

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES  
MARCH 5, 2008

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS  
PRESENT: Brown, N. Hall, Campbell, Mr. Wilbur, Vice Chairman of the Board making  
the quorum.

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MEMBERS  
ABSENT: Lindsay, Scribner, Clark, Alexander

SUPERVISORS: Trinkle, Henke, G. Hall, LaPointe

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Kevin Hayes, County Administrator

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Mark Galough, Planning Director

Chris DeBolt, Planner

Marge Mohn, Tourism

Ericka Sellar, Assist. Co. Atty.

Brian Gilchrist, Director Cooperative Ext.

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Approval of Minutes – January 23, 2008
- 3) Department Reports/Requests
  - A) Agriculture
    - a. Overview of Ag Conference – February 28, 2008
  - B) Planning
    - a. Upcoming Training Sessions
    - b. GML Mailing to all Towns & Villages
    - c. County Planning Board Monthly Report (Jan/Feb. 2008)
  - C) Tourism
    - a. Monthly Update
  - D) Community Development
    - a. Overview of Business Show – February 28, 2008
    - b. Job Discovery 2008 – March 13, 2008
- 4) Other Business
- 5) Department Head Evaluation – Director of Planning
- 6) Adjournment

Chairman Brown opened the meeting for discussion at 1:02 P.M., no quorum.

AGRICULTURE

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

- Overview of Ag Conference held on February 28, 2008 – He felt this was a very good conference and well attended. The focus was on the economic viability of farms, how we can make things more economically stable for farms and preservation. The Snowmobile Club was represented at the conference as they would like to see in the conservation easements that the snowmobile trails that are on existing ag parcels going into conservation easements that those trails be maintained. He also noted that the NYS Department of Ag & Markets renewed the funding for the grants for writing Ag and farmland protection plans at the local level.

Mr. Campbell arrives making a quorum at 1:11 P.M.

Brian Gilchrist, Cornell Cooperative Extension Director, addressed the following Ag items:

- PDR Workshops held February 12<sup>th</sup> at Municipal Center – basically to get the word out about the upcoming PDR opportunity. They informed people about the process, time frame and getting some pre-applications submitted.
- Ag and Farmland Protection Bd. – Brian, Teri Ptacek and Alan Brown have discussed what the Ag and Farmland Protection Board should be doing at that level. One idea is going beyond just the dairy industry and include other commodity producers, i.e. maple syrup producers, fruits & vegetables producers, livestock, equine and bring them together with a speaker to see what there needs are, i.e. labor, infrastructure, access to markets. There is one vacancy on the Ag and Farmland Protection Board, Bill Fraser is not seeking reappointment, open position not representing any specific Ag sector.
- Cooperative Extension Personnel Update:
  - Coop. Ext. 4H position – job description approved and will be advertising.
  - Open horticulture position - still working on job description (masters level).
- 4H Capital Days – Three youths attended from Washington County.

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

- Upcoming Training Sessions:
  - March 20<sup>th</sup> SEQRA Workshop – Matt Fuller, Presenter
  - June 12<sup>th</sup> Reality Subdivisions – DOH Engineer, Ericka Sellar, Assistant County Attorney, Bill McCarty, Director of Real Property, Dona Crandall, County Clerk – Presenters
  - October 16<sup>th</sup> – Reserved the date and state facilitators will be coming but the topic is undetermined at this time (interested in feedback on possible topics for discussion).
- GML Mailing to all Towns & Villages – mailed out last week requesting up to date contact information. He is trying to get an up to date list also of the local regulations to establish a regulatory inventory.
- County Planning Board Monthly Report (Jan/Feb. 2008) – Washington County Planning Board Monthly Report attached. The County Planning Board needs to be addressed for a project in a town when there is possible intermunicipal impact which means it is within five hundred feet of a county or state road, public land, municipal boundary and certain projects like site plan review. The County Planning Board makes a recommendation to the local planning board that can either choose to accept or override that recommendation with a super majority vote. The County Planning Board never has the final say, they only advise. There are exemptions where a local municipality can enter into an agreement with the County that says these actions listed below are exempt from action by the County Planning Board.

TOURISM – Marge Mohn, Tourism Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Monthly Update – attached. The maple tour is scheduled for the last two weekends in March. The Battenkill bike race will take place in April. She stated the Tourism web site is being updated regularly. Currently the County has approximately 130 hotel/motel beds and more are needed in the northern section of the county due to the soccer park in the Town of Fort Ann. Chairman Trinkle stated she received an email from Christine Hoffer of the Rice Mansion Inn, stating she is willing to discuss the pros and cons of an occupancy tax in Washington County and feels it would positively impact the growth of tourism in the County. Marge stated the Tourism Association Board of Directors are surveying area hotel/motel businesses on the topic of an occupancy tax. The County would set the bed tax (percent) and administer and determine how it would be used. All of the surrounding counties have a bed tax. Roger Wickes, County Attorney, gave an overview of the bed tax process and what other counties are doing with their bed tax monies. Mark Galough, Planning Director, stated the tax should be place prior to any hotel/motel development in the County. Chairman Brown would like more statistics on bed numbers and bed days. The Tourism Board is trying to get businesses to buy into the bed tax. Discussion ensued. Kate Ziem from the Tourism Association will be asked to report out to the committee on the survey and Roger Wickes will gather information, other counties bed tax laws and timeline of the process/implementation of a bed tax. Chairman Brown is also interested in the cost to administer a bed tax.

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

- Overview of Business Show – February 28, 2008 – This was very successful. The Chamber is talking about moving this event around the County.
- Job Discovery 2008 is scheduled for March 13, 2008 at ACC with 72-73 employers represented.

OTHER BUSINESS - A motion to accept the minutes of the January 23, 2008 meeting was moved by Mr. Wilbur, seconded and adopted.

DEPARTMENT HEAD EVALUATION - A motion to enter an executive session, Director of Planning, was moved by Mr. Wilbur, seconded by Mr. Campbell and adopted. In executive session, a department head evaluation was conducted, Director of Planning, and no action was taken.

The meeting adjourned from executive session.