

# WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **OCTOBER 1, 2007**

**Committee Members Present:**

Supervisors Monroe  
Stec  
F. Thomas  
Sokol

**Committee Members Absent:**

Supervisors Mason  
Champagne  
Girard

**Others Present:**

Representing Warren County Economic  
Development Corporation:  
Leonard Fosbrook, President  
Peter Wohl, Vice President  
Representing Adirondack Regional Chamber of  
Commerce:  
Tori Riley  
Matt Fuller  
Todd Shimkus  
Peter Aust, Chamber of Commerce of  
Southern Saratoga County  
Sheldon Hurst, Adirondack Community College  
William H. Thomas, Chairman  
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative &  
Fiscal Services  
Nicole Livingston, Deputy Clerk of the Board  
Supervisor Geraghty  
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office Specialist

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Mr. Monroe called the Economic Development Committee Meeting to order at 10:22 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Leonard Fosbrook, President, Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who requested a Resolution of Support from this Committee relative to approving a boundary amendment to the County Local Law. He explained that in order to move the Finch Pruyn application forward, a boundary amendment would be required that included *all* their property within the Empire Zone. When the parcels located along Quaker Road in the Town of Queensbury were re-zoned to highway commercial, he stated, they did not meet the requirements of their development plan and it necessitated a land swap for the Finch Pruyn property. In response to a query by Mr. Stec, Mr. Fosbrook replied a supporting resolution by the Town of Queensbury would also be required.

Motion was made by Mr. Stec, seconded by Mr. Sokol and carried unanimously approving the request as outlined above, and the necessary resolution was authorized for the next Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Fosbrook expounded that members of his Department recently attended an event sponsored by the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce (ARCC) whereby they visited Hillsboro, Oregon, a community heavily involved in nanotechnology. He said a Power Point presentation was prepared outlining the highlights of their trip, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Todd Shimkus, Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce, who briefly introduced all attendees: Matt Fuller, attorney with the law firm of Fitzgerald, Morris Baker & Firth; Sheldon Hurst, Adirondack Community College (ACC); Peter Aust, Chief Executive

Officer (CEO) and President of Southern Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; and Tori Riley, Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce. He noted there were representatives from all three counties (Saratoga, Washington and Warren), the private sector, as well as economic development, political and educational leaders.

Mr. Shimkus explained the City of Hillsboro grew from 7,500 people in the 1950's to 85,000 in 2007, and they projected a population of 170,000 within the next 20 years, if their plan goes according to schedule. He indicated their economic transformation went from forest/agricultural products to high technology when the Intel chip fabrication facility was constructed in 1976, ultimately proving the two economies could grow adjacent to one another. Throughout their trip, he said, they had the opportunity to learn how the local schools and community college were impacted by the advancement in technology. Mr. Shimkus indicated the purpose of this trip was to view the practices of this community while anticipating the same growth this region may experience in subsequent years.

Messrs. Geraghty and W. Thomas entered 10:30 a.m.

Mr. Shimkus stated the transformation began in the 1950's when the City of Hillsboro developed a water system to attract food processing plants in an attempt to increase the agricultural economy. He said a water system was designed to produce fifty million gallons of water per day when only three million gallons were needed. In the 1960's, he apprised, the City of Hillsboro decided enough industry was needed to provide job opportunities to every two out of three local residents. In order to achieve this objective, Mr. Shimkus indicated their first comprehensive land use plan was adopted in 1978, which created a metro system that established the regional infrastructure services. While many cities had already enacted a land use plan, he said, the City of Hillsboro required a 20-year supply of land to be utilized for manufacturing and to expand their urban growth boundary.

Mr. Shimkus explained the City of Hillsboro was first explored by the Intel Corporation in 1974 and two years later, their first of four chip fabrication plants had been constructed that employed 16,000 employees. He noted there were many advantages to the Intel Corporation relocating in Hillsboro, such as private aviation, the quality of schools, and an abundance of water.

Mr. Shimkus stated the State of Oregon assisted the City of Hillsboro in their anticipated expansion by calculating the tax assessments for tech-related properties, as well as mandating the land use plans and zoning. Mr. Shimkus apprised that sixty-five percent of the school district budgets were funded by the State of Oregon while all property taxes were capped at \$5 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. Furthermore, he indicated that Intel and other businesses advocated that the State of Oregon require that all elementary school districts be consolidated. Communities within the State of Oregon did not levy a sales tax preventing competition for retail business, added Mr. Shimkus.

Mr. Shimkus noted there were fewer levels of government; only one school district with a student population of 20,000; and a 50-year land use plan had been adopted. Despite the original water project being proposed for a different industry, he said, it was the primary cause for growth. He further related that the City of Hillsboro elected to become their own regional economy and not depend upon the City of Portland.

During their trip, Mr. Shimkus apprised of various meetings with business leaders, elected, school,

economic development, and planning officials who attributed their success to the joint cooperation of all parties involved. Throughout their travels, he said, they noticed the advanced technology firms and agriculture industry were thriving amongst themselves. Each year the City of Hillsboro hosted an annual town meeting to celebrate and evaluate the progress of their 50-year plan with both professional and elected officials in attendance, stated Mr. Shimkus. Unlike Warren County, he said, the City of Hillsboro did not have a tourism industry.

During one meeting, Mr. Shimkus said he recalled a comment made by a member of their Planning Department that “they had been hired with the understanding that their job was to facilitate, not regulate.” According to their officials, he commented, it took the City of Hillsboro and Chamber of Commerce 18 months to lay out a comprehensive plan and establish a support system to balance any competing interests. From an economical standpoint, he said, the business officials learned the employee wages in all sectors had increased.

Mr. Shimkus indicated Hillsboro welcomed new members to their community by embracing their differences and granting numerous opportunities to women entering the workforce. He said the Hillsboro Library offered a reading program in 15 languages, as many of their farm workers were of the Latino descent. Furthermore, when they compared the educational background of New York residents with Oregon residents, he said, Hillsboro had a slight advantage in the degrees obtained from colleges and universities. In addition to the many micro-electronic courses offered by Portland Community College, Mr. Shimkus indicated agricultural courses were taught by a full-time local farmer.

In summation, Mr. Shimkus noted the City of Hillsboro was attempting to create planned multi-use developments (PUD) along the many light rail stops for residential, retail and manufacturing establishments eliminating the need to commute by automobile from their homes to your place of employment. The biggest challenge facing their City was the increased traffic congestion on roadways adjacent to the Portland International Airport, commented Mr. Shimkus.

Mr. Monroe said he was surprised to learn the State of Oregon had capped their local property taxes rather than allowing the burden to fall upon the smaller communities. Since Warren County was a tourism based community, he said, it would be difficult to eliminate the sales tax when they considered the amount of revenue it generated. He further stated that many residents expressed their school identity would be lost if consolidating schools occurred, and Mr. Shimkus responded in this particular case, the State of Oregon imposed the merger. In addition, Mr. Shimkus apprised that the Gates Foundation, as well as Intel, encouraged the connection between education and careers.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Wohl informed the Committee he was previously employed as a management consultant with the Cities of Portland and Hillsboro. While it was easy to recognize all the differences between the host location and Warren County, he said, these folks visited Oregon with an open mind and were prepared to make recommendations to achieve the same economic advantages.

With respect to the size of their water system, Mr. Monroe said Warren County would receive significant opposition if they attempted to construct a facility 25 times larger than their current need.

At the time the City of Hillsboro improved their water system, Mr. Fosbrook said they anticipated it being a food processing center.

A discussion ensued.

Mr. Shimkus apprised that outside the Hillsboro urban growth boundary, they had stringent guidelines whereby an individual was required to perform some form of agriculture on the land they owned. Mr. Fuller suggested that if a plan were developed that met the necessary impact issues, the towns could potentially develop land within and adjacent to the Adirondack Park Agency (APA). There were 100 acre shovel-ready, pre-approved sites available through the agency, commented Mr. Monroe.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Sokol and seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, Mr. Monroe adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber  
Legislative Office Specialist