

Economic Development Committee Minutes

May 2, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Daly; Supervisors Peck, A. Johnson, Kinowski, Richardson, Sausville, Wood, Collyer and Southworth; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; Todd Shimkus, Saratoga Chamber of Commerce; Jason Kemper, Planning; League of Women Voters; Dennis Brobston, SEDC.

Chairman Daly called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Johnson the minutes of the April 4, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

Ms. Daly said the first item is to support an application for the Saratoga and North Creek Railway, LLC before the Surface Transportation Board to provide rail service on the approximately 29.71 miles of existing rail track known as the “Tahawus Line” running from North Creek, NY with terminus at Newcomb, NY.

Mr. Wood said the Saratoga and North Creek Railway began operations on passenger service between North Creek and Saratoga Springs this past summer. They had an extremely successful year in the passenger business and they are looking to expand their business. There is approximately 30 miles of existing rail between North Creek and Tahawus where there are huge pilings of tailings from mining operations that have occurred in previous years. Currently, a very limited amount of those tailings are being hauled by large tractor trailers and are being sold as fill. The opportunity is there for large quantities of them to be sold and the logical mode of transportation would be rail. The Saratoga/North Creek railroad has applied for permission to use that rail line. Initially, there was some opposition from certain Adirondack Park Agencies and related organizations. Essex, and Warren Counties have both adopted resolutions supporting approval by New York State and the Federal transportation people to authorize the use of the rail line for the purpose of transporting tailings. The Governor’s office has indicated that certain agencies within the their office including DOT and AEC are now in support of this because the end product is the right thing as there is less environmental stress using the railroad to transport the tailings as opposed to tractor trailers. The Town of Corinth has already passed a resolution because they own a rail line in Saratoga County and it is to their economic benefit that this be successful. They, as well as Warren County, receive a certain amount of money for every rail car that travels the rail line. This is an economic plus and the right thing to do, he said. Mr. Wood said it is his hope that Saratoga County would join with other organizations in supporting this effort.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Sausville in support of a Resolution supporting the application from the Saratoga North Creek Railway before the Surface Transportation Board. Unanimous.

Ms. Daly said that the Capital District Cleaner Greener Sustainability Plan which was approved last year, with the City of Albany as the lead agency, was supported by a letter of support from Saratoga County. This project is now underway, and the planning program is going to be the first phase of this endeavor, which is intended to provide the necessary resources for each region. What they will do is develop a comprehensive sustainability plan and after you get through that with each community weighing in with its own visions, goals and objectives they will enter into stage two which will be a more competitive process for projects to receive funding. The planning stage is estimated to take approximately eight months. Chairman Wood has asked Mr. Kemper to assist him with attendance at meetings to provide input.

Mr. Wood said the first meeting is scheduled for May 10th at noon in Schenectady County; a location has yet to be identified. They have identified eight subcommittees that will focus on different topics which will include transportation, energy, water, food systems, economic development, climate adaptation and waste.

Ms. Daly said the other application that the county was a part of was the Local Government Efficiency Grant. Saratoga County, joined by seven other counties, has taken the lead agency role. If the grant goes through the next phase will be to prepare the RFP to go out for bid for possible vendors to begin the process.

Ms. Daly said the Capital District Economic Development Council has reconvened for 2012. She said she attended the meeting along with Mr. Brobston from SEDC. Saratoga County will be working on the plan implementation work group which is designed to develop a comprehensive implementation agenda for the plan that was written last year and provide oversight of the entire process. She said the council is trying to make the process much more transparent with tracking of the actual applications available via their website.

Ms. Daly said the release of the application is anticipated soon, with an application deadline anticipated by mid-summer. Changes that have been implemented include having more time for scoring, with a six week scheduling time compared to the two week time frame of before. It is anticipated that this will be done in late summer and awards will be made in the fall.

Ms. Daly said the subcommittee met with the Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce. They anticipate meeting with the Saratoga Chamber of Commerce and SEDC as well. She said there is no order of finish to the entities that they are meeting with. They have been working with individual schedules, which have dictated what has been done to date. **Ms. Daly requested that anyone who intends to go to the SEDC Annual Dinner on May 30th to please contact the Clerk of the Board, as there is a registration process.**

Ms. Daly said she would like to plan a planning session for the committee to meet to discuss the work of the subcommittee. She said she would like to do that outside of the regular Economic Development Committee meeting, so it can be more of a workshop with some draft plans that have been written. She said she is targeting sometime in June.

On a motion made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Johnson the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom