

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **March 26, 2007**

Committee Members Present:

Supervisors Monroe
 Stec
 Mason
 Champagne
 F. Thomas
 Girard
 Sokol

Others Present:

Representing Warren County Economic
Development Corporation:
Leonard Fosbrook, President
Peter Wohl, Director, Adirondack Regional
Business Incubator
John Wheatley, Project Manager, Queensbury
Industrial Park
Joan Parsons, Commissioner of Administrative &
Fiscal Services
Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board
Nicholas Caimano, Budget Officer
Supervisor Gabriels
Supervisor Belden
Supervisor Merlino
Supervisor Geraghty
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

Mr. Monroe called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 26, 2007 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Fosbrook, President, Economic Development Corporation, Warren County, who distributed copies of his agenda to members of the committee; a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Fosbrook stated there were no updates relative to the National Guard grant and the Queensbury Industrial Park.

Mr. Fosbrook explained that the agenda today involved the Revitalization of Downtown Glens Falls, which was the second item on the Project Priority List recently approved by the Committee.

Peter Wohl, Director of Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI), apprised that his Department had been approached by Congresswoman Gillibrand requesting appropriations as they related to economic development in Warren County. In coordination with the County Planning Department and the City of Glens Falls, he said, four requests totaling \$4 million were identified and prioritized in an effort to increase their chances for funding assistance. He stated two requests were for the City of Glens Falls, one relating to Civic Center upgrades and the other were catalyst projects for the South Street Corridor, while the Airport runway extension as well as the Chester Industrial Park were the other two requests. According to recent headlines in *The Post Star*, he said, the Congresswoman anticipated being vocal in forwarding the appropriation requests; however, if they were unsuccessful, she vowed to assist them in seeking other grant opportunities.

Continuing on with Item II, Mr. Fosbrook related his department had spent a significant amount of time on Business Assistance. He reminded the Committee the Barton Group recently purchased a building on the corner of Ridge and Warren Streets to be utilized as their corporate headquarters, bringing with them 30 jobs to the area. He stated the intent of the Barton Group was to make this a Green Building, (one of 700 in the entire United States). Mr. Fosbrook explained a "Green Building" as an energy efficient building that used geothermal heating/cooling; solar panels to assist in producing energy; a rainwater collection plan, as well as using some of the granite they mined in the construction of the building and sidewalks making the curb appeal extremely attractive. He said they anticipated this building to be used as a teaching model by producing a video and conducting tours for schools revealing the unique technology Barton had to offer.

Mr. Belden exited the meeting at 10:27 a.m.

Mr. Fosbrook stated his department had assisted the Barton Group by applying for a National Grid grant as they were an Empire Zone Company, introducing them to the National Development Council, as well as directing them to the appropriate people to receive the assistance and guidance they required. He said the anticipated completion date of this project was August of 2007.

Mr. Caimano exited the meeting at 10:28 a.m.

Mr. Fosbrook related the Glen Street Associates was another company his department had worked very closely with for the past few years. He said they first began working with Peter Hoffman, Principal of Glen Street Associates, on the renovation of 100 Glen Street, a 23,000 square foot building that was totally occupied and currently on the tax rolls in the City of Glens Falls. He indicated the second building Mr. Hoffman just recently completed was 136 Glen Street (former Glens Falls National Bank), which had become another signature building in the City. He said that building was 6,600 square feet with a retail business on the first floor, office space on the second floor and apartments on the third floor, which ultimately had become a model that most cities followed.

Mr. Gabriels entered the meeting 10:29 a.m.

Mr. Fosbrook apprised that Mr. Hoffman had just commenced renovating 140 Glen Street and Assemblywoman Sayward had executed a lease for first floor office space. He indicated the building was 10,000 square feet with apartments on the second and third floors but anticipated the second floor becoming office space. In addition, he said, Mr. Hoffman purchased 86 Glen Street, a 15,000 square foot building that would become strictly office space. Mr. Fosbrook advised that Mr. Hoffman and his company had renovated a total of 54,600 square feet.

Mr. Girard added that Mr. Hoffman was an impressive individual, who had plans for the buildings prior to purchasing them and was the "king" of tax abatement by selling and investing in other real estate. He said Warren County should be thankful that Mr. Hoffman was willing to invest his funds in the City of Glens Falls. Mr. Fosbrook stated their department worked in conjunction with developers locating potential tenants in the various townships throughout Warren County. He added that Mr. Hoffman visited their office on a weekly basis. In addition, there was the misconception they must recruit companies to Warren County and then locate space; however, he said, it was actually the reverse. Mr. Fosbrook stated their approach to economic development had become a model of success that other communities were following.

A brief discussion ensued.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Girard, Mr. Fosbrook commented the EDC (Economic Development Corporation) worked closely with the Chamber of Commerce. While the Chamber dealt with the policy and business practices, he said EDC worked with the infrastructure.

Mr. Fosbrook added that Michael Kaidas was another developer that recently made inquiry about purchasing his third building. Mr. Girard said he was concerned about the real estate speculators whose only intent was resale. Mr. Fosbrook said the solution was strict code enforcement which would prohibit owners from purchasing buildings who did not want to utilize their personal funds in renovating a building. Furthermore, he said, the assets to the City of Glens Falls were the existing buildings. While some property owners were assessed after renovations, he noted, other landowners were not and there appeared to be no movement by the City to approach the absent property owners.

Continuing with the next item on the agenda, Mr. Fosbrook said they just received their 501(c) 3 designation for the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC). He said they were currently structuring a model that would offer a property owner a tax incentive in exchange for donating their building to EDC. Thereafter, he stated, EDC would act as the liaison in canvassing downtown developers.

Mr. Fosbrook related EDC was in the middle of the revitalization of downtown Glens Falls with Peter Wohl acting as the project manager and John Wheatley working with National Grid. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Girard, Mr. Fosbrook said he was hopeful that Mr. Levinsky would move forward in the projects he had proposed; however, he noted, there were other interested developers should those proposals fall through.

Relative to Item III on the agenda, Mr. Fosbrook commented the EDC Sales plan involved a \$25,000 expenditure from their marketing and travel budget in an effort to recruit nano and biotechnology businesses to downtown Glens Falls and/or the Queensbury Industrial Park.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Wheatley, who distributed the EDC Targeting Promotion & Sales Plan for 2007. He acknowledged the nano and biotechnology industries were widely recognized opportunities for Warren County and they would be utilizing this sales platform to market all Warren County sites that were light industrial or vacant. In addition, he said, they aligned themselves with two regional marketing initiatives, the first one being the Center for Economic Growth (CEG) - New York Loves Nanotech. He indicated this initiative was three to four years old and was a collection of economic development agencies, supply companies, as well as governmental agencies that utilized the coalition to recruit people to this region.

Mr. Wheatley stated the second initiative was state-wide, New York Loves Bio, which was put together by the New York State Economic Development Council (NYSEDC). He stated this model was new but similar to the nano tech model. He said their department were members of both initiatives and would be participating in four of the seven major trade shows that were international in scope. Mr. Wheatley said the map on page 3 demonstrated a comprehensive listing of all the nanoelectronic assets in the region and would be the back drop to the entire exhibit. The second map, he noted, listed two parks located in Warren County, Queensbury Industrial Park and Tech Meadows at Glens Falls.

Mr. Wheatley advised that Warren County would gain immediate regional and international exposure, as well as joining a group of elite individuals that had tech experience recruiting organizations to the area. He said he anticipated construction to commence within the next 1-2 years while infrastructure would begin this summer. He acknowledged this was a time consuming process with a big financial commitment but the time to get involved was now.

Mr. Fosbrook added that his department was involved in building relationships and attracting businesses in the Tech Valley to relocate somewhere in Warren County.

Relative to Item IV, Mr. Wohl apprised the annual luncheon was scheduled for noon on April 27, 2007 at The Hiland with Congresswoman Gillibrand being the guest speaker. He said the notices and invitations, as well as one additional newsletter should all be forthcoming.

Mr. Monroe queried whether Mr. Fosbrook had any involvement with the wind project. According to recent reports, he said, the former governor was opposed to the project while it appeared Governor Spitzer may support it. Mr. Fosbrook replied their Board was on record supporting the project but there was not much else they could do.

Mr. Mason exited the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

A brief discussion ensued.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Champagne and seconded by Mr. Stec, Mr. Monroe adjourned the meeting at 11:01 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber
Legislative Office Specialist