

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: MARCH 1, 2010

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:	OTHERS PRESENT:
SUPERVISORS TAYLOR	REPRESENTING PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
CONOVER	PATRICIA TATICH, DIRECTOR
PITKIN	WAYNE LAMOTHE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
McCOY	JAMIE WHITE, SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR
McDEVITT	REPRESENTING WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:
COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:	LEONARD FOSBROOK, PRESIDENT
SUPERVISORS SOKOL	JENNIFER SWITZER, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE/EMPIRE ZONE SPECIALIST
MERLINO	FREDERICK MONROE, CHAIRMAN
	JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
	SUPERVISORS LOEB
	STEC
	STRAINER
	THOMAS
	BLAKE JONES, <i>THE POST STAR</i>
	CHARLENE DiRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Planning & Community Development Committee to order at 10:57 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Len Fosbrook, President of the Economic Development Corporation, who distributed copies of his agenda to the Committee members; a copy of same is on file with the minutes. Mr. Fosbrook stated the first item on the agenda was a discussion on the Empire Zone Program sunset and he asked Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance/Empire Zone Specialist, for a report.

Ms. Switzer said an email had been received pertaining to the Empire Zone Program from Empire State Development regarding the sunset of the Program. She advised there had been questions pertaining to the continuation of benefits from the Empire Zone Program which were addressed. She apprised the majority of the issues revolved around the Enhanced Investment Tax Credit benefit and the Enhanced Employment Incentive Tax Credit benefit. Those benefits would be abolished, she continued, with the sunset on June 30, 2010 unless, according to the State if the Governor's budget passed, because it included provisions to fund the credits. She said it was unknown if the budget would pass or if the benefits would remain in the budget. She apprised the Wage Tax Credit, the Real Property Tax Credit and the Sales Tax Credit and Refund would continue as long as the entity remained in good standing which meant they would need to complete their business annual report on a yearly basis. She said the

administration of the Empire Zone Program would remain the responsibility of the EDC without any State funding.

Ms. Switzer reported they were still awaiting further information on the new Excelsior Program. Mr. Conover asked how the sunset of the Empire Zone Program effected the staffing of the EDC. Ms. Switzer explained the EDC was previously funded \$45,000 for administration of the Empire Zone Program. With the State terminating the Program and the economic issues at the County, she added, the EDC would no longer receive the \$45,000 in funding. She advised that 75% of the cost of her salary had been paid out of the Empire Zone funding and the EDC would now cover 100% of the cost of her salary. She noted the termination of the funding would not effect the administration of the Program.

Chairman Monroe reported Senator Little and Assemblywoman Sayward had established an Adirondack Caucus consisting of four Senators and five Assembly persons. He added they had drafted a bill to create an Economic Development Zone for the Adirondacks. Mr. Fosbrook noted the same position had been taken at the Empire Zone Conference the previous month.

Mr. Fosbrook stated the EDC Board had discussed ways to assist businesses with a focus on the tourism industry which was 25% of the economy in Warren County. He added as a result of meetings pertaining to the Gaslight Village property, the EDC had volunteered to seek a proposal which would give data with which to make decisions on the property. The agenda packet contained a proposal, he added, from ConsultEcon, Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts. He said the proposal was one of two which were received and the cost of the study would be \$38,000 to be funded by the EDC. He apprised a list of qualifications was included in the proposal.

Mr. Fosbrook noted the tourism industry was active and wanted to be involved in the promotion of tourism. He said a comprehensive strategic approach was needed with regards to tourism. Mr. Pitkin asked if the Tourism Department was aware of the proposal and Mr. Fosbrook replied he had provided Kate Johnson, Director of Tourism, with a copy of the proposal but they had not had a chance to discuss it. Mr. Taylor apprised there had been discussions in the past of completing a tourism study which had been met with objections. He said it was important to note the study would assist the Tourism Department. Mr. Fosbrook stated the Tourism Department handled the advertising and promotion for the County but he questioned the possibility of missed opportunities pertaining to infrastructure needs. He added it was important to analyze the data and determine who were the customers and what their needs were.

Mr. Taylor questioned if the \$38,000 would come from the existing EDC budget and Mr. Fosbrook replied the EDC was willing to pay for the entire study as they felt very strongly that it was needed. Chairman Monroe stated the concept of the tourism study had come from a request made at a Gaslight Village Ad Hoc Committee meeting. He said the Committee had determined that a market analysis was needed to determine the needs the Gaslight Village property could fulfill. He noted the proposal was of a broader scale than was originally requested.

Discussion ensued pertaining to the proposal.

Mr. Fosbrook stated the EDC would like some type of guarantee the County would hold a thorough discussion of the outcome of the report. He added their worry was that the County would not act on any of the recommendations of ConsultEcon, Inc. Mr. Pitkin asked if Mr. Fosbrook's request was to ensure that the EDC did not fund a study that would be ignored by the County and Mr. Fosbrook replied affirmatively. Mr. McDevitt stated he would offer his commitment that he would read the report thoroughly and attempt to act on the recommendations. Mr. Conover suggested the Committee be part of the process in working with ConsultEcon, Inc. and Mr. Fosbrook agreed, noting part of the proposal was to meet with involved entities to finalize a work plan for the project. Mr. Taylor questioned if a financial commitment from the County would be necessary following the outcome of the study and Mr. Fosbrook replied it was difficult to forecast what the results would be. Mr. Pitkin noted if the recommendations of the report involved significant financial requirements it would be met with resistance from the Board. Mr. Fosbrook questioned the possibility of utilizing occupancy tax funds in connection with the property. Mr. Pitkin responded the concept had been discussed and was a possibility.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to support the EDC's suggestion to contract with ConsultEcon, Inc. to prepare a tourism strategy report for Warren County at a cost of \$38,000 to be paid from the EDC Budget.

Chairman Monroe questioned the next step since the concept involved the realm of several Committees, such as the Tourism, Occupancy Tax and Finance Committees and the full Board. Mr. Taylor suggested a joint meeting to discuss the concept. It was the consensus of the Committee that the issue of the tourism strategy report be referred to the Tourism Committee.

This concluded the EDC portion of the Committee meeting.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Tatich, Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, who distributed copies of her agenda to the Committee members; a copy of which is on file with the minutes.

Commencing with the pending items, Ms. Tatich reported there continued to be a vacancy on the Warren County Planning Board from the Town of Queensbury. She added Mr. Stec had said he would provide a member and if not, then they would recruit a member from one of the surrounding Towns. Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of the Planning & Community Development Department, stated the representative should be from a community in the southern portion of the County, such as the Town of Lake George, the Town of Queensbury or the City of Glens Falls. He added there were representatives from the northern portion of the County and they tried to keep a balance of the communities represented.

Pertaining to the Planning Efficiency Grant, Ms. Tatich stated, the Committee had authorized submission of a grant application with the City of Glens Falls in an amount not to exceed \$50,000 and the County's share of the local match not to exceed \$2,500. She reported the grant was submitted the previous week and there were various opportunities for shared services. She noted the original concept had been for shared services of dispatching but there was an opportunity to look at other shared services, as well. She said Avalon Associates were under contract with the City and had prepared the application.

Ms. Tatich reported there had been a referral from the Health Services Committee to research the possibility of hiring a Grant Administrator using the administrative funds offered with grants. She added she had several discussions with Patricia Auer, Director of Public Health, and they were continuing to look at options and she would present a report at the next Committee meeting.

There was a pending item, Ms. Tatich said, requesting the County Attorney to research Municipal Law Section 239 to determine the possible elimination of area and use variance referrals handled by the Warren County Planning Board. She advised she had no report on the progress of this item.

Ms. Tatich stated the last pending item was a discussion regarding which GIS (Geographic Information System) services were Town responsibilities and which were County. She advised Mr. Conover had suggested the Department research which services were used and how often. Mr. LaMothe reported the second page of the agenda showed the amount of usage on the mapping information available online through the Spatial Data Viewer. He noted in a fifteen day period there were 2,451 hits. He added there was an average of 6,827 logins to Imagemate Online per year and an average of 27,716 parcels were viewed per year. He advised the Association of Realtors contracted with the County for an additional level of detail over and above what was provided to the public and this contract offset the cost of the contract for maintenance of the program. He apprised an employee of the Planning & Community Development Department invested a lot of time inputting the information that was derived from the Real Property Tax Services Office. Mr. Conover commented he had used the Spatial Data Viewer and had found it to be a tremendous asset to the County. Mr. LaMothe reported the Spatial Data Viewer had been used by people in every State and sixteen separate countries.

Ms. Tatich apprised the Sheriff's Department reaped the benefits of work completed by the Planning & Community Development Department as it pertained to 911 addresses. She added the Real Property Tax Services Office generated approximately \$14,000 in 2009 on requests that were only available because of work completed by the Planning & Community Development Department. She said it was important to note that revenues were generated by other Departments because of work completed by her Department.

Mr. LaMothe requested a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Lake George Park Commission for GIS services provided by the County. He added the initial agreement would be for 100 hours of service in the amount of \$2,500 and additional services at a rate of \$30 per hour.

Motion was made by Mr. Pitkin, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to authorize an MOU with the Lake George Park Commission as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 19, 2010 Board meeting.*

Mr. LaMothe requested authorization to submit a grant application to the New York State

Housing Trust Fund Corporation, Office of Community Renewal for a Community Development Block Grant in an amount not to exceed \$750,000 for community development on behalf of local communities. He noted there had been a referral from the Health Services Committee to determine if funding was available for the sprinkler system at Westmount Health Facility. He said it would be an eligible activity for this grant funding and he would require a copy of the engineering report.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. McDevitt and carried unanimously to authorize the submission of the grant application as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 19, 2010 Board meeting.*

Ms. Tatich reported there was a recent program funding award from the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation. Mr. LaMothe explained two or three years ago there was a program (CD 66) which was funded under the HOME Program. He added the State had awarded additional funds to five entities in the State through a performance based initiative without further application. He said Warren County had been awarded \$300,000 and he requested to amend the 2010 County budget to increase estimated revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$300,000 to reflect the receipt of the funding.

Motion was made by Mr. McDevitt, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried unanimously to amend the 2010 County budget as presented and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Ms. Tatich said the next item was a discussion on issues relating to the First Wilderness Heritage Corridor (FWHC) plan implementation. Mr. LaMothe explained the County had been awarded funding for marketing and promotion in the FWHC. He added discussions with the Tourism Department had determined they would be unable to complete the type of work called for by the grant. He presented a request to the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, he continued, for matching funds to contract with an Event Coordinator to assist the local communities in marketing small events within the FWHC. He explained they had released a Request for Proposal (RFP) and had received three bids, none of which they felt were worth pursuing. He noted Resolution No. 456 of 2005 adopted the FWHC Action Plan which had 214 identified goals and objectives, one of which was an Event Technical Assistance Provider. Mr. LaMothe apprised the Town of Lake Luzerne had entered into an agreement with a former employee of the Warren County Tourism Department to provide a similar service at the local level. That agreement, he continued, qualified as the local match to allow the County to pursue the same services on a part-time basis with a temporary employee at the County level which would be 100% funded by the grant.

Mr. LaMothe stated a proposal was included in the agenda packet which listed services that would be provided by a 12 to 16 hour per week position on a temporary basis. He said discussions with Civil Service had determined there was an existing job classification which could be utilized. He requested approval to establish an Event Facilitator and Technical Assistance Provider position on a temporary part-time basis which would be funded 100% by

the existing grant for a period of three years. Mr. Pitkin asked if the Department had a particular person in mind for the position and Mr. LaMothe responded it was the same person that was currently under contract with the Town of Lake Luzerne.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Pitkin and carried unanimously to establish part-time help line in the Planning Department Budget to pay for an Event Facilitator and Technical Assistance Provider position on a temporary part-time basis utilizing funding from the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program FWHC Grant and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaMothe apprised he had sent letters to all of the FWHC communities requesting a working group of five to nine people to hold meetings beginning March 15, 2010. He added the responses had not been forthcoming.

Ms. Tatich stated the 2010 Census would begin in mid-April and the Department had received promotional items from the Census Bureau, such as mugs and tote bags. She added some of the other County Planners were giving the items to volunteers who delivered Meals-on-Wheels to distribute. She said she would contact the Town Supervisors to determine how they wanted to promote the Census in their Towns.

Ms. Tatich reviewed the meetings that had been attended by the Planning & Community Development Department staff which were listed on the agenda. She mentioned the Adirondack North Country Association (ANCA) felt they did not have a relationship with the communities in the southeast corner of the Park. The President of ANCA, she continued, had requested that she put together a group of Supervisors to discuss issues related to Economic Development and to formalize a relationship with ANCA.

Mr. Taylor advised the County's decision not to increase sales tax had caused the need to find additional ways to generate revenues. He explained there had been \$1.5 billion in taxable sales in Warren County in 2008 and if the County could find ways to increase that amount by 3% it would generate an additional \$40 million in sales. He said he wanted to establish a Business Improvement Forum to develop ways to increase taxable sales in Warren County. He added he had discussed the concept with the Chairman of the Washington County Planning Committee who would present it at their next meeting.

There being no further business to come before the Planning & Community Development Committee, on motion by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mr. McCoy, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist