

AG., PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRUARY 24, 2009

AG/PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Campbell, Rymph, Brown, Lindsay, Hurley

AG/PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Scribner, N. Hall

SUPERVISORS: Wilbur, G. Hall, Trinkle, Henke, LaPointe

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Kevin Hayes, County Administrator

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Chris DeBolt, Planner

Marge Mohn, Tourism Director

Bill McCarty, Director RPTS

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Karen Pratt, Director Data Processing

, ASA

Barbara Winchell, Personnel Director

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Approval of Minutes – January 21, 2009 Meeting
- 3) Department Reports/Requests
 - A. Bed Tax Update – County Attorney
 - B. Planning
 - a. Discuss EPA Water Quality Grant
 - b. Annual Report
 - c. County Planning Board Monthly Report
 - d. Agriculture District Update
 - e. CDBG Announcement
 - f. Broadband
 - g. Discuss Proposed Stream Corridor Regulations
 - h. Canal Trail Update
 - i. Discuss Director of Planning Position
 - C. Tourism
 - a. Monthly Report
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Adjournment

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:05 P.M.

A motion to approve the minutes of the January 21, 2009 meeting, was moved by Mr. Lindsay, seconded by Mr. Brown and adopted.

BED TAX UPDATE – Roger Wickes, County Attorney, addressed the committee on the following:

- Bed Tax Update – The proposed bill and home rule request have been received from the state, copy attached. The wording did not mirror our request. The proposed legislation used the standard language/definitions used for all counties. The legislation includes the 4%, administrative fee hold back, and the hotel, motels, bed and breakfast contained in all bed tax legislation but not the definition to include any facility that the State charges sales tax, i.e. campgrounds. Roger stated the local law will allow us to further define what the County is trying to do. The next step would be to pass a resolution requesting passage of this proposed bed tax legislation. A motion to present a resolution to support passage of the bed tax

legislation was moved by Mr. Lindsay and seconded by Messrs. Rymph and Brown. Discussion. Roger stated if we want a more expansive definition, i.e. include campgrounds then the County should not support this proposed legislation. This proposed legislation is using standard language. He recommends having discussions with Senator Little about what we wanted included. Mr. Lindsay withdrew his motion and Messrs. Rymph and Brown his second. A motion to send a letter to Senator Little expressing what we wanted to be included in this legislation was moved by Mr. Lindsay, seconded by Mr. Hurley and adopted. The committee would like a definition of tourist facility. He is 99% sure campgrounds are not considered a tourist facility. Roger provided additional information. The state does not tax campgrounds now. A motion to move forward with the bed tax and also go back to our legislators requesting addition of the other items we requested was moved by Mr. Hurley, seconded by Mr. Lindsay and adopted.

PLANNING: Chris DeBolt, Planner, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Discuss EPA Water Quality Grant – Chris updated on a grant from the EPA to the County in the amount of \$150,000. The study is complete but he does not have the final draft from the consultant, Economic Impact of the Environmental Contamination to the Upper Hudson. He is working on completing the paperwork to wrap up this grant.
- Annual Report – copies were distributed to all Supervisors.
- County Planning Board Monthly Report – Four projects were considered, all projects were of local concern. Regarding the Kingsbury project, the definition of junk vehicle should be changed to include boats.
- Agriculture District Update – Departments involved with the ag district process met on February 4th to discuss the procedure and status of district reviews. In 2007 Ag and Markets law 25AA changed to streamline the review process and removed the requirement of the County Planning Board review and also no longer requires every resident in the district receive the notification of the public hearing. A motion to discontinue mailing of legal notice of public hearing on ag district reviews to the residents in the district was moved by Mr. Rymph, seconded by Lindsay and adopted. Mr. Brown opposed.
- CDBG Announcement – Community Development Block Grant Announcements, \$400,000 available to communities with less than 40,000 people:
 - NYS Main Street Program – covers municipally owned infrastructure expansion. The issue with CDBG funds is a certain number of constituents served must be in economically depressed area. April 24th deadline for submission.
 - Restore NY Grant – Up to \$2.5M, the removal of obsolete commercial or industrial buildings, development of infrastructure or facilities to attract or sustain employment opportunities and attraction of new industry, commercial, retail or mixed use. Letter of intent due by March 9th.

For both of these grants, the local municipalities or the County can apply.

- Update on Ag Planning Grants - Letters from Ag & Markets due to the state budget all ag planning grants on hold. (Preliminary approval was given to Granville and Hartford put they are now on hold.)
- Broadband – Universal broadband access is an issue. He contacted Oswego County regarding a private company they worked with, New Visions Power Lines out of Syracuse, who installed broadband access to taxpayers at no cost. The technology they use is the broadband over power lines. The advantage of this system is that you do not have to string any new wires. The company is willing to make a presentation to the committee about this technology and about how the County would move forward with this initiative, what would and would not be required of the County. They are doing work in Schoharie, Oswego and Cortland counties. In these counties, the counties have been providing assistance by doing surveys of residents to try to judge the interest in the service. Chris is also meeting with another company, a different technology, on Thursday with Tori Riley, LDC. Regarding cost, service similar to road runner would be \$30.00 per month and increase to \$56 for internet and voice service. If the County was to move forward, the company needs a survey of residents to gauge interest and also a mapping effort to know where broadband is available and the density of the population in unserved areas. Karen Pratt, Director IT, suggested exploring the use of Restore NY funds for doing the resident survey. The grant has a 10% local match. A motion to have Chris contact the gentlemen for a presentation and send a letter of intent to Restore NY to apply for grant was moved by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Lindsay and adopted.
- Discuss Proposed Stream Corridor Regulations – Lake George Park Commission is proposing new stream corridor regulations. Basically, they are mapping the streams in the Lake George Park and attempting to put a 100 ft. buffer on either side of the stream. If a landowner wanted to clear any trees or put a structure within the buffer, they would need a permit. This impacts 12,000 acres of privately held land in Washington County. He has until the second week in March to submit public comment from the Planning Dept. He would like input from the towns of Dresden, Fort Ann and Putnam. Stormwater run off is the main issue. A motion to have the County Planning Department comment to support the towns of Fort Ann, Putnam and Dresden position on this matter was moved by Mr. Lindsay, seconded by Mr. Rymph and adopted.
- Canal Trail Update – Fort Edward to Fort Ann – The bond monies for this project are in jeopardy and it does not look like funds will be available for this project
- Discuss Director of Planning Position – Kevin distributed a handout, a comparison of several counties Planning Departments, attached. Barb Winchell, Personnel Director, stated the planner position is open competitive. The Director is a non-competitive position. He meets minimum qualifications for Director and can be appointed to that position at any time. The committee needs to discuss the Director salary, what do we want to pay the Director. Chris is currently a 40-hour employee

but as a director he would be an exempt position. At budget time, it was discussed that once he passed the exam, which he has, then being stepped into the position. Kevin will develop some scenarios for committee consideration.

TOURISM – Marge Mohn, I Love NY Program Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Monthly Updates – handout attached.
- Tour of the Battenkill – Kevin gave Marge information from Christine Hoffer requesting \$5,000.00 for the Tour of the Battenkill bike race. Marge has sent them an application but no submission by Battenkill race to date.
- 2008 Funding – We are one of six counties in the state that did not receive their 2008 funding from the state. She has invoices that are not being paid due to no funding. Marge and Kevin will work on a letter addressing this matter.

OTHER BUSINESS:

- Agricultural Stewardship Association –
 - PDR Moses – expecting final approval. No response to date on the projects submitted this fall, Hand Melon Farm. Once selected it takes two years to go through the process. PDR applications, to early to tell about requests for this program year.
 - 2009 Ag Business Winter Workshops - Handout on file.
- Distribution of Promotional Information - Tori Riley, LDC, stated that through any events (Battenkill Bike Tour), departments should help get promotional materials out. Everyone should help Marge get information out.
- Planning Board – Four hours of mandatory training required annually. The State will no longer come up to provide classes. Chris has been contacted by an attorney who is willing to provide training sessions and would charge the attendees. The County Attorney's office is willing to provide this service. A motion to have the County Attorney's office provide the service, training for County Planning Boards, and bill the State was moved by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Rymph and adopted.

The meeting adjourned at 3:24 PM.