

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

NOVEMBER 1, 2007 – 4:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman A. Johnson; Supervisors Daly, Janik, Richardson and Sausville; David Wickerham, County Administrator; Jason Kemper, Planning; Greg Dixon, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; League of Women Voters; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Sausville the minutes of the September 6, 2007 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Dixon gave a brief update on tourism and upcoming events for 2008. He thanked the Board of Supervisors for their continued support of tourism in Saratoga County. Through the first three-quarters, the occupancy tax was up by approximately 7%. Attendance at the main attractions this summer was up 5% - 8%. Inquiries continue to be strong, with mail and phone inquiries on the rise, up 9% this year and website visits up 15%.

Mr. Dixon said some of the highlights of the past year included a \$145,000 cooperative ad campaign with some of the major attractions and hotels. Negotiations with NY Media were successful in obtaining approximately \$30,000 in free promotional advertising for the county. A firm was retained to create a video on attractions in the county, which can be accessed from the website. There has been a complete restructuring of the website in order to more actively let people know what is going on in the county.

Mr. Dixon said in 2008 work will be done to locate funds to put toward on-line advertising through the internet and improving the website. The following are some improvements to be made.

1. On line advertising through the internet
2. Improvements with public relations
3. Use technology to continue with an on-going research program to find out why and when people are coming to the area.

Mr. Dixon said, an I LOVE NY grant in the amount of \$72,446 was received, which was an 11% increase from last year.

Mr. Kemper gave a brief powerpoint presentation on the progress of the Zim Smith Trail. Bids were sent out in the Spring for the southern portion of the trail. The project is under budget and progressing on schedule, with the trail now 99% complete.

A draft copy of the proposed trail policy was distributed to all committee members for their review and comments. Mr. Johnson requested that comments be submitted to either

he or Mr. Kemper in the next couple of weeks. This would allow the final policy to be adopted at the December Economic Development Committee meeting.

Mr. Johnson distributed a letter from Greenman Pedersen, Inc., looking for an amendment to their contract for an increase of approximately \$80,000 due to delays in the trail project.

Mr. Kemper said project costs for the Zim Smith Mid-County Trail system currently total \$450,000. We are under budget and on target with the completion, he said.

Mr. Richardson said in the past there have been funds allocated to the Economic Development Committee. He suggested that the committee might want to pursue this once again for future years as an avenue for smaller communities such as Mechanicville, Corinth and other small communities to obtain funds through grant applications for various projects that they might have.

Mr. Johnson said he would forward this idea on to the incoming chairman of the Economic Development Committee for 2008.

On a motion made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Sausville the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom