

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Monday, January 11, 2021 - 10:30 AM

VIRTUALLY HELD

Ike Tyler, Chairperson

Roy Holzer, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Tyler called this Economic Development/Planning/Publicity Meeting to order at 10:36 am with the following Supervisors virtually in attendance: Clayton Barber, Archie Depo, Stephanie DeZalia, Shaun Gilliland, Joseph Giordano, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Kenneth Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Noel Merrihew, Jay Rand, Tom Scozzafava, Jeffrey Subra, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson and Davina Winemiller. Robin DeLoria and were absent.

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

Deputies present: Dina Garvey

Also virtually present: Jody Olcott - IDA, James McKenna and Mary Jane Lawrence - ROOST and Aurora McCaffrey - Essex County Historian. James Seeley - Cornell Cooperative Extension was absent.

TYLER: I am going to call this Economic Development Committee to order and get started. Carol or Jody here?

OLCOTT: Jody's here.

TYLER: Okay, Jody. I see you, how are you doing?

OLCOTT: We submitted a regular report, nothing else to update, unless there's questions?

TYLER: Any questions for Jody?

GILLILLAND: I'd like to know what they found out about the cable?

TYLER: Thank you Jody.

MONTY: Ike?

TYLER: Yeah

MONTY: I do have a quick question for Jody, if she's still here?

OLCOTT: Yup, I'm here.

MONTY: Do we know anything on that cable running down Lake Champlain, did we get any information?

OLCOTT: I have not received any information. My last discussion on it was right before Christmas with Palmer and Manning and Manning was going to write a letter to them requesting information and jurisdictional determinations and I haven't seen that, yet.

MONTY: Okay

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

TYLER: Okay, moving ahead to Community Resources, Anna.

REYNOLDS: Hi, I'm on the phone.

TYLER: What do you have, Anna?

REYNOLDS: I submitted my report. Attached is a list of current projects that we're working on, some of the grants that we submitted in December and are still working on, for example, the FEMA application and the forecasted grants we're planning to submit, hopefully within the next few months. So, if anyone has any questions, let me know.

TYLER: Any questions? Thank you Anna.

REYNOLDS: Thank you

The next item on the agenda was the Historian, Aurora McCaffrey reporting as follows:

TYLER: County Historian, Aurora?

MCCAFFREY: Hi, good morning. You have my report. I just want to note that we are doing some collections, the staff and I.

We're upgrading storage and also preparing for the HVAC installation, which will start fairly shortly. We are also planning for the 2021 season, hoping that we can have a regular season, but also preparing for not. We are looking into possible digital venues and also doing outside programs.

So, that's all I have to note today. Any questions?

TYLER: Any questions for Aurora? Thank you Aurora.

MCCAFFREY: Thank you

The next item on the agenda was Cornell Cooperative Extension, with no report given.

TYLER: Cooperative Extension, Dan do you know where we stand on this? Mr. Palmer, do you know where we stand on Cooperative Extension?

PALMER: We really have not heard anything specifically from them. I think they're still searching for an executive director.

TYLER: Okay, thank you

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

TYLER: We have two people from ROOST here, Mary Jane and Mr. McKenna. The floor is yours.

MCKENNA: Good morning, you know, I'll comment on something first and then MJ will talk about some things as well, but over this 9 or 10 months we have all heard, you know these remote workers and real estate prices are going up and properties are being sold off, so we decided to try and get some data on the potential of people moving into our county. We're going to be using our visitor list and send out a survey to try and gauge what the real interest is. We've listed all of our tourism, county tourism regions and towns in this and we're going to be getting this survey out this week and we hope that we can get some good data on what that potential is. So, we're pretty excited about that and we'll see where that goes.

In looking at the fall, you know we just got our fall occupancy tax collection. It looks like fall was down 2% compared to last year; which really wasn't bad. There's a lot of events, conventions, Can-AM Hockey and other things that happen in our county during the fall, but it seems that leisure travel sort of filled that gap and we still think that is sort of COVID related to travel. We will have the final numbers for the first six months of this CEF Fund. We'll have those numbers in February, the first week in February and at that time we'll do the distributions from, as we've all agreed upon over this past year, on those funds.

I'd like to comment briefly on the World University Games. They are moving forward. Those dates are January 12th through 22, 2023. There was the World University Winter Games set for Switzerland this month, in '21. They were postponed. So, those games will now happen, plan to happen in December of '21 and then our games will be the next games in January of '23.

Sponsorship packages for that are now being finalized and also the broadcast media is being finalized and we hope that will certainly be good, national and international exposure, that will be a world feed for that event.

Of another note, ORDA is working with the National Women's Hockey League and they are going to do the playoffs and finals in our county, this month or coming up and it's in a total bubble. They're doing it in a total bubble. No interaction with the community at all. They'll be in a bubble in that arena and in the lodging facilities. But, what's noteworthy of that is the finals, the playoffs, the final playoffs and finals will be aired on NBC. So, good exposure for our county during that event. With that, I'd like to turn it over to MJ to give you a little update on programs, specifically what we have in motion.

TYLER: Before you do Jim, I just want to know if anybody had any questions?

MCKENNA: Okay

TYLER: Any questions for Jim? Thank you Jim. Mary Jane

LAWRENCE: Good morning everybody, just to give you a quick update on the program of work of our marketing with ROOST. We have completed our 2021 marketing plan. It's now, it's gone to our Marketing Committee, our Board Marketing Committee and we've received approval and will now need approval and will go to the full board and then to the County for approval.

We'll be setting up meetings with each of our regions to review the high level marketing plans initiatives for each of the regions, get the region's feedback and really, specifically just to understand where we are this winter, but more looking at spring, summertime to really look at the marketing for our region. What we're doing currently is we're really focused on keeping the region top in the mind of the traveler. So, as we discussed at last month's meeting, we're doing a lot of creative email initiatives from abandoned contact to welcome to specific interest for each individual list that we have, which has been really successful. We're seeing great open rates; we're seeing people stay on the sites longer. So, we're really happy with the way the emails are performing.

Last year we launched a snowmobile app; which we tweaked throughout the summer and of course, we just need a little bit more snow, but that app is being used as we're watching that carefully. So, that seems to be going fairly well, although, the winter is not completely cooperating at this point for that app.

Again, we received some great press for the region, which we're really excited about. We seem to keep being mentioned in different articles throughout New York State and international, excuse me, you know national publications. So, that's good, again, keeping our region top of mind to the traveler and we are seeing pretty steady visitation to our sites. So, we're holding and we're not putting any money behind any paid promotions right now, just because of the current pandemic situation. We just feel like people are going to travel or they're not going to travel and putting money behind it is probably better held off till spring, really promoting the summer months, where people can be outdoors and open spaces and, you know, warm weather.

So, that's where we are right now. We just have sent out our leisure travel study for 2020 and we've gotten about 4,000 responses, which of course have to be cleaned up to see how the

responses are, but that'll be interesting to see in 2020 what that traveler looked like compared to over the years past. So, we're interested in getting that back and of course, we'll share that with everybody, once that's wrapped up. Any questions?

TYLER: Thank you Mary Jane. Any questions?
I don't hear or see anything, thank you Mary Jane.

LAWRENCE: You're welcome, thank you.

TYLER: Is there anything else to come before this committee? I'm not hearing anything. Motion to adjourn, we are adjourned.

AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:46 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy
Clerk of the Board