

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES

JULY 14, 2009 – 4:00 P.M.

Present: Chairman Daly; Supervisors Lawler, Richardson, Sausville, Veitch, Wright, A. Johnson, and Grattidge; Dennis Brobston, SEDC; Jason Kemper, Planning; Julie Stokes, Saratoga PLAN; Cynthia Sodher, League of Women Voters; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Sausville the minutes of the May 5, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.

Ms. Daly gave a brief report about a recent trip that Chairman Johnson, Mr. Brobston, Mr. Relyea and she took to Washington, D.C., meeting with the New York Delegation. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce themselves and meet with everyone, including one of the committees on Commerce and Transportation. To let them know that we in Saratoga County, specifically Luther Forest, have a viable project going on and have economic development moving forward in a positive manner. Unlike what is happening around the country, we believe we can stand to be a model program for you to showcase and to other communities as they go through some tougher times.

Promoting this project and bringing a level of awareness and the magnitude of this project to our federal officials, we thought, was very important. Although we do have a great first tenant, we need assistance in continuing to market the project. This is a project that is poised to compete with Tech Valley in California. Not only are we competing amongst the United States, Texas and California, but also we are primed to compete globally. It was also pointed out that at this point in time Saratoga County has not asked for any federal money for the project, everything that has gone into the project has been private, state and county funding. It has been reiterated that the job is not done. We have brought this infrastructure to the property and secured a major tenant, but there is still a big campus to fill up. We need to continue to market the project according to our vision and our plan according to how we would like to see that done. In a follow up to that meeting, the Vice President came to Clifton Park and Ms Daly was given an opportunity to speak to him personally with regard to the Luther Forest Technology Campus and reiterated again that Saratoga County had not used federal stimulus funds for the project. However, now the time has come when we need to sit down and talk to them about whether or not this is a project, we know the project stands to be a model for the country, for stimulus funds. The Vice President communicated that he was very supportive of the idea and gave a card for someone to follow up with in the Vice Presidents office. Ms. Daly's footnotes were personally signed by the Vice President and she will forward them to Mr. Relyea for display at the Luther Forest Technology Campus.

Mr. Relyea said it was amazing to be able to see everyone, even if it was for only a few minutes. Meeting everyone is important as issues come up from time to time that need to be addressed and Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand would be helpful in helping us to understand what they are and point us in the right direction. Next week during the groundbreaking, we believe we are going to see Senator Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressman Murphy.

Mr. Lawler asked if invites to the groundbreaking had been sent out? Mr. Relyea said e-mails started going out today for the June 24th groundbreaking event. Everyone will have to be there at a certain time and buses will transport people from the Malta Commons Business Park to the Technology Park, as there will be no parking at the Technology Park. Times will be included in the e-mail.

Ms. Daly said we have finally reached the end and now the decision time is here with regard to the Zim Smith trail. We are now at an impasse where we have to apply for stimulus money. Unless we are able to grab hold of the time, we are going to miss out on this federal money. The time has come where the county will have to make a financial commitment to the Zim Smith trail, as designed, in order to finish.

Ms. Daly introduced Julie Stokes, from Saratoga PLAN.

Mr. Kemper said, a few months ago he sought permission from the committee to use federal stimulus money for the completion of the Zim Smith Trail from Underpass Road to Oak Street. Since that time, DOT has said that a permanent easement on the railroad was needed on the land in front of the Burnes house on Oak Street, which was private property. Eventually, DOT came back and said, you will not be able to use federal stimulus money on that portion of the trail. Meetings took place for two or three days at the Department of Transportation, meeting with engineers and DOT, and permission was given to move forward with the project from Zepco Lane south to Underpass Road. From Zepco Lane, approximately 1,500 ft. up to Oak Street non-federal money will need to be used, as it will be on private property. Ms. Burns has since offered to sell her property, allowing the county to move off from the railroad property to build the trail and possibly be able to use stimulus money as the county would own the land. Mr. Kemper revised the plans and went back to DOT. It was stated that it would take approximately four to six months to make that happen and the county would still have go through the State and Federal purchasing requirements. After speaking with DOT, it has been determined that if the county waits another four to six months they will probably lose the federal stimulus money.

Mr. Kemper said it will cost approximately \$550,000 to go from Zepco Lane to the end of Oak Street. Originally, back in 2002 the county had set aside \$171,000 of county money, and received \$686,000 in federal money. The county has spent \$135,000 of county money on the project so far.

Mr. Kemper said the county has been very fortunate that the round lake bypass has built a part of the trail, along with the town of Malta, Curtis Lumber, the Overpass, and the Water Authority put in a bridge.

Mr. Kemper said currently the project is approximately 15% - 20% low on bids that have come out. Right now the estimated construction cost on the piece from Zepco Lane to Oak Street, is approximately \$394,000, with an additional \$25,000 for an inspector for a total of \$419,000.

A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve a resolution appropriating up to \$550,000 for the completion of the Zim Smith Trail and to accept Federal stimulus money for portions where it is allowed. Unanimous.

Mrs. Stokes thanked the committee and the county for their initiatives in getting the Zim Smith Trail completed.

Mr. Sausville asked how the portion of the trail from Ballston Spa to the State Park was going to be finished. Is there a possibility that the State Parks and Recreation Department could take some responsibility to make the connections?

Mr. Kemper said as projects come forward on the parcels we have been working to acquire the right away. No more money can be applied for until the current project is finished. As soon as this portion is done, we will again pursue options to obtain federal money.

Mr. Lawler said this is a worthwhile, well-planned project and it is an appropriate example of cooperation from both public and private entities.

Mr. Sausville said if we think of this as only a County project it will take a longer period of time. If we think of it as a County and State project, with the State Parks and Recreation, by eminent domain if necessary, we could get the links to connect the park faster.

Mr. Kemper said at last months meeting Ms. Raymond came before the committee for the Great Sacandaga Lake Community with regard to the Hudson River/Black River Regulating District, and their proposed changes to the lake. The process has since been suspended, and the Sacandaga Protection Committee, has been setup. The lake association could not accept funds to fight the legal battle on the lake so they have now set up the protection committee, which can legally accept funds to start to come up with an agreement on the land usage on and around Sacandaga Lake. This would allow the Committee, should this issue arise again, to go after the Hudson River/Black River Regulating District. The proposed resolution has been issued to Fulton County and all the municipalities around the lake.

Mr. Wright said they are not looking for any monetary commitment, just support for their efforts to protect the interests of the Great Sacandaga Lake Committee and to assist legislative actions relative to the lake region.

Mr. Veitch asked if there was a time frame that it had to be passed by? Mr. Wright said he didn't think so, but they were trying to get it passed as soon as possible.

Ms. Daly said that a lot of other communities have already passed the resolution.

Mr. Sausville said one area that is troubling to him is supporting a lobbying group that can legally fight this unit of the government that was created by all the municipalities up and down the river for flood control and power. For the county to support a group that is going to go out and do battle with the Black River, Hudson River regulating district, it seems to be a dangerous area, and he would like to seek some council on the issue.

Mr. Lawler said the precedent is already in place, where the Board has used its resources to advance policy issues that are of importance to the community.

Mr. Wright said, we have to protect our tax base on the lake. This is a rule that would diminish the property value along the lake and in Saratoga County.

A motion was made by Mr. Wright, seconded by Mr. Veitch to approve a resolution supporting the Sacandaga Protection Committee in their efforts to protect the interests of the Great Sacandaga Lake Community and to assist with legislative actions relative to the lake region. Ayes – Daly, Lawler, Richardson, Veitch and Wright – Nays – Sausville. Motion passed.

Mr. Sausville said he would oppose the motion until he obtains more information.

Mr. Sausville asked Mr. Kemper to obtain more information on the rational for the changing of policy on the part of the regulating district, and the public sentiment associated with that.

Mr. Kemper said the regulating district has provided no information so far.

Ms. Daly said this information would be forwarded on to Ms. Raymond, so she can inform the Law and Finance committee with any information that may come up between now and then for further discussion.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom