

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**MONDAY, JUNE 19, 2023
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Joseph J. Minuta, Chairman
Thomas J. Faggione, **Kevindaryán Luján**,
James O'Donnell, Paul Ruskiewicz, Genesis Ramos

ALSO

PRESENT: Katherine E. Bonelli, Chairwoman
Barry J. Cheney, Legislator
Peter V. Tuohy, Legislator
Alan Sorensen, Commissioner, Planning Department
Amanda Dana, Tourism Director
Rachel Carr, Tourism Coordinator
Lisa Santiago, Tourism Assistant
Nora Martinez, Film Specialist, Tourism
Bill Fioravanti, CEO, Orange County Industrial Development Agency
Dina Sena, Budget Analyst

Chairman Minuta opened the committee meeting at 4:02 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present with the exception of Legislators Sassi and Stegenga who were absent.

Chairman Minuta changed the order of the agenda requesting Mr. Fioravanti to address the committee first.

Mr. Fioravanti provided a monthly update on the IDA (On file in Clerk, Legislative Office). He addressed the Monitor Bill and stated that the Monitor will be appointed by August 1st. They plan to work well with the Monitor and remain completely transparent.

Mr. Ruskiewicz asked if Senator Skoufis or other elected officials will not have any influence over this Monitor.

Mr. Fioravanti stated that the Inspector General's Office made it clear that they spoke to the Senator and other elected officials who were involved. They had their opportunity to provide any input that they wanted. His number one objective when he met with the Inspector General's Chief of Staff and Counsel in lower Manhattan last month, was to make it clear who he is, who they are, who the Board of Directors are, and separate them from the criminals that were here before. His reasoning for conveying this to them was because it was obvious that the Senator and others who were pushing this implied to Albany how out of control they are, as if it was the same administration. They stopped him midway and told him that they were aware, they read everything and they know what was going on. They are interested in facts, not political drama.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if the Inspector General was there.

Mr. Fioravanti responded that she was not present, but her Chief of Staff was present along with their Counsel. He added that it did not appear as though they would be directly communicating with the Inspector General.

Mr. O'Donnell confirmed that the Inspector General is appointed by the Governor.

Mr. Fioravanti confirmed that was correct.

Mr. O'Donnell commented that once the Monitor is named and reports to duty, he would like for the Education and Economic Development Committee to invite that individual to appear before them and update them on their economic development background. They should be able to meet the new Monitor and find out what his or her mindset is.

Mr. O'Donnell made a motion to have the Monitor appear before the Education and Economic Development Committee, to meet them and to see what their background is, seconded by Mr. Ruskiewicz.

Motion carried. All in favor.

Mr. Minuta noted that they have done their job as a Legislature. Mr. Fioravanti has done a fine job along with everyone on the board. Now is a good time for them to be accountable.

Ms. Dana provided a quarterly update on Tourism and Film (On file in Clerk, Legislative Office).

Ms. Ramos made a motion to set the Public Hearing for the 2023-2024 OCCC Budget, seconded by Mr. Ruskiewicz (8/3/23 – 3:15 p.m.)

Motion carried. All in favor.

Chairman Minuta recused himself from the next item, and requested that Mr. Ruskiewicz step in as Acting Chairman for the remainder of the meeting.

Mr. Faggione moved to approve SEQRA and applications for the inclusion of lands into the Orange County Agricultural District No. 1, seconded by Mr. Luján.

Mr. Sorensen explained that this was the annual opportunity for property owners to submit applications to join Agricultural District No. 1. Ten applications were received which was a lot compared to other years. Each application was reviewed by the Orange County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board and sites visits were conducted.

Mr. Ruskiewicz asked Mr. Sorensen if there were any parcels not recommended by the Board.

Mr. Sorensen explained that 8 out of 10 were recommended. The applicant in Woodbury, Seth Pulver, is currently operating a Bed and Breakfast. He is interested in starting an event venue and the proposal is to expand to a winery. The Board did review the property and there has been a lot of work done at the site. The applicant plans to grow the vines for the winery and there has been capital improvements to support the future of a winery.

Chairwoman Bonelli added that at the public hearing for the inclusion of lands into the Orange County Agricultural District No. 1., the owner of the property in the Town of Woodbury made a legitimate argument for inclusion. They received a letter from the Village of Woodbury opposing the inclusion of the property; however, there was no reason provided as to why they opposed the project. After the public hearing was held, they did receive letters of support from councilmembers in the Town of Woodbury for the project. The final decision on these properties will be made by the New York State Commissioner of Agriculture and Markets and she felt it was only fair to give this property owner a fair hearing and let Albany make the final decision. She asked that they add the property for inclusion in Orange County Agricultural District No. 1. She added that the other property that was not recommended for inclusion was only storing machinery at this point.

Mr. Ruskiewicz stated that to be included in the Agricultural District, there does not have to be agriculture there but it has to be a site that is suitable for sustaining an agricultural operation, which this one does. Mr. Pulver appears to be headed down that path. He suggested adding the property into the Agricultural District.

Mr. Ruskiewicz moved to include the Pulver property in the Town of Woodbury; 202-1-70,202-1-72,202-1-79, 202-1-12, 202-1-60.5 and 202-1-59.1 into the Orange County Agricultural District No. 1, seconded by Mr. Faggione.

Motion carried. All in favor.

As amended, motion carried. All in favor.

On the motion of Mr. Faggione, seconded by Ms. Ramos, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.