

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

November 25, 2008

2:00 p.m.

Conf. Rm. E, 4th Floor, Legislative Office Building, Oswego, NY

1. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

PRESENT: Legs. Shawn Doyle, Chairman, Morris Sorbello, V. Chair., Jack Beckwith, Arthur Gearsbeck, Louella LeClair, Douglas Malone, and Kimberly Seager

GUESTS: Leg. Santore, Myron and Sue Pringle, Leg. Kastler, Paul Forestiere

STAFF: Dave Turner, Kelly Jordal, Phil Church, Chairman Leemann and Deb Wise

Approval of Minutes – October 28, 2008

Chairman Doyle stated that the meeting on October 28, 2008, Executive Session ended at 4:45 p.m. the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m. with a motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Gearsbeck. All were in favor of adjournment. Chairman Doyle stated with that correction to the minutes, he asked for a motion to accept the minutes of October 28, 2008. Motion by Leg. LeClair second by Leg. Sorbello to accept the minutes with the correction. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Dave Turner stated to Chairman Doyle that he had one comment regarding Page 2, Item 3, Contract Revision. Mr. Turner stated that this item is a brownfield contract that had to be terminated with one company and transferred to another company. This resolution was acted on last month, but it didn't go to the full legislature for full action. Mr. Turner stated that there were a couple of legal items that we needed to make sure were absolutely correct before going to the full legislature. Mr. Turner stated that it is recommended to proceed, this will be on the Legislative agenda for the December 11th meeting.

2. Employee Recognition

The Committee members went into Legislative Chambers for a picture with Deborah Wise and she was thanked for her 10 years of service to the County.

3. Resolutions

A. Annual Bed Tax

Chairman Doyle stated the next agenda item is the Annual Bed Tax. Dave Turner stated that this is an annual resolution, as required by the law that established the collection and distribution of the bed tax. Mr. Turner stated that each year the legislature determines that it's appropriate for the Treasurer's office to retain 2% for their administrative costs and the balance of the bed tax to be used on promoting Oswego County, this comes up every year as that is the way the law was written. Leg. Gearsbeck asked how much is the bed tax this year? Mr. Turner stated that the fiscal year ends for the bed tax November 30, we don't receive those immediately. Mr. Turner stated that they don't know the full numbers of the bed tax yet but with receipts that they do have they are up from 2007 by about 8 or 9%. If this trend keeps up we will be 5 to 10% above what was collected in the last fiscal year. Phil Church stated in the budget there was \$275,000 which is without the 2% to the Treasurer. Mr. Turner stated that we should be about \$300,000 for this fiscal year. New York State as a whole

as of August saw an increase, while the whole country had seen a decline, New York was growing as a state at about 10%. There was more discussion. Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Beckwith to accept the resolution to allocate hotel/motel occupancy tax revenues and distribution of revenues for 2009 to be used for tourism-promotion in Oswego County. All in favor. Motion carried.

B. Environmental Management Council Appointments

Chairman Doyle stated that there are five reappointments to the Environmental Management Council (EMC), the current appointments will expire on 12/31/08. Chairman Doyle stated that there will be one member position that will not be reappointed that is currently held by Alix Krueger, she has asked to not be reappointed. The reappointments to the EMC are: Sandra Bonanno, John Puppardo, Peter Rosenbaum, Don Ross, and Fran Verdoliva. Motion by Leg. Sorbello second by Leg. Beckwith for the five reappointments to the Environmental Management Council. All were in favor. Motion carried.

4. Tourism Updates

Dave Turner gave the tourism updates, awareness as to where people are contacting us from. Mr. Turner stated we are on track right now for the first six months with the website, we've had about 82,000 hits, 257,000 individual page views and about 36,000 unique visitors. If we keep up at this trend we will have had 163,000 visits annually. Mr. Turner stated last month we had 9,000 visitors over half of those are unique visitors. The blogs we tracked for Kelly 586 visits, from 13 states and 3 countries. The outdoor adventures of Jessica's had over a 1,000 visitors from 14 states and South Africa. The regular fishing, hunting blog by Spider Rybaak had 1,000 visitors from 13 states and South Africa. Mr. Turner stated through October of this year, our various forms of reaching out to people, have resulted in about 2500 specific requests. Most of those requests are from 20 countries, so pretty much from around the world. Mr. Turner stated when people call and request information, the tourism staff tries to find out where they have seen the information or the advertisement. Mr. Turner stated that the New York State data for non-resident fishing licenses have been issued to people from every state in the country except North Dakota. Leg. Sorbello asked about tour buses and who organizes those? Mr. Turner stated that Kelly Jordal is our person that meets the busses, she's going to the American Bus Association conference in Virginia, this is the largest one. Kelly will be attending with the person from the Thousand Island area, they've been doing the bus tours for quite some time. Mr. Turner stated bus travel will increase, we are on the Heritage tour, we have itineraries that we market through various crew operators, we are looking to put one together next year that will be cross county with Cayuga County. Chairman Doyle stated perhaps working with Oneida County would be good for tourism, tying Fort Stanwix with Fort Ontario. Mr. Turner stated the Post Standard recently had promotion entries that Onondaga County Visitors Bureau invited us to participate in. We looked at where this would be distributed and the cost, this might work for us. We sent the ad to the Post Standard and they said that it was fine, but then when Onondaga County looked at the ad in the final proof of the publication, this has reference to staying overnight in Oswego County. So Onondaga County said that the ad had to be taken out. Mr. Turner stated that it depends on what county you are working with. There was more discussion.

Leg. Kastler asked the question, what about looking ahead to 2012 celebration of the War of 1812, is anything being planned yet? Chairman Doyle stated this is being looked at by the Tourism Advisory Council. Leg. Sorbello stated that a lot of people are looking at the bus tours, it's more economical.

Leg. Seager stated that an 1812 publication or brochure, more like the hunting and fishing guide, would give people visiting or looking to visit, then they would know where to go and what to see. Mr. Turner stated that we could do the brochure instead of a magazine, there would be a big savings, and we could put on it heritage and cultural events. Leg. Seager stated just do the heritage items, not the cultural events, if the events are left off they can be used year after year. There was more discussion.

Leg. Malone stated we have SUNY Oswego, all the students, we need to promote our area to the students and their families. Leg. Malone stated the students are from all over, if we could advertise more at the college get the students interested in the area. Mr. Turner stated that we have used the visitors guide in the past at the college in Culkin Hall but not very warmly received. When there are athletic events at the college, tourism is usually asked to put together packets for the coaches that are coming in, so that is another way that we try and reach visitors at the college. Leg. Malone stated we should have this part of their orientation in August, we should go right to the student body. Mr. Turner stated the easiest way, we should put something in the Oswegonian, a link to our website in that. There was more discussion.

Dave Turner stated that the toll free number fish'n fun hotline we've had 8,700 calls to the toll free line, they were from 24 states and Canada.

Leg. Beckwith asked about any updates with the Farmland Protection Plan. Leg. Beckwith stated that according to John DeHollander, about a year ago there was going to be something done with it. Mr. Turner stated that there are two initiatives, at the last meeting, Leg. Brown the chair, there was a recommendation that the planning department update the Farmland Protection Plan, which was put together nine years ago. Mr. Turner stated that we brought this to them in January, and they are just now responding to that recommendation. We could do updates or we could wait until after December 2009, to do things right. We have the option of waiting for the updates we can apply for funding from the State to do this, this can only be done once in every ten years. The second initiative is a project that we've been working on with Soil and Water; Cooperative Extension; Farm Bureau; and National Resource Conservation Service, that is developing a program that would have a process in place for farmer's in Oswego County who are eligible and met the criteria. They could apply for money to purchase development rights of their property in exchange for conservation easement. Mr. Turner stated that this is a complicated process, involves a lot of work on our side and for the individual farmer's. We are following closely some templates that New York State provided and one that Cayuga County did, they have a very good comprehensive program. We have met several times in the last year and a half to take a look at these things, we are now working with the American Farmland Trust, to try and get a group of landowners together and explain where we are in the process. After the course of next year, we would actually finalize the plan and put the process in place and start taking applications for the next round of funding. There is money in the planning budget particularly for that process for the next year. There is a little money in the budget this year and John DeHollander is trying to get money through FL-LOWPA budget for this. Paul Forestiere stated that no agency in Oswego County has the expertise to move this forward, American Farmland Trust is helping to move us through the process. They are interested in moving this forward, to protect farmland in Oswego County so that we will always have this farmland. Mr. Forestiere stated that people move in next to a farm and then complain about the smell of the manure coming from that farm, this protects the farmers from instances like these. Mr. Turner stated that one of the hardest things for farmers to accept is that there

isn't enough money to go around for everyone that wants their farm protected and the state tries to geographically distribute that, they don't have enough money for each and every county where there is an interest. We won't be able to send in 5 to 10 applications every time, this is part of the process that we are developing the pre-application. Mr. Forestiere stated that we will look at the best applicants and try to help that one particular farmer at that time. This is a lengthy process, there are a lot of people that are interested in this but they might be turned away by the process. Mr. Turner stated that this won't be an expense for the county or Cooperative Extension, but to the farmer. Mr. Forestiere stated that once this program goes through, you have given up the right to develop your land, there is no change the land will never be able to be developed. The land has to remain farm land. There was more discussion.

Leg. Kastler asked about the funding for the public access along the coastline of Lake Ontario. Dave Turner stated that he has met with the Department of State and in particular the one that you are referring to for Lake Ontario, has been through the Town of Scriba. We developed a scope of work and we sent letters to all of the communities that have properties along Lake Ontario and asked them if they wanted to participate as our stakeholders of the advisory group. Mr. Turner stated we received a letter back from an individual in Mexico and a response from the city of Oswego, there wasn't a prime interest as we thought that there would be. We can still move forward with this committee, we've also requested someone from DEC to be on this committee. Mr. Turner stated that we have a similar situation with the Town of Hastings the applicant for the Oswego and Oneida Rivers and the shoreline of Oneida Lake within Oswego County. We've heard from the Town of Granby and the City of Oswego we've also asked the Canal Corp. for a representative to be on the committee. Mr. Turner stated we will make another attempt to get more people involved, then we'll have our first meeting.

Leg. Kastler thanked Chairman Leemann and Dave Turner for sending out those broadband surveys on Election Day. Leg. Kastler stated that she passed out between 700 and 800 of them. There was some discussion.

5. Agency Reports

Cooperative Extension and Soil and Water had their reports for the committee. Chairman Doyle asked for a motion to accept the reports. Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Gearsbeck to accept the agency reports. All were in favor. Motion carried.

Dave Turner stated he wanted to bring your attention to # 4 of the Soil and Water report, which is an Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop being offered on December 11, 2008 in Volney. This information has been sent to town clerks, this maybe something that you'd like to mention in your district. Mr. Turner stated that erosion control can help to eliminate erosion and the nutrient problems that enter our waterways.

II. Adjournment

Chairman Doyle asked for a motion to adjourn at 3:31 p.m. Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Malone to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. Motion carried.