

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2019
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruskiewicz, Chairman
Barry J. Cheney, Joseph J. Minuta, James D. O'Donnell,
Rob Sassi, Joel Sierra, Kathy A. Stegenga, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Leigh J. Benton, Legislator
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator
James M. Kulisek
John S. Vero, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
Harold Porr III, Acting County Executive
Langdon Chapman, County Attorney
Steven M. Gross, Commissioner, Human Resources
Molly O'Donnell, Personnel Management Technician, Human Resources
John McCarey, Director, Real Property Tax Service
Nicole Andersen, Acting Director, Community Development
Deborah Slesinski, Deputy Budget Director
Deanna Crawford, Budget Analyst
Gretchen Riordan, Budget Analyst
Bill Fiovoranti, Director, Economic Development
Maureen Halahan, President, CEO, Orange County Partnership
Amanda Dana, Director, Tourism
Stephanie Kistner, Tourism Coordinator
Sarah McKay, Executive Director, Orange County Arts Council
Dawn Ansbro, Executive Director, SUNY Orange Foundation
Russell O. Vernon, Go Zone Partners
William Conyey, Go Zone Partners
Debra Kurtzman, Go Zone Partners

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee meeting at 4:10 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Mr. Minuta who was absent.

Mr. Sassi moved to approve the request confirmation of appointment of Nicole Andersen as Director of the Orange County Department of Community Development, seconded by M. Stegenga.

Mr. Porr pointed out that there was an error on the resume regarding consulting work. It states she does that work to present date but she does not.

Ms. Anderson noted that she has not done that work since 2016.

Mr. Porr stated that when Mr. Mayfield announced he was leaving last summer, he gave two weeks notice and there was a lot of work left behind. There was little staff remaining with the exception of John Ebert, who just retired two weeks ago. Nicole has been thrown into it and has been doing a wonderful job.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Ms. Stegenga moved the request directing the Clerk of the Legislature to publish a Notice of Review of Orange County Agricultural Districts Nos. 1 and 2, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Ms. Reed stated that this was their 16th year of including land into the agricultural district. This is the beginning of the process where they send out a notice to the public informing them they can submit applications to submit their lands into the districts. Applications are sent to the Commissioner of Planning and he reviews them to make sure it is all in order. They present them to the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board. The board members go out to see the property and interview the individuals and make recommendations to the Legislature. The Legislature holds a public hearing and then vote on it. She added that no action by the legislative body is needed at this time.

Mr. Sassi asked if there was a limit of acreage that can be included.

Mr. McCarey responded it is 7 acres.

Mr. Vernon introduced Mr. Conyeya and Ms. Kurtzman and shared that between the three of them they have extensive real estate development, business technology, software development and banking experience. They have worked on many projects in the City of Newburgh to help revitalize the city and return properties to the tax rolls and try to increase the revenue base coming into the city. They focused on the Armory for the last 8 years which has great results. They prepared a proposal to look at all three of the county owned buildings on Grand Street. They understand that SUNY Orange is rapidly moving forward with the American Legion and Masonic Temple buildings. Their focus is the YMCA building. He provided a handout with an overview (on file with original minutes).

Ms. Kurtzman stated that they think they can do a combination of renovation and new construction that will respect the existing enclosure since it is a beautiful building in historic Newburgh. They intend to have three zones, commercial, residential and a tech center.

Mr. Conyeya explained that they would build out 3,500-4,500 square feet of commercial space with roof terraces to enable views for the river. The tech center is a large part of the project. This would have software based with training. They would offer internships with SUNY Orange and other colleges may be interested. There is also a job placement component, which would be available to faculty and staff, students and parents. They are happy to work with the college to help build programs or training programs. This project will enhance Newburgh overall by providing more living and work space.

Mr. Vernon stressed the impact this would have on the City of Newburgh. Today the City of Newburgh with the assessed value is non taxable and it hurts the city. One of the key components is that this building would go back on the tax rolls and the building will lead to job creation.

Ms. Tautel ask how the Tech Center would work with the students who pay tuition and would it build into the college curriculum.

Mr. Sonyea responded that they would need to work with the college to see what made the most sense.

Chairman Brescia inquired about parking which is always an issue.

Mr. Vernon noted that parking is critical and mentioned that there is additional land nearby.

Chairman Brescia stated that he heard this presentation before and it's a great presentation. If the Legislature decides to proceed then they will need to sit down with the SUNY Foundation and Dr. Young to see if something could be worked out.

Ms. Stegenga asked if this would be primarily for the students or will it be open to anyone.

Mr. Conyeya responded that they envision it to be open to everyone but priority to students and faculty. He added that he did not think the college has a need for student housing although they were open to it.

Ms. Stegenga stated that with the development of these buildings, maybe you would want to fit into the area since it is a college area but the plan seemed rather elaborate and wanted to know if it would be overpriced. She asked if it was going to be tailored to the students.

Mr. Conyeya commented that they are not opposed to making it preferential for students and faculty but he did not know what the market was going to be

Mr. Sierra asked how big the addition was going to be.

Ms. Kurtzman responded that the second floor addition on top of the tech center is 2,200 square foot. There was going to be an addition for a third floor which will be a total of 6,000 square feet.

Mr. Sierra further asked if the new construction will match the old structure.

Mr. Conyeya replied that the facade will not change because the work will be done internally and behind it.

Mr. Sierra asked what type of housing will it be, affordable housing or workforce housing.

Mr. Conyeya replied that right now it is market rate.

Mr. Sierra further asked if there were presently any contracts with the college and he was advised by Mr. Conyeya they do not have any contracts at this time.

Mr. Cheney asked if they saw a need for any adjustments that would require them to go to the ZBA and Mr. Conyeya responded that they should not need any zoning changes.

Mr. Sassi asked how big and how much for the rental units.

Ms. Kurtzman responded that they range from studios which are about 600 square feet to two bedrooms which are about 1,250 square feet.

Mr. Sassi asked if there were any plans for a rooftop terrace like a restaurant.

Ms. Kurtzman stated that they would like to take advantage of the views but nothing is planned yet.

Mr. Sierra commented that there is a need for workforce housing throughout the county. He thought it was a great project and there are similar projects like this in Middletown. He strongly encouraged the committee and the Legislature to consider having a percentage of the residential component to be workforce housing and he would fully support that. He added that should be considered not for just this project but other projects going forward.

Mr. Fioravanti was next with an update on Economic Development. He announced that Amazon pulled out of New York City. They tracked down one of the Amazon lobbyist and had a great conversation and also sent out a package offering all the amenities Orange County can offer.

Mr. Fioravanti continued with his update by stating he has been working with the municipal leaders and they are on the same page as to what they want for economic development and what they see that is important. He has taken over the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) which is very valuable and can be an attraction tool. He may attend a conference for FTZ in May. He has been working with the Department of General Services and an organization called Tech Hub and they are working on a Tech Summit followed by a hack-a-thon. He has been working with the transition of the Orange County Film office from the Arts Council to Tourism. Project Medline and Project Sail Fish are two 1 million square foot plus warehouse distribution centers slated for the Town of Montgomery. Legoland will have by the end of the year 90 full time people. They are working on building their administrative building. Presently, they are renting space at 30 Matthews Street. The plan is still for them to open May of 2020. Citiva, is the medical marijuana company in the Warwick Corporate Park. They are building a facility for medical marijuana and Citiva is opening their second dispensary in Wappinger Falls, the other one is in Brooklyn. Woodbury Commons is working on an expansion. They are working on a hotel project in Port Jervis. A manufacturer that will build an 81,000 square foot manufacturing facility in the Town of Montgomery with jobs at \$80,000 per year. Milmar Foods in the Town of Goshen who employee 400 people manufacture food and truck in their own water. They are trying to help get them get water so they are

presently working with the Village of Goshen. Lastly, the Camp LaGuardia property has no firm commitment yet. The property is not ready yet and there are three municipalities involved.

Mr. O'Donnell asked the status of an assistant for him.

Mr. Fioravanti stated that he previously mentioned to the committee that he was going to be in limbo for a little bit. When the time is right, they will look at bringing someone in.

Ms. Kistner provided an update on the construction at the Tourism office which is almost complete. It has been transformed from just an office to a Welcome Center. They are scheduling meetings with their partners and different entities in the county to come in and share material with them so they can display it in their office. She addressed the film activity that they have been a part of which has been very exciting. They have been meeting different producers and production scouts. They are able to promote for them and connect the scouts with different properties which is awesome to be part of the process. Orange County will be represented at the Berlin Travel Show and that is being done through co-branding through Dutchess County. They are planning for the New York Air Show and they are trying to promote their hotels at the show.

Ms. Tautel asked if the Tourism Office can provide them with all the information being discussed today.

Ms. Dana responded that they will provide that to them.

Ms. Tautel further asked if they follow up on any feedback received after the trade shows and do they have a way of tracking it. She continued to ask when they are advertising Woodbury Commons for example, does it go further than that, do they advertise past Woodbury Commons like the small shops, the mom and pop stores on Main Street in Woodbury.

Ms. Dana explained that more and more tourists are hitting the wineries, the distilleries. They love Woodbury Commons but they are doing more than just shopping.

Ms. Kistner explained that they do obtain any type of recording of information from trade shows they use. They do provide a scanner so everyone can capture information.

Ms. Dana provided a brief update on the Film Office (see original minutes). They would like to incorporate the Film Office into the Tourism Office. They say that you can earn up to \$250,000 a day for the right production coming through your village, town or city. There is \$23.7 billion dollars in the film industry and 30 plus sound stages. Orange County is in a great location and it is a wonderful foundation. She mentioned the movie "Big Dogs" that filmed in Newburgh and the positive impact it had on the local economy.

Ms. Tautel asked if the Arts Council budget is being put in the Tourism budget.

Ms. Dana explained that last year the Orange County IDA was a large part of the funding source for the Film Office but they chose not to fund the Film Office any longer due to some regulations.

Mr. Benton commented that the dollar figures are high, the success is there, why can't they just do this themselves. Why did they need the sole support of the IDA. He did not think that county government should be involved. We could assist with certain things but this is not for county government.

Ms. Dana explained that this was a common practice throughout New York State. Tourism Offices do manage Film Offices and it makes perfect sense for them to work together and collaborate.

Mr. Benton mentioned that was not really an answer because won't you be making money.

Mr. Ruskiewicz pointed out that there is the Hudson Valley Film Office that provides these services for free. If we don't do this then these film offices will be going to our surrounding counties.

Mr. O'Donnell asked about the request for the part-time position.

Ms. Dana explained that the Orange County Arts Council had a part-time person in film they just carried it over. The individual is unemployed right now. This will be a county employee.

Mr. O'Donnell asked why the person cannot stay where they are and be employed, why do they need to be a county employee with county benefits and retirement.

Ms. Dana explained that was the plan initially but the thought this was the best way to grow this department.

Mr. O'Donnell asked Ms. Ansbro if there was a downside to have a consultant versus a county employee.

Ms. Ansbro responded that there was not really any downside to it. They pay this individual as a consultant.

Mr. O'Donnell stated that the upside of this is accountability if they are a county employee.

Chairman Brescia stated that he thought the person was not going to be solely film. Would there be other responsibilities.

Ms. Dana responded they will be part of their team and every person on that team will be cross trained in film.

Ms. Stegenga asked what the responsibilities would be.

Ms. Dana responded that all the functions would be taken over by the part time film person and the rest of the team would help out. Scouting is a big part of the position. Researching and finding out what production companies are coming, where they want to film and reaching out. They need to know what trade shows they should be at.

Ms. Stegenga asked if the municipalities would be aware so they can be prepared.

Ms. Dana explained they can do a broadcast to municipal leaders and other entities and they can get the feedback as to what the needs are. She added that they are trying to streamline the permitting process so it will be easy to go into any municipalities.

Ms. Bonelli pointed out that money was allocated in 2017 that was not utilized. It was for the purpose of Arts Council/Film Office. The money did not go to the Arts Council so could that money be funneled to Tourism to perform that function.

Ms. Dana stated that she was aware of the money but it did not work out but now they are hoping to get the money some other way.

Mr. Kulisek added that he did not think the money was specifically for the Arts Council but was going to be used to help fund it since the IDA was not able to fund them anymore.

Ms. Slesinski noted that half of the Arts Council budget is used for grant purposes.

Mr. Sierra thought that the position was important. He was in support of the Economic Development Director and the Tourism Director. The position will be instrumental for sales tax and the Tourism office. It is under \$50,000 and if it does not work out in a year, they can always pull the position. He was in favor of the position and he was in favor of the \$49,900.00.

Mr. Cheney asked why Tourism instead of Economic Development?

Ms. Dana explained that there is large amount of resources that needs to be applied to the Film Office. The past four weeks they have been inundated with production scout calls and the Tourism staff pitched in and did a lot of work together as a team which helped so much. They felt the Film Office would be better served under Tourism. It does not really matter but the rest of the state is structured that way. In Rockland County they handle it all together, film, economic development and tourism all together.

Mr. Cheney stated that the people coming here to do the filming are tourists and they need hotels, they will need restaurants. He just saw a presentation from the Village Board meeting this week from a company that gave permission to film on Railroad Avenue. They are coming back because they recalled the scene and the setting and want to shoot again.

Ms. Reed pointed out that the money is coming out of contingency and at this time the request is only for the supplemental appropriation to the Tourism Department. They

are not creating the position yet. The Human Resources Department is still working on the classification and the job description.

Ms. Tautel asked if we were able to get the resources from the Arts Council. She thought that the Arts Council was a better fit than Tourism for this. She liked the presentation and the figures that were discussed, but when Umbra presented at the last committee meeting when Ms. Dana was away, they said that a lot of this revenue goes across the river to Dutchess County.

Mr. Fioravanti noted that the Arts Council is still a partner with them.

Mr. Cheney moved the request for Supplemental appropriation of \$49,900 to fund Film Office, seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz stated that the committee would take a break and return to the Legislative Chambers at 6:15 p.m. for the Legoland presentation.

On the motion of Ms. Tautel, seconded by Mr. Cheney, the meeting adjourned at 5:43 p.m.