

Economic Development Committee Minutes
February 7, 2019 – 3:30 p.m.

Present: Chairman Phil Barrett; Committee Members Art Johnson, Todd Kusnierz, Tom Richardson, Tim Szczepaniak, Matt Veitch; Supervisors Alan Grattidge, Ed Kinowski, Darren O'Connor, Jean Raymond and Chairman of the Board Kevin Tollisen; Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Jason Kemper, Planning; Craig Hayner, Christine Rush, County Clerk; Andrew Jarosh, Treasurer; Jennifer McClosky, Employment & Training; Marty Vanags, Shelby Schneider, Mary Estelle Ryckman, Jenny Kelley, Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership; Michael Relyea, Jim Angus.

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

On a motion made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Szczepaniak, the minutes of the January 8, 2019 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Relyea gave an update on the proposed Aquatic Center at Exit 12. Mr. Barrett said that they completed a feasibility study for this project and he believes it is an important project for the County. Mr. Relyea said that he is on the Board of Directors for the Adirondack Aquatic Center. This is a four pool aquatic center proposed for Exit 12. Recently, some of their funding entities have questioned moving the proposed location to another area due to the lack of traction at the Malta site. There is a site in Schenectady county that can also be entertained. This is a \$25M facility, they have reviewed the numbers, 5-year business plan, met with banks and program people from all over the country. In order to layer the funding at the Malta site, it is quickly approaching whereby leadership and support from a County perspective is needed. Mr. Relyea said that the Malta Town Board is behind the project and they have discussed Town funding as a recreation program. Mr. Relyea said that he believes this is project has a lot of opportunity and possibilities for success in Saratoga County, however their Board need help with this. Other counties have tax credit and credit investment vehicles which would make layering the financing less difficult. Mr. Relyea said that the opportunity exists, and they would welcome, the Economic Development committee and Board of Supervisors to agree that this project is worth pursuing, and help to lead the project. Mr. Barrett said that there are many positives, health and wellness, school programs and team sports. A certain sized pool is necessary to host regional tournaments. Mr. O'Connor said that this facility would provide an added resource for not only the Town of Malta but for the entire County, that would contribute to the diversity of attractions that the County already has. Mr. Relyea said that the sports tourism industry has grown from a \$7B in 2012 to \$17B in 2017 and is constantly growing. Mr. Barrett said that he would like to establish a sub-committee to work directly with Mr. Relyea to see what the County can do to play the leadership role and step forward to help get this project done in Saratoga County. Sub-committee members will include Supervisors O'Connor, Szczepaniak and Kusnierz.

Mr. Barrett said that he had some discussions recently with Mr. Richardson regarding attracting business to the City of Mechanicville. Mr. Richardson said that in the last year or two they have had Golden Crust Bakery move to a building on Central Avenue, Cumberland Farms have just completed the construction of a large store with 14-16 gas pumps, Stewarts Shop purchased several

properties and are expanding their store. There is a property across the street, the former DiSiena paint store, which was recently purchased. He has spoken with the new owner, and also with the owners of other properties in that location, that would be interested in selling their properties if something can be put together. Mr. Richardson has spoken with Mr. Barrett, Mr. Bardunias, SSCP, and has also reached out to grocery stores. The population of the City is approximately 5K, however the population of the surrounding area is approximately 20K. Mr. Richardson believes that this is an opportunity for a retail business. Currently the only grocery store in the city is Price Chopper. Mr. Richardson said that the revitalization of Mechanicville has been a priority of his since he was elected 14 years ago. He believes that this particular property on Central Avenue in Mechanicville has a lot of potential. Mr. Barrett said that they can help by putting together a packet of information regarding Mechanicville and the property. Ms. Schneider said that DOT have traffic studies information on their website.

A motion was made by Mr. Szczepaniak, seconded by Mr. Kusnierz, to approve amendments to the boundaries of Saratoga County Consolidated Agricultural District #2 and authorizing issuance of a negative declaration under SEQRA. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said that the details of the Agricultural District amendments were covered in January. A public hearing will be held in February and pending the outcome of the public hearing, the item will move onto the Board for approval. Part of the resolution will include a SEQR negative declaration. Mr. Kemper previously emailed the SEQR form to the Committee members and gave a brief overview.

A motion was made by Mr. Veitch, seconded by Mr. Johnson, to authorize the Chair to enter into agreement with the New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) to accept additional funding the construction and construction inspection costs associated with the Zim Smith Trail Extension Project. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said that his office was notified that an additional \$24,559 in funding is available for the Zim Smith Trail. No local match is necessary. This will bring the total grant funding for the project up to \$5,179,259. The project is on schedule for completion in Fall of 2019. Mr. Kemper said that drone footage is available and he can share the information with the Committee next month.

Mr. Kemper gave an update on the use of County forestland as mitigation for Karner Blue Butterfly habitat. Mr. Kemper said that the Karner Blue mitigation area is being moved from the County Airport land. Land in the Town of Northumberland and within the Wilton Wildlife Preserve and Park has been identified as the proposed habitat mitigation. There are 77 acres of permanent impacts at the airport. Mr. Kemper distributed maps of the 3 parcels of County forestland in the Town of Northumberland. DPW and Planning have worked with DEC and the properties are suitable habitats. Two of the parcels have been recently cut. If approved by the FAA the parcels would be cleared and timber will not be harvested from these parcels in the future.

Mr. Kemper distributed several charts and spreadsheets regarding the Farmland and Open Space projects. The yearly summary of Open Space projects shows that to date, the Saratoga County Farmland and Open Space program has protected 4,668 acres of which 2,893 is farmland and 1,775

is open space. Total county funding to date has totaled \$4,785,849, leveraging a total project cost of \$25,938,014. These figures include the 2018 projects, of which some did not received Ag. and Markets funding. These projects have not been formally withdrawn yet. The pending farmland and open space projects total \$427,660 which also includes the projects not formally withdrawn yet. These projects will be funded from the open space reserve account which has a balance of \$480,401. Any projects that are formally withdrawn will leave additional funds in the reserve account.

Mr. Kemper gave an overview on the Saratoga County Trails Program. The total outstanding projects amount to \$102,083, and will be funded from the Trails Reserve Account which has a current balance of \$102,238. Any projects that are formally withdrawn will leave additional funds in the reserve account. Funding in the amount of \$222,083 has been granted by the County since 2015 and this has leveraged a total project cost of \$1,669,358.

Mr. Kemper said that they had 592 registered attendees at the annual conference which is the largest year yet. There were 24 vendors and sponsors. Attendees came from 15 counties and 71 municipalities.

Mr. Vanags gave an update and powerpoint presentation from the Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership. Mr. Vanags introduced his staff in attendance and distributed copies of presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Mr. Barrett said that he would like to see more emphasis on helping the local communities as this is where economic development stems from, zoning changes, GEIS, environmental studies being done proactively. Mr. Barrett said that grant writing and assistance with studies can be very beneficial to the communities. Mr. Vanags said that they can offer services that better fit the local communities, for example retail fairs and grant writing. Mr. Vanags has asked one of his staff to monitor what available grants are available for a variety of different activities. He has been working with a local ambulance service in finding a grant for their needs.

Ms. Estelle Ryckman gave a brief update on global markets. She said that it's important to have resources and help make companies recession proof. Those companies that have access to global markets, are around 9% less likely to go out of business in a recession. SCPP recently helped a local printing company with the duties being imposed on the paper they use, Mrs. Schneider worked to Senator Schumer's office to advocate on their behalf. The cost of the added tariffs to this company would have been approximately \$90M per year.

Mr. Grattidge said that in a recently passed farm bill at the Federal level, industrial hemp and CBD has been approved for therapeutic uses. Mr. Grattidge said that effort should be put into where local agriculture could benefit from some of these projects. Mrs. Schneider said that she has been to a legislative hearing on this issue. There are approx. 25K products that can be produced by industrial grade help. They are learning more about the growing process and also related concerns. They are in an education process now. They also know of companies that are ready to go ahead in this industry. In April they will be partnering with Cornell Cooperative Extension on "Recipes for Success" a workshop for aspiring food entrepreneurs on how to start and market a food related business.

On a motion made by Mr. Kusnierz, seconded by Mr. Szczepaniak, the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Deputy Clerk of the Board