

## Economic Development Committee Minutes

February 3, 2010 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Daly; Supervisors Grattidge, A. Johnson, Kinowski, and Lawler; Spencer Hellwig, Mgmt. Analyst; Shelby Schneider, Dennis Brobston, SEDC; Jason Kemper, Planning; Kathy Denkenberger, Saratoga Connection Bureau; Greg Dixon, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; Cynthia Sodher, League of Women Voters; Kathy Ram, Shorey Public Relations; Press.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Johnson the minutes of the December 8, 2009 meeting were approved unanimously.**

Chairman Daly reviewed the charge of the Economic Development Committee as follows:

The charge of the committee is to assist local efforts and attract new businesses to the county in a continuous effort to improve the commercial and industrial climate of that area.

Chairman Daly announced the appointment of Mr. Grattidge as Committee Vice Chair. Mr. Grattidge accepted.

Chairman Daly appointed a change order committee for Trails consisting of the following people: Art Johnson, Anita Daly and Jason Kemper

Mr. Brobston gave a brief update from SEDC as follows: Companies have been working on solidifying their base and being concerned to keep what they have at this point and not doing anything to grow that might jeopardize some of their revenue. SEDC has been working with them on business planning and marketing opportunities possibly overseas.

With regard to Global Foundries, they are getting into the process of RFP's going out for some of their construction needs. SEDC is expecting to have opportunity to meet with some of the suppliers in the next few months.

Mr. Brobston said with regard to the asset/needs community worksheet report, he and Mrs. Schneider has been working with supervisors in coordinating information that has been received. What has been found, is that not everybody knows exactly how SEDC came to do what they are doing, therefore, the assessments are helpful in giving more insight into what the towns interests are.

Mr. Brobston said, on behalf of Ms. Yepsen, he would like to let the committee know that on February 17<sup>th</sup>, Charles Wait is hosting a meeting between 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. on Church Street.

Mr. Brobston said he and Ms. Daly are working on a presentation for a lunch meeting at the Association of Towns on February 15<sup>th</sup> with topics including partnerships with private, public and university partnerships and how that helps economic development. The meeting is scheduled from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Saratoga Inn and Conference Center. A part of the presentation will be coming from the State Department.

Mr. Lawler said there has been a lot of discussion on whether Empire Zones are coming or going. There are some companies that have already been negatively impacted with the change of regulations. What is SEDC's strategy to deal with the changes in the Empire Zone?

Mrs. Schneider said the state legislature has proposed a program entitled "the Excelsior Program" in the 2010 budget. The program is not the same type of program, it is not geographically based, incentives are different and there is no real property tax credit. The assets are not the same and there is a \$50 million cap per year for the entire program. The program is set to sunset on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Mr. Lawler said it is the uncertainty of the existing plan and it is the lack of definition of the future plan that is probably going to create a closed window of opportunity, not only for Saratoga County, but statewide.

Mr. Brobston said there are companies out there right now that would like to expand and commit. Saratoga County is losing a very important tool that levels the playing field with other states.

Ms. Daly introduced Kathy Wren from Shorey PR, who contracts with SEDC in the areas of marketing and Public Relations. Part of the committee's charge is to assist with publicity of the county.

Ms. Wren said that Shorey PR meet with supervisors recently for a messaging session, which is taking what the Saratoga County Board Of Supervisors does and communicating that to the public and companies who move here and may not understand what they do.

Ms. Wren distributed a draft Message Map outlining what was most important to the Supervisors and each of their individual towns and the county as a whole.

Ms. Daly said the IDA was financially supportive of funding to move forward with marketing and other efforts for economic development for the county. In conjunction with the county IDA, all supervisors are invited to attend an after hours reception to be held locally on March 16<sup>th</sup>. Details to follow.

Ms. Daly said after a trip to Austin, Texas she was introduced to people who have far more knowledge and experience in the world of economic development; from what a community looks like in the beginning, to consulting and assisting communities through their growth in the future.

Ms. Daly appointed a subcommittee that will work with Shorey PR and SEDC to facilitate an event to include an individual from Texas who is knowledgeable to speak about growth in Saratoga County. Ms. Daly said she would like this individual to meet with several different types of individuals such as; Not for Profits, business leaders, government leaders, and the Board of Supervisors to give some insight as to what the county's efforts should be to prepare for a prosperous future.

Ms. Daly assigned the following people to the subcommittee: Mr. Johnson, Mr. Grattidge and Mr. Kemper.

Mr. Dixon thanked the committee for their continued support of the Tourism Program. The reason for the downturn in tourism numbers was in part because of the economy, but also the proliferation of hotels in the county. The numbers for attractions last year were strong. Looking at 2010, most of the data for the tourism industry shows growth.

Mr. Dixon said there is a good chance that the state matching funds program for 2010 will be reduced substantially or eliminated entirely. For Saratoga County that would be important because the county received \$57,000 in extra funds to market tourism in 2009.

Mr. Dixon said the Chamber would be working to continue to be effective with the money they have by continuing to look at marketing some last minute trips, expanding Public Relations, and a greater focus on outdoor recreation.

Ms. Daly asked what the response has been in the percentages of people that find Saratoga County a wonderful place to be.

Mr. Dixon said there was a study done in 2008 and the responses were very positive.

Mr. Lawler asked how much the gross tax was off from 2009 to 2008? Mr. Dixon said 2009 was off approximately 5% from 2008.

Mrs. Dengenberger said what was seen last year was that people came to Saratoga County, but shortened their stay and didn't spend as much. Saratoga Connection Bureau worked with the hotel and convention industry to help increase attendance through websites, promotions, speakers and programs. This year Saratoga Connection Bureau will be attending trade shows, looking at regional markets in the Northeast.

Mr. Kemper said last year there was \$15,000 placed in the Planning Dept. budget to finish the trail work that already had been started. Approximately \$3,000 - \$4,000 was spent, leaving \$12,180. Mr. Kemper requested a resolution to reappropriate \$12,180 to the 2010 budget.

Mr. Johnson said there are several trails that will need kiosks and signage.

**A motion was made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Johnson to reappropriate \$12,180 of trail funds to the 2010 budget. Unanimous.**

Ms. Daly thanked all supervisors who attended the Planning Conference.

Mr. Kemper said the Planning Conference was attended by approximately 520 participants, with 108 from outside the county. Sponsorships were good. There were 150 survey responses to the conference with an overall good response.

Mr. Kemper requested a resolution to amend the Ag District to include one parcel from the town of Clifton Park and one from the town of Greenfield.

**A motion was made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Kinowski to amend the Ag District to include on parcel from the town of Clifton Park and the town of Greenfield, and to forward the details on the Law and Finance Committee. Unanimous.**

**On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Johnson the meeting was adjourned. Unanimous.**

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sansom