

## Economic Development Committee Minutes

May 4, 2010 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Daly; Supervisors Grattidge, A. Johnson, Richardson, Sausville, and Peck; Paula Schafer, Cornell Cooperative Extension; Jamie O'Neill, Jason Kemper, Planning; Jeff Meyer, Marcia White, SPAC; Todd Garafano, Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau; Greg Dixon, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; Jim Angus, SEDC; Press.

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

**On a motion made by Mr. Grattidge, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the April 13, 2010 meeting were approved unanimously.**

Mrs. White, President of the Saratoga Performing Arts Center gave a brief overview and video of SPAC.

Mrs. White thanked the Board of Supervisors for their support to the region and for the success story that they have provided for upstate New York. Your strong leadership, sense of responsibility, and positioning our county during times when everyone is struggling in this economy has continued to make this community very strong.

When SPAC was built in the 1960's it wasn't because of a group of very civic minded people who came together creating SPAC, but it was because they saw that it was an important link in reviving a lagging economy in Saratoga at that time.

SPAC remains a very powerful economic engine. A study was done by the New York State Alliance for the arts in 2005 with a conclusion that the Performing Arts Center through its classical performances generates \$30 million in revenue for the local community. It is estimated that other concerts generate as much as \$60 million annually by drawing tourists to the area.

Mrs. White said when a budget is cut, one of the first things that is also cut is educational arts. At SPAC one of the missions is arts education, where they have reached out to school districts and provided arts education to 26 schools.

Despite a troubled economy, 2009 attendance at the New York City ballet was up 24%, and attendance at the Philadelphia Orchestra was up 14%, she said.

We believe in SPAC. "We believe it needs to continue to be what it was built for and we will continue to do that," she said.

Ms. Daly thanked Mrs. White, stating that her insight and leadership in creating the Performing Arts Center, into something that not only reaches out to all children, and all families, but also has a venue that goes well beyond July and August. It looks to the future and invests in our grand commodity that we have, which are the children in the area.

Ms. Daly said she looks forward to continuing to work with SPAC as a governmental entity, partnering. As we know, in economic development all of our successes are born out of our ability to collaborate and partner with academic institutions, performing arts as well as governmental entities. We look forward to continuing to work together as we grow this county and maintain the quality of life, she said.

Ms. Daly introduced Paula Schafer from Cornell Cooperative Extension and Jamie O'Neill from the county Planning Department.

Ms. Schafer said this year is the celebration of the 15<sup>th</sup> year of Sunday on the Farm. This year's event will be held on Sunday, June 20<sup>th</sup> between 12 noon and 4:00 p.m. at the Arnold Haven Farm in the Town of Charlton. Free tours of the dairy facility will be offered to learn about agriculture, as well as, a farmers market, food demonstrations by local chefs, horse drawn wagon rides, live music, spelling bee and an ice cream eating contest.

Mr. Grattidge thanked Ms. Schafer and Mrs. O'Neill for a job well done in organizing the Sundae on the Farm event. This is a collaborative effort with many local farms participating, and is a great way for people to meet the farming community.

Mr. Grattidge said there has been a lot of media talk this year about the ethical treatment of animals. He said the Arnold Haven Farm that will be featured in this year's event does an outstanding job in taking care of their animals and is a very traditional working family farm.

Ms. Daly introduced Mr. Dixon from the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce and Mr. Garafano from the Saratoga Convention and Tourism Bureau.

Mr. Dixon said 2010 is already looking to be a better year than 2009. A PowerPoint presentation was given highlighting a new tag line design, print ads and web ads.

Mr. Garafano said 125 meetings and conventions are already booked for this year. Groups that were too large to fit in the old City Center have renewed their interest as the building's expansion progresses.

Mr. Dixon said the feeling is that this is going to be a great season, but acknowledged that there is much work to be done.

Mr. Kemper gave a brief update on the Zim Smith Trail project, stating that stimulus funds were received last year. In addition, the County Water Authority put the county

water line in, saving approximately \$160,000. Currently there is approximately \$88,000 of federal money left.

Ms. Daly gave an update on the Haiti initiative as follows: Ms. Schmehl, Exec. Director of To Love a Child has just returned from Haiti. Ms. Schmehl visited three schools while in Haiti that will benefit from the collection project. One school in particular doesn't have a single book, she said. Another school has fifteen or more children sharing a book. They are so much in need and the children are anxious to learn English. They realize that English may be their way to a better life. This collection project is a great one and just in time for young minds, knowledge and education.

Ms. Daly said since the initiative was announced she has received quite a bit of outreach. She will be speaking at the Shenendehowa Board of Education study session on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Daly said the director of the Environmental Science Department at Shenendehowa has taken on an initiative of their own for Senior Locker Clean out Day where they will recycle, reuse and distribute to Haiti any useable items.

Ms. Daly said there have been several schools that have expressed their willingness to participate and are in the process of planning the logistics in their districts.

Ms. Daly said the next Economic Development committee meeting in June will take place at the AMD headquarters at the Luther Forest Technology Campus,

Mr. Sausville stated that Showcase Malta would be held on May 4, 2010. SEDC will be coming to Malta, as well as a presentation from Mr. Russo working with Realtors, developers and business people to attract the next round of projects that will be positioned around Global Foundries. This is a good opportunity to see the properties that are being showcased in the town. The event will take place at 6:30 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Sansom

