

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

June 24, 2013

PRESENT:

Richard Keaveney, Chairman
Arthur Baer
Ronald Knott
Elizabeth Young
Jeffrey Braley
Ellen Thurston
Sarah Sterling
Robin Andrews

ABSENT:

Arthur Bassin- Notified
Michael Benson
Richard Scalera
John Porreca

ALSO PRESENT:

Angela Rothermel, Ast. Dep. Clerk
Kenneth Flood
Chuck Bornt
Jim Waterhouse
Maryann Johnson
Chuck Brooks

Press: 1

Chairman Keaveney called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M.

Agriculture – J. Waterhouse and M. Johnson

Jim Waterhouse is the Co-Chair of the Farmland Protection Board. J. Waterhouse said that the Farmland Protection Plan Draft Plan was revised, and had all the Supervisors review the revised chapter 5 draft while he talked about the Review and Establishment of date and time for the Public Hearing. He believes that it is a great document. He believes that the next step is to have the Board of Supervisors hold a Public Hearing. The document has not substantially changed since the Board of Supervisors received the first copy months ago. Chapter 5 of the Plan has been revised per request of the State, and they have sent charts out to the state. The supervisors told J. Waterhouse that a copy of the plan has to be available at 401 State Street for everyone to be able to read through, in order for a Public Hearing to take place. At this time, J. Waterhouse and the Supervisors agreed to hold a Public Hearing on July 10th, 2013 at the Full Board meeting. A motion was requested, by Chairman R. Keaveney, to move forward with the Public Hearing. Motion to approve by E. Young, Seconded by R. Knott, motion carried.

At the request of a few interested parties, J. Waterhouse explained, they had to update the goals and recommendations, and also what activities are parts of the goals. J. Waterhouse told the Committee that he needed County oversight, though there really are no financial issues, it is just very helpful having the County on board. He said that support is as good as any financial issue. J. Waterhouse and M. Johnson explained to the County that they would like to update the plan annually, and do it a few chapters at a time, so they do not have to go ahead and revise the whole thing at once.

Cornell Cooperative Extension - C. Bornt and C. Brooks

C. Brooks introduced C. Bornt to talk to the Committee about the Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture program. C. Bornt is in team leader of 9-11 people in a Capital Area Agriculture Program. He thanked the Committee for having him, and explained to them his hope for combining resources to save money while expanding. C. Bornt has been a senior member of Capital District Vegetable and Small Fruit Program for 12 years. He says over the years the program has gone through quite a few changes, the biggest being that it went from having 4 Counties attending to 17 Counties attending. It is a merger for many different groups, and all together the members all total about 150 years of service with fruits and vegetables. The program focuses on vegetables, small fruits, and tree fruits. The program received their funding from County contributions, Cornell University, program generated income, and the Grower Enrollment Program. The Supervisors asked C. Bornt how big the total budget is and what percentage is from the County. C. Bornt explained that the budget is at \$750,000 and 60% of that is from Columbia County. He told the Supervisors that he would like to start bringing in big chain stores for meetings, to see what they are looking for, and give growers ideas. It is hard to go head to head with the big growers, C. Bornt says that they just can't keep up with the costs. A quart of Strawberries from California cost \$1.26, a quart of Strawberries at a Farmers Market in Columbia County is over \$6.00. He said that they have been spending quite a bit of time on hiring Production and Marketing Specialists. He also explained that in the past 5-6 years they have spent a lot of time with new beginner farmers. He believes that if you work with them early they end up staying in the

business. C. Bornt says they are now trying to develop a spray program for insects. They need something that will not only kill pest, but be safe to people.

Economic Development- K. Flood

K. Flood gave an update on the CEDC Activities. He said that they are still waiting for a contract for four businesses. There were 2 small loans approved this month. One was for \$5,000 for Easy Food, a door to door frozen food dealer, in Greene County. There was also a loan for \$8,500 for Miranda's Cutting Edge Salon, in Kinderhook, so that she can move to a bigger place as she is looking into a full service salon.

K. Flood explained to the Supervisors that he spent a day with Supervisor R. Knott, visiting the Town of Stuyvesant, and two businesses within the town. He said that he would like to do that with each Supervisor, so that he can get a feel of what goes on in each town and what kind of businesses are in the towns. He said that he will be getting letters out to the Supervisors announcing that he would like to visit their towns, and asking them to call with a date that works for them. K. Flood explained that it is very beneficial to spend time reviewing the Town projects, and visiting the town businesses.

Choose Columbia is moving forward. They are currently working on their marketing outlets, and are going to start working with the Register Star more.

Tourism

K. Flood explained to the Committee that the State studies have come out. They took numbers from last year and this year, and came to the following conclusions. Lodging in Columbia County has decreased, but everything else seems to be in an upward trend. Recreation, food and beverage, transportation, and second homes are all up from last year.

Capital District Region Economic Development Council

Consolidated Funding Application Round III – Potential Projects

They have received the Goat Farm Study money. K. Flood said that it is important to get a marketing feasibility plan on the airport. He also told the Committee that they are looking to obtain money to improve a Stockport waterfront. A workshop will be held on the subject on July 15th, 2013 at 9:30 at the college.

Start-Up NY Update

K. Flood told the Committee that the bill was passed. He said that it is not completely clear what the passed bill means. He has the bill, has read it, and sent it out, but nothing is clear yet. The bill is supposed to be for the purchase and creation of land that is designated tax free. It is not clear in the bill if the land has to be owned by the college or not. Existing businesses and companies that left New York due to the high taxes can come back and take advantage of the tax free land. Existing businesses can take advantage of the land if they want to start a new line. If companies are going to compete, they cannot move onto the land.

With no further business there was a motion to adjourn at 6:20P.M. By E. Young, seconded by A Baer, motion carried.

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