

Minutes of a Public Hearing held in the Town Hall on Monday,  
June 22, 1942 at 2:00 P.M.

Present:

Joseph V. Kelly, Supervisor

Henry M. Zaleski

Frank J. Smith

Austin H. Warner

Fred H. Boutcher, Justices of the Peace

WAIVER OF NOTICE AND CONSENT TO MEETING

We, the undersigned, being all members of the Town Board of the Town of Riverhead, County of Suffolk and State of New York, do hereby waive notice of the time, place, date and purpose of a meeting of the Town Board of the Town of Riverhead, to be held in the Town Hall, at Riverhead, New York on the 22nd day of June 1942 at 2:00 P.M., and do consent to the holding of such meeting and to the transaction of any and all business that may come before such meeting.

Dated at Riverhead, N.Y.  
June 22, 1942.

Signed: Joseph V. Kelly

Henry M. Zaleski

Frank J. Smith

Fred H. Boutcher

The matter for discussion was the petition to the Farm Security Administration of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish a temporary camp for migratory farm laborers in Suffolk County on the proposed site located on the North side of Route 58 (Riverhead By-Pass) just a little west of Al Magee' gas station.

Supervisor Kelly called the meeting to order and explained the purpose of the Hearing, stating that in order to save time and confusion, the proponents of the proposition would be heard first and then the opponents to the proposition would be heard.

Petitions for and against the proposition were received and placed on file.

Pres. of the Suffolk County Farm & Home Bureau

Mr. Leslie T. Wells addressed the meeting and brought out the factors due to the war which cause the serious farm labor problem. He stated that many of the young men are in the United States service and many of the experienced farm laborers who ordinarily migrate from place to place are afraid to do it this year because of the rationing of tires and gasoline. He said that the migratory camp system was the most feasible for Suffolk County. They are under government supervision, modern, sanitary and governed in such a manner to prevent any disturbances. He warned of the serious farm labor situation especially during the harvesting season and felt that something should be done about it.

Mr. George Cushman addressed the meeting outlining the importance of Agriculture in Suffolk County to the war effort. He stated that if

anything happened to agriculture in Suffolk County, Riverhead and other Towns will be in a precarious position; if there is a labor shortage in Suffolk County, means must be taken to supply sufficient farm labor during the harvest season.

Mr. John Ryder, Secretary of the Suffolk County Farm and Home Bureau addressed the meeting stating that the farm labor problem in Suffolk County has become acute. He said that there were many different propositions presented to the Farm Bureau for the solution of this serious problem and after much deliberation, the Bureau thought that the only feasible proposition was that of the migratory camp. For that reason the Bureau contacted F.S.A. He further stated that the migratory camps have been in operation for some time in many other States, three of which are located in the State of New Jersey and all have been successful in their purpose. He reiterated what Mr. Wells had already said adding that they not only visited some of the camps but contacted many people who live in the vicinity of the camps even to the State Troopers and all said that they were orderly and well kept. He said that all these communities objected to the camps coming there at first but after they had been established and they saw how they worked in such orderly fashion, no one had any objection to them whatsoever. He felt that this was the best way to solve the farm labor problem.

Mr. Walter Stark addressed the meeting as one who is interested in the success or failure of Agriculture in Suffolk County. He said he had no suggestions as to where the camp is to be placed however he could see no objection to a migratory labor camp, labor has always come up in previous years without supervision why not bring them up under supervision. He outlined in detail how serious it would be if the farmers were hampered in the harvesting of their crops by insufficient farm labor. He wished to go on record on behalf of I.W. Young & Co. as favoring the camp proposition.

Mr. Herman Aldrich addressed the meeting stating that he had signed the petition in favor of the migratory labor camp. He said that under ordinary conditions he would not have signed it but that this is war and the farmers must harvest their crops. He felt that a labor camp under Government supervision would be far better than the situation of floating labor as in the past. To him this seems to be the only solution.

Mr. Nathaniel Talmage addressed the meeting stating that he had attended a forum at Buffalo, New York at which time the matter of migratory farm labor camps were discussed. He said that there was nothing but praise for this camp system as to supervision, orderliness and results and this came from people who lived in the vicinity of various camps. He said that the hardest thing was to place the camp but after it was once placed there was no objection.

Pres. of the Suffolk County Potato Loader's Ass'tion

Mr. Albin Bobinski addressed the meeting stating that he represented 30 loading stations. He said that at a meeting of the Association it was the consensus of opinion that the labor shortage would present a serious problem in Suffolk County and that they wished to go on record as favoring the migratory camp plan.

Mr. Henry Talmage addressed the meeting stating that the farmers will need a lot of farm help this fall. He said that as far as migrant farm help is concerned, it would be no different this year than the past years, the only difference would be that under the camp plan, they would be under supervision. He pointed out that this problem is caused by the uncertainty of conditions such as the rationing of certain commodities and transportation facilities. Just as many skilled laborers have come up in the

past, they were orderly people and in most instances wanted to go back before the farmers were through with them. He stated that the potato crop means \$8,000,000.00 a year to Suffolk County, and because of this Suffolk County is in a better financial condition than any other rural community. He expressed the the urgent need of more farm labor and felt that the camp plan would solve the problem.

Justice Warner addressed the meeting stating that he favored the camp plan. He said that he has worked on this plan not in the capacity of a member of the Town Board but as an individual who sees the serious problem of a farm labor shortage and the necessity for a solution. He wanted it understood that politics had no bearing on his decision. He said that when the matter was brought to his attention, he personally investigated the migratory camp plan by contacting people who knew and lived near established camps and he received the same answer everywhere- that at first there was in every instance objection to the camp site but once they were established everyone was pleased and there were no objections- everyone agreed that the camps were well regulated, well kept and served their purpose splendidly- there was no congregating in the streets and that there was a curfew at 9:00 P.M. The likelihood of many children coming to the camp was small. He felt that this method of obtaining experienced farm labor under government supervision was far better than the old method of bringing in hundreds of laborers and then letting them float for themselves. He urged that the camp be tried for three months and then assured that if it did not work, the camp would not be established here next year.

Mr. John Lloyd of the United States <sup>Farms in Suffolk County</sup> Employment Service addressed the meeting stating that there were 2344 and that they employ between 1400 to 1900 monthly paid farm laborers, however it is estimated that between 2000 to 4000 temporary farm laborers will be needed during the harvest season. He said that there was a shortage of labor in Suffolk County and if they cannot obtain sufficient labor here, they must go elsewhere. He said that he knows of no reason why a community would object to such a camp if the situation requires it.

Mr. Elliot Benjamin addressed the meeting stating that this is the first year that they are operating their farm without a steady hired hand. He felt that the camp method would be a convenient way to obtain help.

Mr. Eugene Draper addressed the meeting stating that he went to the Farm Bureau to obtain a paper for signers in favor of the camp proposition. He found that many were indifereent to the plan and finally gave it up, thinking probably it wasn't for the best. But after listening to all of the speakers, he could not see why there was any objection to the migratory camp plan where the camp is under government supervision.

Mrs Carrie Seay addressed the meeting and objected to the establishment of a migratory labor camp in the Town of Riverhead because of the character of the class of people that the camp might bring to Riverhead.

Mr. Isidore Scheinberg, Attorney representing 66 petitioners opposing the location of the proposed migratory labor camp. He said that his clients have no objection to the establishment of a labor camp but they would rather not have it in their back yards.

Mr. John T. Hill addressed the meeting and objected to the establishment of a migratory labor camp in the Town of Riverhead.

No. 5

Mr. George W. Hildreth, President of the Board of Education of School/ addressed the meeting stating that he is aware of the shortage of labor and that he does not want to oppose anything which would be for the best interests of the public. He outlined what might happen in School District No. 5, if a migratory camp was established within it and did not think it was fair for this District to bear the additional expense but that it should be born by the School Districts which would be benefitted.

Mr. John L. Danielowich addressed the meeting and wished to go on record as opposing the camp because of the proposed site. He said that the camp would be placed on the property adjoining his and he did not want it in his back yard.

Mr. Albert T. Magee addressed the meeting and said that he objected to the location of the camp because it adjoined property belonging to him.

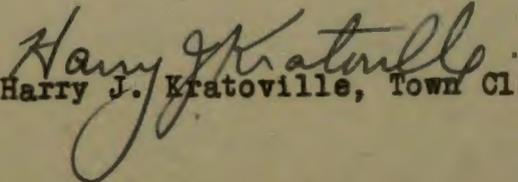
Mr. Albert S. Richards of the Farm Security Administration addressed the meeting and explained in detail, how the migratory farm labor camp would operate under government supervision if the plan was approved. He reiterated what has already been said in favor of the camps, adding that there should be no fear as to the expense of educating the children, if any, in the camps. He assured the meeting that the government would take care of that expense.

Justice Zaleski addressed the meeting stating that he has no objection to the establishment of labor camps and complimented the Farm Bureau and Committee for trying to bring experienced farm labor to Suffolk County, however he said in matters of this kind peoples rights, property rights and School District rights must be respected and wished to go on record as not opposing the establishment of a farm labor camp but that he is opposed to the present proposed site and wished the Farm Bureau much success in obtaining a new site.

No one else wishing to be heard, Supervisor Kelly declared the Hearing closed.

The Town Board, after deliberating the aforesaid matter at length, recorded the following roll call vote: Justice Zaleski No, Justice Smith No, Justice Warner Yes, Justice Boutcher Yes, Supervisor Kelly No. Total Vote, Yes 2, No 3.

There being no further business on motion and vote the meeting adjourned.

  
Harry J. Kratoville, Town Clerk.