

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE  
MINUTES**

**MONDAY, JULY 16, 2018  
4:00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Paul Ruskiewicz, Chairman  
Leigh J. Benton, Barry J. Cheney, Thomas Faggione,  
Kevindaryan Lujan, James D. O'Donnell, Rob Sassi, Laurie R. Tautel

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman  
Peter Tuohy, Legislator  
John S. Vero, Legislator  
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel  
Donna McCarey, Deputy Commissioner of Human Resources  
Alison Tyack, Director of Personnel Management, Human Resources  
Maureen Halahan, President/CEO, Orange County Partnership  
Bill Fioravanti, Director, Economic Development  
Amanda Dana, Director, Orange County Tourism  
Michael Ventre, Budget Analyst

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee meeting at 4:00 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.

First on the agenda was Mr. Fioravanti who introduced himself to the committee as the new Economic Development Director. He thanked everyone for their support of the position. He stated that he intends to play a critical role in the County's coordination and collaboration with the various partners around the county and around the region. There is a lot of knowledge and resources with internal partners such as the County Executive Team, the Planning Department, Real Property and the Legislature. The external partners, which he plans to work closely with are the Orange County Partnership, IDA, the Hudson Valley EDC and the local municipalities. He wants to work together to create quality jobs, prepare local workforce and help businesses and their employees thrive.

Mr. Fioravanti expanded on sector focus, manufacturing and technology. He wants to connect to the agricultural community and strengthen the medical industry. There are many opportunities with Legoland coming to Goshen and he looked forward to working closely with Tourism. The focus is not just bringing in businesses, bed tax and property tax, but also creating jobs for young people. There is a very big payback with the Arts and that sector is ready to explode with film and television. Other initiatives are workforce development, urban redevelopment and working with municipalities. They need to find opportunities that will allow the cities to thrive. They want to work closer to the municipal leaders and streamline approval processes for assessing and attracting economic development.

Mr. Fioravanti concluded by stating they plan to grow the department over the next few years as far as resources and hopefully personnel. The goal is to be effective in advancing economic development for local municipalities and for businesses and the residents.

Mr. O'Donnell asked if there was money in the budget for an administrative assistant.

Mr. Fioravanti responded that there was money in the budget but the additional staff might not happen until January because most of the money is in the 2019 budget.

Mr. O'Donnell commented that he believed the money is there now and he wants Mr. Fioravanti to get off to a good start with the support he needs.

Mr. Fioravanti stated that he has received support from all over so he was doing okay for now.

Mr. O'Donnell added that he did not want him to wait too long to get the support staff because they want him out in the field so he can leave someone in the office. The money is in the budget and it was planned this way for him to have help. For Mr. Fioravanti not to have support staff is not right for him nor is it right for the county or for the citizens that they serve.

Mr. Lujan stated that they did not want to set him up for failure so if this is something he really needs and if the Legislature can help to please let them know. He continued to state that transportation is a big issue with the cities.

Mr. Fioravanti stated that they can bring some resources together to work on that.

Mr. Lujan mentioned an economic hub such as a shuttle that would go from the eastern end of the county to the western part of the county.

Mr. Sassi commented on agritourism and Mr. Fioravanti responded that he and Ms. Dana met someone about that and it is another way for their farmers to take advantage of opportunities with new age economic functions.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz stated that when they had the discussion on creating this position one of the intents is to have the director come to the committee monthly with updates and Mr. Fioravanti responded he looked forward to it.

Mr. Cheney asked if they had the infrastructure to support data centers and how limited it is.

Mr. Fioravanti stated that they need power, water and the network which he is still trying to see how strong the network is throughout the county. They have the framework but what areas to focus on they still need to assess.

Mr. Cheney further asked if he had a database of technical companies within the county.

Mr. Fioravanti responded that he wants to research that a little further to get the right people around the table to see how viable the opportunity is.

Next on the agenda was Maureen Halahan with a quarterly update on the Orange County Partnership. Ms. Halahan introduced Lindsey Newler who is their new Director of Business Attraction.

Ms. Halahan announced that the Consolidated Funding Application was in full swing and the deadline for all the applications will be July 27<sup>th</sup>. Bluewater Industrial was before the Town of Montgomery seeking approvals planning on building just over 1 million square feet. National Realty Development who has done development throughout Orange County sold a site to a spec developer who plans to put up a 312,000 square foot building in Montgomery. She addressed the business retention and expansion activity such as Bon Secours Medical Expansion in the City of Port Jervis and Kessler Development in New Windsor is expanding by 260,000 square feet.

Ms. Halahan addressed transportation which is provided by some jobs but it is not always utilized. There are companies that have transportation programs within the company, such as Amy's Kitchen. You can always provide buses but cannot always put people in them unless companies support them and bring them right to the door.

**Ms. Halahan mentioned Café Spice who was ready to get set up in Dutchess County but once people started talking about it, the Town of New Windsor pushed for them to stay in Orange County and they did. They are expanding and they anticipate they will retain 160 jobs and create 50 more. Angry Orchard needs to add additional parking because they have so many people visiting their location so they need to accommodate. Amscan is interested in leasing a 50,000 to 100,000 warehouse. Orange Packaging created many jobs in Newburgh, currently employing 75 people and creating 30 new jobs. They found a site and liked it a lot and they went to the state and received their commitment but the recent conversation was not too enthusiastic so that can be an issue. Project Degree is interested in expanding creating 50 new jobs. Equilibrium Brewery, Pine Island Brewing Co. and Dana Distributors are all growing. She pointed out that the aviation operations are looking to expand. The Workforce Development Task Force all got together and the interest has exploded.**

Ms. Halahan announced that today for the first time ever is the STEM Enrichment Program at SUNY Orange which is a result of all of them working together. Nummies Bakery is a gluten free bakery who uses space within Satin Fine Foods. Citiva is a medical marijuana manufacturer and is in contract to purchase lots in Warwick Valley Tech Park and the ground-breaking ceremony is July 31<sup>st</sup> with 50 new jobs. The Partnership is working with Stewart Airport to help attract major airlines. She announced that Project Adventure, Project Woodland and Project Kip are looking at sites in Orange County and is hopeful they will be back. City Winery is a successful vineyard and is interested in property on the Wallkill River in the Village of Montgomery.

Last on the agenda was the new Director of Tourism, Amanda Dana. Ms. Dana introduced herself to the committee and thanked everyone for having confidence in her and in the position. She displayed a power point presentation and noted that she would like to take Tourism to a new level, change the Tourism Office into more of a welcome center. Westchester County has a large amount of conference activity that takes place and their tourism is through the roof. She would like to encourage a conference center in Orange County. Ms. Dana reviewed a pie chart on what people spend their money on which is food and beverage. She announced Legoland will have their ground-breaking ceremony soon.

The Zulu Lounge at Hotel Thayer is a lot of fun and there is a new visitor center at West Point which is amazing. Her plan is to visit the people who run the visitor centers, like the one at West Point, and work together. She addressed Stewart Airport and the need to push tourism and get people to stay in Orange County. She met up with some Chinese operators who are planning a Chinese Lantern Festival in Orange County which will probably bring in 15,000 to 20,000 people. Ms. Dana reminded everyone that the Freedom Festival was coming up and the Airshow will take place in September.

Ms. Dana expanded more on her vision for a welcome center in Orange County and would like to incorporate with the Farmer's Market and have some type of activity at the welcome center. She would like start putting some of those ideas in next year. They would also like to hire some additional staff into the Tourism Office. Many restaurants will be coming back such as The Jolly Onion, Gasho and Bull's Head Inn.

Ms. Tautel requested Ms. Dana to include the Highland Falls Chamber of Commerce when she is working on advertising for West Point because they would like to bring the tourist on to their main street to bring it back to life.

Mr. Lujan asked Ms. Dana what her plan was for the City of Newburgh.

Ms. Dana mentioned to Mr. Lujan that she was recently at the waterfront in Newburgh and had an hour wait for a restaurant she was going to, but it was not just that restaurant she was going to, it was every single one of them on the waterfront. It was great, and she would love to encourage more guests. They are working with the MTA and with Newburgh.

Mr. Lujan added that he thought it was great but would still like to see people in the City of Newburgh, on Liberty Street.

Mr. Cheney inquired about the welcome center and asked if there was a plan to bring it closer to the highways. He further asked if there are opportunities through social media or signage on the highways to get people engaged with what is available in Orange County.

Ms. Dana explained that in other places when tourist go to the big attractions, such as Legoland, they like to see the welcome centers, or the gateways closer to highways. It will get them off the highway, into the community. For now, they are at 99 Main Street, but once Legoland is up and running, they could possibly transition into that type of welcome center.

Chairman Brescia announced that on the 31<sup>st</sup> they were planning to bring in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial "The Wall That Heals" which will bring in visitors to the City of Newburgh.

Mr. Lujan thanked Chairman Brescia for the reminder.

On the motion of Ms. Tautel, seconded by Mr. Benton, the meeting adjourned at 5:15 p.m.



