

Economic Development Committee Minutes
October 14, 2020 – 3:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Jack Lawler; Committee Members Ed Kinowski, Dan Pemrick, Jean Raymond, Tom Richardson, Jon Schopf, Kevin Tollisen; Supervisors Phil Barrett, Tara Gaston, Todd Kusnierz, Bill Peck, Benny Zlotnick and Chairman of the Board Preston Allen; Chad Cooke, Matt Rose, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Todd Shimkus, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; Pete Bardunias, Chamber of Southern Saratoga County.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Kinowski, seconded by Mr. Richardson, the minutes of the September 9, 2020 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Lawler introduced Mr. Shimkus for a brief presentation on a campaign that the Chamber would like to launch in support of local businesses. Mr. Lawler said that with the change in season, there is concern within the Chamber and business community that some businesses will struggle through the end of the year. Mr. Shimkus distributed a handout which is attached to these minutes. Mr. Shimkus said that the campaign is called “Save our Locals” and will be launched within the next few days. Mr. Shimkus said that the economy has been reopened but virtually every sector has restrictions, some of which are severe in terms of the capacity they can accommodate inside of their facilities. Mr. Shimkus said that they are worried about the locally owned, independent businesses, most of which went for several months without income during the shutdown. Now they are partially reopened. Mr. Shimkus said that these businesses need a good holiday season and a good bump in the remaining months in the year. Mr. Shimkus said that the Chamber are doing an all-out full court press to save the local businesses. They have created “Save our Locals” logos posters and signage that is customized for each municipality. The graphics can also be downloaded and used from the Chambers website. The promotional effort is to encourage everyone in the community to be a part of this, shop local, dine out locally, purchase local services, use local contractors. Mr. Shimkus said that as the colder months come in, they will bring back the take out program and promotion for restaurants. They will also bring back the gift card promotion, which is important over the holidays. Mr. Shimkus said that their SCORE program (Service Corps Of Retired Executives) has 12 volunteers that are willing to meet in person at the Clifton Park Office, Saratoga Springs Office or Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership Office in Malta or virtually. They have agreed to adapt, normally they do small business start-ups but they would like to help any small business that is trying to adapt, whether it’s changing financial plans, strategy or marketing. Mr. Shimkus said that a dedicated phone line will be set up that anyone can call with questions. They will also be using boosted social media posts and using their foundation to help fund this. They will be reaching out to the community asking those businesses that can help to donate to this and they will use those funds to boost posts and other types of things. They are currently working with a couple of communities on promotional videos. Mr. Shimkus said that these can be done for any communities, just reach out to his office. Mr. Shimkus said that they are doing this for both members and non-members that need help in Saratoga County. Mr. Lawler said that it is a great effort and is very timely. Mr. Lawler said that having the Chamber

get out in front of this, at this time of year may make a big difference. Mr. Lawler said it's important that people in the County are aware of the fact that the quality of life we had and the great dining, shopping options we had prior to the Covid pandemic, if we want to have these when this is all over, we have to make sure these businesses are still around and do what we need to do to support them.

Mr. Kemper previously distributed a memo via email.

A motion was made by Mrs. Raymond, seconded by Mr. Pemrick, to approve the proposed modification and continuation of Saratoga County Consolidated Ag. District No. 1 and issuing a Negative Declaration under SEQR. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said that the process started at the beginning of the year. A public hearing was held on September 9th. There were a total of 12 written comments submitted to the Clerk of the Board and an additional 2 comments to the Planning Department. A summary of the comments is included in the final report which is over 200 pages. As part of this year's review, they also did an extensive review with the Real Property Department and local Assessors to make sure that every parcel in the Ag. District was correctly coded as such. Mr. Kemper read the summary from the report to be sent to NYS Ag. & Markets which is as follows:

"The Saratoga County Planning Board (SCPB) and the Saratoga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board (SCAFB) has reviewed all materials submitted as part of the 303a 8 year review period for Agricultural District #1. The SCPB and SCAFB determined that the Saratoga County Consolidated Agricultural District #1 is established, robust and operating as originally intended. Each municipality located within the district has and will continue to manage, promote and protect the district through local plans and laws. The SCPB and SCAFB recommend that the Saratoga County Consolidated Agricultural District #1 boundary map be modified to correctly correspond to the 2020 RPS parcel codes depicting participation in the Saratoga County Agricultural District #1. An extensive review was conducted the Saratoga County Planning Department, Saratoga County Real Property Office as well as all municipal Assessors in Agricultural District #1 to correctly delineate the Agricultural District Boundary. All participating county departments, municipalities as well as the Agricultural Farmland Protection Board have agreed on the proposed modification as presented. These changes are depicted in Appendix 7."

Mr. Kemper said that in addition they are also conducting the annual review of 303B's and if any come in by October 31st, they will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for inclusion into the district.

Mr. Kinowski thanked Mr. Kemper for the work he has done with the Town of Stillwater. Mr. Lawler said that the comments received were all very complimentary and appreciated the County making the effort to preserve agriculture and farmland.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Richardson, to authorize the 2020 Trails Grants. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said that the applications were reviewed by the Trails Committee on October 7th. A complete summary of each project is included in the previously emailed memo. Mr. Kemper said that there is \$75K in the 2020 budget for trail projects and 11 different municipalities requested funding for a total of \$98,201.50. Mr. Kemper said that when presented to the Trails Committee, two scenarios were outlined. The first is to fund each application at approximately 75.89% which would keep it within the funding amount of \$75K. The second option, preferred by the Trails Committee, was to transfer \$23,201.50 from the 2020 open space budget to fully fund all applications. Mr. Richardson said that in the past, when funding for trails has fallen a little short of fully funding, they have either had funds in reserve, or funds were taken from the County Reserve to fully fund all of the applications. Mr. Richardson said that trails have become very popular and are very important for, not only during the pandemic but moving forward, the health of individuals. Mr. Richardson said that they were aware that there are funds in the open space budget and are requesting to move funds into the Trails line to fully fund the applications this year. Mrs. Raymond said that the transfer would make perfect sense as a trail is basically a linear open space and would probably fit the definition of open space. Mrs. Raymond said that for many, smaller towns especially, they don't have the luxury of being able to have large pieces of open space unless some not for profit comes in to pick up the tab. Mrs. Raymond said that the trails are very important for smaller communities where there are less sidewalks. Mr. Kemper said that the Land Preservation Committee did not move forward with funding applications this year. Of the \$100K in the 2020 open space budget, approximately \$40K from a previous years project in the Town of Malta will be funded from this years budget, leaving approximately \$60K remaining. Mr. Richardson said that they are requesting \$23,201.50 to be transferred to the trails budget. Mr. Cooke confirmed that this is a transfer within the operating budget. Mr. Kemper said that the total project costs for all 11 projects is just under \$300K.

Mr. Richardson said that Mr. Veitch is putting together a list of items that need attention on the trails in the County. Mr. Richardson said that in the past, \$2K-\$3K has been placed in the Planning Department budget for trail maintenance. The trails committee is recommending a consideration of \$15K be placed in the Planning Department budget for the upkeep of the trails moving forward.

A motion was made by Mr. Tollisen, seconded by Mr. Richardson, committee approval of the 2021 budget funding request by the Chamber of Southern Saratoga County's AKA Capital Region Chamber in the amount of \$40K. Unanimous.

Mr. Bardunias distributed a handout which is attached to these minutes, and gave a brief update. Mr. Bardunias said that they have completed 6 straight years of the community development program with Saratoga County and are now going into year 7. Mr. Bardunias expressed the importance of the continued upkeep of past projects and directed the committee to the photos, maintenance of the Historic Lock 19, bulletin board in Mechanicville, Vischer Ferry preserve. Mr. Bardunias said that the Rest Area at Exit 9 was as busy as a normal year even without the track. They worked with the Malta Business Community Alliance and the Stillwater Experience Committee, continued their work with Marine Transportation and Halfmoon Area 3, and continued their support of the Saratoga County Fair. Mr. Bardunias said that the integration with the Capital Region Chamber that began on 1/1/2020 brought additional staff to the Clifton Park office and

brought more resources to the area. Mr. Bardunias said that the budget request for 2021 is the same as 2020 and outlined the main focus of 2021 proposed projects.

1. Continuation/maintenance of past projects
2. Operation of Clifton Park Visitor Center
3. COVID-19 economic crisis and recovery support for Saratoga County Businesses
4. Helping Saratoga County Businesses access up to \$8.5 million in available loan funds via two chamber-facilitated programs
5. Integration with the Capital Region Chamber to better connect Saratoga County to expanded resources and support business growth and community prosperity
6. Continue ongoing initiatives and maintain Community Development Menu of projects for consideration in 2021

Mr. Bardunias encouraged everyone to take advantage of the Clifton Park Visitor Center / Rest Area and to use their brochure and television displays located there. Mr. Bardunias thanked the Committee for the support over the past years. Mr. Lawler said that this Committee has traditionally voted on the Chambers request for funding and passed the request on to Law & Finance. Mr. Lawler said that this year is a tough year budget wise. Every municipal budget has been negatively affected. Mr. Lawler advised Mr. Bardunias that even with approval from this committee, it is unknown where funding will fall within the County budget as Law & Finance works to put the budget together for next year. Mr. Lawler commended Mr. Bardunias on his work ethic and the value of the work provided to the Community.

Mr. Tollisen gave a brief update from the Saratoga County IDA PPE grant program. At yesterday's meeting they approved 23 business applications. The businesses range from senior citizen related health care facilities, hotels, churches, children's museum, dentist offices, hair salons, restaurants and delicatessens. The average benefit was just over \$5K. There is a little over ½ of the funding remaining. Mr. Tollisen encouraged all to keep getting the word out to local businesses. Mr. Lawler commended the IDA and requested a list of the companies for follow up purposes.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Raymond, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board