

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF LEGISLATORS
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS
JOINT MEETING WITH COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION
JANUARY 13, 2009, 1:00 pm
MEETING MINUTES**

IN ATTENDANCE:

Committee on Government Operations: Leg. Ken Jenkins, Chair; Legislators William Burton, Judy Myers, Martin Rogowsky, and Bernice Spreckman. Advisory Members: Albert Annunziata, Dennis McDermott. Committee Coordinator: Barbara Dodds.

Committee on Legislation: Leg. William Burton, Chair, Legislators Tom Abinanti, George Oros, Ken Jenkins, Judy Myers, Martin Rogowsky. Committee Coordinator: Steve Bass

Others: WCDOT: Commissioner Larry Salley; WC Dept. of Law: Mary Lynn Nicolas-Brewster; Karen Tennenbaum; Ken Finger; Meghan Schoeffling, WDOM; AOAC: Alana Ciuffetelli, Silvio Soari; WRO: Andrea Klausner, Ann Seligsohn; CCAC: Angelo Ponzi; Independent Living: Rebecca Praw, Christa Douaihy; Lisa Buck, Bridge Fund; Aura Velez, Cluster, Gerald McKinstry, Journal News.

MINUTES APPROVED: October 21, 2008, November 12, 2008

ITEMS RECEIVED AND FILED: #248

ITEMS DISCUSSED:

Government Operations Only:

- 247. Act to authorize the County to enter into grant agreements totaling \$2,850,000 through the FAA, NYS and the NYSDOT for resurfacing Terminal Road Network; an environmental resolution determining no adverse impact.
- 251. An Act naming the area in front of the County Office Building located at 85 Court Street in White Plains NY, the Christopher Ridley Plaza.

With Legislation:

- 187. Legislation adding Source of Income as a discrimination category in the Westchester County Fair Housing Law.

Legislation Only:

- State Legislative Package

With a quorum present, Legislator Jenkins opened the meeting of the Committee on Government Operations at 1:25 p.m. With a quorum present, Legislator Burton opened the Committee on Legislation.

▪ Leg. Jenkins welcomed Commissioner Larry Salley to discuss item #247. This is legislation would allow the County to enter into agreements accepting grants from the Federal Aviation Administration and the New York State Department of Transportation as part of a total cost of \$2,850,000 to resurface the terminal roadway at the airport in front of hangar D, around the terminal, around the parking garage and out to the traffic circle. An additional County amount of \$150,000 from the Airport Specialty Revenue Fund would be added to the funding and not from taxpayer dollars. To Leg. Myers' question whether impervious surfaces would be added, Comm. Salley responded that a minor amount would be added but handled by enlarging the on-site retention basin. Due to the time

constraints of this item—the executed grant agreement must be approved by the Board of Acquisitions and Contracts and accepted by January 28—the environmental portion, which did not come through the ordinary communications channel, is being brought directly into committee. The two parts of the legislation—receipt of the federal grant and the negative environmental declaration—were moved by Leg. Spreckman and seconded by Leg. Burton. All voted in favor.

- Coming directly into Committee, the next item was an act from Legislator Williams of Mount Vernon and County Executive Andrew Spano to name the area in front of 85 Court Street after the late **Det. Christopher Ridley**, killed in action at the location. Motion moved by Leg. Burton and seconded by Leg. Myers. All voted in favor.

- Legislator Jenkins welcomed Associate County Attorney Mary Lynn Nicolas-Brewster to follow-up on previous committee discussions of the proposed local law amending the Westchester County Fair Housing Law. She described the revision to the local law as prohibiting housing discrimination based on a person's **source of income** with the addition of a new Section 700.23-a requiring the County to conduct education and outreach to inform the public of this prohibition. Additionally, the revision includes prohibitions against unlawful real estate practices to become effective immediately for current lessees in a housing accommodation. The law would take effect for persons other than current lessees 180 days after its enactment.

Legislator Jenkins summarized testimony before the committee from advocates for tenants and landlords. He noted that there some concerns were expressed about Section 8 procedures and inspections of housing units. Those issues will be taken up as part of the Planning Dept.'s education and outreach programs and the landlords will have six months to exercise the program without penalty. Since Leg. Harckham could not be present, Leg. Jenkins relayed the Human Rights Commission's response to Leg. Harckham's inquiry about a possible adjustment to the number of units in a landlord's building for compliance purposes. Changing numbers of units would be inconsistent with the current Human Rights Law of which this amendment is an extension. The same is true of fine levels which are dictated by the law due to a "willful, wanton and malicious" breaking of the law.

Discussion ensued on a number of issues discussed in previous meetings over several months. Committee members debated from their experiences as constituent advocates, real estate broker, landlord, banker and defense attorneys.

Leg. Abinanti had to an appointment that required him to leave before the end of the meeting. Motion was therefore moved by Leg. Abinanti and seconded by Leg. Oros for the Committee on Legislation to take up the second item on the committee agenda out of order. All voted in favor. Mr. Bass reviewed the changes requested and items that were approved by the sponsors. Leg. Oros expressed his disappointment that a couple of his initiatives were not included in the package. Motion to accept the legislative package was moved by Leg. Myers and seconded by Leg. Jenkins. All voted in favor. Leg. Abinanti moved to adjourn the Committee on Legislation, seconded by Leg. Oros. Tie vote 3-3, motion failed.

Leg. Jenkins asked Ms. Nicolas-Brewster for the administrative process in a case of discrimination. She provided the steps following a complaint registered to the Fair Housing Board Leading to findings for dismissal, compensatory damages or penalties. Debate on problems with this category of discrimination continued. The motion was made for Government Operations to sign out the legislation, moved by Leg. Burton, seconded by Leg. Myers. Signed out by Legislators Jenkins, Burton, Myers and Spreckman (without prejudice).

Leg. Myers moved adjournment of the Committee on Legislation, seconded by Leg. Jenkins, all present in favor. Leg. Rogowsky moved adjournment of the Committee on Government Operations, seconded by Leg. Myers. All voted in favor. Leg. Jenkins closed the meeting at 3:18 pm.