

Economic Development Committee Minutes
November 7, 2012 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Daly; Supervisors A. Johnson, Kinowski, Richardson, Sausville, Collyer, Wood and Grattidge; Ryan Moore, Mgmt. Analyst; John Herrick, County Chairman; Jim Angus, SEDC; Janet Kennedy, Lakes to Locks; Jason Kemper, Planning; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Sausville the minutes of the October 3, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mrs. Kennedy said that Lakes to Lock Passage is a New York State Bi-way that has received all American road designations from the Federal Highway Administration for roadway travel experiences that could be useful on a trip. The Federal Highway Administration believed the argument that was made that the experiences, the history, the culture, and natural resources were significant enough to attract both national and international travelers to this corridor which includes Clinton, Essex, Warren, Washington, Saratoga and Rensselaer counties. The binding force is the interconnected waterways which include the Upper Hudson River, Champlain Canal, Lake George, and Lake Champlain. Lakes to Locks also has a formal agreement with Quebec through the Quebec/New York Trade Corridor including the Richelieu Valley.

Mrs. Kennedy said the most exciting thing that Lakes to Locks has done is with National Geographic. National Geographic has developed a program called Geotourism for travelers who are interested in visiting a place and leaving it better than what they found. They are interested in sustainable communities and historic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources and having authentic experiences.

Mrs. Kennedy said Lakes to Locks is working with National Geographic on a website that has all the content contributed by the people who live here, including the Town Historians, managers of museums, and local citizens that have an experience that they want to share. The content can be found as a list and a map through the interactive map guide.

Mr. Sausville asked Mrs. Kennedy if Lakes to Locks had a ten year plan and what it would be. Mrs. Kennedy said the strategy has three parts to include, building identity of the region, building the products, experiences and marketing. Handouts were distributed outlining where Lakes to Locks got to where they are and what they plan to do over the next ten years to all committee members.

Ms. Daly said the roll of the Economic Development committee is to raise the level of awareness, as well as the community awareness, about the assets that we have and to do the best we can for our communities. Ms. Daly said it fits right along with everything the

committee has tried to do with using existing infrastructure, whether it is to continue to promote what we have or whether it is taking things and elevating them to another level. She said by partnering with others, Mechanicville was able to be awarded with a large grant, which is another area that we have identified through all of our work over this year and last year; demonstrating how valuable our partnerships are with others.

Ms. Daly said as discussed at the last committee meeting we are following through with University of Albany Professor, Dr. David Lewis. Mr. Kinowski said a number of different documentations were presented from SEDC, Chambers, Lakes to Locks and committee groups on how they all help us pull together economic development in the county. In working with another PHD applicant they looked at what it is that we might be able to use or how to best develop a plan that can be used as a stepping stone into the future. Along that line Dr. Lewis said he would be happy to meet with the group and stakeholders that help out Saratoga County and he would be the mentor of the meeting. Suggestions and recommendations would be brought back to the Economic Development committee. Ms. Daly said November 27th is a date that Dr. Lewis has submitted to meet with him. Once that date has been confirmed letters will go out to all those invited to the meeting. Ms. Daly said it is their intention to include Planning, and Cornell Cooperative Extension in the group.

Ms. Daly said she had two recommendations that she would like to move forward for 2013. She said feedback came in from Supervisors on the Community Development Plan proposal submitted by the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors with discussions with Mr. Hellwig and committee sentiments in general, this was a community development plan proposed at working with our promotions revenue dollars that come from the occupancy tax that is collected and done in the same fashion as the Chamber is supported, but not duplicating the efforts. Ms. Daly said there is money in the budget, not additional dollars that are being raised. She said she would like to move ahead with the recommendation for the Community Development Plan for next year.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Sausville to support moving forward a Community Development Plan using marketing dollars for 2013. Unanimous.

Ms. Daly said Mr. Lawler and Mr. Kinowski also support the proposal, so we will look forward to working with them next year.

Ms. Daly said in working with Dr. Lewis and conversations in the last couple of meetings, we have all discussed and are looking forward in sending on recommendations for next year that Saratoga County look to put into place an Economic Development Coordinator/Director to be funded out of money that is generated from occupancy tax dollars. This would not be funded through general fund budgets, she said. With all the activity that is going on and being discussed today we are trying to cultivate it, so at the end of two years of work in this arena we have stepped up our game considerably both with the IDA, Capital Region Development Council, and creating a Capital Resource Corporation. Ms. Daly said what Supervisors are telling her and clamoring for is communication, coordination and collaboration. The only way

we can effectively do that at this time is to have some form of coordinator. The idea is to place a Coordinator/Director in place. Ms. Daly said this is still a work in progress and right now it is concept and recommendation to move forward.

Mr. Sausville asked if this would be to task an existing employee of the county with those responsibilities or would it be a new position. Ms. Daly said she is really just looking at the need, not the person. That can come in time, she said. This is really to underscore the need and as we go through and create the strategic plan we need to have this focal point.

Mr. Sausville asked if that position could be contracted. Ms. Daly said that could be an option.

Mr. Sausville said the county already funds a number of agencies for economic development. He asked if you could say that one of their jobs is to provide this kind of service to the county. Ms. Daly said after meeting with Dr. Lewis there may be a clearer understanding of that. She said the way this envisioned right now is not to have it be one of the entities that we are currently working with because we end up with nothing more than we have today. We have a lot of entities who have their own roles, but we don't have anyone who is continuously coordinating our efforts and coordinating the appreciation of each other's roles. If you are one of those providers you don't necessarily work for the good of another provider. This might be a difficult task for one of them to perform.

Mr. Sausville said if the county is spending \$300 to \$400 a year for these other providers and you took approximately \$50,000 away and say we are going to spend this amount of money in a different way wouldn't it be budget neutral. Ms. Daly said those are all options that we have. She said this would still be budget neutral because even with the recommendation for a position for next year there are still funds in the proposed 2013 budget to have such a position and the recommendation would be to work within those funds.

Mr. Johnson said he didn't see this position replacing any outside agency. We are going to continue to work and coordinate efforts with them. He said there is enough occupancy tax money available without taking any money away from other agencies.

Ms. Daly said one of the things that Dr. Lewis commented on is really getting a clear understanding of the scope of service. With a clearer understanding of the scope and services of each one it will also provide this legislative body with a form of accountability because right now we really don't have a clear path to accountability with anyone. It is unfair for some of them to be able to come before this body because of the nature of what they do, for example, the Chamber, they can come in and they can say they have designed this website and done marketing in these six different brochures and then you bring in another entity that is doing economic development and it is not as visual so it is not as clear, so the accountability for that particular provider may not be as easily seen and that would be something that we would look to clarify as well, so we know if we are spending money with any number of the entities that we work with that we also have a direct line of accountability. Ms. Daly said taxpayers are really going to demand that we do that and right now our accountability could be improved.

Mr. Collyer asked if the county was looking at creating another position, an umbrella type position that would be funded through the county budget for an individual. Ms. Daly said it would not come through the county budget; it would come through the tax revenues that are generated from the occupancy taxes that are collected. Mr. Collyer said that was part of the county budget. Ms. Daly said yes, but it is obligated to be spent back out. She said there is a law that obligates the county to spend that money back out for promotion and economic development, and we are saying within that budget framework. She said it would not be new dollars to be raised by the general taxpayer through property tax dollars. Mr. Collyer said it seems like we are just posturing for a county position that is going to be much more than salary. He said you are going to be looking at benefits, a secretary, office, etc. Ms. Daly said all of that would have to be budgeted, and if it doesn't fall within a budget and it doesn't work then you would have to come up with plan "B". Ms. Daly said the need is being defined and we are defining the need to work within what opportunities we have to work in and it is being proposed to be done next year, she said. Mr. Collyer asked if other groups feel there is a need for this. Ms. Daly said this committee and the subcommittee have been working with and meeting with all of these entities for approximately a year and a half. Mr. Collyer said he is not totally convinced there is a need. Ms. Daly said what has kind of gone unnoticed is what hasn't been done. With as much work as has been involved in chairing the committee this year and last year we have taken the initiative to do some things that we haven't done in the past, for example, the job fair with Global Foundries. These are all expansions of our efforts that the committee has taken on over some time. This was a huge undertaking, but there was a huge amount of support from a couple of other supervisors and the Chairman for all of that. It wasn't just that day and time; it was working with Global, writing out the parameters and then coordinating with all of the agencies to get the information out, even with the county JTPA group.

Ms. Daly said we have created the Capital Resource Corporation because we have been involved in a relationship with the IDA which has now grown to another level and through that partnership we identified the need to create the Corporation which will open up the door for more involvement on the county's part. All indications are that this will be looked upon very favorably. The by-laws of the corporation have been left very open and are still in the works to allow a lot more opportunity for the county to be involved. Ms. Daly said the future is very visionary at this time, but if we go into it with our arms wide open then the chances of us continuing the success that we have will be more positive.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Mr. Richardson to make a recommendation to create an Economic Development Coordinator/Director. Unanimous

Mr. Kemper requested approval of a major contract award for the 2013 Planning Conference to include lunch. He said in the past he has done two minor contracts, but after speaking to the County Attorney, it was decided that it would be much cleaner to go out to bid for one major contract. The City Center has been contacted for their top four caterers, and an RFP was sent out. Mr. Kemper said the conference will be paid for by attendee registrations and sponsor

fees associated with the conference. He said last year the revenue raised from the conference was approximately \$44,000, with a net gain to the county of approximately \$7,000. Mr. Kemper said Panza's came in with the lowest bid of \$35/person.

A motion was made by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Richardson to approve the 2013 Planning Conference Contract Award with Panza's Restaurant. Unanimous.

Ms. Daly asked if registration forms have been sent out. Mr. Kemper said there have been two emails sent out with Save the Date. The exhibitors letter has been sent out which will then be followed up in approximately two weeks with sponsorships. Mr. Kemper said sponsorships alone last year were approximately \$6,100. He said there were three or four new people who have contacted him this year to say they are interested in conference as an exhibitor, which would be additional revenue. He said everything will take place in the City Center this year and the fees will remain the same.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom