

Minutes

Planning & Economic Development Committee

**September 19, 6:00 pm, Room 331**

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Odell, Chagnon, Starks, Himelein

Members Absent: O'Connell

Others: Tampio, Ames, Wells, McCoy, Borrello, Dennison, Abdella, A. Abdella, McCord, Bowen, B. Starks

*Chairman Odell called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m.*

Approval of Minutes (07/18/18)

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Chagnon

*Unanimously Carried*

Privilege of the Floor

Ms. Starks: Hi, I'm Beth Starks. I'm assistant professor for teacher education at JCC. I'm the early childhood education coordinator there and also the founder and executive director of Chautauqua Lake Childcare Center. I'll be presenting next month, hopefully to talk to you about childcare and the importance of thinking about childcare in our economic development planning.

Chairman Odell: Thank you, Ms. Starks.

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Proposed Resolution- Authorize Allocation of 3% Occupancy Tax Funding from the 2018 Reserve Account for Ripley Gateway/Commerce Center Feasibility Study

County Executive Borrello: This is the allocation of the 3% for the Ripley Gateway Center. I'm actually quite surprised that Mark isn't here. As we- I have talked about many times, I have felt for the longest time that we need a true gateway center at the entrance to New York State. In the past, the ideas that have been posed have something like a welcome center, someplace that you get off the thruway to pee and get a map and get back on the road. What we

would like to do is something on a much grander scale and I think you have all heard me talk about this- very much like we see at Tamarack in West Virginia, which is in itself a destination. It is a tourist attraction that features all of the things that are made and produced in West Virginia. Along those same lines, I would like to try something like that on a grand scale- the best of Western New York at the entrance to our State. I am truly disappointed that the Governor has chosen to put the most recent one on Grand Island. With that being said, I have heard there are conversations about putting more in different parts of the State. I think to prepare ourselves for that and to prepare ourselves for pursuing it independently, to take money to do a- I wouldn't call it a feasibility study, but a proposal that would also include some kind of concept renderings so we can see what it is that can be done in Ripley. Supervisor Bowen is here and I know that he has been spending time and investing in that area right by the State line. This is great opportunity for us to collaborate with the town and I think to push forward on something that could be an amazing economic driver for our County, but also, take what we have now at the entrance of our State and- I took some pictures awhile back of some of the spots there and I didn't bring them with me tonight, but I did have some images showing pictures of the entrance of Ripley with the poor dilapidated buildings there and then West Virginia and the Tamarack location. If you took the names off of these places and you asked a nationwide poll to label which picture is New York and which was West Virginia, not many would get that right and it's sad. Its sad to say that the entrance to our State, and one of the busiest traveled entrances to our State, looks like it does. I think we need to put an effort into turning that around and making that a true gateway to our County and to our State. This would be our first step.

Chairman Odell: Thank you.

Legislator Starks: Is \$50,000 the cost of that study?

County Executive Borrello: Yes, it's an approximate number. It will cover the study.

Legislator Chagnon: George, I appreciate your explanation about the concept. What is puzzling me a bit, is that the 3% reserve is for tourism and this- the center that you are describing is far more than tourism. Its economic development, its commerce, and all of those concepts rolled into one. Why is the tourism occupancy tax going to bear the burden of this?

County Executive Borrello: Really, this is a tourism attraction. What I'm saying is that other welcome centers are not a tourist destination. This will be a tourist destination. While there were certainly be commerce conducted there, it's tourism related commerce. For example, if you have- have you ever been to Tamarack?

Legislator Chagnon: Yes.

County Executive Borrello: OK. What they have there is what I'm envisioning for us. It's the idea of bringing products that are produced locally to be sold there. You may not be able to get off your trip long enough to take that tour down to all of our wineries or to visit a place where you can buy Amish made furniture. This would put them in one location, which is an attraction to tourists. The economic development side of it is the economic development engine that it would be by supplying tourist based commerce. To me, it is all about tourism. Tourism is

also a significant portion of our economic development strategy here in the County. In future phases, when we have an opportunity to budget for this in other places, we are going to need participation from other parts of County government including economic development and the IDA. This is just kind of allowing us to take the first step so that we can then give those other agencies the opportunity to apply for CFA grants or going back to ASD and saying how much can you fund this with- this is giving them the initial steps to give them a jumpstart to get those things done. We really can't go anywhere without this.

Legislator Chagnon: Thank you that answered my question.

Chairman Odell: Has a company been selected to conduct this study? Is this enough of a budget? Or over-budget?

County Executive Borrello: Yes. Mark- I wish Mark was here because he has more of those details. I have let him handle the- he is the more- Don, do you have any more input on that?

Mr. McCord: No, I'm not exactly sure.

County Executive Borrello: In that sense, this is kind of a round figure based on what we have been told. Those agencies-

Chairman Odell: It's a benchmark number-

County Executive Borrello: Yeah.

Chairman Odell: I'm assuming that even without the director of the IDA here we can assume the commitment to the \$5,000 is no problem on the IDA's part. Any other questions for the committee? All those in favor? Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution- Formation of Chautauqua County Food Policy Council

Mrs. Abdella: I'm Ann Abdella from the Chautauqua County Health Network.

Mr. McCord: So, the resolution before you is for the formation of a food policy council and we are assisting with that process from an administrative standpoint. I'm going to let Ann explain what this is all about because the Chautauqua County Health Network has been a large part of coordinating those efforts.

Mrs. Abdella: Thank you. Probably three years ago we got into a bit of a partnership with Chautauqua County Health Network, the County Planning Department, the County Executive and Cooperative Extension to partner on a technical assistance grant from the USDA and the American Farmland Trust. Chautauqua County was identified as one rural county in the Country of ten as what they would call a community of opportunity. Which means that we have a good portion of terrific farmland that, from their estimation, is underutilized and that we have opportunities to- we have

many of the right pieces in place to create an effective food system in this community, but we are missing some things and benefiting from some technical assistance and planning to help start to identify how we can knit those pieces together. That involves planning, food production, growing the food, processing the food, distributing the food, storing the food and handling the waste. So, for that project Mr. Horrigan, when he was the County Executive, appointed a growing food connections steering committee and that group has continued to meet over the course of probably the last three years. Our technical assistance has ended, as was expected, with USDA. The plan document has been prepared and we can get you copies of these. I believe the planning department participated in a supplemental study last- in the last 18 months with the University of Buffalo food lab and- what's the program-

Mr. McCord: Urban Design-

Mrs. Abdella: To do a study in the County and I think many of you that were on the Legislature last year actually saw the presentation that the graduates provided. This report has a series of recommendations in it. There are about 16 of them. The committee has met, looked at and prioritized that list of 16 and come up with five or six. On that list is the formal formation- instead of being a steering committee, creating a council and that the success of that leans into having the blessing of the elected officials and the County Executive and that it has a home within government. Formalizing the formation of a council and then dedicating some amount of staff time to overseeing that council- minutes, calling people to meetings, setting agendas and reporting out to the community. From our organizations perspective, Chautauqua County Health Network, our mission is to strengthen the local health care and wellness delivery system. From where we sit, food security, nutrition and access to healthier foods for all people is a large component of the work that we do. We are seeking to embed health across all sectors of the community and there is some tremendous economic development opportunity within this report and within the opportunities that a food policy council would be looking at. From our vantage point, we have committed to you and the planning department that we would provide at least three years of funding to partially support the staff position for this. Anything I'm missing?

Mr. McCord: The one thing about this that makes it timely- we have looked at the impact on the workload. These would be quarterly meetings. We are, as a department, people that work on public policies, so this is in our wheelhouse and fits well with community development. The other part is that we secured a \$30,000 grant from the Community Foundation in Jamestown for an agricultural plan and updated the current Ag plan that we had. We will bring forward to you next month, in October, a resolution that would allow us to submit to New York State Ag and Markets to fund balance of that planning process- because of the way that you heard Ann describe what this food policy council does, I see these things being timely because they go hand in hand. If you are looking at the food source and production it is some of the same things we looked at during this planning process with the Ag plan. I think it is just a good marriage to get both items done at this time.

Chairman Odell: Sometimes the stars align. Thank you very much.

Legislator Himelein: Ann, you mentioned that land was underutilized. At one time, I know, the federal government used to subsidize land not to use it. Is that still in existence? Will it affect this?

Mrs. Abdella: I cannot answer this question.

Mr. McCord: It is a good question, but I don't know the answer to that either.

Mr. Himelein: Can you have it for Audit & Control?

Mr. McCord: I will make my best attempt at that.

Mr. Himelein: It's pushing you, I know, but I think it's a very pertinent question.

Legislator Starks: Is the grant funding coming from this farmland trust or the Community Foundation?

Mrs. Abdella: It is coming from the Chautauqua County Health Network through a creating healthy schools and communities grant that we have. The State Health Department is very supportive of this idea.

Legislator Starks: I just wanted to clarify that. Thank you.

Legislator Chagnon: I'm curious as to why this is coming to us now because the last whereas clause says that, "the revenues and expenditures associated with this grant are already included in the tentative 2019 budget," that we haven't seen yet. Why are we being asked to form this when we haven't seen the budget that is going to have the revenues and expenses associated with it?

Mr. McCord: The Health Network has a grant currently that Ann has referenced- they have to get this in place before the end of September if they are going to maintain those funds and not have to send some of those back. The workload is in 2019, but we have to secure the money for that currently or we will lose it and not have the opportunity-

Mrs. Abdella: If we lose that placeholder with our funder it may not be there next year.

Legislator Chagnon: Well, the devil's advocate question is; what if we don't accept this in the 2019 budget and we have already accepted this grant?

Mrs. Abdella: I would assume that-

Mr. McCord: This is primarily for a revenue source. The expenditure side of this is just in staff time. There are no- we don't have to run adds or do anything like that, so there is very little (*inaudible*) in the form of overhead, it is just in the form of some staff hours. I wouldn't have entered into this agreement if it would have been anything more than quarterly.

Legislator Chagnon: OK, does that answer my theoretical question?

Mr. McCord: Not completely. I told Ann this, if we don't go through the budget process and we end up completely in the hole, we will not be able to accept this on our side of the equation and she understood that.

Mrs. Abdella: We will return the money to the State.

Legislator Chagnon: OK, thank you.

Chairman Odell: The positive side of- what were the best of the major recommendations being utilized from the study at UB?

Mrs. Abdella: I will get you a copy of this. Really, it's the infrastructure. It's keeping the people in place, keeping the planning going, engaging more members on a more consistent basis- on a steering committee people sort of volunteer their time. If they are appointed to something like this we think we will have more committed involvement. I'll rattle off a few. The first one on the list is hire a food system economic development coordinator, incentives the formation of a food system transportation network, develop secondary vocational and higher education agricultural education programs, we are doing a lot in manufacturing and not so much in agriculture, conduct food security assessment to determine additional barriers, launch micro lending and discounted facilities programs, form an advisory council to strengthen and sustain the food system, publish a report on the state of agri-tourism, develop food donation infrastructure, create an environmental resource management plan, increase farm to school participation through the network, encourage SNAP education campaigns and it goes on. This doesn't mean that the group is going to choose all of that, but there is a tremendous amount of research that has gone into building the case for support to consider.

Chairman Odell: This all sounds familiar from last fall's report. Thank you for that. Are there any other questions? All those in favor? Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution- Authorize Agreement with County of Cattaraugus to Extend Term  
Of the Conewango Watershed Commission

Mr. Abdella: As most of you may be aware, the commission has been in existence for several decades. This would be a renewal of that commission which is jointly implemented with Cattaraugus County. You will see in the resolved clause- there are essentially the same terms that have existed that each county remains responsible for any capital expenditures that are within its borders. The practical realities are that this enables the structure to continue, but as you will see, it is subject to appropriation and the agreement can be terminated with 90 days' notice. As each budget year happens and goes by, you are free to decide whether to continue to commit to this structure and the functions of the commission. This will allow that structure to remain in place for the next five years, again, subject to your annual budget procedures.

Chairman Odell: Thank you, Steve. Any questions from the committee?

Legislator Himelein: Nothing from me.

Legislator Chagnon: Steve is the \$7,500 consistent with what we have been budgeting?

Mr. Abdella: Yes. It is the same as the previous year.

Legislator Chagnon: OK.

Chairman Odell: Any other questions? All those in favor? Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution- Joint Funding Agreement with U.S. Department of Interior – Geological Survey

Mr. McCoy: Good evening. This is something that is cyclical in nature. We do it every year about this time. It is a joint funding agreement with USGS to fund the lake and river gauges on Chautauqua Lake and the Chatakoin River. The information is very useful for our perspectives and even critical to the operation of the South and Center Chautauqua Lake Waste Water Treatment Plant and for the operation of the Warner Dam. It's part of the County Executives budget, so that's why you don't see any budgeting information on this resolution.

Chairman Odell: Which does need to be done annually more or less as a house keeping item, right?

Mr. McCoy: Correct.

Chairman Odell: Thank you. Any questions? All in favor? Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution- Authorize Use of Chautauqua County 2% Occupancy Tax Reserve Funds for Mitigating Dredging Impacts in Dunkirk Harbor

Mr. McCoy: As you know, Dunkirk harbor is being dredged this year and they are probably just about done. There were some unanticipated impacts. The federal channel not only extends from the pier out past Niagara Mohawk/National Grid generating plant, but it also extends east and west along the inner break waters. The water was four and a half to six feet deep before they dredged it back down to eight feet. As such, there is a lot of aquatic vegetation. A lot of it broke loose, floated in, and impacted the public boat launch and marina operations. It also happened at a time when Dunkirk was having their power boat races which made for a very unattractive waterfront. This is to help compensate them for some of their efforts to help clean things up.

Chairman Odell: Was this – maybe County Executive Borrello could help clarify- is this what we used to clean up Cassadaga Lakes?

County Executive Borrello: Yes.

Chairman Odell: Very good. Questions?

Legislator Chagnon: Dave, we were talking about this the other day. I was assuming that this was a onetime thing and that it was the result of the dredging activity-

Mr. McCoy: Yes.

Legislator Chagnon: I wasn't sure enough to make that claim. This isn't something that we will expect to be happening on an annual basis? Is this something that we would expect to happen again if Dunkirk is doing the offshore powerboat races again? My understanding was that it was only related to the dredging.

Mr. McCoy: OK. I do believe that the City will ask again for some help for the powerboat races when they come around next year. There is enough money in this resolution to give us two years for cleanup work.

Legislator Chagnon: This is for two years?

Legislator Starks: Why are we asking for two years of cleanup?

Mr. McCoy: I don't know what is going to happen next year. We don't even know if the races will be back.

Legislator Chagnon: Why would we allocate money for it then?

Mr. McCoy: Because we don't have to spend it all.

County Executive Borrello: I think that the money that we allocated for this year- just to go back to answer your questions specifically- so, the power races didn't cause the issue. It was the dredging that caused the issue. Last year they did contract with the Cassadaga Lakes Association to do some weed harvesting in the harbor prior to the dredging. This is more excess this year than anything else. In other words, this is stuff that they really- it was more work this year than last year because-

Legislator Chagnon: Because of the dredging.

County Executive Borrello: Yes. The money that we allocated this year in this resolution realistically should be spent this year, but we probably- realistically, there was more than that spent between (*inaudible*) and the City to get this cleaned up. It would be nice to have additional funding, but realistically what they are getting would not really- to get what they get this year would help what the City has to expend this year to help them next year. We would give them the money now and they would have to spend less next year. I also know that they are looking to find a more permanent solution for themselves in Dunkirk for next year which might make it irrelevant in future years for us.

Legislator Chagnon: For the powerboat race?

County Executive Borrello: No, I'm talking about for weed mitigation. They are looking- I can't speak to it because it is not my place, but essentially what I am saying is that if we give them this money this year and hopefully we won't have to- well, the following years we

wouldn't have to help them because they are looking for their own solution. It is not my place to say what the City is working on.

Legislator Chagnon: Well, that leaves us with some muddy waters. If you had come and said this was a direct result of the dredging, this was a onetime event, \$5,000 to mitigate that, but not we are into helping them next year- this casts it in a completely different light.

County Executive Borrello: The reality of it is that it is to clean up what was done this year. The question is how much will the County participate versus the City. If we theoretically gave them less this year, it would put them in a position not to be able to do what they want to do next year. Then they would need to come back asking more frequently. So, more money spent now means less money spent later. That's the only way I can describe it for you, but it is your decision.

Legislator Himelein: How much money does that leave in the 2% fund?

Chairman Odell: That would leave \$232,000.

Mrs. Dennison: Yes. There is \$232,000 now before the \$5,000. It would leave \$227,000.

County Executive Borrello: That is still a healthy balance.

Mrs. Dennison: I just wanted to add a comment that if the funds are not all utilized this year, anything that is unutilized would return to the reserve at the end of the year. If Dunkirk doesn't spend it or need all of it, it would be returned-

Legislator Chagnon: The money had already been spent. The \$5,000 is going to go to the City of Dunkirk but some of it going to sit in their bank account and that is the source of my concern. I'm just going to say- preceding the vote on this resolution, I'm in favor of the concept of helping the City of Dunkirk to mitigate the result of the dredging, but I am not in favor of giving them additional funds that they could utilize in future years. As the resolution stands, I will not be voting in favor of it.

County Executive Borrello: Well would there be a- would you like to cut it down some? I would like to have your support. As you already know, the City of Dunkirk is very financially strained with the NRG situation-

Legislator Chagnon: If you would have a feeling of what the cost is for this year, I would understand that next year they would be coming back for additional support.

County Executive Borrello: Do you know what the gap is?

Mr. McCoy: I haven't seen any receipts from the City, but my gut feeling is that it would be around \$2,500.

Legislator Chagnon: I would like to propose that we amend this resolution to change the amount from \$5,000 to \$2,500. Then I will sign it.

Chairman Odell: I think we all could. I have to agree.

Legislator Himelein: I'll second that.

*Unanimously Carried to Amend the Resolution*

Chairman Odell: Any discussion on the resolution as amended? All those in favor?  
Opposed?

*Unanimously Carried as Amended*

Discussion- 2% Occupancy Tax Program Updated Grant Application  
-Dave McCoy, Watershed Coordinator

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Chagnon to adjourn.

*Unanimously Carried (7:00 p.m.)*

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,  
Olivia L. Ames, Committee Secretary