

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: SEPTEMBER 29, 2008

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS SOKOL
BELDEN
TESSIER
CHAMPAGNE
MERLINO
STEC

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR TAYLOR

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
PATRICIA TATICH, DIRECTOR
WAYNE LAMOTHE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
LAURA MOORE, PLANNING COORDINATOR
REPRESENTING WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION:
LEONARD FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT
FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
TRISH NENNINGER, SECOND ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
HAL PAYNE, COMMISSIONER OF ADMINISTRATIVE
AND FISCAL SERVICES
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS GOODSPEED
STRAINER
THOMAS
JANET KENNEDY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LAKES TO LOCKS
PASSAGE, INC.
TOM RANDALL, *THE ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Sokol called the meeting of the Planning & Community Development Committee to order at 10:34 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Champagne and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Tatich, Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of same is on file with the minutes.

Ms. Tatich began the agenda review with the first pending item which pertained to a request to have a speaker from the New York State Office of Technology address the Committee on the topic of broadband. She noted that she had been assured that a representative would come to address the Committee. She advised that Debra Olds, who was employed at the Technical Assistance Center in Plattsburgh, New York, was the representative for Warren County. She stated that it would be easier to request the attendance of a speaker, if a specific time and date for the meeting was set in advance. She questioned when the next Planning & Community Development meeting would be

held and Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, replied that it would be October 27, 2008. Ms. Tatich said that she would call to determine if a speaker would be available to address the Committee on that date.

Ms. Tatich apprised that she had met with Julie Pacyna, Purchasing Agent, with regards to going out to bid for the Broadband Study. She said that she had been informed that although there were companies with State contracts for broadband study, the regulations required a 'mini bid'. She noted that the company from Rochester that had showed interest in performing the study was on State contract. She added that after discussions with Mrs. Pacyna it had been determined that the County did not need to embark on the bidding process in order to use the services of that company. She questioned whether the Committee wanted to proceed with the Broadband Study.

Discussion ensued pertaining to broadband.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to proceed with the Broadband Study.

In connection with the second pending item, Ms. Tatich apprised that she had spoken with Alan Hipps, of the Adirondack Community Housing Trust (ACHT), who informed her that they had hired an individual to assist with the advancing of projects. She added that representatives from the Planning & Community Development Department and the ACHT would meet in October to begin dialogue on home ownership and collaboration activities.

In reference to the third pending item, Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development, informed the Committee that he had begun discussions with Luisa Sherman, of the Lake George Chamber of Commerce, regarding shared services of an Event Coordinator. He said that they had determined how the shared services would work and had forwarded a request to the Department of State for funding through the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program (LWRP). He added that he hoped to have further information by the next Committee meeting.

Proceeding with the fourth pending item, Mr. LaMothe stated that they had requested up to \$30,000 in grant funding for materials to be used for the construction of a railroad platform at the Stony Creek Station (1,000 Acres Resort) from the LWRP. He added that there was an existing grant program that they might be able to reallocate funds from for this purpose. He apprised that the current contract called for a certain scope of work to be completed.

Pertaining to the fifth pending item, Ms. Tatich said that an extensive marketing program had been initiated to apprise potential lower income clients of funds that were available for assistance. She added that they had a significant waiting list for funding. She stated that she would email the list to other Department Heads that dealt with lower income families so that the names on the list could be compared with the names on other departments' lists.

Mr. Stec entered the meeting at 10:45 a.m.

Mr. LaMothe noted that there was \$2.8 million in Community Development funds available and approximately \$1.3 million had been earmarked for housing improvement programs. He said that 28 homes were in the process of being improved, as follows;

- ▶ three in the Town of Hague;
- ▶ three in the Town of Bolton;
- ▶ two in the Town of Horicon;
- ▶ nine in the Town of Johnsbury;
- ▶ nine in the Town of Lake Luzerne;
- ▶ one in the Town of Thurman; and
- ▶ one in the Town of Queensbury.

Mr. LaMothe stated that there were approximately 90 people on the waiting list for assistance with their homes. He said that of the \$1.3 million, \$600,000 had been committed to current projects.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Tatich apprised that she had informed her staff that the priority for work with households was to assist with furnaces and weatherization.

Ms. Tatich requested a resolution that would authorize the Planning & Community Development Department to act as the project sponsor for the 400th Explore NY reimbursable grant to be submitted by Lakes to Locks Passage, Inc. and would authorize the County to enter into a contract with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for funding provided from the Hudson Fulton Champlain Quadricentennial Act. Laura Moore, Planning Coordinator of the Planning & Community Development Department, introduced Janet Kennedy, Executive Director of Lakes to Locks Passage, Inc. She added that they were hoping to utilize the \$45,000 which had been received from the Hudson Fulton Champlain Quadricentennial Commission. She noted that the funding required a cash match. She added that there was a proposal in the agenda packet as to how those funds could be spent.

Ms. Kennedy apprised that she had been working with Mr. LaMothe and Ms. Moore on ideas for ways to access the \$45,000 in grant funding. She said that she was proposing that Lakes to Locks Passage, Inc. work with Warren County in the same way that they had with the Town of Lake George when they placed exhibits in the Lake George Visitors Center. She explained that there were four items that they were proposing to the communities for consideration, as follows:

- ▶ community kiosks, at a cost of \$6,000 each;
- ▶ a website, at a cost of \$2,500 for the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor (FWHC) plus an additional \$1,000 per community;
- ▶ video programming, at a cost of \$1,500 per minute; and
- ▶ theme based itineraries, at a cost of \$1,500 each.

Ms. Kennedy explained that the community kiosks would provide information on the sites and attractions within the community and she added that an example of a kiosk was included in the agenda packet. She advised that the kiosks would include a bulletin board with a map of the community that could be changed as businesses came and went. She noted that the kiosks were designed to be placed in permanent locations within the community.

Ms. Kennedy expounded that another option was to develop a FWHC section on the Lakes to Locks Passage website, www.lakestolocks.com. She noted that the website currently promoted the Towns of Hague, Bolton, Lake George, Queensbury and the City of Glens Falls.

Ms. Kennedy advised that her favorite section of the website was called the media room, which contained short one-minute video fact stories about the community. She added that they had a list of over one hundred stories that could be added to the website. She stated that the stories were great for building community pride and were beneficial in promoting tourism. She noted that the videos that were currently on the website had been paid for by Stewarts Shops, who would also show the videos in their stores. She added that the videos were suitable for teachers to use in their class curriculum.

The last option, Ms. Kennedy stated was the development of theme based itineraries that would involve creating packages for tourists depicting what there was to see and do in Warren County. She apprised that she would work with Mr. LaMothe and Ms. Moore to discuss ways that the communities could leverage the \$45,000 in funding.

Ms. Kennedy played an example of a one-minute video for the Committee.

Mr. Champagne clarified that the grant would reimburse \$45,000 after \$90,000 had been expended. He noted that the options were items that would be nice to have; however, he questioned if they were necessary. Mr. Geraghty questioned if the funds had been budgeted. Ms. Moore explained that the individual towns could use occupancy tax funds for this purpose. Mr. Sokol asked if it would be up to each town whether or not they wanted to participate and Ms. Moore replied affirmatively.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Merlino, seconded by Mr. Belden and carried unanimously to authorize the Planning & Community Development Department to act as the project sponsor for the 400th Explore NY reimbursable grant to be submitted by Lakes to Locks Passage, Inc. and to authorize the County to enter into a contract with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation for funding provided from the Hudson Fulton Champlain Quadricentennial Act. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the October 17, 2008 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich requested to amend the 2008 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$419, to reflect reimbursement for postage.

Motion was made by Mr. Belden, seconded by Mr. Tessier and carried unanimously to amend the 2008 County budget, as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Tatich requested transfers of funds from various account codes to the Contract Code (CD65 8676 0333 470) in an amount totaling \$51,598. She noted that these were administration funds which had not been used and were being transferred so they could be utilized towards the Micro-Enterprise Program. Mr. LaMothe explained that the amounts were the remaining balances in each of the accounts. Mr. Geraghty questioned if the budget had been overstated by \$51,598 and Mr. LaMothe responded that the funds were in those accounts for certain administrative costs which the State no longer allowed. Mr. LaMothe explained that mid-way through the grant the State had changed their policy which accounted for the remaining funds. Mr. Champagne asked if any of the funds were local dollars and Mr. LaMothe replied that they were grant funds.

Discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Tessier, seconded by Mr. Merlino and carried unanimously to approve the request for transfers of funds, as outlined above and to refer the same to the Finance Committee. *Copies of the requests for Transfers of Funds are on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaMothe pointed out that they had a contract with Image Mate On-Line, which had a program for web-based GIS (Geographic Information System). He added that the funding for the program had been eliminated in the 2009 County budget and therefore, the contract would be terminated in September of 2009.

Ms. Tatich stated that they had surpassed \$25 million in awards for the Housing Improvement Program. She added that since she started working for the County the total amount of funding awards was \$26,067,718.

Ms. Tatich, Mr. LaMothe and Ms. Moore exited the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Len Fosbrook, President of the Warren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; a copy of same is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Fosbrook stated that the first item on the agenda was to review the Emerging Business Trends Luncheon, which had Dr. John Kelly, Senior Vice President and Director of Research and Development for IBM (International Business Machines), as the keynote speaker. He thanked the Supervisors that had attended. He noted that

there had been approximately 280 people in attendance and the comments that had been received from the business community had been favorable. He apprised that during Dr. Kelly's speech on the 'Golden Age of Innovation in New York State' he had stated that "the growth in nano-technology in Albany's Tech Valley region will continue to move north and Warren County is right on the doorstep of this activity".

Mr. Fosbrook expressed his appreciation to the sponsors of the Emerging Business Trends Luncheon; Behan Communications, Inc.; Glens Falls National Bank & Trust Company; and Lemery Greisler LLC. He also thanked the co-sponsors; the Warren County Council of Chambers and *The Post Star*. He noted that it had been a significant event and many businesses had purchased tables. He said that the EDC anticipated the luncheon to become an annual event.

Mr. Fosbrook stated that the next item on the agenda pertained to the Queensbury Business Park and he added that a picture was included in the agenda packet of the Readiness Center which was being constructed by the National Guard. He said that completion of the Readiness Center was anticipated for March 2009 and another building would be constructed at the site at a later date. He advised that the infrastructure for the building had been completed. Mr. Sokol questioned the size of the building and Mr. Stec responded that it was 500,000 square feet. *(Subsequent to the meeting, Mr. Stec clarified that the Readiness Center was 50,000 square feet.)*

Mr. Fosbrook apprised that the third item on the agenda pertained to the Empire Zone Program. He said that there had been misuses early in the Program which had occurred prior to Warren County getting their zone. He added that everyone was paying for the misuses of the Program. He stated that the Program would conclude in 2011 and Dean Skelos, the new Senate Majority Leader, had put forth a new program. He noted that the current program was not very helpful to small businesses. He advised that in the current economy the small business owner would need more assistance than was currently available. He reported that he would attend a meeting of the New York State Economic Development Council at the Proctors Theater in Troy, New York the first week in October to receive updates on the Empire Zone Program. He noted that an outline of Mr. Skelos' plan to rebuild New York State's economy had been included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Fosbrook reported that the last item on the agenda pertained to Empire State Development. He explained that due to the fact that these were financially difficult times, they were not looking to the State for new tools or direction. He stated that they had not received any assistance since the Spitzer Administration took office. He added that under the Pataki Administration, Empire State Development had been a large part of the organization. He said that the system had worked well because the regional offices had a good understanding of what the local needs were. He explained that when the Spitzer Administration took office they had divided the program into upstate and downstate with two co-chairmen. He added that the co-chairmen had spent a year developing a blueprint for growth and had drafted a final document. He said that funds had been put in place, some of which were part of the Restore New York Grant

Program. He stated that the Restore New York Grant Program was supposed to be back online by now; however, he added, so far it was not. He advised that Governor Paterson appointed Robert Wilmers, the Chairman of M&T Bank, to head Empire State Development. He added that they recently announced the choices for the new upstate and downstate chairmen. He noted that the downstate chairman was affiliated with the banking industry and the upstate chairman oversaw the Rochester Economic Development Program. He said that at this time they were awaiting proposals from the chairmen to determine what types of programs would be established.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Fosbrook noted that there was a publication that began in 2001 entitled 'The Calculation of the Gross Domestic Product by MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area)'. He said that when they originated the document the level had been set at 100, the departure point. He added that the data had been recorded from 2001 to 2006 and this MSA had a steady and continuing growth in gross domestic product over that time period. Mr. Stec questioned where we were as compared to the remainder of the State and added that he felt we would be doing better than the State average. Mr. Fosbrook responded that the question was difficult to answer as the report was done by MSA. He added that we were a particularly small MSA and added that he always compared our area to Ithaca, New York. Mr. Champagne questioned what the numbers would be if the catheter industry was removed from the equation and Mr. Fosbrook responded that there would be a decrease as opposed to an increase. He noted that tourism and the catheter industry were key components of the areas economy.

Mr. Fosbrook apprised that the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI) had put on a day long program for small business and entrepreneurship at Adirondack Community College on Friday, September 26, 2008. He added that he had attended for the majority of the day. He said there had been different panels which had included some of the best minds in the area.

There being no further business to come before the Planning & Community Development Committee, on motion by Mr. Belden and seconded by Mr. Champagne, Mr. Sokol adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist