

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Monday, February 14, 2022 - 10:00 AM

Ike Tyler, Chairperson
Roy Holzer, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Tyler called this Economic Development/Planning/Publicity Meeting to order at 10:00 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Stephanie DeZalia, Derek Doty, Shaun Gilliland, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Ken Hughes, Steve McNally, Noel Merrihew, Jim Monty, Tom Scozzafava, Matthew Stanley, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, Davina Winemiller, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Robin DeLoria had been previously excused.

Department Heads present: Dan Palmer, Anna Reynolds and Mike Mascarenas. Dan Manning was absent.

Deputies present: Dina Garvey

Also present: Jody Olcott - IDA, Jim McKenna and Mary Jane Lawrence - ROOST, and Laurie Davis and Ashlee Carly Summers - Cornell Cooperative Extension. Aurora McCaffery had been previously excused. Bruce Misarski was absent

TYLER: Economic Development, good morning.

The first item on the agenda was Industrial Development was Jody Olcott reporting as follows:

OLCOTT: I don't have anything additional, unless you have questions on my report.

TYLER: Anybody have any questions? I don't see any Jody, thank you.

The next item on the agenda was Community Resources with Anna Reynolds reporting as follows:

REYNOLDS: Good morning, I have 4 resolutions today. The first being for the EFC Septic System Replacement Program, a budget amendment, increasing revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$123,242.50, from 2021 to 2022.

TYLER: Mr. Holzer, second Mr. Merrihew

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT TO INCREASE REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$123,242.50, CARRYOVER FROM 2021 TO 2022 - EFC SEPTIC SYSTEM REPLACEMENT PROGRAM.

Holzer, Merrihew

TYLER: Discussion?

PALMER: This is just a carryover; right? It's not an additional?

REYNOLDS: Yeah, these are all carryovers.

PALMER: Yeah, so these resolutions, especially for new Supervisors, these resolutions are really, they don't change what we received. All they are, because the State is on a different fiscal year than we are, their fiscal year ends in April, so we have to move these resolutions to extend the money into 2022.

TYLER: All in favor? Opposed?

REYNOLDS: The next one's for the New York State Ag and Markets Farmland Protection Grant, requesting a budget amendment increasing revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$20,000.00 from 2021 to 2022.

TYLER: Davina and Stephanie, thank you.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT TO INCREASE REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,000.00, CARRYOVER FROM 2021 TO 2022 - NEW YORK STATE AGS AND MARKETS FARMLAND PROTECTION GRANT

Winemiller, DeZalia

TYLER: Thank you, discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Carries.

REYNOLDS: The next one's for the New York State Local Government Efficiency Grant, requesting a budget amendment increasing revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$112,010.01 from 2020 to 2021.

TYLER: Okay, we have Ms. Winemiller, Ms. DeZalia.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT TO INCREASE REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$112,010.01, CARRYOVER FROM 2020 TO 2021 -

NEW YORK STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY GRANT.

Winemiller, DeZalia

TYLER: All in favor? Opposed?
You have two more?

REYNOLDS: Just one more, and it's the same grant program. The New York State Local Government Efficiency Grant Program, budget amendment for increasing revenues and appropriations in the amount of \$112,010.01 from 2021 to 2022.

TYLER: Mr. Roy and Mr. Hughes second.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING A BUDGET AMENDMENT IN THE ESSEX COUNTY COMMUNITY RESOURCES DEPARTMENT, INCREASING REVENUES AND APPROPRIATIONS IN THE AMOUNT OF \$112,010.01, CARRYOVER FROM 2021 TO 2022 - NEW YORK STATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY GRANT.

Holzer, Hughes

TYLER: All in favor? Opposed?

REYNOLDS: And there is one referral today, it's from the Town of Willsboro. The Planning Board submitted a referral for site plan review on 2.8 acres for commercial development along State Route 22. So, that is why it triggered a referral, because it's 500 feet within the state highway. I've reviewed the materials submitted and there's no impact to County property.

TYLER: Mr. Hughes, Mr. Roy

**ACTION OF THE ESSEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
ON REFERRAL RECEIVED FROM THE TOWN WILLSBORO**

The following motion was made by Supervisor Hughes.

Where, the Essex County Planning Board has considered the following GML 239 referrals at its regular meeting on February 14, 2022.

REFERRAL
Town of Willsboro - Seville Development, LLC

PROPOSED ACTION
site plan review

Whereas, none of the referred, proposed actions directly impacts a county road or county property.

Be It adopted by the Essex County Planning Board that no recommendation or comment on the said referrals shall be or hereby is made, and the respective referring bodies may take such final action as they deem appropriate.

This motion was seconded by Supervisor Holzer and passed on a vote of 9 in favor, and none opposed.

TYLER: All in favor? Opposed? Anything else? Any questions?

HOLZER: Just a general comment, Anna, I want to thank you and Rob for all the help you've been giving the Town of Wilmington in regards to our Homestead Housing, hopefully we'll keep moving ahead on it.

REYNOLDS: Yeah, definitely.

HOLZER: I really appreciate all your help.

REYNOLDS: Yeah, we plan to work on it and follow up this week, for sure, with the APA and all the other steps that we have to work through to get it done.

TYLER: Thank you, Anna.

WINEMILLER: Anna, can you give us a rundown for the grants that are coming up?

REYNOLDS: So, so far I've heard of the CFA being released, as it typically does in the summer. Well, it would be released probably in April-May, if we're lucky and it would be due, typically in July. So, if we're given 3 months to write the grant applications, we would be fortunate for that. Some other grant programs to look out for, the Lake Champlain Basin Program Grants, this year they have more money than they typically do, so there's new programs that are available. So, that's something that we will keep an eye out for and some other planning grants that we've learned about through ESD and I'm not sure the due dates, at this moment, but there are programs that we will look out for.

WINEMILLER: Excellent, thank you so much.

TYLER: Thank you ma'am.

The next item on the agenda was the Essex County Historian, Aurora McCaffrey having been previously excused.

The next item on the agenda was Cornell Cooperative Extension, with Laurie Davis and Carly Summers reporting as follows:

TYLER Cooperative Extension, we have a presentation today from Laurie Davis and Carly

Summers.

DAVIS: Good morning, everyone. Hopefully, I got my report in about an hour too late, so hopefully it got printed out for you. We have a report and a budget summary and a couple of program flyers and things coming out. I just wanted to highlight our Happy Trails Program, that if you know of any kids in your towns that might like to participate. It's a brand new program, we got grant funding for youth who need to be highly motivated and dedicated and have a dream of working with horses and it's a leadership and horse skills program. It's going to start in March, so hopefully you got the flyer for that and that has all the contact information that you need, but it's a highly selective application program that we're starting.

I also was going to give you a quick update on our Executive Director search. It closes tomorrow and it's actually looking really promising. We have triple the applications that we had from our last searches and there's some great ones in there, so we're really encouraged about that.

But, mostly I want to take our time to have Carly, our Ag Leader give an update on the Farmland Protection Plan. So, I am going to turn it over to Carly.

WINEMILLER: Before you leave I have one quick question.

DAVIS: Yeah

WINEMILLER: Could you possibly email the Supervisors that horse flyer in color?

DAVIS: Oh, sure.

WINEMILLER: Then we could post it on our social media pages.

DAVIS: Perfect

WINEMILLER: This copy isn't very clear.

DAVIS: Sure, I'll send it out when I get back.

WINEMILLER: Thank you so much.

DAVIS: Thank you

GILLILLAND: While Carly is getting ready, I have one question. The question/comment, I've come to understand that Essex County, at this time and maybe you can confirm it for me, is down to two commercial dairy farms? One in Essex and one in Willsboro.

DAVIS: That would be a Carly question.

SUMMERS: I wasn't listening, I'm sorry.

DAVIS: Are there just two commercial dairies left?

GILLILLAND: We can just discuss this after you're done with the presentation.

SUMMERS: Okay

DAVIS: Okay, anyone else?

SUMMERS: So, I'm Carly Summers, as Laurie said, I'm with Cornell Cooperative Extension in Essex County and I lead the Agriculture Program. So, some of you are newer to this idea of our Farmland Protection Plan. So, it is a State Law for all the counties that have significant amounts of agriculture to have a strategic plan in place and our newest, most recent plan was actually completed in 1997, so it's quite old. So, when I started about 5 years, Ag and Markets contacted me and asked me to start the process of getting these going again and we started it about two years ago; which is the amount of time that Ag and Markets pretty much expects you to take to do a Farmland Protection Plan. We're getting really close and working a lot with Anna Reynolds and Community Resources, as well as Adirondack Land Trust to lead this plan.

So, I'm just going to give you a few of the little key findings, so far and talk about what the purpose of this strategic plan is anyway, how are we going to use it. So, well as what we've done so far as part of the strategic planning process and then what's next.

So, this is one of the beautiful pictures that came out of our Adirondack Harvest Festival Open Farm Week, last year. You're going to see from some of the data that we're showing through this strategic plan that doing events like open farm week is really important for the scale of agriculture and the scope of agriculture in Essex County. So, this is Mossbrook Roots Farm, if you guys aren't familiar with it. So, the purpose of strategic planning has a lot of great ramifications. You, basically, the people in this room, you're going to benefit a lot from this, because everybody from the county, all of these networking partners are trying to give you an idea of what we should be doing. So, strategic planning should guide policy, as well as funding decisions and also local planning and zoning regulations are a big part of the research and Anna Reynolds led that and that is one of the things that should be heavily influenced by a plan like this. We definitely need to see our strategies for collaboration and networking be impacted by this plan and as a site able document is this really important. So, the grant writing that you were, guys were asking about grants, you should be able to refer to this plan for anything agriculture and food system related and we're already starting to use a lot of the data that has come out of this plan for what we're doing in CCE Essex County.

So, as part of this strategic plan, so far it's involved a lot of data collection, looking at things like the agricultural census, wage data, economic data for the county and the region. We also conducted a lot of interviews, via phone and zoom, because we weren't able to get together in person in the way a strategic plan like this would normally be done. We switched interviews and switched to surveys and Ag and Markets actually has been really impressed by the way that we've conducted this whole plan so far, because we didn't just see it as only farmland protection; which is the way this plan is usually geared. We look at it in the context of the whole food system and you're going to see a little bit of why it's really important for that, because in our county we're really different in terms of scale. We don't have a lot of really big commercial farms shipping lots

of food out of the county. We have a lot of smaller scale farms in our county selling to people in our county, so we needed to look at the food system as a whole in order to understand the viability of farms and food businesses here.

So, then of course, we surveyed farmers and land owners as well as customers, since the customers are buying a lot of the local foods and restaurant owners, because we have the potential to tap a really large area of food, the food system by tapping into more restaurant sales. So, of course Farmland Protection relays a lot on map making, so some of you are really going to, if you love maps like I do, we've got a lot of maps in this plan and they've got a lot of information and as I said, Anna Reynolds looked at every single town's regulations, plans and zoning laws. We're going to get a lot of information about what you can do in your town to help encourage agriculture, as well food system businesses and all that boiled down to a swat analysis and then will be rolled into a further strategic planning guide.

So, somethings, I guess some of you that have been around longer might be really familiar, that we're talked about, but others that might be a little newer, looking at agriculture, especially in some of the towns that don't have as much agriculture, something that is unique about our agriculture scene is that most of the farms are small. This is US Census data, census data, that the majority of farms over on the left hand side on the graph are showing that they're making an income less than \$20,000.00 a year, really small. We do have a lot of farms that make a more sustainable living and then only a few farms that are making over half a million dollars. This looks really different than a lot of counties in the State, but that isn't bad, it just means that we're different. So, this is a map of our agricultural districts; which I'll explain more about agricultural districts in an upcoming meeting, but this map just gives you a good visual of where farming occurs in the county. Most of you are probably familiar with the fact that most of our farming is happening in the Champlain Valley. So, those are the green highlighted towns. We have also have a growing farming scene in the Jay region and the AuSable Forks region, but all the white region is a lot of beautiful preserved forests and wilderness. So, a lot of the way our agricultural scene is geared towards is they're small, diverse, often times they're organic or environmentally friendly farms that are nestled within the wilderness. So, we also know that we have a lot of wilderness tourism, so we need to be fusing together the strength of our region and not looking at agriculture as a separate economy and tourism as a separate economy, we're wanting to fuse that together. So, that's one of the things that we're striving to do.

This is a striking set of data, so I've talked previously about the fact that Essex County is, looks very different in terms of the percentage of direct to customer sales compared to other counties in the North Country, but this map of the whole State shows that we are second only to a county near New York City in sales directly to the customer. The New York City one is, I think, is 37%, but, we're at 33% of our agricultural sales are direct to customer. That's meaning farm stands, farmer's markets, things like that. So, we're not shipping the majority of our food out to other counties or other states and what this means is that our business models are really different and that is linked a lot of the fact that we are selling a lot of our food to customers.

So, as I said one of our surveys was to customers who we reached out, there is 345 and that means we had 345 people participate in our survey, which is great and one of the questions that we wanted to get out there, is what are the things that people are mainly buying and you can see. You can't read all the things, probably, but they buy a whole lot of things and this is the reason why I moved here and one of the reasons is that I wanted to be able to eat local food, know my

farmer, know where my food came from and have it actually taste delicious. So, this is something that other people are also reporting. So, 345 people participated, to me said that people were passionate about this topic. Some of the really funny quotes are, I just moved to the area and one of the top three reasons we chose Essex County is because of the availability of local produce, meats and dairy and this is something that I hear and this is something we pulled out of the plan. So, people expressed that they were happy to see farming grow over the past 10 years and they wanted to see it continue to grow and another person said, I trust my local farmers to do the right thing and I want to strengthen the local economy. So, those were some impactful quotes that I wanted to share. I also, one of the most important questions that we looked at, was people filling in the blank, so I would like to see more _____ in my community. 35% of people that participated in this survey said they wanted to see more locally owned food businesses. So and as you can see, people also wanted composting programs, more farm markets, co-ops and restaurants.

So, one of, of course the most important survey that we did was reaching farmers and farmland owners, but we didn't just reach out only to farmers, we also know that farmland owners, there's a huge audience of farmland owners that aren't actually farming their land. They might be leasing their land to farmers, they might not, they might have inherited farmland and there's no farming happening on it still. So, we worked with real property data to make sure that we reach not only active farmers, but also farmland owners and the reason why we did this is because Essex County isn't distinct from the rest of the nation in that we're reaching an age bracket where a lot of farmers and farmland owners are retiring out of, they're ready to retire and that is resulting in a lot of farmland being lost to residential developments. Just between the last ag census there were three acres a minute of farmland lost in the nation and so and a lot of that has to do with the lack of succession planning and a lot of that has to do with the fact that if you don't plan, the easiest and fastest way you can make the most money to retire to get out of your land is to sell your land to residential development. So, that is something that we found in the survey. You can see the trend, on this graph is showing when we surveyed all the farmers; which we reached 94, do you have a succession plan and we asked them about specific aspects of it. The red bar, which is reaching 79%, basically and 75% across the board is not prepared at all. That's dangerous, that's dangerous for forest owners, as well as farmland owners, but we really have to get that number up and a lot of people are just intimidated about all the things that have to go through succession planning. So, that's one really important project that I am working on a lot to step it up.

The mapping projects and these were led largely by Adirondack Land Trust, looked at what is the farmland to be protected and this is one of the most important outcome and sets of data from the plan, because we really need to actively protect farmland. It is important to create, to help farmland owners to create succession plans, that is one really important way to protect farmland, but another is to actively protect farmland using conservation easements and what conservation easements are is basically to sell the development right off of farmland, so that it makes the land more affordable for the new people buying it and it also pays the farmer or the farmland owner for the development rights, to where it basically washes out to be the same price as if you were selling your land for development, but it allows the land to be more sustainably passed on. It's a little complicated, I can answer more questions about that, but it boils down to, there are over 37,000 acres in this County that we could and should preserve permanently through conservation easements is the recommendation of this plan and the fun thing is Land Trust broke it down into

small, medium and large farms, because a lot of farms in other areas of the Country are huge and those are seen as, you know, very valuable farms, but here we have a lot of smaller areas that are only there on yellow bracket, what we're calling Tier 3 or smaller farms between 7 and 50 acres and with small direct market farms you can actually have a very valuable farm business on a smaller land, so we included everything that we could, which would contribute to the area food system resiliency.

So, boiling it down, the key strategy, I am going to just sum it up with today or the Essex County policymakers, you guys, the top three ways that you can help protect farmland are; the support organizations and programs that conserve farmland permanently with conservation easements. That is something that currently could be a lot stronger and there's a few different strategies for that. To enable farm viability, you guys do a great job with that. The best ways to do that is to support Cornell Cooperative Extension, as well as all the regional partners that we work with and to assist in farmland succession planning. So, that is something that CCE does, other organizations can do that, as well. So, those are the three top key strategies I'll point out. So, if any of you have any questions, I would be happy to take them.

HOLZER: Quick question, so with your farmland conservation easements, are they contingent upon the farm being active? Because, I heard you say earlier that it's one and done and once we do farmland easements they're forever.

SUMMERS: Good question, farmland easement don't have to be for only active farms, at all. I mean a forest could be in an easement. There's all sorts of easements that could be for historical property. They're a way to protect key pieces of property of all kinds, so active farmers, not active farmers, but it is a permanent protection.

HUGHES: Is farmland that changes its use to solar still remain farmland on your list here?

SUMMERS: That's a very good question. Right now, big commercial solar farms, the ones that take up 40 acres or something, they can do them differently. There's all sort of ways that they install those. Some of them involve a lot of concrete and a lot of roads and most conservation easements, conservation easements could be designed into whatever deal it is. So, every single conservation easement is different. Most of them would not allow a big commercial solar farm like that to happen, but you could, you know there are easements done in Pennsylvania and things that allow for fracking. So, it depends on your easement.

HUGHES: Okay, thank you Carly.

DOTY: Is the easement part of the DEC 420A program?

SUMMERS: No, good question. The 420A is largely for taxes and forests. But, the easements are funded and in all sorts of ways Ag and Markets has a lot great grants that fund the purchase of conservation easements, but not all of them have to go through Ag and Markets. There's NRCS has grants that fund the purchase of conservation easements and then Adirondack Land Trust, often, will raise money to fund the purchase of conservation easements, all on their own without

any grants. So, there's all sorts of ways.

DOTY: Thank you.

STANLEY: Not the Town of Jay, farming has changed a lot in my years that I've been around it. I know when I was younger there was a lot of dairy farms, the fair was much bigger. There was a different way of farming in Essex County 20-30 years ago. I've seen in Jay, just alone, a lot of those farms have turned into goat farms, cheese farms, but a problem that I've seen in trying to put this in showing off what Essex County has in the farming industry, the agriculture industry, is there any way that we can tag this along with the fair, so we could actually show what Essex County does actually produce now, because it's not so much dairy as it is other things. I know there's a lot of direct customer stuff in Jay. I mean right off the top of my head I know of 3 farm stores where people frequent a lot. How can we get, like yourself, other people into Essex County and move into Essex County, because they want to live off these farms and how do we foster them to grow and showcase what we have and try and do something hand in hand to increase, I mean the Fair was a big part of my life growing up and the last, probably 10 years that I've been going there, it's a shadow of what it used to be and how do we make these go hand and hand?

GILLILLAND: Mr. Stanley, you are now assigned to the Fairgrounds Task Force.

HOLZER: You're my co-chair.

SUMMERS: As Shaun pointed out, I think it does take people who are passionate about the Fair to be on the Fair Board. In terms of supporting the direct to customer farming, one of the things that came out of the 1997 plan that was really special, farmers were specifically asking for an organization like Adirondack Harvest. If you're familiar with Adirondack Harvest that is something that is CCE Essex runs. We have a really awesome, super current, comprehensive local food guide on the web and then we also do a lot of direct marketing for it, through social media and through press releases and through blogs and videos and all sort of things and so we are, it's a cooperative marketing platform, basically, but just focusing mostly on public education, so giving customers a much more solid idea of what's into these farms. If you haven't seen the videos and the photos, I suggest you, you can all sign up for the Adirondack Harvest newsletter. We're got a lot of really great stuff going on right now and that is very, geared towards, a similar thing to the Fair. We have an Adirondack Harvest Festival, that normally when Covid isn't going on, we have, it's on the fairgrounds, it's sort of like, maybe, an old traditional fair would be, and, but we do, we have had conversations with people that, how can we combine the fair and Adirondack Harvest Festival? It's not off the table, it's just got so many divergent, sort of, you know the demo derby and animals are sort of hard to combine, but.

STANLEY: I think those two things, they're very different programs, like Adirondack Harvest was great. Moon Valley Farm used to be my Grandmother's farm, so we were part of that this year. But, they're good programs, where it's nice to visit the farm, but it's nice to also have the customer go to one place to see what there is, instead of having to travel around, as well. So, I don't know how we can get that hand and hand to work together.

SUMMERS: Like the Adirondack Harvest Festival, you mean? Yeah, but I do think it's a good idea if you're interested in the Fair, it would be great to join in, because there's not a lot of people that really participate in the Fair Board, are there?

GILLILLAND: The Fair Board is different than ours, we have a Fairgrounds Task Force here, which in the governmental side of it. The Fair Board runs the actual Fair, itself.

SUMMERS: Okay

GILLILLAND: These are all questions that Mr. Holzer wrestles with on a weekly basis. I'm really, I'm joking with you, but.

HOLZER: No, we're serious.

MONTY: Now, I know Adirondack Harvest you work with ROOST, but outside of that do you do any other marketing with ROOST for farms in Essex County?

SUMMERS: We have been working more with ROOST. Over the years, ROOST has always been a supporter of the Festival, but we have been writing blogs for their newsletters more; which helps us cross pollinate with our newsletters and we did a video series with them. They supported our idea for 3 videos that we had and had their professional videographer come to some farms and put together a really cool video series. Did any of you see that?

MONTY: I think it kind of goes hand and hand with what you're talking about, is getting that information out there.

STANLEY: Absolutely, I know trying to go through the rebranding of the Whiteface Region we brought up agri-tourism, a lot.

SUMMERSA: Great

STANLEY: And I think that is a major portion of growing tourism in Essex County and we need to tap into that.

SUMMERS: Absolutely, yeah we need to have people who come here to hike or kayak or ski, think, I can also eat local food and be excited to eat local food when they're here and I didn't talk about the restaurant survey, because, there's a lot of data to talk about, but there are not very many restaurants that actually support the local food scene here and if we could promote the area as a place to eat local food and bring local food into our restaurants, it's a huge untapped area for the economy to grow and the restaurants do, that do buy local food, they do experience, you know people want to eat local food in restaurants and so the places that do it are better off because of it. So, we just have to help facilitate that.

TYLER: Real quick, I just want to, you know the Ag Society runs the fairgrounds is they're working hard, talking about it all the time, how they can reintroduce farming and stuff into the Fair. It's an ag fair. So, they're looking for ideas all the time how they can do that. There's just not a lot of participation in that.

SUMMERS: Thank you all for your time.

GILLILLAND: Mr. Chairman, I have one quick question for CCE.

TYLER: Go ahead.

GILLILLAND: And that is going back to commercial dairies. I was informed and I just want to make clear, we have two commercial dairies left in Essex County, one in Essex and one in Willsboro and there's an organic one in Westport and that's it. We have a very huge, our tradition here, when you drive by and all over the North Country, even in the mountains, you see remnants of old dairy farms and things like that and Carly's absolutely correct. You know the resurgence, the renaissance in agriculture is more toward the organic and smaller farms and things, but there has to be, the industry has to be wide spread, we have to support commercials. The problem is, not to interfere with the markets and things like that, but I do think that it is important that we support, because, you know milk will eventually come back, the market will adjust and we don't want to be caught where we have no more milk producers left here in Essex County and all of a sudden the market is profitable. Anyway, so I've talked to a dairy farmer in my town about the issue and the concern of what's left, even as well for the Amish who are coming and who want to sell milk, as well and we have this increased Amish population who's coming in Essex County is if Agri-Mark decides that it's just not worth it to drive a truck over here and pick up milk, then they're done and we're done in Essex County has a dairy producer. So, I'm not on this Committee, but I would, if somebody would support, I would like to put forth a resolution to Agri-Mark, encouraging Agri-Mark to forestall or to not cancel milk pickups in Essex County and to support our dairy farmers.

TYLER: Moved by Mr. Hughes, second Mr. Holzer.

RESOLUTION SUPPORTING ESSEX COUNTY DAIRY FARMERS AND ENCOURAGING AGRI-MARK TO NOT CANCEL MILK PICKUPS FROM ESSEX COUNTY DAIRY FARMERS.

Hughes, Holzer

TYLER: Do we have more discussion on it?

HUGHES: I have a question; do we know if Stewart's picks up in our County?

GILLILLAND: The only, the truck that I know of is Agri-Mark and Agri-Mark sells to Cabot and it comes back to, it comes back to and one other brand other than Cabot, too and those brands come back to Essex County and is sold in stores and stuff, McCadam and Cabot.

TYLER: All in favor? Opposed? Great

The next item was the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST), with Jim McKenna and Mary Jane Lawrence reporting as follows:

LAWRENCE: Good morning, I just have a couple of things to go over, just an update on our program of work and then Jim McKenna also has a couple of things that he wants to touch on. So, you all have our 2022 Marketing Plan. This year we have everybody the full marketing and management plan. In the years past we've given you just your regions, but we switched up this year and now you get to see what we're doing all over Essex County, Hamilton County and Saranac Lake and Tupper Lake.

A couple of things to update you on, first and foremost, we're very happy that that's completed and in your hands. We use it as a bible, we use it throughout all our campaign planning, from our emails to our social strategy to our paid media to our phone/video program of work. So, that is definitely a very highly used document in our organization.

Just to take one step back, we did have meetings in the summer and fall throughout our regions to get the input from community members and leaders in the community to make sure that we were hitting the topics that we felt that were important, wanted to make sure that your communities felt that they were important, as well and their input and feedback.

A couple of updates on our website. The Wilmington website was going to be finished in 2022, that's going to have a new look and new feel to match the colors, the new colors and logos. We're going to be doing a complete rebuild of that site in 2023.

The Lake Champlain website, we are doing a complete rebuild of that and we're in the first steps of the new layout. We just presented to the committee, I think that was last week. So, any of you that were on that, I hope you found that productive.

A couple of photoshoots that we've completed this winter. We've done snowshoeing and cross country skiing in the HUB. We've done Whiteface Mountain, AuSable Chasm, the new venues in the High Peaks Region and also we're doing new media shoots which is kind of a heavy lift for us TV campaigns that we're planning for out of 2022 and going into 2023. So, it's a whole different level of quality that we need to produce for video for those types of campaign. So, we're really excited about it, but it's an endeavor.

Oh, we just completed the Empire State Winter Games 2022, which is very exciting, because as you know we had to skip a year. We worked with the Adirondack Sports Council; which is the organization that is facilitating the World University Games and the Empire States Winter Games this year. We had 1,900 athletes, which compared to 2020; which compared to 2020 we had about 2,400. So, we definitely had less, but that was not a bad thing and it was successful and people are excited for next year.

We also completed our mountain biking survey. As we've spoken about in the past, biking is becoming more and more popular; which there's some positives to that and there's also some challenges with, I know the biking and the automobiles and so we tried to pull it apart to understand really who's coming here and what are they looking for and how long are they staying, how much money are they spending and we worked with several of the regional and local

organizations to help put this survey together and you know many of them, from BETA to the Barkeater Trails to etc., etc., so I won't read them all, but we had over 4,000 responses and I'll just give you a couple of the highlights that you may find interesting. So, half of the mountain biking travelers that don't take overnight trips have only been, are new mountain bikers. So, the more experienced mountain bikers do take trips for overnight, it's about 1.5 nights per biker. They look towards short term rentals and some camping, is there choice for lodging. The most desired trails are, across all mountain bikers, are purpose built single tracks, which means they're build specifically for mountain biking, cross country trails and all mountain trails and we have it all. So, we're in a good position. It's very interesting that if you're an experience, a very experienced mountain biker and they usually use what's call Trail Force, it's a heavily used website, social media for residents and more experienced travelers, but the newcomers use designation websites. So, we've been doing a lot of work on all our websites to really focus and make sure we get great information on biking and we're going to continue to do that, going into the summer of 2022, you know sharing the roads and road etiquette, etc. It's exciting, isn't it. I think that's it, Jim, anything you want to talk about.

MCKENNA: Thank you Mary Jane and hello everybody. We will be distributing, next month, in March, the balance of the CTEF funds for calendar year 2021. That's the Community Tourism Enhancement Fund, that the 2% additional occupancy tax. Last year ended up good and we sort of established that, if you remember last year, every town got \$20,000.00 for the year, that was based on \$2 million in collections. The collections now have increased to \$2.5, so keeping that 1% average, that \$20,000.00 will turn into \$25,000.00.

We've also been able to purchase some software that gives us a by town breakout of AirBnB, which mean historically AirBnB pays one lump sum, we don't get the breakouts, but through this software we've been able to really break it out by town and each town, you know overall, the only occupancy information we could get in the past was hotel occupancy and North Elba was about 87% or 88% of that, with this software with AirBnB, North Elba is about 60%, which means the balance we'll be able to split through towns with this. So, that's I think is a good thing for everybody and we have seen, you know the short term rentals have increased pretty much, you know the software has also allowed us to look at it historically and all towns, you know the AirBnB and private rentals we can see an increase on an annual basis that. So, it's good software that we have and we think that will be very important moving forward and every town will benefit from it.

The other thing is the World University Games, that is moving forward, as Mary Jane said the Adirondack Sports Council is the organization that is organizing those games. They're up to, I think 40-50 employees full time, that will get up to about 150 when the games come and historically, well normally the organization that is the rights holder, it's call the International University Sports Federation, it's called FISU, because it's given in French. They would be coming over in a regular basis, but with Covid they haven't, they've just now started coming again and all their technical delegates, all their staff, a lot of their staff and their technical delegates will be coming over in the next two months. So, there's about 50-60 international people coming in to evaluate where the organization's at. So, that's moving forward and I guess we're available for questions.

Ironman; so we've put together a task force last fall of representatives from each of the towns where the Ironman Race goes through, so that's North Elba, Keene, Wilmington and Jay and

we've had some, a lot of meetings, I think 8 to 10 meetings; MJ is that about right? And we've got people on each side of the fence on it, but we've come up with some very specific recommendations through that task force moving forward and I've met with North Elba once, we meet with North Elba again today, we've meet with the Village of Lake Placid, we've meet the Town of Wilmington, we've got to schedule I believe with Keene and I think we've waiting for a final date for the Town of Jay, but we're going to move that forward. The recommendations of the task force was for, you know, verbal commitment for '22, because they do registrations in advance, so one more year for '23. However, Ironman has come back and said they want a three-year engagement, so we still have to work through a lot of details. You know, that event is, as Shaun's aware and you know it's a pretty spend in the County, last year the total spend by the athletes and families was about \$8 million, normally it's about \$10 million, when it's a full race, it was cut back last year, because of Covid, which translates, you know in the area of \$400,000.00 in sales tax for our County and you have to look at that in two ways, though, we weren't be totally empty if Ironman wasn't here. So, you know, there's incremental, which we have those numbers, direct expenses and there's economic value in it, there's also international brand value in it. So, we're still sort of evaluating all that and we hope to be in a final position, hopefully by the end of this month to see where we're going. Did I get that right, Mary Jane?

HOLZER: Jim, in regards to your new software that you get for AirBnB, how long have you been using it and the second thing is, can we start getting regular reports on what each Town is generating? I think this information is important for the communities that are enforcing short term ordinances and I also think that this would be valuable to Weights and Measures as we're ensuring that all these short term rentals are being registered in the Treasurer's Office.

MCKENNA: Right now we would only be able to look at an annual basis, Roy, but I think as we can move forward we would probably be able to get a little more consistent.

HOLZER: Do you have last year done?

MCKENNA: Yes, we do.

HOLZER: Can I get a copy of it?

MCKENNA: Yes, you can.

SCOZZAFAVA: I just want to, once again, thank Jim and the occupancy tax portion that the towns get, in our community we're going to have vintage sled races.

MCKENNA: Actually, I don't think Moriah gets the \$25,000.00 (laughter).

SCOZZAFAVA: Yeah, we get it. But, I mean you put in new signage.

MCKENNA: I saw that, it looks great, Tom, it looks great.

SCOZZAFAVA: The vintage sled races that are going to be next weekend, which I was amazed at the number of people that they draw for the antique snowmobiles. I am just telling you that in Moriah, that money's been a godsend.

MCKENNA: Yup, the signs look really good and we've seen in a lot of towns, I notice North Hudson, we talked about that Stephanie, a lot of town signs are looking great.

SCOZZAFAVA: Thank you

MCKENNA: Thank you, you pushed that Tom, by the way.

SCOZZAFAVA: Yes, I did.

MCKENNA: I know you did.

SCOZZAFAVA: It's all about me, that's why I'm bringing it up (laughter).

WINEMILLER: Jim, I was just wondering, a lot of people have mentioned to me, am sure that Derek has heard this, too, in Saranac Lake, at Coakley's and it is summer and it's crazy busy, it's very hard to get out. There's a Mobil, Coakley's and then all the traffic from Lake Placid coming into Saranac Lake and then there's no stop at the Y there, is there any plans for some type of stop sign or a light or something at that intersection, especially with the Empire State Games?

MCKENNA: I haven't heard of anything and I'm not sure is it's a DOT requirement? Maybe Jim would know that, is that how that works, Jim?

DOUGAN: That would be DOT, you need to make out a request.

DOTY: I can just update you. Jim's office put me in contact with Mr. Pat Barnes, Division One at DOT. There's a representative that's working with the University Games, now for traffic control. I will be meeting with someone this week and I'll bring up that intersection, as well.

WINEMILLER: I think that would alleviate, if we could get a light there. That would alleviate the pressure further down by MBT.

DOTY: But, DOT does have a person assigned just for these University Games, so the timing is good.

WINEMILLER: Excellent, thank you.

TYLER: Anything else?

STANLEY: Back to Ironman, Ironman's a great event and I brought this up to Greg when I met with Greg, I brought it up to that task force when we were looking at moving or having Ironman

back. Ironman is a great event, but it's right in the center of the height of tourism season in the summer. Is there any way to try to encourage Ironman to move to one of the shoulder seasons? Whether it's early before the summer tourism season or into the early fall, because I think, I mean with businesses that thrive on tourism, having an event at your busiest time of year is like counterproductive. So, if we could as we're working with them on a contract and move towards one of the shoulder seasons, because when I think they started doing the ½ Ironman, that's actually kind of a dead spot, right between Labor Day and Columbus Day, where it starts building back up to Columbus Day. So, if something could be done as talks are happening with Ironman, to look earlier in June, maybe that would be a good possibility.

MCKENNA: Yeah, actually one of the recommendations coming out of the task force is to certainly do that. The challenge is, you mentioned that one was done in September, the ½ Ironman, there was snow and 30°. That doesn't work for the swim. So, the windows that are being looked at is late June, possibly the weekend after 4th of July, when we see a little bit of lull and possibly looking into the end of August. So, that is one of the recommendations moving forward. We're just one stop on their schedule, so it's a lot of coordination, but, yes, that is part of the recommendations.

HARRINGTON: Yes, I remember with the 1980 Winter Olympics, the Department of Education allowed all the schools in Essex County to be closed for those two weeks; which would generate a high degree of volunteerism and I am wondering what the strategies are for the University Games in regards to volunteerism?

MCKENNA: Well, I'm not sure, I don't think there's a movement through the Education Department to do the same thing for 1980. I saw a report that the Sports Council gave last Friday, right now they have 450 confirmed volunteers, total number needed is 2,900. So, they're working on that. They're going to be reaching out a lot to a lot of the universities, as well, but they'll be doing a full campaign on trying to get volunteers and you know the volunteers, it's not like going for a 2-hour event, what they're doing is trying to sign people up for the full 11 days. So, 2,900 volunteers will be needed.

WILSON: Thank you, Jim and MJ, the marketing plan, the Management Plan is excellent. I really appreciate on page 6 the explanation of the transition to designation management and I think some of the things that Tom brought up, the using occupancy tax money to benefit our residents is really important and like Mr. Stanley's bringing if we try and make things work for our communities. So, it's great that your organization's doing that and I want to continue, you've been great in working with Keene to take advantage of that, because I think helping Supervisors understand that new role is really key, so I would encourage to read at the bottom of Page 6, the explanation there. But, thank you, Keene is benefitting from the change in, that fundamental change in how ROOST approaches marketing and management.

MCKENNA: Yeah, I'll just comment on that. We will have a North Elba Designation Management Plan compete at the end of this month and that is going to show the total change over what you're mentioning, Joe Pete. You know we're in a situation where there's a lot of places in the world that are identifying over tourism and event fatigue and North Elba is one of them and what that does

is it sort of separates tourism and makes the residents uneasy with tourism and this Designation Management Plan is an attempt to start working more cooperatively and organizations like ours that have historically been only outbound focused, meaning that we were out there trying to bring people in, we're now really changing significantly and trying to be, not only continue outbound, but working inbound with the communities and doing things with tourism that have a direct benefit for residents. So, we're still, we're not the only organization like ours in the world doing that, there's a big shift in what's called designation marketing organizations to designation marketing and management organizations and this Designation Management Plan, which we did cooperatively with the Village the Lake Placid and the Town of North Elba has some very specific goals that are geared around residents, quality of place and life for residents are really the focal point of it, so we're going to kick that off for the end of this month with cooperation with the town and the village and we think it's a good example moving forward for all of our towns in the County to start looking at things in that light.

TYLER: Thank you James. Seeing nothing else, have a great day.

MCKENNA: Yup, thank you very much.

TYLER: I don't see Mr. Misarski here.

The next item was the Housing Assistance Program with Bruce Misarski absent and no report given.

Anything else come before this Board? Mr. Monty?

MONTY: I know we're running behind, I just wanted to give everybody a quick update on the Low Income Housing Task Force. We have been meeting regularly and our thought process is to have a plan and a recommendation to the Board by late spring and early summer. I sat in on a regional roundtable with ADK Action last week. They're planning on two more in the future. One coming up in March and then one in April. If you have any questions and thoughts, please, by all means, get a hold of myself and Mr. Hughes. I think it's something that we can do as a County. We are just looking at the direction we think is best for us to take, thank you.

TYLER: Anything else?

HUGHES: Just a very quick reminder, broadband development is economic development and EmpireStateBroadband.com is the website for the deadline for the survey with a March 18th deadline, we are currently at 4% on a response rate, and we're looking to get 5% response rate. So, we're actually the 3rd highest response rate in the entire State, with Hamilton County and Genesee County beating us. So, please get that survey out there, let the people know that they need to, encourage them to please fill that out and hopefully we'll have a data set at the end of March and move forward with this. Mr. Monty, anything to add?

MONTY: Yeah, I just want to say, we got some information, I put it right out to the Boquet Valley School District and within an hour, they sent it immediately out to all the parents in the school district. So, I would recommend getting it to your local school districts and getting it out, because I think that would definitely increase our numbers and like Ken said, we're number three in the State as far as responding to the survey; which is surprising, considering the size of Essex County.

TYLER: Thank you, anything else?

SUMMER: I was curious with the satellite based internet that is now available, like with Starlink type of program, that they typically would serve the whole area and sort of replace the need for broadband.

HUGHES: I believe the impetus is going to be on terrestrial broadband, fiber optic broadband, because I don't believe the FCC counts Starlink or satellite based as broadband at this time, so they're looking, we're looking at finding ways to ensure physical connectivity, pole to pole, fiber to the home directly, that's the emphasis, right now. That's not saying what you're talking about isn't a future opportunity, but for right now we're looking, New York State is looking at what we can do for fiber to the home, to end the last mile. If that helps?

TYLER: Anything else? We are adjourned.

AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:00 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy
Clerk of the Board