



**MINUTES**  
**PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – 5:30PM**  
**Live streamed – <https://youtu.be/hKvYBO1CAw4>**

**CALL TO ORDER:** By Hon. Keith Batman, Chairman opened the live streamed meeting at 5:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS:** Legislators - Michael Didio, Tricia Kerr (Vice Chair), Heidi Nightengale, Christopher Petrus, Paul Pinckney, Charlie Ripley

**OTHERS:** Legislators Tucker Whitman, Hans Pecher, Elane Daly, Tim Lattimore, Ryan Foley, County Attorney Christopher Palermo, Assistant County Attorney Brittany Massi, Cayuga Economic Development Director, Tracy Verrier, Cayuga Cooperative Extension Associate Director Dan Welch, Cayuga County Soil and Water District Doug Kierst and Erin McDonald, Tourism Executive Director, Karen Kuhl, Sheriff Brian Schenck, Planning Economic Development Stephen Lynch, Director, Suzanne Gauthier, Administrative Assistant

**MINUTES TO APPROVE:** April 8, 2020

Charlie Ripley motioned to approve the minutes of April 8, 2020, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Paul Pinckney. All members present voted in favor, passed. May 13, 2020.

**APPOINTMENTS:**

**Cayuga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board: Cornell Cooperative Representative**

Mr. Dan Welch, Dir. Cornell Co-op Ext., 248 Grant Ave., Auburn, NY 13021, Term - May 26, 2020 start. Coterminous with position. New appt.

**CCDC (Cayuga County Development Corporation)**

Eric J Ridley, 7834 State St. Rd., Auburn, NY 13021, term – 4-1-20 to 3-31-2022 – re-appt.

Bud Shattuck, 66 Grove St., Union Springs, NY 13160, term – 4-1-20 to 3-31-2022 – re-appt.

Michael Didio motioned to move approve the appointments and move to the Legislature for approval, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heidi Nightengale. All members present voted in favor, passed.

**DEPARTMENT UPDATES FOR COMMITTEE:**

**Steve Lynch (Planning & Economic Development) –**

1. COVID-19 staffing: All planning staff have been working remotely since March 19. All staff are advancing open projects and participating in regularly scheduled staff meetings via 8x8.
1. Cayuga County Development Corporation Approves 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency Loan to CEDA for COVID19 Loan Program. The CCDC Board approved a second \$100,000.00 Emergency Loan to CEDA, recapitalizing the CEDA CV19 Small Business Micro Loan Program established with the first CCDC \$100K Loan in March. As of April 30, CEDA has deployed ~\$73K of these loan funds to sixteen (16) small businesses with applications pending estimated to deplete the initial capitalization. Planning Department staffing CCDC responded quickly with a CCDC Board meeting and is expediting loan closing and transfer of the loan funds to CEDA.
2. Comprehensive Plans for Town of Moravia & Village of Moravia: Senior Planner David Nelson is continuing to work with the Town and Village on their individual Comprehensive Plans supported by NYSDEC funding grants secured by the Planning Department. Draft Plans for both municipalities are nearing completion and required greenhouse gas and energy use assessments are being prepared.
3. Town of Victory Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan: The first draft of the full Farmland Protection Plan for the Town has been completed. The next step is a required public meeting to present the draft. Meeting logistics and presentation options are being assessed in light of NY PAUSE requirements.
4. Local Waterfront Revitalization Plans for Sterling/Fair Haven and the Village of Cayuga. Contracts are in place for these NYSDOS-funded local waterfront planning projects. Kick-off meetings will take place virtually in May with the local steering committee teams, project staff and state grant representatives. Senior Planner Kari Terwilliger will lead the Town of Sterling/Village of Fair Haven LWRP and Senior Planner/GIS Analyst Greg Colucci will lead the Village of Cayuga LWRP.

5. Sterling Nature Center Facility Project. This is a joint project undertaken by Planning and Parks Department. The Planning Director and Senior Planner David Nelson are leading the state-funded project. The NYS Lake Ontario Resiliency & Economic
6. Development Initiative Program (“REDI”) is the primary funding source for this ~\$4.3MM Project with the REDI funds providing 95% Grant Funding (for Capital Construction) and a 2019 CFA Grant through NYS Parks provided 75% Grant Funding (A&E Construction Documents). The next major project steps include proceeding with the architecture and engineering construction documents under the CFA grant and conducting the SEQRA reviews with the County as Lead Agency.
7. Erie Canal Re-watering and Trail Planning Project. Senior Planner Greg Colucci is the project lead for this grant-funded project in collaboration with the Town of Brutus. Grant Contracts from NYS Parks are in place and a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process has been prepared and approved by state grant representatives. The RFQ, circulated to identify and select a qualified firm to complete flood studies, trail planning and permitting, will be circulated in May to allow initial engineering work to proceed in June or July, pending a required Legislature resolution authorizing contract execution.
8. Owasco Lake Nine-Element Plan. Associate Planner Michele Wunderlich is leading the Owasco Lake 9E Plan and it has been brought back on-schedule through the concerted efforts of a project team including NYSDEC, Eco-Logic, Cornell University Researchers and County Staff. There have been managed delays due to Cornell researchers recent loss of access to the Cornell super-computers used to test the 9E SWAR GIS Computer Model which will be a key functional component of the 9E Plan (due to Corona19).
9. Owasco Lake Watershed Rules & Regulations Project (WSRR). The WSRR Steering Committee completed their work on proposed WSRR in mid-March and approved the planned Public Presentation of the final draft for City of Auburn and Town of Owasco elected officials and transmittal of the project materials to the municipal officials as soon as a joint meeting date could be arranged given the NY PAUSE regulations related to COVID19. A Project Transmittal Packet has been finalized, including project background, draft regulations and a summary of, and response to, the public comments received during the 2019 Public Comment Period. It will be release with transmittal to the City and Town elected officials.
10. Owasco Flats Wetlands and Riparian Buffer Project, Phase II. Engineering for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase of the Owasco Flats Wetlands Project is being finalized and release of construction bid documents is tentatively scheduled for late May/early June. Grant Funding is in place for the proposed project work which will construct a third wetland basin area this summer/fall.
11. Household Hazardous Waste (“HHW”) Program. County Environmental Engineer Bruce Natale is working with project partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension and the County Soil and Water Conservation District to adjust the schedule and implementation plans for the annual HHW events in light of the CV19 restrictions. Expectations are that demand for disposal of household hazardous waste materials will be higher than normal. Contingency plans for the program will be finalized and shared with the legislature and the public.
12. Cayuga County Local Solid Waste Management Plan (LSWMP) Update Project. The existing County LSWMP is scheduled for an update in 2020-2021. County Environmental Engineer Bruce Natale is preparing an information-gathering survey for municipal officials in the Towns and Villages to initiate the data collection phase needed to inform the Plan update. A similar outreach plan to the primary solid waste and recycling contractors working in the County will also be conducted.

Director Lynch stated staff has been advancing all projects along with a new project to provide amendments to the Town of Ira’s Comprehensive Plan and Zoning code. Staff will be meeting with all of the State agencies involved with the Sterling Nature Center project with the pre-application process for the REDI funds and the SEQRA process.

Construction is scheduled to restart at Emerson Park with work to continue on the paths and reconnection of the bridge.

## **RESOLUTIONS:**

### **PLANNING:**

5-20-PL-1 Authorizing the County Treasurer to establish a Capital-H account for the Sterling Nature Center Capital Improvement Project funded through NYS Resiliency and Economic Development Initiative and 2019 Consolidated Funding Application Grant Programs.

Christopher Petrus motioned to approve and move resolution 5-20-PL-1, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heidi Nightengale. No discussion. All members present voted in favor, passed.

5-20-PL-2 Authorizing the signing of a contract with the United States Geological Survey for operation and maintenance of a satellite linked flow gaging station on the Owasco Inlet.

Michael Didio motioned to move resolutions 5-20-PL-2, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Heidi Nightengale. No discussion. All members present voted in favor, passed.

5-20-PL-3 Authorizing and setting the date of a Legislature Public Hearing on additions of Real Property to the Cayuga County Agricultural District.

Charlie Ripley motioned to move resolutions 5-20-PL-3, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Paul Pinckney. No discussion. All members present voted in favor, passed.

**Vacant (Employment & Training) –**

**Tracy Verrier (CEDA) –**

- Metric Snapshot through April 16, 2020 (does not include COVID response):
  - Existing businesses met with: 40 (including 9 first-time contacts)
  - Entrepreneurs met with: 14
  - See supplemental document for additional metrics and economic indicators.
- COVID Response Metrics through April 24, 2020 (based on information reported by businesses at time of contact, not all businesses provided all information and some information could have changed over time):
  - Number of businesses contacted in some form:132
  - Number reporting being open at time of contact: 67
  - Total weekly lost revenue: \$516,725
  - Average weekly lost revenue: \$6,302
  - Average percent reduction in revenue: 79%
  - Total financial assistance needed (estimated): \$3,138,850
  - Average financial assistance needed (estimated): \$39,236
  - Industry breakdown:

Agriculture	3	Manufacturing	10
Construction	10	Nonprofit	5
Craft Beverage	5	Other	17
Entertainment/Recreation	5	Retail	22
Food service (restaurant, bar, bakery)	24	Salon	10
Health/Wellness/Fitness	12	Transportation	5
Hotel/Accommodations	4		

- Geographic breakdown:

Auburn	84	Moravia	8
Aurelius	7	Owasco	1
Brutus/Weedsport	8	Scipio/Scipio Center	1
Cato	4	Sennett	3
Conquest	1	Springport/Union Springs	2
Fleming	2	Sterling/Fair Haven	4
Ledyard/Aurora	3	Summerhill	1
Montezuma	1	Throop	2

- Emergency Microloans (as of 4/24/20): 11 approved (\$48,050); 4 complete and awaiting approval; 10 received and in underwriting or awaiting additional information; 1 withdrawn due to finding another resource.
- In addition to other regional economic development working groups, Tracy Verrier is participating on the United Way taskforce and in a working group of regional economic development partners. These groups are focused on what resources are needed now, and looking to what will be needed moving forward as the economy ramps back up and businesses reopen. As part of the regional working group, Tracy is participating in a sub-group focused on developing policy recommendations.

Director Verrier presented an update on the Emergency COVID 19 Micro Loans. CEDA has approved 21 small business loans for \$96,550 along with a few additional loans in the underwriting process. Cayuga County Development Corporation has approved an additional \$100,000 for new loans in anticipation that the local businesses will need additional assistance to reopen: build inventories, marketing, staff and cleaning, etc. CEDA staff are reaching out to local business to bring awareness of the resources which are available to them.

Legislator Lattimore inquired about CCDC’s financial position and whether Tessy Plastics is seeking assistance for their project in Auburn. Director Verrier stated Tessy is a City project and is currently working with AIDA on financial incentives; and beyond AIDA’s assistance the company currently does not have a financing need for this project.

Legislator Pinckney inquired about the TRW plant. Director Verrier explained the TRW did shut down; however are reopening and believes TRW will continue to prepare to move their operations to their other site. CEDA has received many inquiries into the availability of this site for reuse.

**Doug Kierst (Soil & Water Conservation District) –**

- Like most of NYS, The Natural Resources Center continues to be closed to public visitors. Fifty percent of the Cayuga County SWCD office Staff continue to work from home until further notice.
- Cayuga County SWCD operation Staff continues to complete projects associated with infrastructure protection. Recently, we have been able to assist with the installation of 2 cross culverts in the Town of Fleming, install road ditch stabilization measures in the Towns of Locke and Venice and finish a shoreline stabilization project on Owasco Lake (prior to lake level increase).
- The Cayuga SWCD Hydroseeder has been used to stabilize exposed soils on several projects throughout Cayuga County.
- Cayuga County Staff has worked with 1 Agricultural producer to begin construction on a BMP implementation project, 1 Agricultural producer to solicit bids to obtain quotes prior to immediate construction and 1 Ag producer to finalize the planning process prior to going out to bid.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff continues to work with engineers to finalize plans to address flooding concerns in the Village of Moravia, erosion/flooding in the Town of Summer Hill and a flooding concern in the Town of Locke.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff continues to provide comments and input on the Owasco Lake 9 Element plan development.
- Cayuga SWCD continue to work with landowners and prepare proposals to submit to the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Grant Program for the implementation of Best Management Practices on their farms.

Director Kierst stated staff is currently doing field work, surveying, road /ditch stabilization and also grant writing.

Legislator Pinckney inquired about a washout behind the strip mall on south side of Route 5/20. Soil and Water has requested quotes to replace with a new pipe. Charlie Ripley stated Soil and Water has done an excellent job on a project in the Town of Summerhill.

**Dan Welch (Director Cornell Cooperative Extension) CCE –**

- o Beginning May 11<sup>th</sup>, CCE Cayuga will be distributing hand sanitizer and face masks from New York State to farmers and farm employees in the county.
- o USDA and NYS have recently announced initiatives to purchase additional food products for food bank and other distribution to those facing food insecurity. NYS has relaxed some rules relating to fat content in dairy products and is working with dairy cooperatives and processors to get more of those products to the Downstate area.
- o The Finger Lakes 4-H Learning Launchpad has reached 3,750 individuals, and is a featured 4-H at Home resource by the National 4-H Council. New youth development content is posted each weekday, and is a collaborative effort of the CCE associations in the region.
- o Vegetables seed packets were distributed through the Auburn Hunger Task Force.
- o The CCE building is closed to the public until further notice. Staff are working remotely and are available by phone and email to respond to inquiries.

Dan Welch reported on the hand sanitizer project. Soil and Water had cleared the ground for the distribution of 332 gallons to farms which represent 575 farm employees. CCE will be looking to provide additional distributions dates in the northern and southern ends of the County. Legislator Lattimore inquired about the proposed cancelling of Cayuga County events and how this cancelling could affect qualifying for State events. Director Welch stated CCE is waiting on definitive decisions and further guidance on the County and State Fairs.

**Karen Kuhl (Tourism) –**

- o March 2020 overall occupancy was 31.1% a almost 10% drop from 2019's 39.2% This is the beginning of the impact on occupancy. New York State on Pause began on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, towards the end of the month. We can expect a stronger impact with the April report, a month entirely under the effects of New York State on Pause.
- o Occupancy Tax – Q2 Occupancy Tax has been approved by the county, we're working on a projection of an overall 40% drop in occupancy through 2020.
- o We received Payroll Protection Program funds. We received \$49,250. These funds are earmarked for payroll, employee benefits, and rent.

- We have launched and have gotten wonderful reception from the #OurCayuga initiative which balances well with the #SupportCayuga effort. We are setting the stage to develop residents' pride in the county's product. Increasing awareness and support of our partners by showing the faces behind the places that make Cayuga County a special place to live.
- National Travel and Tourism Week - National Travel and Tourism Week runs May 3-9. Annually celebrated on the first full week of May, it is important to recognize it this year as the industry has been hit especially hard due to COVID-19. This year's theme is The Spirit of Travel and we'll be doing various spotlighting throughout the week. The City of Auburn will light up City Hall in red on Sunday May 3<sup>rd</sup> to show its spirit of travel and support the tourism industry.
- Reopening Strategy - The Finger Lakes and Cayuga County are poised in what is considered the faster track to recovery for the tourism industry. With so many unknowns about this virus and its potential resurgence once we start mobilizing again, we need to be aware of tourism's role and responsibility. We are familiarizing ourselves with the federal, state and health recommendations on reopening procedures for partners in the tourism industry in order to assist and provide guidance in this process.
- Survey – We've conducted a survey on the impact COVID-19 has had on our partners. We've received over 100 answers to the survey whose focus was to identify if they are they open and to what extent, labor impacts and financial impacts.

Director Kuhl further reported on the anticipated 40-60 % drop in occupancy rates for the year. As the County is positioned as a likeable destination, hopefully will be looking for increased activity in later summer/early fall. Tourism will be promoting the Our Cayuga campaign to help support local business through shifting the focus to local residents to inform them of what programs are open and to promote the local businesses through gift certificates and drive up events. Director Kuhl reported on the recent survey sent out to the local tourism businesses. The responses predict a very bleak outcome for the past few months and a slow regrowth going forward. The businesses responded based on the how the current situation evolves as to when they are able and willing to reopen. Legislator Kerr inquired whether the local tourism businesses are able to access any needed capital to keep them going. Director Kuhl responded the expected loss gap in revenue will be difficult to recapture; yet the businesses are looking for potential new revenue sources. Legislator Nightengale stated the distributed report was well presented and the refocusing and restaging process could be very beneficial for the County's other programs and departments.

**ADJOURNMENT: June 10, 2020 at 5:30 PM**

Paul Pinckney motioned to adjourn the Planning and Economic Development Meeting at 6:02 p.m., 2<sup>nd</sup> by Michael Didio. All members present voted in favor of the motion, passed.

Next Planning and Economic Development is scheduled for June 10, 2020, at the Cayuga County Office Building, Sixth Floor County Chambers, 160 Genesee Street, Auburn, New York 13021, via remote access.

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