

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 23, 2008

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS
PRESENT: Brown, Scribner, Clark, Alexander, N. Hall, Campbell

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS
ABSENT: Lindsay

SUPERVISORS: Trinkle, Wilbur, Rymph, G. Hall

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Mark Galough, Planning Director

Chris DeBolt, Planner

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Approval of Minutes – March 25, 2008
- 3) Department Reports/Requests
 - A) Planning
 - a. Dredging Project Update – Dave King, EPA
 - b. Economic Impact of Snowmobiling on Washington County and Champlain Canal Issues – Dave Perkins, Washington County Snowmobile Clubs
 - c. Washington County Data Book Update
 - d. County Planning Board Monthly Update
 - B) Tourism
 - a. Monthly Update
 - b. Occupancy Tax Discussion
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Adjournment

Chairman Brown called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

The minutes of the March 25, 2008 meeting were approved.

PLANNING

Mark Galough, Director of Planning, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Dredging Project Update – Dave King, EPA, updated the committee on the dredging project and distributed two handouts: The Hudson River Dredging Report March-April 2008 Issue and Dredge Area Delineation Phase 2 Fact Sheet January 2008, on file and available at www.hudsondredging.com. All of the road work is in, the canal was widened by 65 feet, one of the two enclosed filter areas is up, rail work in place, loading track and concrete pads next week, wharf work and the liner is down anywhere there is a chance of contamination, and the buildings and treatment center should be complete by October 2008. Dredging will start in May 2009 at the yacht basin. 80% of the dredging will be between Fort Edward and Schuylerville. This is estimated to be a six-year project. The PCB materials are going to be shipped to Texas by rail for disposal. A tour will be scheduled once the buildings are up and equipment is in them. Recreational travel on the canal will continue and has been addressed by the Community Advisory Committee.

- Economic Impact of Snowmobiling on Washington County and Champlain Canal Issues – Dave Perkins, Washington County Snowmobile Clubs, slide presentation, handouts on file: text of slide presentation, landowner information and trail map. Of concern with the Canal Corporation is that they have regulations prohibiting snowmobiles, which they did not realize but were fortunate to have been issued a permit to allow them to use. They need this access and hopefully their use permit will continue. A motion to issue a resolution opposing other use of snowmobile registration monies was moved by Mr. Scribner, seconded by Mr. Clark and adopted.
- Washington County Data Book Update – on County website. Mark encouraged everyone to take a look.
- County Planning Board Monthly Update by Chris DeBolt, Planner – handout attached. He advised the committee of the availability of additional grant monies for Ag protection plans.

TOURISM

- Monthly Update – Marge Mohn, Tourism Director, presented her monthly report, attached. She is working on updating the map and format of the information in the Chronicle's publication on Washington County.
- Occupancy Tax Discussion – The Washington County Tourism Association is forming a committee to explore an occupancy tax. The Ag & Planning committee would like an idea of the administrative costs associated with an occupancy tax.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Ag Summit and Lunch – Chairman Brown invited committee members to an Ag Summit entitled "Growing Opportunities for Washington County Farmers" on Monday May 5th from 12:00 to 2:30 (lunch served) at Profit Hall, Main Street, Salem.
- Milk Prices – Discussion ensued on the unstable milk prices and the cost of corn. The committee discussed what could be done to help. They discussed the impact of property taxes on farms and a suggestion to look at increasing sales tax. Mr. Brown was looking for some things that the Board could do to help us with the tax situation. Mr. Wilbur stated we would be taking a look at the services provided, mandated, non-mandated and necessary. A motion to have Brian Gilchrist, Executive Director Cooperative Extension, draft a letter to our legislators on the unstable milk prices was moved by Mr. Scribner, unanimously seconded and adopted. The committee also discussed the County's current budget concerns both reducing expenses and increasing revenue. Mr. Brown stated some Supervisors have talked about and he would like to request a meeting on the budget. Gayle Hall, Budget Officer, stated budget meetings have been scheduled for May to go over the 2008 budget. Mr. Brown stated the Board is supposed to have a little more input in providing direction to department heads. Mrs. G. Hall stated dialogue would be taking place with department heads including discussion on what within the department is funded on a percentage by the state. She stated that everything would be looked at thoroughly.