ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE

Monday, June 8, 2026 - 10:00 AM

Matthew Stanley, Chairperson
Kenneth Hughes, Vice-Chairperson

Chairman Stanley called this Economic Development/Planning/Publicity Meeting to order at 10:30 am with the following Supervisors in attendance: Clayton Barber, Matt Brassard, Chris Clark, Timothy Follos, Kenneth Hughes, Mary Lamphear, Tracie McGill, Steve McNally, Clayton Menser, James O'Bryan, Timothy Pierce, Richard Preston, Matthew Stanley, Davina Thurston, Ike Tyler, Joe Pete Wilson, and Margaret Wood. Cathleen Reusser was previously excused.

Department Heads present: Mike Mascarenas, Anna Reynolds, Angie Allen, Hannah Carson, Jim Dougan, Krissy Leerkes, and Terri Morse.

Deputy present: Dina Garvey and Bill Tansey

Also Present: Elizabeth Lee & Cole Trager - Cornell Cooperative Extension, Carol Calabrese & Jody Olcott - IDA, Dan Kelleher - ROOST, Nicole Justice-Green - Essex County Land Bank, and Angelina Sanfilippo - SUNY Apprenticeship Program. Aurora McCaffrey - Essex County Historian and Caitlyn Wargo - Adirondack Roots had been previously excused.

STANLEY: Good morning, everybody, it's 10:30, we will call the Economic Development Committee to order, and we'll start off with the Essex County IDA.

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The first item on the agenda was the Industrial Development Committee with Carol Calabrese and Jody Olcott reporting as follows:

OLCOTT: Good morning, I am just going to quick and then Carol's got a presentation, but I am here to discuss the Champlain Hudson Power Express Project which we talked about really in December of last year, beginning of January. Some of the towns that are affected have discussed it, we haven't discussed it at the County level. I have been working with Bill on your portion of it. Either way to either make the jump to Host Community Agreement or stay with the existing PILOT, it's entirely up to you, it doesn't change really much of anything. Many of the towns that have reviewed it, I say the same thing. Review your tax cap calculation and figure out if it's a negative or a positive for you over the 30 years of payments. The line actually went effective May 13th, like most recently, so I want to get this done, obviously.
To date; all the schools have made the jump, Crown Point made the jump, Westport made the jump, Ti is going to be reviewing it at their next meeting.

O'BRYAN: The school?

OLCOTT: The school made the jump.

O'BRYAN: Yeah, the school made the jump.

OLCOTT: Yeah, you as a town are going to review it.

O'BRYAN: Absolutely

OLCOTT: Moriah is on the fence; Willsboro is still on the fence. I don't care, it doesn't matter to me either way, either stay or go, it just depends on if it affects you or not and I think Bill has Linda or Mike or somebody review your situation as a county to determine whether it's a negative or positive.

STANLEY: Bill, would you like to come up?

TANSEY: Yes, please, thank you.
Good morning, we're talking about a PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes of agreement) versus a Community Host Agreement. A Pilot in Lieu of Tax agreement, any money received goes against your tax cap. So, for example, in 2026, I am going to read off some numbers, and these are big numbers, the tax levy for Essex County was $29.4 million that payment would have been reduced by $233,000, so that increased tax levy would have been reduced by $233,000 had you received the PILOT payment. By the fifth year, 2031-2032, the tax cap limit will be reduced by $1.2 million.

MASCARENAS: Yeah, just so I can put it into context, typically what we can go up in our tax cap, so the $29 million that Bill's speaking to is actually our levy, that's not what we can increase by. We're typically somewhere around $800,000 to a million dollars in terms of the formula. So, decreasing it by those other numbers you said would have a negative impact on our ability to raise the levy based on a percentage long term by a significant amount.

STANLEY: By like 40%.

MASCARENAS: Yeah

TANSEY: Simple, not exactly correct, if your tax levy is $100,000, you get 2%, so that means next year you can to $102,000, if you receive a $100,000 PILOT payment, you can raise your levy by $1,000. That's now it affects you.
The big difference between the PILOT and the Community Host Agreement; you can make an agreement with anybody you want to. Mr. Hughes, you and I can shake hands, and I am going to pay you $231 million over 30 years. That agreement is upon both of us to enforce. A Community Host Agreement works like that, it's a handshake. You've got a written handshake. The PILOT is statute based, you can defer back to the taxes, which you can't do, necessarily with the Community Host Agreement. It's an agreement.

STANLEY: What I am getting from Mr. Tansey and from Mr. Mascarenas is your recommendation

is for us to move from a PILOT Agreement to a Community Host Agreement, correct?

TANSEY: If you consider just finances, moving to the Community Host Agreement is the better choice.

MASCARENAS: And that is what I always consider (laughter).

STANLEY: Could I have a motion and a second for this? Mr. Hughes and Mr. Tyler.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE AMENDED AND RESTATED PILOT AGREEMENT BY THE ESSEX COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY WITH RESPECT TO A CERTAIN PROJECT TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY CHPE LLC., APPROVING A CERTAIN HOST COMMUNITY AGREEMENT, AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION AND DELIVERY OF THE SAME

STANLEY: Discussion.

HUGHES: So, I just noted that Exhibit A was blank, is there, on the documentation.

OLCOTT: Oh, the proposed resolution?

HUGHES: Yeah, is that, are we making a motion on the proposed resolution right now?

OLCOTT: Sorry, I don't even know what we sent over. Yeah, the resolution consenting to the amendment.

HUGHES: Yes, this resolution…

OLCOTT: Yeah, and I sent that, Bill has the actual document. It's the same exact document and the same exact payments as what you have, and you saw it as a town.

HUGHES: Yeah, we went to the HDA in Essex.

OLCOTT: Yeah, you did.

HUGHES: In Section One is withdrawing from the original PILOT and moving over to the HAD.

TANSEY: Right, so it is the resolution. That's what's going to have to go through this Committee to get to Full Board for final approval.

HUGHES: Right, and that's what I made the motion on.

TANSEY: So, financially Community Host Agreements are fairly new. There are a lot of them in this area of New York, but they are fairly new. There's not much case law; there's not much

enforcement action against them. I just have to assume that everybody has kept their handshake and the payments continue. If this agreement falls apart, I really can't tell you how you put it back together because that hasn't been done before.

OLCOTT: I mean we're also in the same situation with the PILOT, don't you think? Because it's in the lake and we have no jurisdiction over, you know, collecting as well. I mean what you've given up for this project, obviously is sales tax exemption during the construction over the last three years, I want to say, I don't quote me on this, I want to say we gave up between the State and the County, $26 million in materials. That was your contribution to the project.

HUGHES: Any other discussion? Being none, all those in favor signify by saying aye. Anybody opposed? Motion carries.

OLCOTT: That's all I got, thanks.

STANLEY: Alright, so up next, we have a presentation by Angelina Sanfilippo, and she is from the SUNY Apprenticeship Program. The floor is yours.

SANFILIPPO: Good morning, everyone, thank you for having me. My name is Angelina Sanfilippo. So, I am from the SUNY Apprenticeship Program. That is a SUNY system initiative. I work within the Office of Workforce Development and Upper Mobility. That's a relatively new office within the SUNY system, because recognize that not everyone can go the traditional college path but that doesn't mean higher ed isn't still accessible.

So, there is a skilled labor gap in New York State, and we know this because every year the Department of Labor puts out workforce surveys to both employers and job seekers and one of the questions, they ask on both sides is very similar. So, on the business side, what barriers prevent you from hiring a candidate and on the job seeker side, what employment barriers are you facing. So, when you look at the answers and this is the most recent one that we have with the data prompts, 2024 is the most recent one, we just finished up 2025.

Employers are saying lack of experience and insufficient training or education is a huge barrier in hiring the people that they want to and then the other side the numbers get much larger and they're saying, I am not getting the job I want because I don't have the right credentials or they're saying I don't have enough experience. So, how can we bridge that gap?

Why did we end up in that place in the first place? Is think of how most high schoolers are advised. They're in their senior year, they're talking to parents, counselors, teachers, and there's still this kind of acratic mindset that if you got good grades in high schools, you're college bound. If you didn't you need to go right to work. There's kind of a lack of gray area in that and so what ends up happening is if you go the college route, you get the training, but not the experience. You do the job route you get the experience, but you lack the training.

So, I am here today to talk about registered apprenticeship which is a lovely combination of both of those things. So, registered apprenticeship is a Department of Labor Program. It's run and administered by the Department of Labor. We partner with then at SUNY because we have funding and I will explain that a little bit later. But the registered apprenticeship model is an earn and learn model. Apprentices who are employees, that's probably the biggest misnomer and myth

that I have to dispel is these are not interns, this is not temporary. These are employees on day one. They are getting on the job training with a skilled mentor on day one and there is a supplemental education component built into it. So, again, you're getting the experience and the training at the exact same time. When it comes to explaining apprenticeship and why it matters in this day and age, I have to remind people that you have to forget the myths or the stereotypes, because the history of apprenticeship in this Country is rooted in the building trades, building and construction. Most people who are not in my role, they hear apprenticeship and they are immediately thinking of unions, they're thinking the building trades. Within the last 8 or so years, the Department of Labor has really been pushing to expand registered apprenticeship to make it accessible in all industries. So, as of today there are about 300 trades for occupations. They still use that word, trade, but we can use it interchangeably with occupation and over 60% of the existing trades that are registered through Department of Labor are not in building and construction. They're in manufacturing, they're in education, they're in health care, human services, IT, there are so many.

So, how is this different? If you're thinking like, you know if you typical on-boarding processes, how does this differ? Because most people when you hire them, you pair them with someone senior, right? And kind of guide them that way, so how is this different than that? There's a work process outline that is approved by DOL. So, you know that your apprentice will spend X amount of hours doing certain tasks and it's uniform. So, it doesn't matter who's doing it. If a person comes in with 0 experience or someone comes in with some experience, but you really didn't know what that experience was, you put them in this apprenticeship program and you know exactly what they covered because of that work process outline and it also exceeds, you know, when people are onboarded for maybe a few weeks of handholding and then it's like, alright, you're on our own. I know I have certainly been in jobs like that, but apprenticeship programs run anywhere from one to five years in length. One to two years for like those health care, human service, education ones and then three plus years for manufacturing and of course the building trades. And the biggest distinction between basic onboarding processes and this is that supplemental education that's built into it. And I come from higher ed, so I actually used to teach at SUNY Potsdam for six years and I am, since learning about this model I am such a big champion for it, because the tradition college route and I am not knocking college, obviously, but think about someone going through high school, straight to college, they're sitting in a classroom or a lecture hall for 4 years and maybe there's an internship, now in SUNY is going to be a required component, but I think my time, maybe there's an applied learning component, maybe not, so then they're in a classroom learning for 4 years and then they go out and start doing it, what they learned and I know I have certainly had plenty of friends that I was in school with and then they went out into the workforce and was like, I don't like this, I just went to college for this and I don't like it. I know a lot of people who went to school of education, they went to go teach and they're like, I don't want to be a teacher. So, one of the good things about this is you're learning in real time whether you like it or not and then the other thing is, is when you're in a classroom learning about theory how is it going to stick? Is it going to stick better if you sit for four years and learn the theory and kind of have it crammed down your throat or if you learn it in real time? As you're doing the skills day to day on the job, you're actually getting to apply it the next day. If you were able to contribute to classroom discussions. I know I spent 6 years in front of a classroom lecturing to freshmen who just stare at you and don't want to contribute. So, it's just a different approach to higher ed.

And the partnership, again I am from SUNY, I am not DOL, the partnership with SUNY means that employees are able to access higher ed at no cost to them and apprentices are able to access higher ed at no cost to them.

So, for every existing trade, almost 300 trades there is a work process outline that has been approved by DOL. It was created with industry experts. So, it is not like DOL, seeing what sticks, right, they would create these in conjunction with relevant industry partners and so you really get a sense of how that uniformity works. So, for this one I can just tell you, so 500 hours are spent in workplace orientation and safety, this is junior accountant, 500 hours in office administration, 1,500 hours in basic accounting principles and then all of those numbered bullets are definitions, and best practices and the apprentice is logging. Day to day, they're logging what they do so that's how you keep track of 4,000 hours, they're looking in each day.

On the right hand side you see the related instruction requirements, that's where we at SUNY come in. So, someone who's going to be ultimately a journey worker, junior accountant, so we still use that term of journey worker, journeymen but now it's degendered, they should take training in these skills. So, intro to accounting, financial accounting, auditing, accounting software, things like that. Things that we would expect a master level accountant, not a CPA but someone who is proficient in accounting you would want them to have these trainings. So, is really strengthens the training model that is within the employer. So, this is to say, what I am talking about registered apprenticeship is not just for unions. It can be but it's not exclusive. It can be for for-profit employers, it can be for non-profits, small employers, it can be municipalities, which is currently happening and I can talk about that closer to the end.

So, the SUNY apprenticeship program, a little bit of a misleading name because we're not an apprenticeship program per se, but we are grant funded and we are the financial support to support registered apprenticeship. We only support registered programs. We have had employers that have come to us and say we have an internal like, what we refer to as little A. We run an apprenticeship program but if it's registered through New York State then we can't fund it.

We have tuition funding to cover those trainings. So, you saw on the right hand side, those topics. So, any classes, credit barring or not, could be non-credit trainings that are becoming more popular on campuses. So, any classes that are done through a SUNY primarily through a community college, we have the funding to support, to the tune of $6,000 or $8,000. So, that's not going to get someone a degree. That's not the purpose of our program; it really is to get people upskilled and trained. That supplemental training is part of the apprenticeship. If someone goes through this and decides, actually, you know what? I can get a college degree, that's great. But it is not the point of our funding.

We also have pre-apprenticeship training dollars. It's a beast, I don't even talk about it when I am talking to an employer for the very first time because it's really easy to get into the weeds. But we do have funding to support kind of like an aptitude test. If you want to gauge someone's readiness for an apprenticeship, we have training to do such a test. So, again, it is no cost to you or to the employee.

Then we have employee incentives. So, when an employer has registered program which is cost free, of course because of the Department of Labor and they decide to use our free money, we have money to then give them. So, that's $1,000 per apprentice and a cap of $10,000. So, I know that's not earth shattering especially if you're talking to someone in the for-profit sector but anytime you're talking to someone in non-profits or municipalities, it's basically a free gift of $10,000 for

using free college tuition grants funds.
So, this is just a list, not exhaustive, but it's pretty much. These are a list of trades that could work well in a municipality. They are either existing titles, like verbatim or maybe a municipality, like based on the civil service is slightly different. That's okay, it doesn't matter what you call it or what they call it. All that matters is that work process outline, that an apprentice completes those tasks and those related instruction topics that they're taking trainings that relate to it.
So, you see a lot in the human service's space, and I've had quite a few conversations with you know departments of public health at the county level, DSS because social service assistant is a trade title. So, if you have someone who's kind of like entry level in DSS and you really want to see them, you know, they have the potential for growth within the department, but they don't have the training that's kind of necessary to upskill this is an excellent way to do that. Any kind of clerk position, the junior account one works really well. There's also this really generic trade title of customer service representative and it is purposely written very generically so it actually fits really well. I talked to at least one municipality that was interested in that trade title because it worked well for, I think it was a clerk position. So, actually Essex County is participating in apprenticeship, to my knowledge, with Clinton Community College's police officer group sponsorship. So, they just got approved last month and so just to give you an example of how this is put into action. Essex County Sheriff's signs up under Clinton Community College's group sponsorship and so now every cadet has $6,000 to put towards the training for the police academy. So, it is being done here.
And to just kind of wrap things up and I do realize that there is a lot of information when talking about registered apprenticeship. I to stay as high level as possible but it's a beast. So, there's a lot of moving parts. That doesn't mean that it's bad or something to be shy away from, but it is a series of conversations that has to happen.
But, just to kind of summarize; registered apprenticeship is right there in the middle and it's rooted in key partnerships between the employer, whoever that may be, big or small, for profit or non. SUNY, as a related instructor provider, we have cost free trainings or registered apprenticeship and of course the Department of Labor who is the one who is the oversight and the implementation of registered apprenticeship.
So, I will stop there and if you have questions, I am happy to answer questions. If you feel like this is a good opportunity for the County, I would love to have that conversation. If you know of people, you know business that this would work well for that's what my role is. So, I am an apprenticeship business developer, that's my job title and I do two things. I do a lot of things, but the two main things, I work with businesses to explain about the registered apprenticeship model and then I am working with all the campuses. So, I work really closely with North Country Community College and so when I know an employer in the region is interested in this, I am going to North Country and say, hey, we've got this employer and how can we support them?

STANLEY: So, we're trying to move this along, I know you have a lot of slides up there with a lot of information. Is there something that you could send to us, that you could send to Dina, so we can share with all the Supervisors?

SANFILIPPO: Absolutely

STANLEY: There was a great slide up there about how it will affect the municipalities and there is a very small info like HDML link, if you could get that to the Supervisors so we have information and your contact information to be able to put us in touch with anybody.
We will take a couple of questions, does anybody have questions?

HUGHES: Do you need to be matriculated in a SUNY school in order to participate in this?

SANFILIPPO: No, and that's one of the parts of the larger conversation is there's a misnomer that SUNY apprenticeship, oh, my employee is going to become a full-time college student. That's not it at all, that's actually antithetical to our programming. The way it really boils to like stripping away all of the nitty-gritty, full-time work, part-time college. So, and the educational component, the requirements works out, there's a formula that they use, but it works out to one 3-credit class a semester, 2 classes a year. So, it's very, very part-time and very doable for people who once through that college isn't for me. Right, we've all heard that before and there's a litany of reasons why people make that decision, some are rooted in reality and others not, some were advised, like you got bad grades in high school therefor you're not college material.

STANLEY: And how, who did you say pays for this?

SANFILIPPO: So, we are funded, so we have split funding. We are written into the State Budget, we are also funded by OSWD and so we have the tuition dollars to support apprentices, and it is probably the easiest grant funds anyone will ever access, because the employer, not the employee has to apply for them, the college actually does. So, when an employer is working directly, say with North Country Community College, NCCC will apply to my program. So, you don't have to apply for it, and the money just sits like a theoretical debit card at the campus and every time they take a class, swipe the card, deduct the funds.

STANLEY: Perfect, anybody else have any other questions? Alright, thank you very much for your time and we'll call Anna Reynolds from Community Resources.

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

REYNOLDS: Good morning, two referrals today from the Town of Wilmington. The updates to Local Law #2 and #3, they were submitted earlier this spring. There are updates to those local laws. There are no countywide or intermunicipal impacts and a letter can be submitted.

STANLEY: Can I have a resolution for that letter? Mr. Follos. A second? Ms. McGill.

ACTION OF THE ESSEX COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

ON REFERRALS RECEIVED FROM THE TOWN OF WILMINGTON

The following motion was made by Supervisor Follos.

Whereas, the Essex County Planning Board has considered the following GML 239 referrals at its regular meeting on June 8, 2026.

REFERRAL	PROPOSED ACTION
Town of Wilmington	**Updates to Local Law #2, Improving access to Housing**
Town of Wilmington	**Updates to Local Law #3, Updating Use Regulations and Requirements for Forestry & Land Clearing**

And 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 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 McGill and passed on a vote of 8 in favor, 1 excused and none opposed.

STANLEY: Any discussion?

HUGHES: I have a question, is it possible to see the language of that local law? I am just curious about what it reads.

REYNOLDS: I have a physical copy. Do you want the physical copy, right now?

HUGHES: Email me, electronic, I am just curious what the law's intention is.

STANLEY: Any other discussion?

FOLLOS: Do you want me to explain in like three sentences or I can also just email you the local laws?

HUGHES: That is up to the Chairman.

STANLEY: If you want to quickly discuss the topics and then the details can be sent in an email.

FOLLOS: Local Law #2, currently Wilmington limits manufactured housing to lots are 3-acres or larger. Local Law #2 aims to decrease that to a one acre lot, minimum.
Local Law #3, updates, in our current zoning code, two lines are reversed so it makes no sense, our regulation of forestry, so that corrects that. And also, the current code also regulates forestry above 50 acres, we're taking to down to 25 acres and also regulating land clearing in preparation for development for which no permits have been issued.

HUGHES: Thank you.

STANLEY: Any other questions? Being none, all those in favor signify by aye. Anybody opposed? Motion carries.

REYNOLDS: Does anyone have any questions regarding my report? I submitted some information and some presentations coming up in Lake Placid for the zoning and planning boards. New York Planning Federation won't send you emails unless you're a member of their organization. So, I think I am going to start clipping them or putting them, when they come up, in my calendar so you guys are aware of those, because they're only once a year or maybe twice a year, so you're missing your credits.

STANLEY: Thank you, that's great because I don't know if we are all members.

REYNOLDS: Probably not, I have a feeling.

STANLEY: Any other questions? Alright, have a great day.

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The next item on the agenda was the Essex County Historian, with Aurora McCaffrey having been previously excused and no additional report given.

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The next item on the agenda was Cornell Cooperative Extension, with Elizabeth Lee and Cole Trager reporting as follows:

LEE: I did submit a report, does anyone have any questions?

STANLEY: Any questions for Ms. Lee?

LEE: Baring any questions, I just want to point out a couple of things. Just a highlight, because I know you're running late today. We had an amazing day. Boquet Valley Central School; last week we had a pilot of a pop-up farmers' market at the school, and it was really, really successful. A great, great partnership and just a really important milestone that we hope to grow to continue connecting youth to their food.
We also have one, we'll be having POP clubs at the farmers' markets this year. Some of you may remember those are also to connect youth to the farming community to get to know farmers and we do have an intern from Cornell who will be here and paid for by Cornell, which is also helpful to support our staff.

And the other thing I just wanted to say is two dates for you; one is we are having an open house for our new building on June 25th to which you are all invited. It is from 3:00-6:00 PM and we're really excited and very proud to be in that building and we are still moving in a little bit, but we will be ready on the 25th. It should be a really fun event, and you are all invited. And the other one, the other date that I want to put on your calendar is just your first announcement or if you haven't seen it already, the Adirondack Harvest Festival will be Saturday, September 19th, don't miss it. With that, we have one other piece of business, and I am going to ask Cole Trager, our Ag Local Food Team Leader, to come up.

STANLEY: While Cole is coming up, I just want to say that I have noticed 4H has sort of been spreading their arms, if you will. I have seen drama stuff with 4H and a lot of great things happening, not only with 4H, but also the senior programs, like especially in our community center and around the county.

LEE: Thanks, I really didn't want to neglect them, and I had hoped to highlight both of those things today, but I know you are running late. So, if you have any questions at all, we have a lot going on. Our 4H mentoring program is really doing really well, as Supervisor Stanley just mentioned, we have a partnership right none for young people to participate in performing acts mentoring, as well as production skills at the Depot, so those things will be coming up. 4H kids will be going and seeing Hadestown this Saturday at the Depot and then joining a production skills workshop with actual professionals on the 20th. Our senior programs are on fire, what can I say? There are a lot of seniors who are really, really wanting to get involved and so as much as we can, we're trying to build local food into the movement classes that we've been doing and if you have interest in your town, we are trying to reach every town in Essex County. I think we're succeeding.

TRAGER: Hey everyone, I just have a couple of quick updates about the agricultural district. So, I know we're running behind so I will try and keep things moving as quickly as possible. The first update is that our annual inclusion report from last year was just approved, so I have all that paperwork on-file from New York State Ag and Markets and 2025 is in the books.
For 2026, the open enrollment period just closed. It was from May 1-30. The Farmland Protection Board is meeting this Wednesday in the conference room of our new building at noon to go over those applications. You can find the list of parcels; it's about 4 pages from the back of your packet. It looks a little bit more intimidating than it is. There's actually only 3 applications here that are new, so to speak. That's Jason Gerhardt in Westport. A couple of the parcels for Tanner Baraby at the Baraby Farms in Chesterfield and then Janice Stainken in Willsboro. The rest of these parcels are all the result of the record keeping discrepancy that we discovered in the last year or so. So, we've been working really closely with Real Property, a huge shoutout to Hannah Carson for helping us to dial this in. We think we have gotten to the bottom of it and what was happening in the past years was that there wasn't great communication about what was happening with parcels when they were either split, combined or significantly resurveyed and so what was happening was that theoretically someone could subdivide a parcel and there would be two new parcel numbers that wouldn't necessarily be included in the agricultural district, but the original parcel, you know obviously was in the agricultural district and what that land to remain in agricultural production. So, with that in mind, most of the parcels on this list are actually parcels

that should be in the Ag District and we're just reenrolling. So, we did all the outreach with those landowners. This will probably be going on for the next year or two. These are the people who are immediately receptive and said, sure, I want to be in the Ag District. There's a handful of other folks who said, send me the resources, send me the paperwork, I want to go over this and take some time to think about it. So, it will probably be a recurring theme for at least the next year or two, but I just wanted to make that clear, that these are mostly new applications. They're mostly farms and farmland that was previously in the Agricultural District and we're just reenrolling them as more of a formality.

STANLEY: Does anyone have any questions?

HUGHES: Cole, I am just wondering if that process is going to work for you, where you reach out to the people to see if there are any changes, or is it, would it be helpful to you if our local planning boards or local assessment offices or zoning officers, if you have them, should be remembering Cornell Cooperative Extension when it comes to any subdivisions or any property splits or things like that?

TRAGER: Yeah, anytime we have the opportunity to communicate with them it's great, just for visibility, but I have been working with Hannah to set up a process where we're actually, our two offices are meeting annually to review those parcels. So, I guess once all those changes have happened at the town level that data is aggregated and then we're looking at a county document that shows all that. Baraby Farms, LCC., the first parcel on that list, is a result of having different systems to kind of look at those.

HUGHES: My town, I was just wondering if there was something that we could be doing to support your process to make this a little less cumbersome in the future.

TRAGER: I think we have a good system in place now, but the communication and visibility never hurts, so if you want to pass it along to the folks in each of your respective towns, definitely feel free to share that information and I can send you some follow-up information so that you have some talking points.

HUGHES: Yeah, that would be great, thank you.

STANLEY: Thank you, any other discussion? Alright, thank you very much guys.

TRAGER: Great, thank you very much.

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The next item was the Regional Office of Sustainable Tourism with Dan Kelleher reporting as follows:

KELLEHER: Good morning, it is great to see everyone today. In your packet is our report highlighting lodging performance for the year, as well as year to date. You can see year to date, projected overall visitor spending is up roughly 3%.

I got some questions over the Q1 Occupancy Tax Reports. Some folks noted that it was slightly down. You may recall that the occupancy reports are a function of both performance and enforcement. So, Q1 2025, specifically in March, there was a hotel that hadn't paid occupancy in a year that made a big payment in March of 2025. So, we knew that March 2026 collections were going to be down comparably. If you actually took out that hotel overpayment in 2025, we were up 15% in March 2026 over March 2025. So, again that's just how those occupancy tax collections work. Something that's a little interesting in the data and we're not 100% sure why. Particularly in April, but the year to date, as well, we have seen a divergence in the performance of lodging facilities, so these are hotels and motels and inns, compared to Airbnbs. So, the lodging facility revenues are up roughly 5% and those small Airbnbs are down, they're up, but just very, very marginal. So, that is something interesting that we are tracking.

A couple of other things just to mention. We do think we're looking at a positive summer. We expect June 2026 to be way above 2025, driven by the Porshe Parade that MJ talked about last month. But we do think we're going to have a good summer despite the gas taxes. At this point a lot of the reservations are non-refundable and so even if this $150 barrel of gas comes, as people are calling for in the next couple of weeks, we should be locked in for a positive summer.

I wanted to congratulate the Town of Jay on your new visitor's center. Of course, the Walls Between Water event last week, that was terrific.

I wanted to congratulate Ticonderoga, as well, on your new murals, that was terrific. The reveal is underway but celebrated on Saturday. Nicole, great job on that event.

Last week we sent out our hotel/motel feasibility study for the Lake Champlain Regions and the Adirondack Hub Regions. You know, right now, you know nearly all the lodging facilities, not necessarily Airbnbs are located in the north and south corners of the County and note that there is a large demand by people that live in the Lake Champlain Region in particular for new lodging facilities so they can have more tourism development. So, we commissioned this study to look at that, so we could go out and pitch that Lake Champlain Region and the Adirondack Hub Region as places to build new hotels. So, we're already at work on that. I know that CATS is using the study as part of their Twin Valleys Project, and the analysis of potentially building some lodging there. Adam Desantis was down in New York City, last week marketing those regions to over 2,000 hotel investors at an international hospitality conference. So, we're looking to pushing that out and hopefully bringing in some new lodging facilities here over the next year.

And then finally, you all have a lot of great events going on for the 250th and the 4th of July. We're actively marketing that. One area of our work that we're particularly proud of is what we call earned media or our ability to get stories put in major media outlets and I am proud to say that one of media writers that we work with works with Fodor's Travel Magazine. You may remember Fodor's Travel Books, etc., and they this year named Ticonderoga as one of the top 5 places to see 4th of July celebrations in the United States. So, we're happy to have helped get that major placement for this year.

With that I am happy to answer questions that folks may have?

STANLEY: Any questions for Dan?

HUGHES: I just want to compliment ROOST on the Rail Trail map.

KELLEHER: Thank you

STANLEY: Any other questions or comments?

FOLLOS: I know you know have a certain answer or anything definite, but do you have any hypothesis as to why the Airbnb and traditional lodging facility are diverging?

KELLER: So, one of the things, we think part of it is Canadian travel and the Canadian's who use a lot of the northern Essex County Airbnbs, the Canadian travel dropped off last year in March and so this year we hadn't seen, so 2025 January, February was still strong for Canadian visitation and we didn't have that in 2026 and that's what we're thinking is causing the drop in Airbnbs.

FOLLOS: Thank you.

STANLEY: And other questions or comments? Thank you very much, Dan.

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The next item was the Essex County Land Bank with Nicole Justice-Green reporting as follows:

JUSTICE-GREEN: Good morning, everyone. Like Dan said, we had a wonderful weekend in Ticonderoga and the Town of Jay with our Walls Between Waters public art initiative. Installing one new mural in the Town of Jay, as well as a number in Ticonderoga, which is very exciting. However, we have been mostly busy in the Land Bank with getting approval of new sites through APA approval, subdivision approval from Move-In New York. We currently have 24 homes that we're about to break ground on in Wilmington, North Elba, Ticonderoga, Chesterfield, Newcomb now that we have Department of Health approval which was quite a journey. I would say that was about 16 months of predevelopment work.

Besides that, our only other major rehabilitation project is in the Town of Jay, that was our only new acquisition this year. Where the Town of Jay used some of their occupancy tax money, so we were able to go to the auction to purchase a property. So, acquisition of blighted properties remains a concern.

Our Veteran's Housing project in Willsboro is probably 75% complete. So, we've been working on that project since September. We're looking for a ribbon cutting probably in the middle of July and four certificates of occupancy. And as I mentioned at our last meeting, we are actively partnering with Homeward Bound Adirondacks, which is a wonderful organization. So, we're really excited about those projects in particular and we're very, very excited to have gotten through our APA approval in the Town of Chesterfield. So, with that I would love to answer any questions that you may have.

STANLEY: Before we get on to questions, Nicole, I mean I would just like to throw out a huge thank you. The Walls Between Waters was amazing. I do know that there were constituents in my town concerned about obviously painting on a brick building and all those concerns and wondering where the money is coming from and why is the Town of Jay spending all this money to paint somebody's building. I know there's a lot of concerns and by the end of it we had almost 150 people show up and come together and actually talk on our Main Street and have an event on our Main Street for the first time in decades. So, I know a lot of that funding comes from HCR, right? Can you describe that a little bit?

JUSTICE-GREEN: Yup, so all the funding for our public art initiatives come through the Land Bank initiative funding through HCR. There is a specific subset of that funding that you can apply for. One more than $150,000 to pay for this public art engagement. It has to be on, near, vacant, blighted or underutilized buildings or highly visible spaces in Land Bank Communities. So, communities in which Land Bank properties exist. So, not every community in Essex County is eligible for that funding, only the communities in which have donated property or Land Bank property is located. So, I listed out on that report those communities. So, the theatre does, from the outside, look like a really nice building, but if you have gone inside of the theatre, they have been working on gutting that building, the property owners and rehabilitating it, probably over the past five years with their own money. It is still, is not yet occupied. It is a very visible building on the Main Street, it is near a number of other blighted buildings and the study shows through the National Land Bank Association, when land banks across the Country utilize this funding to draw attention to underutilized and vacant places and in Ticonderoga, two of the properties that we placed murals, one was fully vacant and it now is not. The property owner invested almost $100,000 of their own money, received some additional grant money, it now has a thriving business. The other property, in particular, had a slum lord that owned the building, it now has a responsible property owner who has fully gutted these apartments and investing in that space and the only reason he bought that building was because it had a mutual on it. So, this program does work and we're incredibly grateful that HCR sees the value in that work, as well.

STANLEY: And I can just second that. Like you said that building in AuSable Forks, they've been working on that for 5-years. They actually now, because of the mural, they've taken an extra step to secure more funding to bring that building and open it back on Main Street, sooner rather than later. So, any questions?

BARBER: I just want to thank Nicole, for Chesterfield. I know the APA gave you a hard time. We had gone through the mapping and there was wetland delineation and they came up and said, oh no, we have a different map, there's more there and come to find out there really wasn't. So, I can understand your frustration and just delayed the project.

JUSTICE-GREEN: Well, it's a huge partnership and I wouldn't have been able to get through it without Captain Andy and your Planning Board and your entire team. So, it was a learning process and at the end of the day sometimes you just have to prove multiple times what you already know and now we're ready to go, so I am very excited.

BARBER: Thank you

HUGHES: Good morning, three quick comments. One; super excited about the Burt Lane, full gut rehab. Every time we have that kind of project it always ends up being an amazing transformation and I am very excited to see this process.
Number Two; when the Board, three years ago, envisioned, at least in my vision, I think the Board envisioned the Land Bank, you guys have taken it even further than I ever envisioned it. I always thought it was about blighted properties, full gut rehabs, just kind of repeating, but with the Move-IN New York Housing pipeline, it's a nice diversification and I am really excited to see you taking that on and having some success with that.
And Number Three; I have always questioned how creative placement in the public art fit into the model of the land bank and I really appreciate the explanation that you have provided in your report that helps me better understand how that side of the coin really supports what you're doing with the full gut rehab, but also with economic development, community pride, etc., etc., so thanks for providing that connection to that placement in the public art and what the mission and the vision of the land bank actually is. I appreciate that.

JUSTICE-GREEN: Thank you, Ken, now we just need a property in Essex.

HUGHES: I am working on it.

STANLEY: Any other questions? Alright, thank you very much Nicole.

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The next item was Adirondack Roots with Caitlyn Wargo having been previously excused and no report was given.

STANLEY: Ms. Wargo is not here today.

HUGHES: As a Board Member for Adirondack Roots, Caitlyn is on a trip, today. I don't know if she mentioned that to anybody. But I just wanted to and Joe Pete can probably speak to this, too, there was a ribbon cutting in Keene a couple of days ago at the Both Meadow Trail Housing, next to the Little Peaks. It was a really great event. The Adirondacks Roots did a really nice job; the Adirondack Community Housing Trust did a really nice job. The Adirondack Explorer, there are a lot of Adirondacks here, Adirondack Explorer did a really great article with Tim Rowland, four homes, ribbon cutting, each home is $160,000 at price and just wonderful to see that partnerships that took place; the Town of Keene, Housing Trust, Adirondack Roots, the State, just doing a great job of working together to get some middle income individuals into these amazing houses; teachers, firefighters, other local individuals who are contributing to not just the Keene Community, but to the larger Essex County community and I couldn't be more proud of the work that Roots and the Housing Trust and Keene and everybody else is doing to make that happen.

STANLEY: And I am glad that you brought you up, because I had written that down on one of my two papers of meetings, so I thank you for bringing that up.

HUGHES: You're welcome, sir.

STANLEY: Any other questions? Concerns? Alright, it is 11:25, we are adjourned.

AS THERE WAS NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO COME BEFORE THIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING/PUBLICITY COMMITTEE, IT WAS ADJOURNED AT 11:25 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dina Garvey, Deputy
Clerk of the Board