

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Monday, April 10, 2023 - 10:00 AM

Ike Tyler, Chairperson
Roy Holzer, Vice-Chairperson

Supervisor Merrihew called this Economic Development/Planning/Publicity Meeting to order at 10:03 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Robin DeLoria, Stephanie DeZalia, Derek Doty, Shaun Gilliland, Charlie Harrington, Roy Holzer, Ken Hughes, Noel Merrihew, Jim Monty, Tom Scozzafava, Davina Winemiller, Margaret Wood and Mark Wright. Steve McNally, Matthew Stanley, Ike Tyler and Joe Pete Wilson had been previously excused.

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

Deputies present: Dina Garvey

Also Present: Carol Calabrese - IDA, Jasen Lawrence - ROOST, Bruce Misarski and Megan Murphy - Housing Assistance, Laurie Davis - Cornell Cooperative Extension, Aurora McCaffery - Essex County Historian and Holly Aquino.

HOLZER: Call this meeting to order. The first item on the agenda is the Industrial Development Agency. Carol, do you have any reports?

CALABRESE: I have a report and submit it. Are there any questions?

HOLZER: Anyone have any questions for Carol? Okay, thank you. The next item on the agenda, Community Resources.

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

REYNOLDS: Good morning, so this morning we had a public hearing on the adoption of a new SEQRA short form for the Ag District modification process. I would like to pass a resolution to adopt the new form that we discussed, but if anyone has any questions before the official motion.

HOLZER: Any questions? Someone like to move this? Margaret. Second by Mr. Doty.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ADOPTION OF THE SHORT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORM FOR THE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT FORMATION (COUNTY AG

DISTRICTS ONLY)

Wood, Doty

HOLZER: All in favor? Opposed?
Anything else?

REYNOLDS: Three referrals, today. The first is the Town of Ticonderoga. The applicant, Jeff Birch, located on 30 and 34 Windy Point Lane is performing a lot line adjustment for the properties. He's eliminating a vacant lot to reassign the two lots he's combining. The Ticonderoga subdivision code, which was historically not met, so it was pre-code. There's no impact to the County and therefore a no impact letter may be issued.

HOLZER: Somebody like to move this? Noel. Second by Derek.

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

The following motion was made by Supervisor Merrihew.

Where, the Essex County Planning Board has considered the following GML 239 referrals at its regular meeting on April 10, 2023.

<u>REFERRAL</u>	<u>PROPOSED ACTION</u>
Town of Ticonderoga - 30 & 34 Windy Point Lane	area variance for a lot line adjustment

Whereas, none of the referred, proposed actions does not directly impact 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 Doty and passed on a vote of 8 in favor, 1 excused and none opposed.

HOLZER: All in favor? Opposed? Carries.

REYNOLDS: The second is also in the Town of Ticonderoga, the applicant is Jeffrey Burns, located on 92 Black Point Road, which is the Snug Harbor Marina. They are extending the fueling dock station. So, there will a setback requirement. So, they require an area variance and a site plan review. There's no impact to the County property that I know of, unless Jim has anything.

DOUGAN: Nope

REYNOLDS: And therefore a letter of no impact, may be issued.

HOLZER: Somebody like to move this? Mr. Doty, second by Stephanie.

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

The following motion was made by Supervisor Doty.

Where, the Essex County Planning Board has considered the following GML 239 referrals at its regular meeting on April 10, 2023.

<u>REFERRAL</u>	<u>PROPOSED ACTION</u>
Town of Ticonderoga, 92 Black Point Road	area variance and site plan review

Whereas, none of the referred, proposed actions does not directly impact 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 DeZalia and passed on a vote of 8 in favor, 1 excused and none opposed.

HOLZER: All in favor? Opposed? Carries.

REYNOLDS: And lastly, in the Town of Westport, the OMNM, LLC, which is the Old Mill, on 6679 Main Street, Route 9N, is requesting a special use permit to develop a pub and restaurant in the building. There's no impact to the County and therefore a letter of impact may be issued.

HOLZER: Moved by Mr. Hughes, second by Charlie.

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

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 April 10, 2023.

<u>REFERRAL</u>	<u>PROPOSED ACTION</u>
Town of Westport, 6679 Main St, Rte.9N	Special Use Permit

Whereas, none of the referred, proposed actions does not directly impact 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 Harrington and passed on a vote of 1 in favor, 1 excused and none opposed.

HOLZER: All in favor? Opposed? Carries.
Anything else?

REYNOLDS: That is all.

HOLZER: Okay, thank you.

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

MCCAFFREY: Good morning, so you have my report for the month. I was able to present you with our 2023 schedule of programs and events. We are really excited about the calendar. It's quite full and we have something scheduled just about every week.

So, the museum opens on May 27. The season starts off with our annual antique and classic car show on June 10th. Other events scheduled are the gallery celebration for the Steven Kellogg show and that's on July 14th and People and Peaks, Annual Adirondack Stories on September 23rd.

We have our lecture and film series, that;s weekly throughout the season, quite a few, seven films and four lectures and then we have a garden party and the Historian's Day to close the season. So, there's quite a bit and we're excited.

That's all I have.

HOLZER: Any questions? Thank you very much.

MCCAFFREY: Thank you.

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

DAVIS: Good morning, filling in for Elizabeth Lee this morning. She's in Boston, anxiously awaiting the overdue birth of her first grandchild. I am filling in for her. We were a little late with our report, but I did see that it make it into the packet there.

What I really wanted to just mention is that this is National Volunteer month and I think National Volunteer Week is coming up next week. As with many organizations, the work and programming that we do here at CCE wouldn't be possible without our volunteers and so this year we have 78 volunteers doing this for CCE, which include our Board of Directors, our Program Advisory

Committees, out Master Gardeners. We have Vista and AmeriCorps volunteers. Educators at Environmental Field Days, support workers who help us with the Adirondack Harvest Festival and mostly our 4H volunteer leaders. So, Jessica Tyson, our 4H Educator, couldn't be here today. She is such a hard worker; she forgot she'd be on vacation this week. So, she asked me to say a few words about the 4H program and our volunteers. So, what you need to know is our 4H numbers are climbing and the enrollment numbers for the adult volunteers are going up and we currently have 25 adult volunteers with 5 more enrolling this week to help with our welding program. We have a new animal science club in Schroon Lake and a couple of new horse volunteers joining. So, without our volunteers we wouldn't be able to offer many of our most popular programs, like welding and we have a couple of countywide horse clubs, dog clubs, horse camp, small animal clinics, participating in the Fair, science, technology, engineering and art, mathematics, STEAM activities and outdoor recreational activities, like snowshoeing, skiing and more. So, I just wanted to recognize that our volunteers are vital to our programming, they're truly the ones who make our programming so successful and impactful for our youth and this year we have one volunteer who has been nominated for State and possibly National recognition. I can't give out the name, yet, it's still in process, but this speaks volumes, because this is the second year in a row that we've had such qualified volunteers to nominate. Last year, we nominated a Shantel Gilliland and she actually ended up making it to the State level and was commended at the State level for her volunteer work with 4H. So, we just wanted to thank and recognize all of our volunteers at CCE and beyond and if you know of anyone who wants to work with 4H Youth, send them along our way. I am also happy to take any questions for our report, if you have any.

HOLZER: Any questions? Thank you.

The next item was the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism (ROOST), with Jasen Lawrence reporting as follows:

LAWRENCE: There's two things I wanted to just mention. Of course, we've got a lot of different things going on. One is the new WhitefaceRegion.com site is scheduled to launch June 1st. There's been a huge initiative there, a lot of community members involved, so we're nearly there. It's pretty exciting, brand new site.

The second big thing that I wanted to mention, you should have all received an email by now, if you missed it or haven't seen it, let me know. On May 10th we're going to be holding our first community call for the solar eclipse, which is just under a year away. It's something that we really want to put a lot of thought into and a lot of planning. If you look out West, as an example, in 2017 some of those more remote, rural states saw essentially statewide traffic jams, tens of thousands of people in small towns. So, it's something that we definitely want to consider. So, that's the first community call on the eclipse and we would love it if you could attend.

What I am really here to talk about today is we have access to a data platform. We partnered with a company called Zaritico and I thought it would be really valuable to give you all a summary on what this platform's capable of and the data that's available, because it can really support a lot of

initiatives within the county if you know that this exists and you can request the data.

So what is Zaritico? Zaritico provides us with high frequency, high-resolution field location data and what does that mean? Well, what it means is we're literally tracking phones within that 30' GPS margin of error area radius and Zaritico tracks 1.6 billion devices globally. So, this is international. Mostly of the US and domestic, if you look at the total percentage of devices, but a lot of international travelers, as well. that's 180+ counties worldwide. So, it's important, as I show you some sample data, these are actual people, physically here, with their device. This isn't an estimate, it's not a guess. These are actual like real numbers and on top of that the credit card database is integrated, so, that's 90 million cards scanned annually. And so what we're able track is actually physical card swipes at locations within the County and then of course we can break that out by sight and it is dining, it is attraction, so on and so forth.

And we can, of course, track some of that visitation based on that geo-location data. So, I will give you some of that in a minute.

So, how does ROOST use this specifically? Specific areas with all of our existing website analytics, so we're able to see someone visited the website and did they physical visit the county and not only did they physically visit the county, did they spend while they were here and where did they go while they were here. So, we can see folks that visited the webpage, did that convert to actual visitation to even that specific event. It integrates with all of our ad campaign data, as well, so we'll run a very specific ad, targeted NYC metro or Albany or something like that and then we can see actual physical visits based on that ad spend, specifically. So we get a real hard line, not an estimate or guess and of course it integrates with all our emails, because we can see if they open an email, plan a visit, social media, so no and so forth and it integrates with travel report data, so we can see that hotel occupancy data long side the actual spend data and integrates on the side of BRBO and AirBnB.

So, we use this for campaign planning, like a mentioned. We can see seasonal visitation trends, so I'll show you some really interesting things in just a moment and we're really hoping this will help us identify some over-tourism areas. So, we can see actual, physical devices in a physical space and understand if a local says, that trail's super busy, there's so many people there, I mean we need to do something about this, there's too many tourists. Well, a lot of times we say, was that true or was it just a popular local trail and we don't actually know. We can actually tell visitors from residents, so we can actually answer that question and say things like, oh, it actually turns out that 95% of the people on that trail are locals, so a local problem, that's great you're using the trail or we can say, no, it turns out 90% are visitors.

It also help identify what to focus on, marketing and content-wise. So, maybe there's a particular point of interest you didn't expect to see popular, turns out that that waterfall is super popular and we don't have any content about it, but it's a trail that could maybe take some more use, so we can redirect people there, there's more content to direct there and of course it tells a real ROI number, often time we have to rely on estimates. We don't really know if an ad resulted in visitations. We use estimates and other methods to figure out if things works.

So, what does this data look like? So, this is for 2020 for the entirety of the county. This is designation visitation based on DMA, designation-marketing areas and these are specific, the percent of visitors that came to the county and what the percent of that spend was while they were here. This is overnight and day trip visitation. So, these are actual prices, again, these are not like people who visited the website or anything like that. These are actually devices detected

in the area, in the county. So, 23% of the folks who visited the county in 2022 were from New York City, they were 17% of the spend, but 18% of the folks who visited the county in 2022 were from Albany/Schenectady, but they were 35% of the spend and the big reason for that is day-trippers. We throw all those day-trippers and the overnight on top of that and you increase that spend significantly. You can see so on and so forth, so this helps us identify actually, physical visitation and no big surprises, really to us, knowing the New York was the biggest. What we did not know, because we didn't have the data that Albany was the biggest spender in terms of bank of buck.

MURPHY: So, I have a question, with the portability of cell phone numbers, are those based on numbers or based on their billing zip codes? Because you can port your number, so you may have a New York City number, but you may actually be living up here.

LAWRENCE: No, it's based on actual GPS location. These are on app usage. So, maybe you're using a map on run, or something like that. So, it uses those apps, anonymously to report data back.

So, in 2022 what was the breakdown of spend per category. Again, we can get estimates from surveying, but these are actually credit card spend on the breakdown and this is average per swipe. So, \$609.00 would be your total stay when they swipe that card, that's what the total was. You know, food, average food swipe was \$148.00 in the county, last year, so on and so forth. So, you get an idea of where that spend is coming from.

And I want to get you an event example of how this is really powerful. We just finished an analysis of the FIS World Ski Jumping event, it was really well attended, the question of course is did people spend more money or was that event sort of a drain on, you know was it too much? Like what really happened? When we look at the spend data from that event and there's a lot more reporting we'll share shortly, we literally just got this on Friday. There was a 6.5% lift in credit card spend during those 3 days, even when taking into account the President's Day weekend which was just afterwards. Pretty cool stuff, so we're able to actually detect ROI and I want to just show you this seasonal visitation trend, how this is super useful. So, down the left is those are years, 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022. You'll notice that spring is that light blue and 2020 is really tiny and if we think back that was Covid, so visitation dropped significantly. We've been really pushing to be less seasonal with our visitation, really focusing on trying to spread that and even it out and you see we're putting a dent in that, which is really exciting. Summer is that maroon, reddish color and you can see that it's getting a little smaller. We want to spread that out. We had a really good winter, percentage-wise, a lot more folks visited in 2020 then in previous year.

And I want to show you the direct visitation, so now we can track. So the big question is, does websites work? We put all this time and effort into websites, is it worth it? This is the type of content that folks use on the website and then if they actually physically came to the area. So, the most popular converting type of pages were events, which makes a lot of sense, so 35% of the folks that visited an event page on one of our websites actually came to the County last year. So we're able to see all of this and these are pretty much what we would expect. And it's interesting, you notice that accommodations are fairly low, this makes a lot of sense because of OTAs, AirBnB, a lot of folks are finding lodging in other means.

So, another really cool thing that we can do, is there's always a look to book window, this now

shows us when someone visits a website and how long it will take them to visit. So, this directly lets us plan how far out we should plan marketing and things. So, the look to book, essentially, in New York, 28 days from the time they visited the website, and they visited 28 days later, that's 25% of the folks. Albany/Schenectady is pretty similar, 27 days. What is really interesting, if you look down lower, it turns out Philadelphia, for whatever reason is half the time. So, if we were running a marketing campaign for Philadelphia we would want to shorten that window, it turns out it's about a 2-week window before folks come to visit.

HOLZER: Jasen, how will ROOST share this with the partners, like a visitor's bureau in the different regions?

LAWRENCE: Yeah, so that's one of the reasons I am here today is we love feedback on the sorts of reports that you would like. We have our own idea of what we think you'd like to see, which we can start there. We're going to start that in the next couple of months. We're going to start regular emails. We're thinking like monthly reports on sort of what happened in the next month and so that's, event summaries and some other things like that thrown in there, too. We would love to hear if you have other ideas and if you have specific things that you would like to see, we can drill all the way down. So, if you're like hey, this one attraction, we think that everybody that visits goes there, is that true? And we can answer that question.

HUGHES: What is the subscription cost to have access to this data?

LAWRENCE: It's expensive. It's \$130,000.00 a year.

DOTY: How long have you been utilizing this service?

LAWRENCE: We started in November and we really finished tweaking everything about a month ago.

DOTY: So, now you have the ability to take, in Lake Placid for instance, our event season, you can correlate everything to events versus an open tourism season.

LAWRENCE: Yup

DOTY: And promote, depending on, well, community drive, if you will. I know this designation management plan that you've been putting together for at least three years now, this program will help you better define it.

LAWRENCE: Yeah, that's exactly, Jim's super excited about all the data we have.

HOLZER: It's a bit scary, too.

LAWRENCE: It's supposed to be all anonymous, it is technically, but you wonder. The big guys know where you live, Google knows where you live.

HOLZER: Thanks again, Jasen. That was actually pretty informative and interesting. I've got mixed feelings about it. I can see where the new information will be valuable in planning on like seeing cause and effect and whether events are the way to go as a marketing or whether we just want to promote our area for the fishing and hiking and things like that. So, it will be interesting to see how that plays out.

The next item was the Housing Assistance Program with Megan Murphy reporting as follows:

MURPHY: Hi everybody. Actually, I do have a handout that I'll pass out right now. So, we did submit a report, I don't know if anyone has any questions about the report. If there are no questions I just have a couple of additional items.

SCOZZAFAVA: I have a question, on your report I noticed the Section 8 Program, quite a while back we talked about that and like Moriah is 79, I don't know if that's individuals or whomever.

MURPHY: That's vouchers, so it might be for a family. So, that's each voucher.

SCOZZAFAVA: So, I talked to Bruce a while back about if it possible to get a list as to where, who the landlords are that receive the assistance. So, we can and my other question would be in that regard, are they being inspected? I know for a long time these places were not being inspected.

MURPHY: Yeah, because of Covid we weren't inspecting. Actually, we have a dedicated inspector now for Essex County and so they are all caught up on back inspections and we are moving forward on re-inspections. In fact, we're running into a bit of an issue, because we started doing a lot of inspections again last May, so we have a big bunch of inspections that are going to on in May, so we're going to actually start in April to address that, because we've been working on this for about a year to get caught up and actually that's something that I can also add, that we are fully staffed. I mean Section 8, we have three full time people in Essex County alone and that includes that full time inspector and they also do help inspect in Clinton County, also, because we have a part time inspector, so they share people.

SCOZZAFAVA: Most landlords are good.

MURPHY: Yup, we have had issues. Covid has been hard on everybody and landlords particularly and so we are in, we're looking at apartments, we're trying to work with landlords to be use that they are up to the quality standards that need to be and so we have been working with them on that. We do still have a little bit of money left in our Landlord Ambassador Program that was funded by the Enterprise Foundation. So, when we find that there are issues, we're trying to work with landlords to be sure that we're making the improvements that need to be made, so that

people are living in quality housing.

SCOZZAFAVA: So, when you find a violation, a serious violation do you notify the building codes department within that community?

MURPHY: We give the landlord a certain period of time to correct and then we go back and go back and re-inspect and if not then, yes, we have at times informed the code enforcement officers.

SCOZZAFAVA: Thank you

HUGHES: I know there was a press release about this, but I don't know if my colleagues have seen the press release and I don't believe your report mentioned this, could you just please speak to the change in leadership?

MURPHY: Yeah, that was my first, I have two things to add and so that was one of them. That there has been a change in leadership at HAPEC. Alan Hipps, some of you, many of you probably know Alan.

SCOZZAFAVA: Yes

MURPHY: Is back as interim Executive Director for a short time and so we will keep you abreast, the Board will be doing a search for a new Executive Director. Anything else?

HUGHES: No, that's it, thanks.

MURPHY: The second thing that I wanted to add, although I am excited to say that we are fully staffed. I will add that one, that is very exciting. So, the second thing that I really wanted to talk about is April is fair housing month. It's not just volunteer month, as we know these days, months come in many flavors. So, April is actually National Fair Housing Month and another very exciting thing, this month we're commemorating the 55th anniversary of the passage of the Fair Housing Act. So, we've been working on this for quite a while and there's been a lot of improvements made. This was a landmark civil rights law, signed by Lyndon Johnson, so and that's how far back we go and so really what fair housing does is it protects people from discrimination when they're renting or buying a home and so this is something that we continue to work on. So, we do have standards on the federal side about what prohibits discrimination and those are race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disabilities, but then New York State then adds some additional protections and so they prohibit discrimination based on age, marital status, military status, sexual orientation, gender identity, source of income, and domestic violence status. So, with that we want to be sure that we understand what is and isn't prohibited conduct for housing and that can be for renters or for owners, like I said and so you know what we think about a lot and Housing Assistance Program is what Mr. Scozzafava brought up, it's the Section 8 Program. We want to be sure that our landlords are renting to everyone fairly with Section 8 and so we do work with landlords to be sure they're clear on what our rental assistance program offers them and how it can benefit landlords. A lot of times people think only on the negative side,

but there's a benefit to landlords with Section 8 and so we just want to be sure that they don't, that everybody's looking at applications fairly. That they're not doing different checks on people and so we're working to be sure that landlords and renters understand their rights. So, I have a handout, you should feel free to put it on your bulletin boards, you should pass them out, you should let people know that April is National Fair Housing Month. So, does anyone have any questions about that? Thank you all so much. Enjoy the great weather, this has been a awesome weekend and a great week.

HOLZER: Anything else to come in front the committee?

HUGHES: Upon request I would like to offer a resolution of appreciation to the Cornell Cooperative Extension Volunteers, as presented earlier this month.

RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS.

Hughes, unanimous

HOLZER: Anything else? Okay, we're adjourned.

AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE, IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 10:30 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy
Clerk of the Board