

Economic Development Committee Minutes
November 6, 2013 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Lawler; Supervisors Daly, A. Johnson, Kinowski, Richardson, Sausville, M. Johnson; and Grattidge; Spencer Hellwig, Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Lisa Scaccia, Employment and Training; Blue Neils, Cooperative Extension; Jason Kemper, Planning; Peter Martin, County Clerk; Todd Shimkus, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; Peter Bardunias, Southern Saratoga Co. Chamber of Commerce; Nafeesa Koslih, Hampton Inn, Clifton Park; Todd Garafano, Saratoga Convention & Tourism Bureau; Brian Straughter, Hampton Inn & Suites, Saratoga Springs; Michelle Rusk, Maggie Ruisi, Residents; Press.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Sausville, seconded by Mr. Johnson the minutes of the September 4, 2013 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Lawler said at the very beginning of the year the Saratoga County Board of Supervisors and Chairman Grattidge, in his opening remarks, made it very clear that Saratoga County was eager to play a more productive roll in economic development in Saratoga County. His vision of moving forward involved entertaining and initiating discussions with a number of different parties in the county, all of whom have to come together to make Saratoga County much more successful, especially as it concerns the Luther Forest Technology Park. A series of meetings have taken place between members of the Economic Development Committee, and in some cases, other Supervisors were involved as well. The meetings involved representatives from the Town of Malta, Luther Forest Technology Corp., Global Foundries and the Saratoga IDA; looking at the obstacles that have been well documented recently, in terms of why we are not having greater success in the park and what role could the County play to jump start the success. The critical concept was how the county could get involved to bring people together in a collegial and compromising environment where everyone realized that the greater good was, in fact, the most important thing on the table and that each party had to be willing to consider alternatives to the status quo. The Chairman and the County Administrator have lead the way with the allocation of \$50,000 in the county budget for next year towards the payment of the traffic study. This was an example of the county stepping up and becoming a more involved partner and taking a role in the park and trying to take a more active role in the success of the park and moving it forward.

Mr. Lawler said this week a formal list of amendments to the Planned Developmental District legislation in the Towns of Malta and Stillwater, has been or will be delivered to the towns. Any changes to the PDD will require actions by those Boards. The amendments that are being proposed are the by-product of a number of meetings and discussions between LFTC officials, representatives, and representatives of the towns and the county. To have a list of formal PDD amendments that Luther Forest Technology Corporation believes will dramatically improve the

competitive position of the park, is very important. To begin that process formally was a key to moving the entire project forward.

Mr. Lawler said part of the process is to look at the tax abatement policy in the park. This is a sensitive subject and will be subject of negotiation and discussion. The IDA is prepared, and they have made it clear that they are open to discussions to amending the traditional IDA policy as it exists throughout the county, recognizing the special circumstances that it has in terms of the size of the businesses that it trying to attract and the impact that businesses of that size will have on the communities. Mr. Lawler said there is now a productive dialogue or at least the opportunity for a productive dialogue between the IDA and the town officials to hammer out a tax abatement policy that will make the Luther Forest Technology Park competitive from a tax abatement process. He said, right now, the park is not eligible for any tax abatement, any pilots or any IDA agreements. Everyone is going into this with an open mind and everyone has the same desire to see the park be the biggest success it can for our community and our region, he said.

Mr. Lawler thanked the representatives of the Luther Forest Technology Corporation who have been a part of this from the very beginning and are eager to see the park become much more competitive and to see the park marketed much more aggressively. All of this ties back into the county's commitment at the beginning of the year, to develop a new long term strategic plan for economic development in Saratoga County. The plan is coming along very well, he said. The consultants will be in town next week and will be meeting with five or six of the largest employers in the county and most of the economic development organizations that are committed and have an interest and stake in the success of economic development in Saratoga County, which will include the two Chambers, SEDC, and Center for Economic Growth. In addition, there is a meeting that will take place with the education stakeholders, which is being organized by Supervisor Daly. Mr. Lawler said there would be three days of meetings, culminated Wednesday with a presentation to the Board of Supervisors at the Agenda Meeting which will define where we are in the plan and will unveil the website that will be used to generate the details of the plan to the public and business community. The website will be interactive, where people will have the opportunity to ask questions and make suggestions.

Mr. Lawler said there is a county commitment of \$50,000 and the support, as a result of positive discussions and negotiations with LFTC, the town of Malta, Saratoga County, Town of Stillwater, and the IDA, we are able to put together a package of proposed PDD amendments to move the park forward.

Mr. Lawler said the county is looking to play an even bigger role than that, and one of the concerns has been the issue of who is going to take care of the roads. Luther Forest Technology Corporation has fallen on hard times financially and they are not able to make the payments that the Town of Malta is expecting, and the Town of Malta, rightfully feels as though this isn't really a fair burden to place on the Town of Malta, if in fact, the County Board of Supervisors and all the other organizations involved believe that this is a project and a park that has county and regional wide significance. The county's part in all of this will be for the county to assume

ownership of the roads in the Luther Forest Technology Park, becoming county roads, which will leave the responsibility of maintenance of the roads to the county. Mr. Lawler said the county is trying to relieve the Town of Malta of their concerns by continuing to have positive discussions toward amending the PDD in a way that meets everybody's expectations.

Mr. Lawler thanked everyone, including Global Foundries for their support and involvement, hosting many meetings where they have given their input in what they think some of the issues are in the park.

Mr. Lawler said the project is going to move forward with willing and able partners to get to a place where everyone can feel as though their concerns have been heard and addressed, and at the same time end up with a park that is as competitive as anything in the country.

Mr. Grattidge said this is the recognition of the county becoming more involved in partnering with Malta and Stillwater, moving the process forward and seeing where we can contribute more than we have in the past and being a part of the dialogue. As we continue to work on the strategic plan the county will take a bigger role, he said.

Mr. Sausville said this is the process that will have to be followed in order to amend the PDD, and this is the first step toward that effort. He said one of the details is that once you go to the IDA for an IDA PILOT, it comes off the tax roll and the county's share of the sales tax doesn't come to the town. In the case of Global Foundries that had a huge impact, as there was no bump up in the sales tax because it was taken off the tax rolls. He said this is another item that they would like to put on the table as negotiations continue.

Mr. Kinowski said it is important not only for the County, but the township that this initiative moves forward. He said he was pleased that it was happening in this fashion where everyone is partnering to move forward.

Mr. Lawler said this is indicative of the role that Saratoga County wants to play in economic development in Saratoga County. We want to be a facilitator, providing resource and input and work closely with the partners in the county, whether they are the business community, or individual towns and municipalities. We are going to try to be as positive a force as we can, but at the same time moving the process forward.

Mr. Johnson said the IDA meetings that have taken place have been productive. They know Malta's concerns and are willing to be flexible in helping to address those concerns.

Ms. Daly said this is a great move forward. Past practices have not proven to be effective, so whenever you are in business or teaching and recognize that the path you have chosen or the practices you have employed are not working, you need to change course and set a new set of practices, becoming more successful as you move forward. This is what this is all about. The opportunity continues to be there, and as a group, that unless we are willing to change and look ahead, we will be in the same place and never move forward. This is an opportunity for change.

Mr. Shimkus distributed a copy of the Tourism Marketing Report from the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce and gave a brief overview of some of the statistics. He said the occupancy tax collections for June through August of this year totaled \$327,034, which is the highest amount every collected.

Mr. Shimkus said this year the Chamber significantly changed the way that they reached out to their targeted markets. Instead of buying ads on six websites they bought ads that actually went after the people that were in the demographics on line. He said \$44,760 was spent on the traditional Ad Campaign along with \$117,647 on the new 2013 Summer Online Ads.

Mr. Shimkus said there were 36 million impressions via the 2013 summer online advertising versus 16 million in 2012.

Mr. Shimkus said at the annual meeting with Tourism Industry leaders, the day after Labor Day, they were told that this summer was a record for Live Nation and that the SPAC program really drove visitation across the county. Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Shimkus to extend an invitation to the Economic Development Committee when they hold their spring and Fall Tourism meetings. He said the feedback would help the county to obtain information on what the perception is of the county from the business community.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Kinowski to designate the Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce as the Saratoga County Tourism Promotion Agency and authorizing the Chamber to apply for "I Love NY" grants for 2014 in the amount of \$190,750. Unanimous.

Mr. Bardunias from the Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce distributed copies of the Community Development Program State Report for 2013 and the 2014 Proposal to all committee members. The PLAN included work with Brookside Museum, Mechanicville Train Station, and attendance at Town business meetings in the Towns of Waterford and Charlton.

Mr. Bardunias requested \$25,000 for 2014 to be used to improve on the work that they have already been doing and to add some new initiatives as follows:

- Improve work already done in 2013 at Historic Lock 19, Brookside Museum, Mechanicville Train State and the Town of Charlton and Town and Village of Waterford.
- Develop additional distribution channel for agriculture products
- Develop historic buildings Business Preservation Task Force
- Work with local BPA's/Chambers as partners
- Obtain in-kind assistance from Tech Valley corporations
- Coordinate local volunteer efforts
- Develop and exploit economic benefits of community improvement projects

Mr. Lawler asked Mr. Bardunias to be mindful of the fact that the county is looking for opportunities to be involved at the grassroots level. The county is looking to see how they can be involved and be part of something bigger, bringing positive resources and tools.

A motion was made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Sausville to approve \$25,000 to the Southern Saratoga Chamber of Commerce for 2014, to be used to continue work that has already begun in the Community Development Plan. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper requested a resolution to accept state funding for the MS4 Stormwater Program in the amount of \$577,000. Mr. Kemper said this is the fourth round of funding that has been applied for the MS4 Stormwater Program, leveraging \$50,000 that has been provided in past budgets to Cornell Cooperative Extension. The total project costs were \$520,000 plus fringe benefits for a total of \$577,000, to cover Cooperative Extension personnel costs and work in the municipalities.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Daly to approve authorizing the Chairman to accept the Stormwater Management Grant in the amount of \$577,000. Unanimous.

A motion was made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Johnson to approve the issuance of a negative declaration of SEQR. Unanimous.

Mr. Lawler said because of Hurricane and Flood damage in the last several years, flood insurance has risen for many small villages and towns along the waterfront. The Federal Government is considering changes to the program and the Mayor in the Village of Waterford has asked for a resolution urging FEMA to fully implement the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act and to make the changes necessary, as called for, to provide relief to the residents.

A motion was made by Ms. Daly, seconded by Mr. Sausville in support of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act, and to make changes, as called for, to provide relief to the residents. Unanimous.

On a motion made by Mr. Johnson, seconded by Ms. Daly the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Chris Sansom