

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
(REMOTELY)  
MONDAY, JUNE 14, 2021  
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruskiewicz, Chairman  
Barry 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  
Kevin W. Hines, Legislator  
James Kulisek, Legislator  
Kevindaryan Lujan, Legislator  
Peter Tuohy, Legislator  
John Vero, Legislator  
Betsy N. Abraham, Legislative Counsel  
Steven M. Neuhaus, County Executive  
Harold Porr III, Deputy County Executive  
Langdon Chapman, County Attorney  
Alan Sorensen, Commissioner, Planning Department  
Jennifer MacLeod, Planner, Planning Department  
Bill Fioravanti, Director, Economic Development  
Amanda Dana, Director, Tourism  
Nora Martinez, Film Specialist, Tourism and Film Office  
Maureen Halahan, President, CEO, Orange County Partnership  
Rachel Wilson, Director, Youth Bureau  
Susan Ambrosino, Associate Account Clerk II, Youth Bureau  
Michael Torelli, Chairman, Industrial Development Agency  
Dean Tamburri, Industrial Development Agency/OCFC Candidate  
Deborah Slesinski, Budget Director

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee meeting at 4:01 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Mr. Minuta who arrived at 4:06 p.m. and Ms. Stegenga who arrived at 4:08 p.m.

Ms. Tautel moved the request for supplemental appropriation for funding received from "The Friends of the Orange County Youth Bureau" (a component fund of the Community Foundation of Orange and Sullivan), \$6,400.00, seconded by Mr. Sassi.

Ms. Wilson explained that the request was to allow them to accept donations raised by the advisory board. The funds were received from "The Friends of the Orange County Youth Bureau" which is a component fund of the Community Foundation. This is what they will give out to the award recipients for the County Executive Youth Awards.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Legislators Minuta and Stegenga who were not yet present.

Mr. Fioravanti provided a monthly update on Economic Development (see original minutes).

Ms. Halahan provided a quarterly update on the Orange County Partnership (see original minutes).

Ms. Dana provided a quarterly update on Tourism and Film (see original minutes).

Mr. Ruskiewicz and Mr. Torelli provided an update on the Industrial Development Agency (IDA). Mr. Ruskiewicz stated that they had a meeting two weeks ago with the County Executive, Senators Martucci and Skoufis about pending legislation that they passed at the state level last Thursday.

Mr. Fioravanti explained that Assembly Bill 1106 is legislation that expands prevailing wage to include hauling and delivering supplies and materials to construction sites. It requires that any project that receives more than 30% in public funding has to be a prevailing wage project. Assembly Bill 795 states that each municipal agency located in the county is to charge the same fee that the agency established for the county agency. It is another effort to try and put local IDAs and county IDAs on the same playing field. The motivation for this is a concern for IDA shopping by businesses to get the best rate.

Mr. Torelli updated the committee by stating they have instituted a payment and voucher process to have checks and balances for every payment and bill. It has resulted in \$1-\$1.5 million in reduced spending. They set a meeting schedule for every third Tuesday of the month at 5:00 p.m. They have three goals: transparency, increase commercial tax rates, increase in jobs/job creation. They have many things ahead of them, including a search for a CEO or an executive director and a search for local counsel. They plan a repayment for the shovel ready loan program to the Warwick LDC. Once it is paid back, they can then discuss about what to do and moving forward. They look forward to putting the past behind them and they can continue to move forward.

Mr. Minuta made a motion for resolution appointing Dean Tamburri to the Orange County Industrial Development Agency and the Orange County Funding Corp., seconded by Ms. Stegenga.

Ms. Bonelli stated that Dean Tamburri has a long history with the local unions and is very involved with his community. She spoke with him last week and he was very energized, and she looks forward to seeing him serve as a board member and work with Mr. Torelli and the rest of the board. The appointment expires on December 31, 2021.

Mr. Tamburri thanked everyone for the opportunity and looked forward to it. He is excited to help in any way he can to help promote the growth of the county.

Ms. Bonelli pointed out that the Mr. Tamburri's name was presented to them by Legislator O'Donnell and there are quite a few other Legislators that know Mr. Tamburri and he was highly recommend.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if Mr. Tamburri could state for the record that he has no conflicts of interest with the former IDA Board, particularly Mr. Cozzolino or Ms. Villasuso.

Mr. Tamburri stated that he has no affiliation with any of that.

Mr. Kulisek stated that he has known Mr. Tamburri for quite a while and his involvement in the community, the county and his knowledge of economic development that happens in the county and he was very supportive of his appointment.

Mr. O'Donnell mentioned that he has known Mr. Tamburri for about twenty years. He has done a great job at Local 17. As Ms. Bonelli stated, he is very involved in the community. He always felt they should have someone from labor represented on the IDA. He was happy that one of the measures passed by the Assembly and the Senate dealt with prevailing wage. He looked forward to working with Mr. Tamburri and protecting the workers of Orange County.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Sassi who left the meeting at 4:50 p.m.

Mr. Cheney made a motion for resolution appointing Robert M. Kennedy III to the Orange County Industrial Development Agency and the Orange County Funding Corp., seconded by Mr. Ruskiewicz.

Ms. Bonelli stated that Mr. Kennedy is from the Town of Warwick where he is a local businessman and is very involved in his community. He is not only affiliated with the St. Anthony's Hospital fund raising but also on their planning board and recently appointed to the Village of Warwick Comprehensive Plan Committee. He had a conflict and was unable to attend the meeting today. She spoke to a few Legislators about Mr. Kennedy's appointment to the IDA Board, and she has been assured he would be a good fit at this time. His term will expire on December 31, 2021.

Mr. O'Donnell expressed his disappointment that Mr. Kennedy was unable to attend the meeting today. Not having the ability to ask him a few questions. He asked Mr. Tamburri about any association or potential conflicts with the previous IDA Board members, and he would like an opportunity to ask Mr. Kennedy the same. He felt it was critical with any candidate for the IDA to be able to meet, face to face.

Mr. Ruskiewicz mentioned that he recommended Mr. Kennedy. He has known him for thirty years and worked with him on the Warwick Planning Board prior to being a Legislator. He understood Mr. O'Donnell's concerns, but he was willing to support Mr. Kennedy.

Ms. Tautel stated that considering the upheaval they had with the previous IDA Board, she felt it would benefit the public as well and allow them to question the candidate.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to table resolution appointing Robert M. Kennedy III to the Orange County Industrial Development Agency and the Orange County Funding Corp. for one month, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Mr. O'Donnell wanted to hear directly from Mr. Kennedy that he has no conflicts of interest and make sure he is aware of the criminal investigation going on, so he knows exactly what he is walking into. He wants the ability to be able to ask him questions and know more about him.

Motion carried. All in favor with the exception of Mr. Cheney and Mr. Ruszkiewicz who voted no.

Mr. Minuta moved to approve SEQRA and applications for Inclusion of Lands in Consolidated Orange County Agricultural District No. 1, seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Mr. Sorensen explained that this is the annual review of Agricultural District No. 1, and five properties were being recommended for inclusion in Agricultural District No. 1. The five properties are Chester Agricultural Center, LLC on 12.1 acres in the Village of Chester; Cotter property on 13.5 acres in the Town of Cornwall; Atlantic Fibre Optic, LLC on 2 acres in the Town of Goshen and two properties owned by the Yurchuk family with one parcel on 4.6 acres and the other on 17.8 acres that adjacent to each other in the Town of Goshen.

Ms. Tautel asked what the process is when a municipality is against a property being included into the Agricultural District.

Mr. Sorensen responded that the Town of Goshen opposed the Atlantic Fibre Optic property. The property is currently used for the storage and sale of fresh cut hay and horse shavings and contains a temporary medical paddock for injured horses for rehabilitation. They planned on housing a pet crematorium. Prior to the year 2020 the parcel was in the Agricultural District, but it was removed during the eight-year review. The Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board did a site visit, and they recommend including it, mainly because it was previously in the Agricultural District. The Town of Goshen sent a letter stating they did not support including the parcel in the Agricultural District.

Mr. Minuta stated that it sounded like a mixed-use property with storage bins, not necessarily agricultural. He asked how it is determined.

Mr. Sorensen explained that the land has agricultural use or potential. If the property was not previously in the Agricultural District, he was not sure he would recommend it to be included. The applicant stated that he had an extended illness and was not able to respond to the notice that the property was going to be removed from the Agricultural District.

Mr. Minuta felt it was unwarranted for him to store anything other than agricultural products. The storage of materials should be for agricultural use, not storing materials for a different business like Atlantic Fibre Optics.

Ms. Stegenga stated that the application it states that they have agricultural intent in the future. She asked what they are currently doing related to agriculture.

Mr. Sorensen responded that they listed in their application the property was being used to store and sell fresh cut hay and horse shavings and contains a temporary medical paddock for injured horses for rehabilitation.

Ms. Stegenga asked what happens if the property does not get the approval to be put into the Agricultural District now because it does not meet the criteria, when would be the next opportunity to apply again.

Mr. Sorensen replied they would have the opportunity to reapply each year during the annual review. If the parcel is added to the Agricultural District, they would need to wait for the next eight-year review to remove it.

Mr. Cheney asked what the requirements were for a property to be included in an agricultural district and do they need to be actively engaged in agriculture.

Mr. Sorensen replied that in order to be included it must be viable agricultural land which means land that is suitable for agricultural production. Something they look for is if the inclusion would serve the public's interest.

Mr. Ruskiewicz suggested to have a separate vote on the Atlantic Fibre Optics, LLC if the committee desired to do so. The committee members agreed.

Mr. Sierra left the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

Atlantic Fibre Optics, LLC:

Motion carried.

4 ayes (Cheney, O'Donnell, Ruskiewicz, Brescia)

3 noes (Minuta, Stegenga, Tautel).

Mr. Ruskiewicz advised the committee the next vote was for the other parcels requesting inclusion.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Cheney moved to set the public hearing for the 2021-2022 OCCC Budget (8/5/21-3:15 p.m.), seconded by Ms. Tautel.

Motion carried. All in favor.

On the motion of Mr. Minuta, seconded by Ms. Tautel, the meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.