

LEGISLATIVE AND RESEARCH COMMITTEE MINUTES

FEBRUARY 3, 2009 – 4:30 P.M.

Present: Chairman Rowland; Supervisors Daly, Raymond, Southworth, Veitch, Wright Yepsen and Grattidge; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Jaimie O’Neill, Planning; John Franck, Michele Boxley, City of Saratoga Springs; Press.

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

On a motion made by Ms. Yepsen, seconded by Mr. Veitch the minutes of the January 14, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Grattidge distributed a sample resolution from American Farmland Trust having to do with State programs on farms and protection. The county has been a beneficiary of this program since it’s beginning in 1992. Agriculture in Saratoga County is one of the larger industries.

In 1996 the county received a planning grant, and at that time put together a Farmland and Protection Plan for the county. There have been many successful programs in the county through the years including the following:

- Curtis Farm - Town of Ballston
- Zuzich Farm - Town of Stillwater
- Saratoga Sod Farm - Town of Stillwater
- Hanrahan Farm - Town of Stillwater
- Saratoga Apple - Town of Saratoga
- Drum Hall Property - Near the Saratoga Battlefield

With the funding that has been received, over 1,000 acres in Saratoga County have been received with easements and purchase and development rights. The county has benefited on their planning grants as well as individual towns.

Mr. Grattidge requested a resolution to encourage the NYS Legislature to support the State’s Farmland Protection Program and Environmental Protection fund.

A motion was made by Ms. Raymond, seconded Mrs. Southworth to approve a resolution encouraging the NYS Legislature to support the State’s Farmland Protection Program and Environmental Protection fund. Unanimous.

Ms. Raymond suggested adding the Farmland Protection Program and Environmental Protection Fund to the Legislative program agenda.

The following items will be added to the 2009 Legislative Program:

- Supporting additional state funding for the Batchlerville Bridge
- CHIPS Funding
- VLT's
- Healthcare Reform
- Empire Zone Program

Ms. Daly said, as Chairman of the Empire Zone Administrative Board, she is in receipt of a letter from Mr. McMann, the Executive Director of the NYS Economic Development Council, which outlines the proposal from the Governor with regard to the Empire Zone Program. She stated that if this proposal were to be adopted it could be very detrimental to New York State.

The executive budget would subject companies making investments and relying on empire zone benefits, to a 20/1-cost/benefit-ratio requirement. This would include companies that are already in the Empire Zone Program. If this is enacted, potentially 2,000 businesses could be removed from the Empire Zone Program, she said.

Ms. Daly said she would like to add to the current legislation program, that the current proposal that the Governor has made for the Empire Zone be rejected.

Mr. Rowland said he would be meeting with legislators with regard to County Fair Association items i.e., premium reimbursements, adding sales tax to ticket prices, cost of labor, issues with people under the age of 18.

Ms. Raymond asked that a copy of the completed list be distributed to all committee members before the NYSAC conference on February 9th.

Mr. Veitch requested a resolution of support for the Fair Assessment of Condominiums under New York State Law.

Mr. Franck said he is pursuing changes to be made to section 339y of the Real Property Tax Law as it relates to condominiums.

Mr. Franck said the definition of a condominium is a form of ownership, not the style of the building. Currently, New York State Law allows any kind of residential development, including single family homes, to form a condo association.

Section 399y requires assessors to assess condos differently than traditional houses. Condo assessments are based not on the sales price of individual units, but on the value of the development as a whole. In practice, that requires assessors to value individual condo units based on their potential to earn rent not sales price.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mrs. Southworth to approve a resolution of support to amend the real property tax law and the real property law in the relation to the taxation of property owned by a cooperative corporation. Unanimous.

On a motion made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Ms. Raymond the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom