

Long Island Regional Planning Council  
Summary Minutes

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Meeting of February 15, 2017 Meeting  
Bank of American Building  
300 Broadhollow Road, Melville, NY 11747

**LIPRC Members Present**

John D. Cameron, Jr., Chair  
Jeff Kraut, Treasurer  
Elizabeth Custodio  
Barbara Donno, Mayor  
Nancy Engelhardt  
Margaret Martinez Malito  
Edward Romaine, Supervisor  
Anthony J. Santino, Supervisor  
Ralph Scordino, Mayor  
Michael White

**Staff and Guests Present**

Richard V. Guardino, Jr.  
Elizabeth Ridge Cole  
Richard Amper  
Ron Busciolerto  
Tatyana Golikova  
Rachel Titus  
Allen Kovesdy  
Andy Kraus  
Chris Weiss  
Gerald Ottavino  
Malcolm Bowman  
Bela Shah  
Erin King Sweeney  
Michael Petre  
Francesca Carlow  
Joseph Cuomo  
Randy Bauer  
Lisa Broughton  
Ryan McTiernan  
Regina Zara  
Nick Anastasi  
Robert Kennedy  
Sophia Johnson  
Neal Lewis

Tim Rothang  
Laura Shaefer  
Kara Hahn

John Cameron announced that the Council was going into Executive Session.

Meeting Commenced:

- John D. Cameron, Jr., opened the meeting at approximately 11:15 a.m.
- Pledge of Allegiance

John Cameron welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### **Roll Call**

We have a quorum.

I would like to welcome one new member, Maggie Martinez Malito, who is President of the Nassau County Youth Board and has been appointed by Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano.

Nancy Engelhardt has moved to from Suffolk County to Nassau County so it was appropriate that she be reappointed. We are just down one member and we will work on a new appointment.

First on the agenda is the adoption of minutes. We have March, June and October meetings. On motion of Mayor Scordino and seconded by Michael White, the adoption of the minutes was approved.

Election of Officers:

Barbara Donno – I would like to put forth the nomination of John D. Cameron as Chairman of the Long Island Regional Planning Council, seconded by Mayor Scordino. Motion passed.

John D. Cameron – I would like to nominate Michael White as Vice Chair of the Council, seconded by Nancy Engelhardt. Motion passed.

Michael White – I would like to nominate Jeff Kraut as Treasurer, seconded by Barbara Donno. Motion passed.

Elizabeth Custodio – I would like to nominate Theresa Sanders as Secretary, seconded by Edward Romaine. Motion passed.

We have an authorization for consulting services for the Long Island Regional Planning Council to retain the PFM Group to do a Tax Alternative Study. We went forward with a Request for Proposal. A sub-committee of the council met, reviewed all the proposals and has recommended Public Financial Management as the group to do the study. The resolution is for a cost not to exceed \$98,925.

Supervisor Romaine was at a meeting with the Governor and the Governor has asked the two county executives to meet with local government to see what can be done. We have a responsibility in local government to the taxpayers to look at lower property taxes. Motion to approve by Mayor Donno, seconded by Supervisor Edward Romaine. Motion passed.

We have an authorization for consulting services for the Long Island Regional Planning Council to retain Epoch 5 to provide public relations, marketing, communications and social media strategies for the Council. Cost not to exceed \$43,100. Motion to approve by Liz Custodio and seconded by Supervisor Romaine. Motion passed.

We have a resolution to retain Rachel Titus. Terri Haller is retiring. Motion to approve by Barbara Donno, seconded by Edward Romaine. Motion passed.

We have a resolution to approve the purchase of furniture and office computers and screens. The purchase price is \$5,714.98. We will be applying to the state for reimbursement for some of the equipment. Motion to approve by Edward Romaine, seconded by Jeff Kraut. Motion passed.

## **PRESENTATION**

“Protecting the NY-NJ Metropolitan Region from the Next Disastrous Storm Surge”  
Malcolm Bowman, Ph.D., P.E. Distinguished Professor of Physical Oceanography, Stony Brook University and Chair, Metro NY/NJ Storm Surge Working Group

I am trained as a physicist, a mathematician and an engineer. I am also a climate scientist and an environmentalist. We look at problems related to population growth. I see my role as trying to bridge the divide between the gray and the green. Gray being the engineers and the people who build things and green being the environmentalists.

Regional problems require regional solutions. They transcend political and geographic boundaries. The question is how do we protect this region and create a safe, livable area for 100 to 150 years. Paths of hurricanes are difficult to predict. Sandy was a monster storm, diameter of 1,000 miles across, but technically it was not a hurricane when it hit the beach, although it had the largest span recorded. Different weather services predicted where it would hit but they were all wrong, mother nature is chaotic. The maps we are looking at do not indicate NJ because NYC does not take responsibility for the state of NJ. The states of New York and New Jersey did not have regional planning and cooperation for both areas. Ground Zero filled with sea water during Sandy. In Breezy Point there was a great amount of destruction due to storm surge, giant waves going over the community and causing gas fires. It only lasted an hour or two but did tremendous damage. On the Fire Island National Seashore, erosion was caused by Sandy. A new inlet was punched through and oceanographers are monitoring it each month to see if it has stabilized or the danger it represents on the mainland. It is now stable and risk is minimal for the moment. There are buoys that monitor the tides, waves, wind. It isn't just the surge but the huge waves that go with it. The Army Corps of Engineers is monitoring the area on the Great South Bay to ensure stability. The risk to residents is minimal right now. We monitor the tides, waves, winds,

air temperature and the speed of the winds and huge waves that go with it. We predict surges on three days' notice so we can unofficially get the message out to the first responders, mayors and supervisors alerting them to the dangers

Elevation is very important as well, we know how high the ground is within a few inches to monitor flooding. I have been asked if Sandy was a worst-case scenario. We have only had a few storms that did the kind of damage Sandy did, it is hard to predict without statistical information due the low number of catastrophes that have occurred. If Sandy had hit the coast 12 hours earlier or later it could have been worse. Sea level is slowly rising. Governor Cuomo said we need regional storm barriers, bold new approaches. Mayor Bloomberg said a local approach is better, he created a report, the NYC Special Initiative on Rebuilding and Resiliency (SIRR), which included hundreds of local projects in NYC. Mayor DeBlasio has continued with Bloomberg's philosophy.

We have two separate problems. We have the storms and then we have the rising sea level. The Secretary of HUD, Sean Donovan, traveled to Europe after Sandy to see what the Dutch were doing to protect against storm surge. He met a landscape architect who was hired to come back to NYC. A competition was held in NY called "Rebuild by Design" and run by the Rockefeller Foundation. The winner of the competition was The Big U – a horseshoe – that is going to build a wall to protect the business district. The problem is the expense, underground wiring, sewer systems, subways, steam heating, etc., so it is difficult to build a structure on the ground with a foundation. I travelled to Europe to see what other cities have done. In 1982 they opened the London Barrier. There are underwater barriers that swing out. In the Netherlands, following a storm in 1953, the federal government formed the Delta Project to build a barrier system with a swinging gate that closes in the event of a big storm around vulnerable inlets. In St. Petersburg, Russian, there are swing gates with the highway on top with the same design as the Netherlands. Venice is prone to flooding by storms from Adriatic Sea. At each of the inlets is a barrier system, a hinge on sea floor across the inlets that hinge up during storm surge. The barrier isn't visible, it must be below the surface which was an engineering challenge. There are good ideas for our inlets where structures can be submerged.

With the bigger storms if we want to save our area we need to build storm surge barriers. It is a work in progress.

#### **Panelists:**

Robert Kennedy, Mayor, Village of Freeport  
Jack Schnirman, City Manager, City of Long Beach  
Marcia Bystryn, President, New York League of Conservation Voters  
Mike DeNicola, Vice President, Haven & Sawyer

Mayor Robert Kennedy - Freeport is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest village in New York State with access to the Atlantic Ocean. During Sandy, the entire village was under 6-8 feet of water, homes burned to the ground, \$15 million in damage to the village and \$10 million just to the Department of Public



Works site. Freeport contributes \$15.8 million in sales tax to NYS. If another Sandy comes, that money will be lost. We must be proactive, not reactive. There will be no recovery for Freeport if another Sandy occurs. The taxpayers and businesses across Long Island will be affected. The most effective thing to do is to prevent, restrict water infiltration from coming in the inlets. This is proven to be successful; in Stamford, CT, \$14.5 million was spent to build a barrier and put in gates, \$18.6 million to build barrier gates and a jetty in New Bedford, MA. In short, reinforce the Barrier Islands and build gates that close an hour or two before the storm to protect LI. You don't need swing gates, you could do hydraulic pressure gates to lift up. The sea levels are rising, the equipment can eliminate nuisance flooding as well. We have a feasibility study contracted now, \$1.5 million of the funding is from federal, \$1 million from NYS, \$500,000 from Nassau County. The first meeting was 2 weeks ago. The DEC, and Army Corp of Engineers were there and they discussed how they are going to do it. They are doing a back-based study and will hopefully decide to put in the two gates. We must look at the region, but let's just start somewhere, we know it is a proven method that needs to be moved on quickly.

City Manager Jack Schnirman – I begin by associating myself with Mayor Kennedy and his remarks. Long beach was Ground Zero with Sandy; the center of the city was underwater, the city sustained \$150 million in damage, incalculable when you add in the homes and broader environmental impacts in Long Beach. Long Beach is rebuilding the right way to be safer and stronger. We thank FEMA and the State for their assistance. The projects that have been worked on include building a new, safer boardwalk on time and under budget. The Army Corps of Engineers is working on a full dune structure which is fully federally funded. A regional approach is necessary and one that Long Beach supports. Long beach protects its area, but the south shore and north shore must be protected in a way that makes sense. Regarding the Army Corp Feasibility Study – from our standpoint we would like it to be faster than 5 years and would like to see the Army Corp of Engineers implementation money built in on the federal side. I was at an event where the Governor said the counties are the place where shared services get done. The LIRPC could play a critical role in convening the efforts to be sure we protect everybody and only a regional approach makes sense. Let's not just protect Long Beach, but protect all in the most cost efficient way.

Marcia Bystryn - Resiliency is one of the important issues of the group that we care about statewide. A legislation has passed 2 years ago that is requiring the state to take sea level into consideration in its funding for capital projects. There are chapters in different parts of the state, in NYC and on Long Island. Each chapter have addressed the challenges of sea level rise and storm surge in various ways. Jack has done fabulous things to address challenges in his city, NYC's SIRR report laid out a scheme for NYC, which is why Bloomberg focused on what he could control. Coordination with NYC and Long Island must not be thought of separately. The issue of barriers is a significant project and critical. The barriers need a thorough discussion and study because it all comes down to how the project gets funded and the extent to which we can build these infrastructure projects into the federal budget.

Mike DiNicola - The Bay Park Sewage Treatment Plant was one of the hardest hit, and has been involved in protection and resiliency. The Bay Park project is \$6 million in, the berm is completed, 4 of 6 substations have been raised, 300 union employees on site, as well as engineers. The night of Sandy, looking at the electrical systems, I said to close the gates which I

also knew would flood the streets and homes. There was no other way to protect the plant. It was only a tropical storm so imagine if a category 5 hurricane hit the island. It took 55 hours to get the sewer system working again, peoples home flooded with sewage. I have a tremendous amount of respect with those involved in recovery and the work going on now.

Gerald Ottavino - Please consider with the feasibility study that dredging the bay should be considered. The marshes are inundated because water has nowhere to go. Salt water is ruining the marshes.

Mayor Kennedy – Dredging would assist, however, with rising tides and marshes collapsing because of vessel use, again, put up the gates, stop the water from coming in, then do the dredging. Prevent the water coming in, address everything else after.

Neil Lewis - The technologies, specifically the Venice approach, aren't just about protection in a major storm, but used for high tide. Arguably there is a case to be made that it is more valuable than just a major storm protection. If it has another benefit of dealing with nuisance flooding it will be a game changer. How does this affect boater activity?

Mayor Robert Kennedy - Services are in use in Bedford, MA that a radio announces closures. People become used to the timetable. The feasibility study will determine how the gates will work when restricting water.

John Cameron – We have discussed coming up with a model that is replicable. Start with the west and work our way east when protecting the inlets. We need to deal with climate change, rising sea levels and storm surge.

Mayor Robert Kennedy - Contact assemblymen and senators to keep this moving. That is how we got the funds for the feasibility study funded. The governing agencies have been involved.

John Cameron – We can be a voice in helping to educate the public and elected officials.

Malcom Bowman – Army Corps of Engineers has completed a study for Jamaica Bay and looked at building bulkheads and barriers. They have found that barriers are effective at protecting JFK Airport and are less expensive. They respond to pressure, it is up to the county government, towns and villages to go through congress.

Next meeting: To be decided

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.