just so you  
4 know what it looks like. If you're a resident, you have to -- if  
5 you search here without creating a profile, you can see all the  
6 occupations listed, all the jobs listed online here. If you log on  
7 and create a user, you get that access to resumes and military  
8 occupations, and if you are an employer, you get the ability to  
9 geo-target and work with us directly. So I just wanted to share  
10 that with you. We will continue to have this board up. Someone on  
11 your staff can be trained to use this portal any time you want.

12  
13 **D.P.O. HAHN:**

14 That would be terrific. Thank you. There are so many things that  
15 you all stood up that are valuable and evergreen, and we need to  
16 keep talking about. Some residents, businesses, in the craze of  
17 the heat of the worst of the pandemic, you know, might not have  
18 heard it all and taken it all in, and so there's so much we can be  
19 talking about and what we're doing and ways we can help. Thank  
20 you.

21  
22 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

23 Thank you, Legislator Hahn. Any other questions for our  
24 commissioners? Anthony, did you have a question?

25  
26 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

27 I do. I have a few, Madam Vice Chair, and I appreciate the  
28 deference. Thank you for chairing the meeting. Good morning,  
29 Commissioners. How are you?

30  
31 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

32 Good morning.

33  
34 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

35 Good morning. How are you?

36  
37 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

38 I'm well. This is more about what the state is doing, if you have  
39 had any contact with the state regarding what I feel is a continued  
40 over-regulation of the restaurant and bar industry with these  
41 regulations, in my opinion, being a little arbitrary and egregious.  
42 Have you had conversations with the state? I just saw in Newsday  
43 that two more restaurants have lost their liquor license. I think  
44 the SLA has been very heavy-handed in this industry. This industry  
45 employs a lot of people in Suffolk County, and I feel the more  
46 regulations and the more heavy-handed SLA has been with them, the  
47 more people we are putting on the government dole as far as  
48 unemployment and social services. So I was wondering if you've had  
49 those conversations and what has transpired.

50  
51 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

52 We have created recommendations and beliefs on impacts and given  
53 it to the control room, which is really our gateway to the  
54 governor's office regarding reopening so that is what we have done  
55 and in that respect advocated for practices that both keep our  
56 residents safe and also help us keep our economy healthy; so it is

1 an ongoing dialogue and we have been advocating on behalf of that  
2 industry and amusement, entertainment, and really all of our  
3 industries.

4 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

5 Yeah. I'm sure you have heard this before but, you know, I walk  
6 into a Walmart or a Lowe's, and there's a thousand people in the  
7 store, and I can't go to the corner restaurant here and have a  
8 drink after 11:00 because it slows down. It's getting to the point  
9 where the governor and the state have picked winners and losers and  
10 driven these people who are putting their life savings into their  
11 business out of business. Thirty percent of them, from the last  
12 report that I saw from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, may never  
13 return. I mean, I think maybe we need to have a more heavy-handed  
14 approach with the state and say, You need to relax these  
15 regulations now because it's gone too far.

16  
17 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

18 We've actually had conversations with the Restaurant Association  
19 locally and state and even, Legislator Hahn, I know that I have put  
20 you in touch with them regarding legislation that you've been  
21 working on, so they have a really strong advocacy group and  
22 connecting with them might be a way to do that.

23  
24 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

25 Okay. Thank you. Commissioner Wright, do you have anything to  
26 add?

27  
28 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

29 No. I think Rosalie did a good job of sort of summing up the  
30 assistance that we've been able to provide today.

31  
32 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

33 And just my second question. This will be my last one. This goes  
34 to small business relief. Currently right now with the new  
35 administration, what is available for small businesses that are  
36 having a hard time meeting payroll and/or their rent?

37  
38 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

39 So I know there's a variety of programs that we have. The New York  
40 Forward Loan program I believe is still available. We have the  
41 BACKSTOP program, which is for small businesses as well. I'd have  
42 to circle back on the federal legislation that's coming forward,  
43 but I know there was a discussion. I was watching a briefing  
44 yesterday by President Biden about increasing PPP and reformulating  
45 PPP and doing a 20-day period where small businesses would be able  
46 to apply, sort of an exclusivity period for application for loan  
47 funding. So there's certainly a lot of resources out there, and  
48 that's where our business resource website is really crucial  
49 because you can find it all in one place. We update it regularly.  
50 Our entire communications team is monitoring inflow and connected  
51 to various resources, and then if we see something we send it on to  
52 them to make sure that it's up there so that businesses and  
53 residents can go there for various resources, whether it's  
54 financial resources for a business, informational or educational or  
55 other sorts of resources for employees. It's all sort of centered  
56 there.

1  
2 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

3 Right. I appreciate that, and there are good resources out there.  
4 But my issue is more that these are loans that these businesses are  
5 going to have to pay back and that's really not what bothers me.  
6 Dovetailing with this is I have testimony in front of the IDA  
7 yesterday about another project that I have an issue with, and it  
8 seems that small- and medium-sized businesses and homeowners are  
9 struggling to make ends meet right now for of employment or lack of  
10 customers coming to their businesses to meet their bottom line, and  
11 we're getting out large tax breaks to these businesses to retain  
12 employment and/or to stay in Suffolk County, and that's a debate  
13 for another time whether that will work or not.

14  
15 But my issue is have we looked to why we keep doing this and why  
16 there isn't that instant relief for homeowners and small businesses  
17 and workers in general as far laborers go.

18  
19 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

20 On the labor side, they're receiving the additional assistance.  
21 The question is for how long that unemployment is going to be, and  
22 like I said, advocating federally and state to have more funding  
23 and flexible funding so that we can retrain people. That is --  
24 it's what Commissioner Wright said before. We need more resources  
25 to do those things. Even the programs like BACKSTOP and some of  
26 the other programs that we have at the county, it's limited to the  
27 amount of funding that we are able to --

28  
29 **LEG. PICCIRILLO:**

30 What I'm trying to -- just to close the circle, what I'm trying to  
31 say is we know middle families in Suffolk County are struggling, we  
32 know small businesses are struggling, and yet we give out these tax  
33 breaks which quickly puts the tax burden back on to the same middle  
34 class families that are struggling, so we are creating a bigger  
35 problem instead of trying to fix that tax problem that we have  
36 here. We are creating a bigger problem by making them pay more  
37 money in property taxes because of the abatements given to these  
38 companies. I really think we need to keep this in front of us to  
39 try to fix this problem now, and I know Legislator Trotta and  
40 myself are working on a letter, and I hope our colleagues join us  
41 about overhauling the IDA and having legislative oversight over  
42 this body because I really do believe that a body of unelected  
43 political appointees should not be doling out taxpayer dollars  
44 without us involved. I know that's a conversation for another  
45 time. Madam Vice Chair, I appreciate the deference. Thank you for  
46 allowing me to ask my questions, and thank you, Commissioners.

47  
48 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

49 No problem. Legislator Trotta, do you have a question?

50  
51 **LEG. TROTТА:**

52 I disagree with Anthony Piccirillo in that this is the time to have  
53 that discussion. So, Commissioner Wright, the IDA recently gave  
54 out a tax break. I think it was \$3 million to Amazon distribution  
55 center at Gabreski Airport, which is in direct competition with  
56 every downtown in the Hamptons. What we did was we gave a

1 billionaire -- not Amazon, the Rechlers, a \$3 million which now  
2 people will -- and, by the way, they absolutely lied on their  
3 application where they said "Will you consider moving out of New  
4 York if you don't do this?" As we know, this is the last mile  
5 distribution center. If anybody should be mad at this, it should  
6 be Bridget Fleming. Every single one of her downtown businesses  
7 was affected by this. They should be paying their taxes. Did we  
8 give any of those businesses tax breaks? This is wrong. This is  
9 why we're number 62. Can you explain to me why they got a tax  
10 break when they blatantly lied on their application?

11  
12 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

13 So unfortunately, I'm not prepared to have this conversation today.  
14 I came here to have a conversation about the Covid recovery  
15 efforts. I know we've had a conversation about the IDA and the  
16 Rechler application. Amazon is an excellent tenant. The Rechler  
17 park has been in development for over 10 years. I know these  
18 benefits were always anticipated to recruit businesses to that  
19 development, and Amazon is an excellent tenant.

20  
21 **LEG. TROTTA:**

22 They are billionaires and they are directly affecting Covid-related  
23 businesses in downtowns, so this is a Covid-related discussion.  
24 The IDA gave them a tax break when they lied on their application.  
25 Now I suggest you go back to the IDA board, and you review -- it's  
26 on page 11 of their application where they say they would consider  
27 moving out. They can't. It's the last mile warehouse moving out  
28 of New York State. So I think that Legislator Piccirillo and I are  
29 not letting this go away, and we have two or three more that have  
30 been passed down the pike, and once this whole Covid thing ends and  
31 we can come to the public meetings, believe me, we are not coming  
32 alone.

33  
34 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

35 Okay. Thank you, Legislator Trotta. Anyone else have any  
36 questionings for the commissioners? I'm sorry, Doc. Go ahead.

37  
38 **LEG. SPENCER:**

39 So it appears. This is sort of an aside, but there's a March 31  
40 deadline for PPP funding for small businesses. Is that something  
41 that's readily out there and available for small businesses to  
42 know?

43  
44 **COMMISSIONER DRAGO:**

45 What we can do is get, and I think we had a couple of really good  
46 questions about what's available, and it does change pretty  
47 regularly, is Commissioner Wright and I can get from SBS and our  
48 other sources a list of what's current as of today and share that  
49 with the group. I just want to check in because it does shift and  
50 change, so I would just love the opportunity to go back and get a  
51 list of what's available as of today.

52  
53 **LEG. SPENCER:**

54 And could you comment on what the Biden administration has done for  
55 really small businesses, businesses 20 and under? I think they are  
56 making more paycheck protection plan funds more readily available

1 for them.

2

3 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

4 Yeah. That's what I had referenced previously. I'd have to go  
5 back and look at the details on it, but I know there is an  
6 application period. I had heard there is sort of an exclusive  
7 application period for small businesses with employee limits, I  
8 think is the limitation of how they're classifying.

9

10 **LEG. SPENCER:**

11 20 and under.

12

13 **COMMISSIONER WRIGHT:**

14 Yeah, that's what I had heard as well.

15

16 **LEG. SPENCER:**

17 Okay. Thank you.

18

19 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

20 Thank you, Legislator Spencer. So, Commissioners, yes, if you can  
21 put together whatever the current list is and maybe send it out not  
22 to just the committee but all the legislators. I think everybody  
23 who isn't even on here today would be interested in that  
24 information, so if you can send it out to all legislators and  
25 staff, that would be great. Thank you both for joining us.  
26 Natalie, congratulations again. Go back to that wonderful little  
27 girl of yours and mazel tov. Enjoy. It's just the beginning.  
28 It's a lovely thing. And, Rosalie, thank you so much for being  
29 with us.

30

31 We have one more piece of business. I'm going to turn it over to  
32 Nicole who's going to discuss an appointment that's going to come  
33 on for a CN at our meeting, so, Nicole, the floor is yours.

34

35 **MS. AMENDOLA:**

36 Thank you, Legislator. So I just wanted to give the committee an  
37 opportunity to speak with Dan Flynn, our appointment for the  
38 planning commission. He will be representing the Town of  
39 Southampton. I just wanted to give him an opportunity to discuss  
40 his background and his interest to serve and to allow the committee  
41 to ask any questions especially since it's not going through the  
42 regular legislative process, but we are submitting it as a CN to  
43 expedite the representation of the Town of Southampton on the  
44 planning commission since it has been long overdue. So with that I  
45 would like to let Dan just say a few words and open it up to  
46 questions to the committee.

47

48 **MR. FLYNN:**

49 Hello, everybody. Again, my name is Dan Flynn. I live Quogue in  
50 the Town of Southampton, and I'm a long time commercial real estate  
51 person. Thirty-five years, I'm with a company called Jones Lang  
52 Lasalle. We go by JLL these days. I've been involved on Long  
53 Island, I started in Nassau County but for the last 20, 25 years,  
54 I've been mostly in Suffolk County. My office is in Melville, and  
55 the more and more I've gotten involved in commercial real estate,  
56 it seems that I always end up meeting with someone in whatever

1 district we're in with their planning person, with their building  
2 department, and it's a quasi-private/public enterprise, and I'm at  
3 a point in my life where I have all this knowledge and I work with  
4 most of the towns and most of the planning departments that when it  
5 was suggested that this might be something I might be interested  
6 in, I was very excited about doing it. I think I can bring a lot  
7 of experience both in real estate and in community relationships.  
8 So I'm excited to represent Southampton, and I'm excited to be part  
9 of overall planning for the county. I'm a resident. I care very  
10 much for the future of both the Town of Southampton, the east end,  
11 as well as Suffolk County and how we interface together.

12  
13 So I'm thrilled to be here, and I think I could bring a lot to the  
14 commission, and I'd be delighted to answer any of your questions.

15  
16 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

17 Any questions for Mr. Flynn? Legislator Fleming.

18  
19 **LEG. FLEMING:**

20 Thank you. Dan, thank you for stepping up and taking on the  
21 willingness to serve on this important commission. I just wanted  
22 to thank you and certainly commend your long experience that lends  
23 itself well to regional planning. I would just like to also let  
24 the committee know the reason why this is coming over as a CN is  
25 because this seat has been vacant for four years, and that the Town  
26 of Southampton has provided previously three private previous  
27 candidates, none of whom made it to this point through the county  
28 executive's office, so there is a consensus here with the county  
29 executive and the Town of Southampton. The seat has been vacant  
30 for years. The east end is unrepresented because East Hampton is  
31 also vacant, so I appreciate the unusual circumstance to bring it  
32 forward as a CN but wanted to give you some context on that; and,  
33 Dan, thank you for being willing to step up to serve. Thank you,  
34 Legislator Berland.

35  
36 **MR. DUBOIS:**

37 My pleasure.

38  
39 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

40 Thank you, Legislator Fleming. Any questions for Mr. Flynn? No?  
41 Okay, seeing none, seeing that this is a CN, you might just want to  
42 be available for the general meeting on Tuesday in case anyone has  
43 questions for you, but thank you for your willingness to serve, and  
44 we look forward to working with you.

45  
46 **MR. FLYNN:**

47 Thank you very much. I look forward to the next meeting. Thank  
48 you.

49  
50 **VICE CHAIRWOMAN BERLAND:**

51 Anybody have any further business before the committee? Seeing  
52 none, we stand adjourned.

53  
54 (The meeting was adjourned at 1:22 p.m.)  
55  
56

## DATE

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**Zoom** [7] - 1:9, 2:14, 4:31, 10:23, 10:24, 10:25, 13:21