

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: AUGUST 12, 2015

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
MONROE
WOOD
STROUGH

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR BEATY

OTHERS PRESENT:

WAYNE LAMOTHE, COUNTY PLANNER
REPRESENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:
ED BARTHOLOMEW, PRESIDENT
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AMY BARTLETT, FIRST ASSISTANT COUNTY ATTORNEY
AMANDA ALLEN, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS CONOVER
DICKINSON
FRASIER
KENNY
THOMAS
MICHAEL SWAN, WARREN COUNTY TREASURER
SAMANTHA HOGAN, SECRETARY TO THE CLERK OF THE BOARD

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 8:45 a.m.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Monroe 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 Wayne LaMothe, *County Planner*, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. LaMothe presented the request to authorize an agreement with IBI Group to update the First Wilderness Market Study and economic impact analysis of rail operations to the Rensselaer Station. He advised Warren County had been awarded a \$100,000 grant to update the market study for the rail lines. Mr. LaMothe stated an RFP (*Request for Proposal*) had been released for these services, but only two responses had been received, as reflected in the Bid Tabulation Sheet included in the agenda packet. He stated after a review of the two bids, it was recommended that the contract be awarded to IBI Group, regardless of the fact that this was the higher of the two bids, because this firm was more qualified; he added that IBI Group had provided copies of a study they had completed for the Detroit Windsor Rail Connection Corridor, which represented exactly the type of study they desired. Mr. LaMothe advised the cost of the study would be completely grant funded, incurring no financial impact to the County.

Mr. Strough questioned whether the rail study would be for service between the Rensselaer and Saratoga Stations, and Mr. LaMothe clarified the study would pertain to the rails from the North Creek Station to the Rensselaer Station and would take into account both operations and the current economic impact to the region, as well as what the economic impact could be if a connection to the Rensselaer Station was established.

Mr. Monroe pointed out emails included in the agenda packet from Mr. David Simpson who seemed to be supportive of the bid being awarded to IBI Group and he asked who David Simpson was. Mr. LaMothe answered that Mr. Simpson was part of the management team for Iowa Pacific.

Chairman Geraghty noted that Iowa Pacific was currently experiencing difficulty reaching an agreement with Canadian Pacific Rail to establish service between the Saratoga and Rensselaer Stations; he also noted an affiliation between Canadian Pacific Rail and IBI Group and he questioned whether this was

a wise decision. Mr. LaMothe responded that IBI Group had first hand knowledge of these types of operations and may be able to open the door to creating the desired connection.

Motion was made by Ms. Wood, seconded by Mr. Monroe and carried unanimously to approve the request as outlined and the necessary resolution was authorized for the August 21st Board meeting. *A copy of the request is on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Ed Bartholomew, *President of the Economic Development Corporation (EDC)*, who displayed a photo depicting traffic congestion in the Route 9 corridor located to the north of the Municipal Center Building, directly in front of the French Mountain Commons outlet stores, which reflected how busy this roadway was during summer months. *A copy of the photo is on file with the minutes.* He explained they desired to conduct a traffic study of Route 9 beginning near Round Lake Road and extending approximately two miles north to Route 149. He acknowledged that a prior study of this area had been completed in 2008; however, he said, substantial changes in the movement of traffic since that time had identified the need to update it. He advised concerns had been voiced by property owners in the area with regards to the fact that a certain saturation point had been reached and there was a feeling that unless something was done to address this problem, it was conceivable that the County's sales tax income could suffer. He apprised that during the summer, southbound traffic counts showed about 14,000 cars traveling through the area on weekdays in the summer, while the northbound traffic count was about 10,000 cars. He commented that provisions needed to be made to accommodate emergency vehicles, as well as to provide better pedestrian walking areas. Mr. Bartholomew stated that the EDC was willing to commit \$25,000 to the study, and they desired for Warren County to match that contribution for an independent study.

Mr. LaMothe stated that this matter had come before the Warren County Planning Board back in late 1980's or early 1990's and the suggestion from the Planning Board at that time had been to limit access and construct a series of service roads; however, he stated, the Town of Queensbury had not see a need to do so at that time. Mr. LaMothe noted that currently there are 21 curb cuts in a quarter mile stretch with the same amount of square footage as the original Crossgates Mall, *located in Guilderland, NY*, but only offering one-third the amount of parking. Mr. Bartholomew said he had been having the same types of conversations with outlet property owners, one of whom had indicated a willingness to reduce access into his property in order to add some property to the east side of the stretch. Mr. Strough agreed that something needed to be done about these issues.

Mr. Taylor asked Paul Dusek, *County Administrator*, to speak in reference to the County-owned properties that may assist in adjusting the traffic flow in this area. With respect to the County-owned parcels located adjacent to the Great Escape (*Six Flags*), Mr. Dusek noted studies had been completed in the past to try and address issues that had risen with regard to access for the property and how it could affect the Great Escape, or vice versa. He continued that the County-owned property located next to Westmount Health Facility was also subject to study by the intended buyer, once the Facility was sold, as to what the potential development for that property would be.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of the Committee to refer the matter of the County's \$25,000 contribution to the study costs to the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee as occupancy tax was identified as a valid source of funding for this expense. Mr. Kenny, speaking as Chairman of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, confirmed he believed this to be an appropriate use of occupancy tax funding as this corridor was vital to the economy of Warren County.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Ms. Wood and seconded by Mr. Monroe, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Samantha Hogan, Secretary to the Clerk of the Board