



MINUTES
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Wednesday, September 9, 2020 – 5:30PM
Live stream Link – <https://youtu.be/G0J4nfltWAI>

CALL TO ORDER: By Hon. Keith Batman, Chairman opened the live streamed meeting at 5:33 p.m.

MEMBERS: Legislators - Christopher Petrus, Paul Pinckney, Charlie Ripley, Heidi Nightengale, Trish Kerr (Vice Chair),

EXCUSED: Legislator Michael Didio

OTHERS: Legislators: Chair Aileen McNabb-Coleman, Hans Pecher, Elane Daly, Timothy Lattimore, Ryan Foley, County Attorney Christopher Palermo, Assistant County Attorney Brittany Massi, Cayuga Economic Development Agency Director, Tracy Verrier, Economic Development Technical Specialist, Taylor Symes, Cayuga Cooperative Extension Associate Director Dan Welch, Cayuga County Soil and Water District Doug Kierst, Employment and Training, Kelly King, Harry Sherman, Deputy EMO Director, Sheriff Brian Schenck, Stephen Lynch, Director, Planning and Economic Development, Suzanne Gauthier, Administrative Assistant

APPOINTMENTS: none

MINUTES TO APPROVE: August 12, 2020

Paul Pinckney motioned to approve the minutes of August 12, 2020, 2nd by Charlie Ripley. All members present voted in favor, passed. September 9, 2020.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES FOR COMMITTEE:

Steve Lynch (Planning & Economic Development) – (see bold text for recent updates)

- 1) COVID-19 staffing: the majority of the staff will continue to work remotely. As needed, staff will begin to come into the office as the County Safety Plan has been introduced; however are limiting the number to 50% staff on any given day. This capacity for planning staff to work remotely should help maintain a reduced number of county staff within the County Office Building at required levels until full re-opening is available.
- 2) Staff have been successfully advancing open projects and participating in regularly scheduled, weekly staff meetings via 8x8. The Director is communicating and coordinating with staff on a daily basis.
- 3) In addition to daily assistance to Town and Village elected officials, appointed board members and the public, the following land use, park and resource protection planning efforts currently underway. Each of the projects below are being advanced by staff:
 - a) Comprehensive Plan for Town of Moravia (**September Steering Committee Meetings**)
 - b) Comprehensive Plan for Village of Moravia (**October Workshop: Goals & Objectives**)
 - c) Town of Victory Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan (**Analysis of Building Permit Data**)
 - d) Joint Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for Town of Sterling & Village of Fair Haven
 - i) **Please Check out the LWRP Project Website prepared by staff: <https://sterlingfairhaven.wixsite.com/lwrp> (**Community Surveys out in September and Regular LWRP Steering Committee Meetings 4th Wednesday of every month**)**
 - e) Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan for the Village of Cayuga
 - i) **Please Check out the LWRP Project Website prepared by staff: <https://villageofcayuga.wixsite.com/lwrp> (**Community Surveys out in October**)**
 - f) Sterling Nature Center Facility & Trail Restoration Project
 - i) **Contracts for the Engineering and Design work for these projects have been executed and site archeology and well water/septic assessments are underway. Design documents are at 60% completion. Potential to release for Public Bidding end of October or Early November.**
 - ii) We are working with the NYSDOS and DASNY to finalize and execute Grant Disbursement Agreements
 - iii) The SEQRA for the project is moving forward in coordination with a number of permitting agencies and the NYSDOS.
 - g) Erie Canal Re-watering and Trail Planning Project (with Town of Brutus)
 - i) **Scope of work and associated fee for the Phase I Flood Impact Assessment and Analysis Contract has been finalized with Bergmann Associates (Rochester NY) and contract will be executed, along with Notice to Proceed, within 2 weeks.**

- h) Emerson Park Capital Improvements and Deauville Island Engineering Project.
 - i) Project meetings with the engineering and design teams have commenced and the project is moving forward. **Concept Plans are being finalized which will form the basis of high-level schematic design and project cost estimating.**
- i) Town of Ira Zoning Ordinance Revisions Project (**Draft Ordinance has been presented to Town Steering Committee (week of August 17)**)
- j) Cayuga Lake Blueway Project (with Tompkins & Seneca Counties – 95% complete)
- k) Owasco Lake Watershed 9E Plan & Watershed Modeling Project.
 - i) The 9-E Watershed Models are being finalized following delays associated with the pandemic and access to the supercomputers at Cornell University. The NYSDOS has recommended a 1-year contract extension which will be submitted with the monthly project report in June. Please note that although the extension is for 1-year, staff is still planning on finalizing the project in about 1/3 that time.
- l) Owasco Flats Wetlands and Riparian Buffer Project, Phase II (**Contracts executed and contractor is on-site advancing work on basin 3**)
- m) Owasco Lake Watershed Rules & Regulations Project (**staff has requested a September joint Public Presentation/Meeting with City of Auburn and Town of Owasco; waiting to confirm date**)
- n) **Household Hazardous Waste (“HHW”) Program conducted the annual FREON Recycling Event on Saturday August 29th, an event made possible by the combined efforts of Planning, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Soil & Water Conservation District staffs. Due to the Pandemic, all fall events are being scaled down with required preregistration and a range of site precautions to limit person-to-person contact. We are also moving the event schedule earlier to accommodate the planned retirement of the County Environmental Engineer (who coordinates and runs grant administration) on October 31, 2020. Upcoming, pre-registration events include TV/Electronics Event on September 26 and a Chemical Collection Event on October 17. Notices will be forthcoming.**
- o) Cayuga County Local Solid Waste Management Plan Update. **Survey to municipalities and strategic partners to go out in September.**
- p) CCPUSA Strategic Organization and Operations Plan
 - i) The CCPUSA Board has been meeting regularly with the Hometown Connections project team (<https://www.hometownconnections.com/>) - remotely, to build board consensus on CCPUSA’s vision and mission and align these with a strategic direction that will enable the agency to build capacity, visibility and credibility as it matures into an operational entity.
 - ii) **Hometown connections are now assessing operational models and gathering the quantitative data needed to build a sound business case for operating a Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) program in Cayuga County.**
 - iii) **Staff is new targeting October (not September) for completion of the Strategic Planning Process and presentation to the Legislature and stakeholders.**
- q) Cayuga County Clean Energy Community Grant Lighting Upgrades at County Jail. Despite two separate public bidding efforts, the County has not received a single bid for this approximate \$90K lighting upgrade project. Planning staff has requested the Building and Grounds Department work with Purchasing to split the bid into two separate bids – one for purchasing the materials and equipment and a second, stand-alone bid to install the materials to spec.
- r) Cayuga County Development Corporation (CCDC). The CCDC is working on closing a small loan to a local dairy farm for milk bottling equipment that will allow the farm to expand its specialty milk market in NY State. The CCDC is in the process of reviewing and approving its FY21 budget which must be circulated to the State by the end of October. CCDC-generated loan deferments (grace periods) for the current portfolio of six (6) borrowers, established to provide cash flow relief during the pandemic, will conclude at the end of September.
- s) Department Staff will present two (2) Planning Board Trainings for municipal appointed zoning and planning board members on September 22nd and 23rd. The evening presentations are being presented back-to-back to accommodate remote training using the County’s ZOOM platform; nearly 60 registrants have already signed up for the training.

Additional Updates:

- Steve highlighted the Sterling Nature Center SEQRA review process is moving forward. An October resolution will be presented to issue a negative declaration and to release the bids to award the bid for the final plans.
- CCPUSA - Hometown Connection and Financial Solutions working to prepare a Strategic Plan and operational assessment and recommendations. Hometown Connection has presented a case for Community Choice Aggregation (CCA). Legislator Lattimore inquired about the Hometown contract and the Cleaner Green \$250,000 grant. Steve explained the County received the grant to advance energy initiatives in the County. Capital elements that are included in grant: lighting for the Public Safety building, electric vehicles and charging stations. A portion of the grant was earmarked for the CCPUA Strategic and Operational Plan. Upon confirming the direction the CCPUSA board should follow, an analysis will be presented on the financial outline for the board. Lynch gave a brief description of the proposed Garnett Solar project in Conquest.

- Staffing transitions: Bruce Natale, Environmental Engineering will be retiring at the end of October. Mr. Natale's will take with him substantial institutional knowledge. Staff will be reviewing the Department's goal for staffing updates during the budget process.
- Legislator Foley inquired about the status of the Emerson Deauville project. Steve stated the concert venue engineering has been going forward and will be looking to present a public meeting with full legislature perhaps in late fall.
- Legislator Daly inquired about the solar projects within the County. Director Lynch stated the proposed solar project in Conquest is to be approximate 200 MWh; whereas the Abundant Solar Project on County House Road in Sennett has an approximate capacity of 5.5 MWh for electricity to be available to residents within the tariff area. The County has an option to purchase electricity from Abundant Solar; yet not obligated to.
- Legislator Kerr asked about the Cayuga County Development Corporation (CCDC)'s budget and whether funds are available for marketing. Director Lynch explained CCDC has a pool of funds dedicated for small business loan projects. The intake for the business loans is handled through CEDA. The other role of CCDC is the focus on the development of civic facilities projects such as the nursing home, hospital, and possible college dormitories, etc. Lynch described the defined roles of the Cayuga County Industrial Development Agency (CCIDA) and CCDC.

Kelly King (Employment & Training) –

Local Workforce and Center Information: Average unemployment rates: per NYS DOL Labor Market Data as follows: (Last updated as of June 2020)

Cayuga County June 2019 rate: 3.9%

Cayuga County June 2020 rate: 10.6

Program Updates:

- **TANF SYEP** - Summer Youth Employment Program is wrapping up. Total 30 participants. Most took part in the incentive program and all took part in the in person work experience. An additional incentive was added to the program, which was to complete an end of program survey. Total incentive potential is up to \$600.00 per participant.
- **WIOA Youth** – 2 participants currently enrolled in year round program.
- **AD/DW Program (CRT/OJT)** - 5 participants enrolled in training this month; 1 enrolled in OJT; 1 additional potential OJT in progress.
- **NCP Program** - 5 new referrals from Court for NCP program for the month. (Court is slowly starting the referral process again)
- **Jobs Program** - 59 new referrals this month for assessments and employment plans. Total enrolled in Jobs Program: 167 participants.

WIOA Update: Currently working on WIOA budget for WDB approval.

Employer Outreach: Page Trucking, Leonardi, BCS, and Tessy Plastics.

Marketing: Workforce Newsletter to be launched, creating new Facebook account, and updating our page on the County Website. Developing plan for WIOA youth outreach.

Job listings: Currently there are 269 job postings for Cayuga County listed in the New York Job Bank.

Customers Served: Approximately 110 customers served this month.

Staff Development: Members of the Employment and Training team are continuing participation in an Offender Series. All staff participated in a Zoom training on how to conduct a Zoom meeting. Both trainings provided by NYATEP. Cross training for all staff in house.

COVID Response: Employment and Training continues to be the only department working at the Cayuga Works Career Center at this time. CAP is no longer housed within our center. BOCES is planning to return at the start of the school year. ACCESS-VR will continue to serve customers remote through the end of the year. NYS DOL continues to be pulled from re-employment services and are processing UI claims remotely until further notice. Employment and Training staff will continue to serve customers remotely and by face to face appointments as needed. The office remains closed to walk in traffic and the public at this time until partners return and or can safely open to full in person services.

Employee Recognition: 2 Employment and Training staff are honorees this year reaching a milestone in service. Linda Carr, Principal Account Clerk Typist celebrates a 40 year milestone. Mary Church, Workforce Development Program Specialist celebrates a 20 year milestone. I thank them for their continued years of service to Cayuga County and the Employment and Training department.

Additional Updates:

- Director King highlighted the Summer Youth program with the students working through the end of September. Due to COVID, adjustments to the program were initiated with educational and other reward options were added as incentives for the students.
- The department is not currently open to the public; however staff is continuing to add job seekers to classroom training as well as offering on the job training opportunities for the local employers. Page Transportation has started an on the job training in Cato.

- Local Business Services Team. Director King, along with assistance from the State Department of Labor is researching an opportunity to restart a local business services team where job partners will have a chance to work together and collaborated on customizing training events, job fairs, etc. for the development of County workforce.
- Legislator Nightengale inquired about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding and whether COVID has affected this budget. Director King stated the WIA budget begins on July 1st. Currently the number of enrolled students in classroom training exceeds last year's numbers, therefore not expecting any change in the projected budget at this time.
- Legislator Lattimore inquired whether retraining opportunities are available to BCS employees, formally TRW. The NYS rapid response coordinator has reached out the BCS to facilitate any employer assistance that may be needed. BCS is currently hiring 56 operations positions with a tentative closing in late December. Upon closing, BCS will coordinate a job fair for their employees. EMT will be a partner in the fair to discuss opportunities for their employees. EMT has also reached out to Tessa Plastics to offer on the job training for their employees.

Doug Kierst (Soil & Water Conservation District) –

- The Natural Resources Center continues to be closed to public visitors. The members of the Cayuga County SWCD Office and Technical Staff now report to the office.

AGRICULTURAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

- Cayuga SWCD Staff continues to complete monthly construction site inspections on SPDES permitted construction site at 1 agricultural operation.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff assisted with the implementation of 220 acres of cover crops and 250 acres of reduced tillage management in the Cayuga Lake watershed.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff worked with 2 agricultural operations to complete new Prescribed Grazing plans for their farms.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff are updating the AEM Program's Strategic Plan to improve the quantity and quality of technical assistance provided to farmers across the County.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff continues to finalize the closeout process on several grant projects that have been completed.

NON-AGRICULTURAL & MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

- Cayuga SWCD Staff has been participating in the update process for the County's Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff completed a SWPPP inspection on the Owasco Flats Project to ensure site compliance with the NYS SPDES Program regulations.
- Cayuga SWCD Technical and Operations Staff is focusing on the third phase of the flood mitigation project in the Village of Moravia. This portion of the project involves the stabilization of an eroding stream channel that flows towards the recently installed cleanout basin.
- The Cayuga SWCD Hydroseeder has been used to stabilize exposed soils on several projects throughout Cayuga County.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff completed a harvesting of aquatic vegetation on Little Sodus Bay, Cayuga Lake and Lake Como. The boats are currently being serviced and will return to the water and finish the harvesting season on Otter Lake.
- Cayuga SWCD Staff continues to work with permitting agencies and engineers for drainage and erosion control projects on Fillmore Rd. (Town of Summerhill), Richardson Hill Rd. (Town of Sempronius), Scott Gulf Rd. (Town of Sempronius) and Hemlock Creek (Town of Locke).

OTHER SWCD NEWS, WORKSHOPS & TRAININGS:

- The Cayuga SWCD spent an afternoon with Aurora Ridge Dairy to develop a short video highlighting the crop harvesting efforts that are conducted on a regular basis by local farms. Whether it is harvesting hay, corn, beans or other crops, a significant amount of conservation planning goes into ensuring that quality crops are grown in a manner that also protects our natural resources.
It is entitled *Aurora Ridge Dairy–Forage Harvest*: <https://youtu.be/hYWqIai63JM>
- The Cayuga SWCD Staff collaborated with the County Solid Waste Management Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension and NUCOR Steel to carry out the County's 2020 Freon Collection Event that was held at the SWCD offices on August 29th.

Additional Updates:

- Weed harvesting is complete for the year, will be completing maintenance items to prepare the equipment for next year. Less weeds had been discovered this year from years past. Cover crop season has started, staff is working with the farms on the proper selection for the fields.
- Staff has been working with the Sempronius highway department on a culvert project in the town.
- Will be starting the Fillmore road next week, weather permitting.

- Legislator Kerr inquired about the AEM Program's Strategic Plan. Doug further explained the Ag and Environmental Management program is put out by the State Conservation District. The AEM is on a five year renewal cycle. Staff will be forwarding the updated plan to the State for review by the end of the year.

Dan Welch (Director Cornell Cooperative Extension) –

- On August 29th, 175 county residents recycled air conditioners, dehumidifiers, and small refrigerators, at the Freon collection event. This event could not have happened without collaboration between CCE Cayuga, the County Planning Department, and the Soil and Water Conservation District. An electronics recycling event is scheduled for September 26th.
- We are re-starting in-person 4-H programs where appropriate social distancing measures can be followed. 10 teens successfully completed safe tractor and machinery operation program, and now have the knowledge and skills to safely operate farm equipment on their family farm or a farm they are employed on.
- CCE Cayuga is participating as part of the Steering Committee for the update to the Cayuga County Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- CCE Cayuga's agriculture educator, Ron Kuck, is part of a statewide group of extension educators and specialists producing podcasts and presentations to help farmers have a successful corn silage harvest.
- CCE Cayuga staff are continuing to alternate days in the office and working from home, with adequate staff coverage for each weekday. County residents can meet with staff by making an appointment.

Additional Updates:

- Collection events: staff has been accepting registrations for the events. Registrations can also be done through the website.
- Staff has been developing the plans to restart the in-person 4-H programs for the students.
- Reminder for drivers to be on the lookout for tractors on the County roads.
- As a non-profit, State funding may be reduced by 20% in the upcoming year. CCE is waiting for more accurate details to come from the State. Director Welch stated CCE's State revenue comes from different funding sources than other County agencies.
- Legislator Lattimore inquired about the College taking over ownership of the CCE building. Director Welch updated the committee on the transfer. The parties are working on the legal aspects of the proposed transfer. The renovation portion of the project is currently on hold, as SUNY has put a hold on capital projects.

Karen Kuhl (Tourism) –

- Occupancy and RevPar numbers continue on a steady increase:
 - July: 2019 - 48% occupancy. 2020 - 66.6% occupancy
 - Year to Date: 2019 – 33.5% occupancy. 2020 - 47.9% occupancy
- E-correspondence in July 2019
 - August E-Blast sent on 8/17/20 | Entertainment & Museums | Open Rate 25% with 5% CTR
 - State of Tourism to partners sent on 7/29/20 | Open Rate 37% with 13% CTR
 - Google My Business tips info graphic | Open Rate 27% with 7% CTR
- Public Relations
 - Monthly WAUB Tourism Thursday
 - Quarterly The Citizen column
 - Hosted Danielle Benjamin from Wanderlust on a Budget
 - Hosted Josiah Brown from NY Welcomes You
- In order to get tourists interest in our region and therefore increase tourism revenue we need to demonstrate that our partners are taking #TravelConfidently seriously. The posts from our office relaying this message have had a strong reception. The messaging will continue into September and October.
- Reimagining Tourism in Cayuga County – We have developed videos to highlight tourism partners around the state that are offering exemplary experiences while maintaining all health regulations. The first four videos are ready and in our YouTube channel. We will begin PR outreach to raise awareness of these efforts.
- As the traveler is doing last minute regional (staycation) style travel, we'll be increasing awareness of Cayuga County product to help drive the last minute planning to our partners. The messaging is written to the Millennial market and will be a regional/New York State outreach through the Fall marketing campaign- Unplan Your Getaway.
- Occupancy Tax - Received Q3 check of \$52,091.28 was received and deposited

Additional updates:

Chairman Batman reported that the Tourism update had noted that the Hotel Occupancy rates have continued to increase.

Tracy Verrier (CEDA) –

- Metric Snapshot through August 20, 2020 (does not include COVID response):
 - Existing businesses met with: 79 (including 26 first-time contacts)
 - Entrepreneurs met with: 35
 - See supplemental document for additional metrics and economic indicators.
- AIDA activities:
 - Approved a financial assistance package for Nucor Steel to upgrade certain systems within the plant and retain existing jobs.
 - Approved a financial assistance package including sales & use tax and mortgage recording tax abatements only for Avstar Fuel Systems to construct an 11,500 sq. ft. expansion to their facility and acquire additional machinery and equipment. Avstar intends to create 40 jobs over the next 3 years.
 - Initial review of marketing proposals for place-based branding, as well as interviews with three finalist firms. AIDA intends to select a firm at the September board meeting.
- CCIDA received a response from DEC to its preliminary engineering report for the sewer project in Aurelius. DEC requested some additional information and clarifications before providing approval. Project partners are working with DEC on these requests.
- CEDA collaborated with the Chamber to host a videoconference with Congressman John Katko. Congressman Katko provided updates about various topics, including the next stimulus legislation, PPP, unemployment, and schools.
- Taylor Symes started as CEDA's new Technical Specialist. She will be staffing the IDAs and providing technical support to the CEDA team and businesses.

Additional Updates:

- Director Verrier introduced Taylor Symes. Ms. Symes stated she is a native of Auburn and described her background and her responsibilities in her Technical Specialist position with CEDA
- Aurelius Sewer Line – Additional engineering will be submitted to the DEC as requested.
- CEDA scheduling two webinars for the local businesses. NYS Office of General Services will be presenting on the State's processes.
- The CEDA website has been modified to allow the site to become more user friendly.
- Legislator Lattimore inquired whether CEDA has been pursuing the availability of any additional site for industrial development. Director Verrier stated the CCIDA board has continuing to look for appropriate and affordable opportunities for site developments.
- Lattimore also inquired on the tax impact of the proposed Solar projects in the County. Verrier explained the process and the benefits the projects may request. The land assessments are determined by the local assessor which would be the base value of the land, the improvements on the land would be added to the revised value of the property for tax purposes. A brief discussion on how the land lease agreements are structured for the land owners.
- Legislator Lattimore also inquired about whether any opportunities are being explored for spinoff business due the new Amazon facility in Onondaga County. Director Verrier noted CEDA and the CCIDA continually look for sites for business expansion and/or relocations.
- Legislator Kerr asked whether the RFP for the marketing strategy plan to attract residents, industries and talent attraction has been reviewed by the CCIDA. Tracy stated AIDA is moving forward with the proposals and the plan has been presented to CCIDA for possible expansion of the program. The Tourism office has also been reviewing the plans with the City of Auburn and noted the firms' commitments to include a County effort in the plans. The committee continued with a discussion on the promoting of the positive assets within the County.

RESOLUTIONS:

NO RESOLUTIONS

ADJOURNMENT: Wednesday, October 14, 2020 at 5:30PM

Heidi Nightengale motioned to adjourn the Planning and Economic Development Meeting at 6:28 p.m., 2nd by Trish Kerr. All members present voted in favor of the motion, passed.

Next Planning and Economic Development is scheduled for October 14, 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**