



MINUTES
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 8, 2020
Live streamed – 6:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER: By Hon. Keith Batman, Chairman opened the live streamed meeting at 6:10 p.m.

MEMBERS: Legislators: Michael Didio, Trish Kerr (Vice Chair), Christopher Petrus, Heidi Nightengale

EXCUSED: Legislator Paul Pinckney, Charlie Ripley

OTHERS: Legislators Elane Daly, Tim Lattimore, Ryan Foley, County Attorney Christopher Palermo, Assistant County Attorney Brittany Massi, Legislative Clerk, Sheila Smith, Director Youth Bureau and Assigned Counsel, Lloyd Hoskins, Cayuga Economic Development Director, Tracy Verrier, Cayuga Cooperative Extension Associate Director Dan Welch, Cayuga County Soil and Water District Doug Kierst and Erin McDonald, 9-1-1 Administrator Denise Spingler, Probation Director, Jay DeWispelaere, Tourism Executive Director, Karen Kuhl, Planning Economic Development Stephen Lynch, Director, Suzanne Gauthier, Administrative Assistant

MINUTES TO APPROVE: March 11, 2020

Christopher Petrus motioned to approve the minutes of March 11, 2020, 2nd by Tricia Kerr. All members present voted in favor, passed. April 8, 2020.

APPOINTMENTS:

Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency (WQMA):

Jeff Emerson, 71 Rochester St, Port Byron, NY 13140 – Term, 3-24-20 to 12-31-24

Cayuga County Soil & Water Conservation District, Board of Directors:

Stephen Nemec, Jr., 3999 Carver Rd., Moravia, NY 13118 – Term, 1-1-20 to 12-31-22

Michael Didio motioned to move approve the appointments and move to the Legislature for approval, 2nd by Christopher Petrus. All members present voted in favor, passed.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES FOR COMMITTEE:

Steve Lynch (Planning & Economic Development) –

1. COVID-19 Staffing: All planning staff were set up and working remotely beginning March 19th, and are set to continue until further notice. Fortunately, much of what we have on our plate right now can be advanced remotely. The inability to meet with our various working groups and elected officials in some parts of the county that do not have access to remote conference/zoom etc., could impact some of the work in the near future.

2. Owasco Lake Watershed Rules and Regulations Update Project

UPDATE: WSRR Steering Committee Meetings were held on March 3rd and 12th. The meetings were also attended by the extended staff working group (~15 individuals) who have worked on the project. Planning facilitated presentation and discussion of the Summary Document that provides responses to the ~37 pages of public feedback on the initial Draft Regulations released in April 2019 and the updated Final Proposed Regulations.

The March meetings resulted in Steering Committee consensus on a Final Draft of the Owasco Lake Watershed Regulations that will be transmitted and presented to the Owasco Town Board and Auburn City Council at a future joint meeting. This meeting was tentatively targeted for April, but will need to be moved to a later date due to the CV-19 pandemic.

3. Staff to Cayuga County Development Corporation

UPDATE: On Wednesday, March 18th the CCDC Board approved its FY19 Independent Financial Audit prepared by Bonadio & Co., CPAs. Staff has prepared all required annual reporting to the NYS Authority Budget Office, due by April 1, 2020. Copies of the Annual CCDC financial audit will be submitted to the Chair of the Legislature and County Treasurer.

UPDATE: Also on March 18th the CCDC Board approved a \$100K Emergency Economic Development Loan to the Cayuga Economic Development Agency (CEDA) to provide CEDA the monies necessary to capitalize a CV19 Emergency Micro Loan

Program and process emergency loans to Cayuga County small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Details include:

- \$100,000 Loan at one-half percent interest amortized over 24-months
- Initial 6-month principal and interest deferment (repayment starts Oct. 1, 2020)
- Nine-month window to deploy loan funds to businesses
- Loan Program Guidelines, Intake, Review and Approval at discretion of CEDA Loan Committee (currently CEDA Executive Committee)

4. Deauville Island Bridge and Pathway Improvements. Staff is working to see if finalizing construction improvements on Deauville Island (paving, finishing the bridge area, etc.) can qualify with the state as essential construction activity during the CV19 restrictions. We are telling the state that the work needs to be done to keep the binder layers from deteriorating and to address the abrupt pavement terminal points near the bridge connection.

5. Sterling Nature Center Development.

UPDATE: We are finalizing a professional services contract with Beardsley Architects for County Attorney review and execution by the Chair. This contract will cover the preparation of construction plans and bidding documents. The 2019 CFA resolutions give authorization to execute the award contract and Beardsley Architects and Engineers were previously selected via a competitive RFP process in 2018. The work is funded under the 2019 CFA grant.

6. GAVRAS Center transfer of North Street Facility from County to Gavras via CCDC. The Planning Director, as Executive Director to CCDC, has executed the CCDC documents needed to finalize the transfer of the GAVRAS Center from the County – to CCDC – to Gavras. This should finalize that transfer from the County’s perspective.

PLANNING RESOLUTIONS:

4-20-PL-1 Declaring the Cayuga County Legislature Lead Agency for the SEQRA Review of County Construction of a new nature center facility at the Sterling Nature Center Park and directing staff to initiate a coordinated SEQRA review process

4-20-PL-2 Authorizing the signing of a contract with Nick Colas to enhance and update the SWAT Model and assist in the update of the Owasco\ Lake Watershed Management and Waterfront Revitalization Plan into a Nine Element Plan Christopher Petrus motioned to bundle, approve and move resolutions 4-20-PL-1 and 4-20-PL-2, 2nd by Trish Kerr. No discussion. All members present voted in favor, passed.

Vacant (Employment & Training) –

Tracy Verrier (CEDA) –

- Metric Snapshot through March 23, 2020 (does not include COVID response):
 - Existing businesses met with: 38 (including 9 first-time contacts)
 - Entrepreneurs met with: 14
 - See supplemental document for additional metrics and economic indicators.
- Since the local emergency declaration, CEDA staff have been working with businesses to help them identify and apply for resources to carry them through this difficult time. The team is staying as current as possible on federal, state, and local financing and technical assistance opportunities.
- CEDA launched a coronavirus response survey to take in and more efficiently process inquiries from businesses in regards to their current needs. As of March 27, over 90 companies have been reached out to or submitted inquiries, and approximately 70% had been contacted in some form. Inquiries are coming in quickly and CEDA staff are working through the list as quickly as possible. Not all companies provided all information in the survey, but so far companies have reported:
 - Over \$335,000 lost revenue per week (total reported)
 - Over \$2m in financing needs, ranging from \$500 to \$500,000. Most report current financing needs under \$75,000.
 - Approximately half of businesses indicated that they were open and operating in some fashion
 - NOTE: these figures are compiled in total, and based on the information provided. Not all businesses answered all questions, so each indicator is likely higher than reported above.
- CEDA launched a COVID-19 Emergency Microloan Program offering small loans to help businesses that only need a small amount to stay afloat, or to help businesses make it through until larger financing opportunities are available. Businesses that are not a good fit for this program are being referred to other programs that meet their needs better.

- Additional Updates

Tracy Verrier stated staff has been working to get in touch with County businesses to provide information on the various resources which are available for assistance. Along with the sheer volume of requests for assistance, many questions still exist on the workings of the Federal programs. Staff has provided daily FAQ videos on their site for review.

Legislator Kerr highlighted the business support efforts CEDA team has been providing to the community and inquired whether any issues with the current supply chain. Tracy Verrier stated the initial responses from the recent business survey identified some of the main concerns as the delivery of goods have been slower than normal and many of the suppliers have shut down their operations as well. Many of the businesses indicated the timeframe for the businesses to survive without any type of assistance would be three weeks to two months. The majority of the requests have been to cover operating expenses and payroll. Other forms of assistance being requested: grant and assistance for marketing and promotion, deferment of rents and mortgage payments, bridge loan assistance until Federal funds are released and some form of tax relief or deferral. The group has also requested assistance with the establishing a local procurement method for items needed.

Legislator Lattimore inquired whether any opportunity may arise from the COVID 19 crisis, perhaps with the attraction of businesses to the Upstate area to assist in identifying and filling the gaps in the supply chains. Tracy stated currently a regional plan is being developed to assist our local nonessential businesses to fill these gaps where possible. Legislator Lattimore suggested perhaps reopening the lab within the hospital to increase the testing capabilities within the County. Legislator Lattimore inquired about how the Downtown Auburn segments are managing through the shut-down.

Legislator Kerr inquired on the assistance being provided to recent start-ups and those businesses looking to open in the near future. Tracy Verrier described the opportunities which may be available for the start-ups. Many new start-ups are not eligible to use some of the Federal programs. Staff has been offering cash flow and working capital information for those businesses with essential workers; as well as unemployment assistance and information on the Payroll Protection Program.

Chairman Batman stated Chair McNabb-Coleman is establishing a committee to establish a coordinated effort to have the departments and agencies provide financial data for legislative review.

Doug Kierst (Soil & Water Conservation District) –

- The Cayuga County SWCD sends our strongest wishes that everyone remains Safe, Healthy and in Positive Spirits. We also send our sincere gratitude to the Cayuga County Health Department Staff, Local Emergency Professionals including the Sheriff's Department, State and City Police, Local Emergency Management and Fire Department Personnel, Doctors, Nurses and others on the front lines for the tremendous work they are doing to keep us safe during this challenging time.
 - Like most of NYS, The Natural Resources Center has been closed to public visitors and Cayuga County SWCD office Staff has been directed to work from home until further notice.
 - Prior to the Governors latest executive order requiring non-essential construction to cease, Cayuga County SWCD operations Staff were able to complete a few water quality protecting projects. We are on hold until we receive further clarification from the State on whether or not water quality protecting projects are considered exempt or not.
 - Cayuga County SWCD Staff taught one (1) NYS DEC endorsed 4 hour training for contractors, municipal officials, engineers and other groups that may be interested in learning about erosion and sediment control methods. All remaining classes have been canceled or postponed until a later date which has yet to be determined.
 - Cayuga County SWCD Staff completed a minor ditch stabilization project in the Owasco Lake Watershed.
 - What better way to pass the time during the stay at home period than to plant trees and shrubs as an individual or as a family! The 2020 Cayuga SWCD Annual Tree, Shrub & Groundcover Sale is in full swing. Visit www.cayugaswcd.org for additional information and available species. Although we are unable to take in person orders, on-line ordering is available! The TENTATIVE last day to order is Tuesday, April 28th, 2020 with the TENTATIVE Pick-up date is Friday, May 8th at the SWCD Office. Dates may be subject to change depending upon the status of the COVID-19 outbreak.
- Additional Updates
Director Kierst stated currently only two staff members in the office. The operational staff have been providing services operating within the constraints of the Governor's executive orders. Projects have been limited to infrastructure projects such as road stabilization projects and Ag protection activities as needed.

Dan Welch (Director Cornell Cooperative Extension) –

- Providing resources and information to farms and other agricultural businesses in Cayuga County on COVID-19 from Cornell, other land grant universities, New York State, USDA and SBA, and Cayuga County Health Department. April “Ag-Alert” Newsletter focused almost exclusively on COVID-19 (600 plus farmers and ag. Businesses)
 - Responding to agricultural specific questions from Cayuga County Health Department.
 - A significant drop in agricultural commodity prices due to the domestic and global economic fallout from COVID-19 is now impacting farms in the county. Most acutely, the sudden shift of demand for certain milk products, farmers in the county are dumping milk before it reaches a processing plant. Eventually the supply, processing, and demand will reach some level of balance, but milk prices may not recover until 2021.
 - Participating in the United Way of Cayuga County community task force on COVID-19.
 - All staff working remotely at least through April 14. Staff are working regionally to deliver online programming and content in Nutrition and 4-H.
- Additional Updates
- Staff has provided the farming community with the needed information from the Health department on COVID 19. The dairy industry has had a large economic loss due to the less demand for milk and butter products. The global downturn has also affected the powder milk prices. A brief discussion was held on the forecast of commodity prices. Dan presented an overview of the milk processing, distribution and supply chain for the dairy industry.

Karen Kuhl (Tourism) –

- This is the hardest report to write, as everything we started working on in the beginning of the month has come to a complete halt. I will provide a high level review of the actions our office has taken in the latter part of the month. A March that came in as a lamb and has ended as a ferocious lion.
 - All events statewide have been canceled and we did extensive follow up with partners to update event information on TourCayuga, regional and state calendar of events.
 - All restaurants have converted to take curbside takeout or delivery. Extensive updating and communications efforts went into effect to encourage visitation of the county’s establishments.
 - Attending Webinars and conference calls with county, regional and state agencies to understand the situation and how to best help partners.
 - Developed partner support site on TourCayuga.com to communicate resources available to our partners.
 - Develop visitor focused site on TourCayuga.com to communicate proper social distancing procedures to visitors.
 - Organize and support staff for “work from home” procedures.
 - Analyzing CCCVBs financial status and reviewing budget for 2020.
 - Reviewing marketing plan for strategic position during and post COVID19.
 - Tourism will be a major part of the recovery process post COVID19. The economic benefits of tourism are significant in Cayuga County and once we’ve overcome the health crisis, tourism will be a key contributor to stabilizing the economy.
 - Developing the materials for positioning Cayuga County as a chosen tourism destination will be a major part of our offices efforts throughout April.
- Additional Updates
- Director Kuhl described how staff has been partnering with the Chamber of Commerce and the Auburn BID with the Support Cayuga Campaign. Tourism as a major economic driver to the area, is developing strategies for bringing the business back to the County as the restraints are lifted. Director Kuhl presented an overview of the possible sequence of events and reopening of the area locally and regionally.

ADJOURNMENT: Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 5:30PM

Christopher Petrus motioned to adjourn the Planning and Economic Development Meeting at 6:45 p.m., 2nd by Christopher Petrus. All members present voted in favor of the motion, passed.

Next Planning and Economic Development is scheduled for May 13, 2020, at the Cayuga County Office Building, Sixth Floor County Chambers, 160 Genesee Street, Auburn, New York 13021

Respectfully submitted, Suzanne Gauthier, Administrative Assistant
Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development