

**EDUCATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 20, 2018
4:00 P.M.**

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

ALSO

PRESENT: L. Stephen Brescia, Chairman
John S. Vero, Legislator
Kathy Stegenga, Legislator
Antoinette Reed, Legislative Counsel
David Church, Commissioner of Planning
Bill Fioravanti, Director, Economic Development
Laurie Villasuso, Chief Operating Officer and Executive Vice President,
Industrial Development Agency
Vinnie Cozzolino, Managing Director, Industrial Development Agency

Chairman Ruskiewicz opened the committee meeting at 4:30 p.m. by asking everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. All committee members were present.

Ms. Villasuso provided a quarterly update on the Industrial Development Agency. She announced they received a visit from the Authorities Budget Office and they performed a spot check audit. This was their second audit and it is something that will happen more often. They chose five projects at random and it was brought to their attention that one of their projects exceeded their sales tax exemption allotment, so they are taking action to correct that.

Ms. Villasuso discussed the Newburgh Area Accelerators which is the "Fashion Manufacturing Cluster." There are seven companies in New Windsor and in City of Newburgh. She addressed the Middletown Area Accelerator which is in the old Horton Hospital which is the "Medical Devices and Personal Care Products" and there are twelve companies in place. Ms. Villasuso announced that they have two interns, one from SUNY New Paltz and one from Mount Saint Mary's College and they are helping them to recraft some of their marketing to make sure they are reaching the right people.

Mr. Cozzolino added that their projection is to be over 100 employees in accelerator companies which is a major milestone. They struggled but believe they have the right formula now and they would like to take advantage of the energy of the economy.

Mr. Lujan commented that he had the opportunity to talk to a constituent of his who is involved with one of the programs and the training and she loves it. He also spoke to former Mayor Nick Valentine and other businesses in the community and this is something they should all welcome. He asked if there was any literature to please send it to him so he can bring it to the local businesses. He requested it to be English and Spanish if possible.

Mr. O'Donnell asked for Ms. Villasuso to elaborate on the interns.

Ms. Villasuso stated that the one is a marketing major and the other intern is a business management major.

Mr. Lujan asked if they were looking for more interns and Ms. Villasuso replied that they will eventually, but their companies can use interns.

Mr. O'Donnell suggested they send correspondence to Orange County Community College to see if there are students looking to intern during the holidays.

Mr. Faggione was fascinated with the background of the IDA and Accelerator. He asked if there were any intentions of headed to the Port Jervis area.

Ms. Villasuso commented that they met with Port Jervis and are working with the Mayor and Legislator Faggione. They are looking at all opportunities in Orange County to expand the Accelerator where it is necessary.

Mr. Cozzolino stated that they never talk about a project until they have a plan in place. Each area has certain attractions which makes it easier for example, Highland Falls has West Point. He added that when they are working with the communities they do their research and they really put things out there which can be uncomfortable.

Mr. Cozzolino added that although Mr. Lujan is very excited about the Accelerator and all the work they are doing, unfortunately, there were many people who did not want to bring the Accelerator to the City of Newburgh.

Mr. Lujan stated that he was excited and there are some others that are also excited. He was supportive of the Accelerator going to Port Jervis and wished them luck.

The next item on the agenda was a notification on reappointments of D. Smith, P. Ruszkiewicz and J. Wright to the Agricultural and Farmland Protection board.

Mr. Cheney asked about another board member, William Johnson, whose term expired.

Chairman Ruszkiewicz explained that Mr. Johnson wants to retire but he is adamant that he is replaced with a dairy farmer, so they are going to hold off for now.

Mr. Fioravanti provided a monthly update on Economic Development. He has been very busy working on many attraction, retention and expansion projects and a lot of it is education. He is trying to work closer with the I.D.A. and they have some projects they are working on together. Mr. O'Donnell recommended he work with Real Property and he has taken advantage of that and it has been a great resource. He has also been working with the Planning Department and they have been great. They are presently working on a grant for Route 17M and the Planning Department will take the lead. They have an investor interested **in putting a hotel on 6 ½ Station Road**. They are trying to lure jobs out of the city and technology helps with that. He went on a farm tour and he met with dairy farmer who are facing many challenges and farming is taking a new direction. He has been focusing on

the arts programs and met with the new head of the Orange County Arts Council and the head of Strom King Arts Center to give himself a better education. He has many meetings set up with municipalities to work on attraction and expansion ideas.

Ms. Tautel suggested that Mr. Fioravanti put additional municipalities on his radar such as Village of Highland Falls, Town of Highlands, Village and Town of Woodbury and the Village of Harriman. She stated that there are a lot more things going on in the Woodbury area besides Woodbury Commons. She added that he should reach out to the President of the local Chamber of Commerce, Jim Modlin.

Mr. Lujan asked what Mr. Fioravanti thought about housing since it is a big problem in Orange County.

Mr. Fioravanti responded that there is a fear about housing for the wrong reasons. They need workforce housing and need people to fill these jobs and they need somewhere to live. The cities provide the greatest opportunity to develop affordable housing. He is a proponent for affordable housing, but they need to balance between that and the types of things they worry about that will not be good for our municipalities.

On the motion of Mr. Lujan, seconded by Ms. Tautel, the meeting adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

