

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Monday, February 8, 2021 - 10:30 AM

HELD VIRTUALLY

Ike Tyler, Chairperson

Roy Holzer, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Tyler called this Economic Development/Planning/Publicity Meeting to order at 11:10 am with the following Supervisors virtually in attendance: Clayton Barber, Archie Depo, Robin DeLoria, Stephanie DeZalia, Shaun Gilliland (in-person), Joseph Giordano, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Kenneth Hughes, Steve McNally, Jim Monty, Noel Merrihew, Jay Rand, Jeffrey Subra, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson and Davina Winemiller. Tom Scozzafava had been previously excused.

Department Heads present: Dan Palmer (in-person), Mike Mascarenas, Anna Reynolds and Jim Dougan. Dan Manning was absent.

Deputies present: Dina Garvey

Also virtually present: Jody Olcott - IDA, James McKenna and Mary Jane Lawrence - ROOST, Aurora McCaffrey - Essex County Historian, James Seeley - Cornell Cooperative Extension and Bruce Misarski - Housing Assistance Program.

TYLER: Okay, let's go right into Economic Development, please, I'll call the meeting to order. Industrial Development?

OLCOTT: I'm here, this is Jodi, good morning.

TYLER: Good morning.

OLCOTT: We submitted our report, a little more detailed than usual and I guess I'll take any questions.

TYLER: Any questions for Jodi? Hearing none, thank you Jodi.

OLCOTT: Thanks

TYLER: Essex County Empire Zone, is that the same thing?

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

TYLER: Anna Reynolds, Community Resources?

REYNOLDS: Hi, there's a referral from the Town of Ticonderoga, a special use permit for a solar array around Route 9 and Veteran's Road, a light industrial district, zoned parcels. There's no impact to County property and a letter of no impact is should be issued.

TYLER: Is there a resolution, please?

HOLZER: I'll move it.

WINEMILLER: I'll second it.

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

The following motion was made by Supervisor Holzer.

Where, the Essex County Planning Board has considered the following GML 239 referrals at its regular meeting on February 8, 2021.

<u>REFERRAL</u>	<u>PROPOSED ACTION</u>
Town of Ticonderoga - ELP Ticonderoga Solar, LLC	special use permit for solar array

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 referral 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 Winemiller and passed on a vote of 9 in favor, and none opposed.

TYLER: Any other discussion? Questions? All in favor, signify by saying aye. Opposed? Anything else, Anna?

REYNOLDS: I just wanted to add that we are getting our county reimbursements in. We just got one from DEC from 2018, the Household Hazardous Waste and one of our grants coming to an end, the Cleaner, Greener NYSERDA project. We were just reimbursed \$35,000.00 and that was soon to be closed out. So, that's exciting for us. That's it.

TYLER: Thank you Anna, have a good day.

REYNOLDS: Okay, thanks

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

TYLER: County Historian, Aurora.

MCCAFFREY: Good morning, you have my report that I submitted. I have nothing more to add, but I would love to answer any questions.

TYLER: Does anybody have anything for Aurora?

WINEMILLER: I have a question.

TYLER: Yeah

WINEMILLER: So, Aurora, recently we've been trying to find historical data on veterans for the Town of St. Armand and one of our task force members has contacted the Essex County Historical Society and we're kind of running up against a brick wall. Who should we contact to get that type of information?

MCCAFFREY: For what, what kind of information are you looking for?

WINEMILLER: We're looking to do a Veteran's Memorial, so we need the list of names of all the St. Armand residents who have served in past wars.

MCCAFFERY: So, any, any veteran?

WINEMILLER: Yes

MCCAFFERY: And have you checked the New York State Military website?

WINEMILLER: Yes, they have not been very helpful.

MCCAFFERY: Oh, okay, because they have some great lists. Okay, let me see, let me see what I can find. Let me look there, myself, here and see if I can find anything and see and look and get you some contacts for that. Maybe if not here, some other sites that might help.

WINEMILLERA: Okay, and I'm sure that you have my email.

TYLER: Davina, Mr. Monty might have some input on this.

MONTY: Davina, we recently developed quite a veterans' memorial here in Lewis and Jean Dickerson did a yeomen's amount of work on this. I will get a hold of Jean and have her contact you, Davina with the resources she used to get it, because, I mean, we go all the way back to the, she got data back to the Revolutionary War.

WINEMILLER: Perfect, thanks. Any assistance anyone can give us, I would really be appreciative.

MONTY: I will get that out to you, today.

WINEMILLER: Great, thanks Aurora.

MCCAFFERY: Yeah

TYLER: Anything else for Aurora? Thank you, Mr. Seeley?

The next item on the agenda was Cornell Cooperative Extension, with James Seeley reporting as follows:

SEELEY: Good morning, thank you for this opportunity. I hope you all have received our annual report, which was hopefully sent to you. If not, please let me know. But, it's our primary goal, as you know, is to educate our community in an effort to improve lives. I want to thank the Essex County Board of Supervisors for supporting our programs. We've continued to deliver these programs virtually throughout the pandemic.

On the first page, I've also listed several grants that support some of our programs, agriculture included. We have received a grant from the USDA for Local Foods Promotion for three years, \$385,000.00. We have received a Workforce Development Grant for welding for farmers for \$6,565.00 and the remainder of the document outlines the primary programs, our primaries; 4H Youth Development, agriculture, Adirondack Harvest, consumer horticulture, family, food and health questions.

Also, I want to thank the County, we are going to be doing, we are succeeding a contract for life skills, such as parenting, budget coaching, and healthy living. These are our new programs and we thank you, again, for your support.

Any questions?

TYLER: Any questions for James? Thank you

SEELEY: Thank you all.

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

MCKENNA: Mary Jane is going to start by giving us some marketing updates, please, Mary Jane.

LAWRENCE: Good morning, everybody, just wanted to give you some updates on what our team is working on. We just completed our year in review email; which gave us snaps of video and also end of the year report for 2020.

We're still working on our ROI through the travel leisure study and we should have that wrapped up in the spring.

We also completed our regional marketing meetings to review the 2021 Marketing Plan and discuss upcoming projects. Two of the projects that I just wanted to touch on was the Lake Champlain and the Whiteface Region/Wilmington rebranding message that we're going to be working on with both of those regions. We'll be sending out a survey to the community, as well as to the traveler and from that, from the results of that survey we will have the committee; which will be made up of member, business people, community members, in both of those regions, to create a branding message and we'll use that message in all of the work that we do moving forward with those regions. So, we'll refer to the messaging on the website when we build content, stories, etc. So, it's a great initiative and we're really excited to work with the communities on that.

We also just completed a video photoshoot in the Hub, Adirondack Hub region and we are working to relaunch our Shop ADK for the spring and summer season in all of our regions.

And we did start our paid advertising up again for the completion of February and into the spring. So, we are putting money behind promoting the region, again.

Any questions on that? That was kind of a quick update, but we have a lot going on for the spring and summer of 2021.

TYLER: Yeah, I watched the zoom the other day on the meeting for the Lake Champlain Area and I thought it was good, very well put together, very informative. I'm looking to moving ahead of that. Hopefully, we get some people to pull off the road going to Lake Placid and come right and come this way, as well.

LAWRENCE: That's our plan. Thank you for participating.

TYLER: Anybody else have any questions for Mary Jane? Jim, do you have anything that you want to add?

MCKENNA: I have a couple of quick points.

Just a little update on the World University Games. The State's going to be initiating a mascot contest around the state, primarily geared towards university and college students to participate. That should kick off shortly.

Also, I wanted to comment on, we did a, in cooperation with the Economic Development Corp., of Warren County, we did a survey, really looking at the potential of getting new residents coming to the Adirondacks. It was done by Camoin 310 out of Saratoga Springs. We've gotten the primarily results, it still has to be fine-tuned, but there was a total of 6,773 surveys analyzed and

where they were from was what's identified as our regional marketing area, 84% of those surveys came from New York State, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New Jersey. So, that is identified as our regional marketing area. A lot of very good information there that we're still compiling, but clearly, quality housing and jobs, right at the top with health care and high speed broadband. We did have a section in there where they could identify all areas of the county, if there's any interest and all of our counties did have interest. So, as we move this forward there is a large potential and growing market for the remote workforce, of which this backs up. Looking at that market area; which is just mentioned, there's potentially 120,000 households that could be targeted over time coming to the Adirondacks for year around. So, we'll give you more information on that as it becomes available.

The other question, the other thing that I wanted to bring up, was, I think, we're probably all noticed the Governor's Executive Budget had something in there for applying sales tax to AirBnB and VRBO, on short-term rentals. What that means, if we looked at 2020 in sales tax revenue for Essex County, that would have been just under \$500,000.00 from AirBnB, alone. That's the only one that we can really track, at this point. It's actually \$493,000.00, is what it would have meant in 2020 in new sales tax revenue for the County. If you add VRBO on that, we're probably getting up near the \$700,000.00. So, we think it's a good thing, it not only puts traditional lodging on level playing field, but it's a nice sales tax revenue source for us.

As we look back at 2020 we've got some, pretty much it complied, overall, where we ended up, based on occupancy tax collections, 2020 ended up being 8% down compared to '19, overall. Traditional lodging; which is, you know, hotels, motels, B&B's, they were off 16%. So, they were down 16%. Short term rentals were up about 19% from what we can tell from our numbers. So, I just wanted to point that out. An 8% decline in occupancy tax translates to about \$700,000.00 in sales tax revenue for the County, so just to keep that in mind.

Also, the CTF, Community Tourism Enhancement Fund, we're going to be finalizing the numbers for 2020 over the next 2 to weeks and we will issue at that time. One thing to keep in mind and maybe Dan Manning might want to take a look at this. It's very hard for us to get an accurate count by town on AirBnB, because they do not report zip codes. I think it's important, as we move forward, that we put as much pressure on AirBnB to provide us with a zip code breakout for AirBnB, because that'll translate, we think, into very good and accurate numbers.

So, that's all I have.

TYLER: Jim, is there any way that you can shoot all the Supervisors those numbers? Those numbers that you just gave us. I see a bunch of people writing stuff down here and I shared, yeah, and for the Supervisors that couldn't join us here, today.

MCKENNA: Certainly can.

TYLER: Thank you very much. Anything for Jim? Thank you

The next item was the Housing Assistance Program with Bruce Misarski reporting as

follows:

TYLER: We'll move right into the Housing Assistance Program, Mr. Misarski.

MISARSKI: Good morning, I would just like to thank the Board of Supervisors, my first board meeting, so I thank you for inviting me.

I have a few things to report on; The Housing Assistance Program has a number of lines of business, so I just want to run through them.

We have a Homebuyer Program that is primarily funded through the Community Development Block Grant that is currently operating and we have money available to assist first time homebuyers without funding.

And we're also packaging SONYMA mortgages for folks that are interested in perhaps mortgaging a mobile home and manufactured home purchases.

Our second business line is our Housing Repair and Rehabilitation Program and we've got a number of different programs running across the County with our repair program. So, we have a mobile home replacement program where we hope to do at least three replacements this summer using state funding and then we also have some CDBG funding that will assist another couple of replacements. All of, hopefully, we be happening this year. Also, we have a Housing Rehab Program that's assisting low and moderate income families with housing repairs.

We have a Housing Counseling Program, so the Housing Counseling Program does a number of different things, right now foreclosure activity is kind of slow, but we are gearing up to be ready to respond to foreclosures once the moratorium is lifted and we do expect probably this summer that foreclosures will be back in business. So, we have a staff that assists folks that are in arrears with their mortgages and, as well, with rentals and evictions.

We also have a Landlord Ambassador Program that we just started in 2020 and we have a staff person who assists landlords with rental issues.

Our Section 8 Rental Program where we are the administrator for the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program and assist about 440 families with rental assistance across the County.

We've also been helping with the New York State Rent Relief Program; which New York State has been rolling out to assist folks that are in arrears with their rent, because of COVID 19 and related losses of income. That program finished up February 1st. We're looking at that transitioning into another program, probably with the federal allocation that'll be coming down the pike.

We've got one house for sale in Lake Placid that we developed with the Adirondack Community Housing Trust and that's on the market, right now and for sale.

We also have the Housing Task Force; which we've been working with other county partners in developing housing for supportive and special needs housing.

And we're, right now, working on an application to help with homeless housing with funding through ESG; which is funding with federal money through the CARES Act.

That's all I have to report, thank you.

TYLER: Well, thank you Mr. Misarski for the report. For your first meeting you did very well.

MISARSKI: Thank you Mr. Tyler.

TYLER: Does anyone have any questions for Bruce? Okay, thank you very much. Anything else to come before the Economic Development Committee? I hear none. I would like you all to do one thing for me, have a great day and stay safe and this meeting is adjourned, thank you.

AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:29 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy
Clerk of the Board