

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES MARCH 24, 2010

AG, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS
PRESENT: Campbell, Brown, Lindsay, Haff, Gordon, Tatko

AG, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS
ABSENT: Idleman

SUPERVISORS: Rymph, LaPointe, Henke

Debra Prehoda, Clerk

Tori Riley, Exec. Director LDC

Soil and Water Representative

Kevin Hayes, County Administrator

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Phyllis Cooper, Treasurer

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Approval of Minutes – February 23, 2010
- 3) Department Reports/Requests:
 - A. Agriculture
 - a. PDR Update – Agriculture Stewardship Association
 - B. Tourism
 - a. Washington County Tourism Website Update
 - b. 2010 I Love NY Funding Update
- 4) Discuss Planning Director Position
- 5) Other Business
- 6) Adjournment

Chairman Campbell called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2010 meeting was moved by Mr. Gordon, seconded by Mr. Haff and adopted. Mrs. Tatko abstained.

AGRICULTURE:

- PDR Update – Agriculture Stewardship Association – Renee Bouplon, Associate Director for the Agriculture Stewardship Association, addressed the committee. She provided an update on the state budget. They were very successful in letters being written and farmers going to Albany in support of the purchase of development program. The Governor has proposed to basically cut the farmland protection plan in half. On March 15th, the American Farmland Trust, organized legislative visits, no farms no food. They are working with the county and towns on the state contracts that were set to expire at the end of the month and she has asked for extensions. She is unsure if there will be any requests for proposals this year. Projects typically take two to three years to close and it depends on how much funding is available. There is currently a \$70M to \$80M backlog of projects to receive funds. That is why they are so concerned when the Governor only has \$10M proposed although the funds for these projects were previously budgeted and awarded. She stated they have stressed with the legislators that they need a plan to repay these funds. These funds were taken from a dedicated fund and need to be repaid. A motion to prepare a resolution for repayment of funds, a repayment plan in place for Environmental Protection Fund, was moved by Mr. Brown, seconded by Mr. Lindsay and adopted. (Renee will provide Roger Wickes with information for preparation of this resolution.)

- PDR Projects – She stated there is a chance that the Stewart project in Easton and the Clark project in Jackson might be funded by year-end.

TOURISM: Christine Hoffer, Tourism Director, addressed the following items:

- Washington County Tourism Website Update – She summarized the website design to date as she presented at the March 19th Board meeting. The home page is the only page live at this time until the other pages are populated with information. Mr. Brown stated the website should state under construction. Several Supervisors mentioned comments made about this site in the Post Star blog. She asked Supervisors for their help with getting businesses listed on the site. She is working with vendors/businesses to get information on the site and will hold a training session. She will encourage people to put their businesses on/join google business. Google business places your business location on a map. Mr. Haff suggested a frequently asked questions page to help businesses link with this site. The site will include a buy local page.
- 2010 I Love NY Funding Update – Cancellation of the Matching Funds Program – She has advised the Tourism Advisory Council of this change. They are working on creating some guidelines for cooperating together to create projects and put together an application process. She displayed several articles/advertisements in several magazines that she collaborated with the vendors to get a better advertising rate. The calendar of events will help people see events throughout the county. The Ecolocal flyer is typically in the Saratoga area. The county gets the bill for the entire advertisement and then we bill out each of the advertisers. With the removal of the I Love NY Funding, they are not restricted to only tourism based businesses. One goal is to get people to travel throughout the county. The county does not have any brochures at this time but she did distribute a copy of a newsletter that she had available at the Adirondack Regional Chamber small business meeting. Chairman Campbell asked how can we get these magazines to businesses and town and county buildings throughout the county for distribution. She will contact the magazines about distribution to the towns.
- Budget – Kevin went over the budget approved at last Friday's Board meeting, handout attached. He stated it has been asked why Christine has not been paid. Christine's contract included the budget and that is why she has not been paid but now the budget has been approved at the March Board meeting. Mr. Brown questioned why she had not been paid. Kevin stated he thought this matter was going to be discussed last month but was not addressed by the committee. A contract with Christine was needed to include all expenses so she would know what her parameters are. Christine stated she was not worried about getting paid. Mr. Lindsay asked how much was put in the 2010 budget for tourism. Kevin stated \$91,230. The Treasurer stated there is a lot of work trying to clean up 2009 expenses and it is still not complete. In the budget the seminars & programs are trade shows and/or conferences Christine might attend. The advertising appropriations include matching funding for example Tourism \$20,000 county funds and \$20,000 matching funds for a total of \$40,000. The Treasurer recommended that the people that want to advertise should sign a contract agreeing to pay. The

Treasurer is invoicing for this program. Christine stated we need to make the program easy for businesses to participate in. If a contract is required for the advertising then that should be included in the application process. Phyllis stated she will set this up to allow use of credit cards. Kevin explained that they have found out that people who advertised on the map have not paid, \$2,053.00 uncollected related to the prior tourism program, and many stated that they never agreed to any advertising expense. The Treasurer stated there were no contracts agreeing to this expense.

- Quebec Cycling Group – August 8th is the beginning of an eight-day journey back to Quebec. This group is being bussed into Queensbury. They will be Whitehall for lunch one day. She is working on things to do to engage the cyclist to come back to the area.
- Assemblyman Jordan – She has been working with Assemblyman Jordan's office to put together a tourism symposium to discuss the impact of the loss of I Love NY funding.
- DOT Signage – She is also working with Assemblyman Jordan's office and they have begun conversations with the Department of Transportation on DOT signage. The Supervisors need to think where they would like the signage and what would you like it to say. She also asked is there the ability to do local signage within Washington County? Can she work with the Highway Department? She is working with Real Property on maps that will be on the website. She hopes that the tourism site will be linked to all the towns and villages.
- Kevin asked if we still use the I Love NY logo in our ad campaigns? Christine stated it will come off our website and we will not be using the logo but we will link to the site because they are still be in operation with information, it was just the matching funds program that ended.
- She stated collaboration needs to start here so the businesses will follow. She recommends driving the Supervisors around the County in a bus to view each town that would help everyone understand what we have to offer.

DISCUSS PLANNING DIRECTOR POSITION – Kevin and Brian talked with Tori Riley, LDC Director, yesterday regarding this position of Planning Director. The concept is having Tori in charge of the department and then getting a Planner to do the work. Kevin stated with Erika Sellar-Ryan, Assistant County Attorney, is leaving county employment and someone needs to fill in for the Planning Board. Kevin feels we need to get someone to start doing the day-to-day work. Also, Tori's clerical staff person is leaving in June. Kevin feels representatives of this committee need to meet with the LDC and then come back to the committee with a recommendation. Mr. Haff stated that the department heads were to meet to discuss what duties they have assumed from the Planning Department. Kevin stated that meeting has not been held. Mr. Lindsay asked what is not getting done. Mr. Campbell stated for example, getting Christine paid because tourism was under Planning. Roger Wickes, County Attorney, stated for example no one is setting up the local training for Planning Board members. Mr. Henke stated we do not have a good idea of what the Planner did and what we want that person to do and therefore cannot support hiring someone. Mr. Haff mentioned a legal firm that is hold a training session for Planning Board members stating that void has been filled. Mr. Lindsay stated the planning needs to be done on the local level. The law does not require a county planner and the county planning board. Mr. Brown asked if there is

another way to do this as well as it is being done for less cost and personnel? Mr. Lindsay stated that the county will probably have to lay people off before the end of this year and this is an open position and why fill it. Kevin stated half of a planner's time is to assist the towns. He stated it is not the county that is going to see the effect of not having a planner it will be the towns. The other half of the duties of the planner is that they take on all the other duties that come along that do not fit in any cubbyhole. Kevin referenced all the work with the Historic Preservation group and CBN connect. Mr. Lindsay stated the size of county government should decrease. It was suggested to poll each town planning board to see the need for a county planner/planning department what has been the historical use of the County planner. Kevin suggested scheduling a meeting of this committee to discuss the Planning department and options moving forward. He will contact departments that are dealing with the duties of the Planning department. Mr. Brown suggested the subject of the meeting should be that we have a problem, we do not have enough money to go around and we are looking for unique solutions to reduce the budget, we have no problem with the Planning Department as it stood in the past but we have a vacancy and we want to get creative ideas here as to how we do not have to add another person to the county payroll.

OTHER BUSINESS: None.

The committee adjourned at 3:33 P.M.

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