

GREEN COMMITTEE

(REMOTELY)

MONDAY, APRIL 26, 2021

2:15 P.M.

PRESENT: Joseph Minuta, Chairman
Leigh J. Benton, Barry J. Cheney, Kevindaryán Luján, Alan J. Sorensen

ALSO

PRESENT: Katie Bonelli, Majority Leader
Thomas J. Faggione, Legislator
Peter Tuohy, Legislator
John S. Vero, Legislator
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel
James S. Brooks, Commissioner of Parks, Recreation & Conservation
Julie Richmond, Deputy Commissioner of Planning
Liz Delaney, Budget Analyst
Dina Sena, Budget Analyst

Chairman Minuta opened the committee meeting at 2:15 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Mr. Sorensen addressed the committee with an update on LEED for Cities and Communities Certification as a Pilot Program and County Planning as a Lead Agency for green initiative. He stated that since the last meeting, he was notified about the LEED Certification and are anticipating a bronze certification, but Orange County was successful and received the silver certification for the Leadership and Energy Environmental Design. By completing the LEED Certification process, Orange County has created the baseline for existing environmental performance and developed the framework for future actions that can be taken to improve the overall resiliency and sustainability of our ecosystems, transportation network, energy production, water usage, etc. He added that they are also embarking on several initiatives this year to further those objectives along with a county-wide resiliency study. They issued an RFP, selected a consultant firm, and have secured grant funding through the Office of Economic Adjustment for Military Installation Resiliency in conjunction with West Point to look at electric resiliency. The department has several programs and are excited that the county was selected and achieved the silver certification.

Mr. Minuta commented that this is great news, and it should be published.

Mr. Sorensen stated when this was first announced there was some coordination with the County Executive's Office regarding sending out a press release, so he will follow-up. He acknowledged the dedicated work of his team in the Planning Department.

Mr. Minuta thanked Mr. Sorensen and his team for their hard work as he knows it is a tumultuous task.

The next agenda item was an update/discussion on EV Charging Stations: Identify locations for initial installation. Mr. Sorensen presented the committee with a power point presentation which included a Priority List, Chosen Locations, and Grant Updates (see original minutes).

Mr. Luján asked if the SUNY Orange Campus will be revisited in the future.

Mr. Sorensen replied the location can be explored as he sees merit to it, and they were apprised that there was additional funding which will be available. His understanding is that municipalities can apply for up to \$500,000.00 and he believes the \$218,000.00 that was already received will be subtracted. They are potentially eligible for another \$272,000.00 which they are currently evaluating.

Mr. Minuta thanked Mr. Sorensen for the update and stated that Mr. Brooks will speak to the last agenda item which is an update/discussion regarding the Kowawase Unique Area.

Mr. Brooks explained that since they last met, he is having some permit issues with the DEC and would like to avoid the process due to the extensive permitting that is required. He has had several conversations with Mr. Sorensen and his staff about other ideas for the site. The building that is there was built long before he became the commissioner so, in general it does need updates. Regarding picnic benches, tables and bbq grills, they ordered shot rock which will stabilize the banks and then the DEC will tell him what type of plantings to put in. As far as the kayak launch, he is treading lightly so that they do not need to get a permit since it is something simple, but in the meantime, they are exploring different avenue to "facelift" the area.

Mr. Minuta stated that this should have been a simple task, but they got stonewalled by the state. There is some sort of plant life growing in the area which they are concerned with.

Mr. Brooks commented that he is not too sure what the genesis of the pushback is and is unsure of whether or not this is a philosophical roadblock. He stated that he does not want to do a formal application because it may trigger the DEC and permit agency to mandate certain requirements. In the meantime, they can continue doing small upgrades to the area.

The meeting adjourned at 2:34 p.m.