

**WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

COMMITTEE: **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

DATE: **OCTOBER 29, 2007**

**Committee Members Present:**

Supervisors Monroe  
Mason  
F. Thomas  
Sokol

**Committee Members Absent:**

Supervisors Stec  
Champagne  
Girard

**Others Present:**

Representing Warren County Economic  
Development Corporation:  
Leonard Fosbrook, President  
Peter Wohl, Vice President  
John Wheatley, Project Manager,  
Queensbury Industrial Park  
Elaine Behlmer, Office Manager  
Jennifer Switzer, Director of  
Finance/Empire Zone Specialist  
William H. Thomas, Chairman  
Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative &  
Fiscal Services  
Nicole Livingston, Deputy Clerk of the Board  
Supervisor Geraghty  
Supervisor Gabriels  
Supervisor Belden  
Supervisor Tessier  
Deanne Rehm, Town of Bolton  
Debra L. Schreiber, Legislative Office  
Specialist

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Mr. Monroe called the Economic Development Committee meeting to order at 10:21 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the October 1, 2007 meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Leonard Fosbrook, President, Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who distributed copies of his agenda packet to members of the committee, *a copy of which is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Fosbrook introduced the staff members of EDC: Jennifer Switzer, Director of Finance/Empire Zone Specialist; Elaine Behlmer, Office Manager; Peter Wohl, Vice President; and John Wheatley, Economic Development Specialist. Everyone had an important role in the various projects that EDC undertook and, he said, he thought it was only appropriate for the Committee to meet these individuals.

Commencing with the first item on the agenda, Mr. Wheatley, updated the Committee on the status of the Queensbury Industrial Park (QIP). With respect to the construction schedule, he noted, the contractor had accomplished many of their proposed deadlines, such as the underground utilities which were near completion and the sub-base installation would commence next week. He anticipated the macadam to be laid the first week of November, road access would be available by mid-November and thereafter, he

said, the utilities (gas, electric and telecom) would be installed. At a recent visit to the site, Mr. Wheatley noted the National Guard was on-site clearing some land and surveying the property. As previously discussed, he said, the National Guard set a time frame to commence construction of their building for the spring of 2008.

Mr. Wheatley apprised that while they (EDC) continued to work with the Economic Development Agency (EDA) in researching additional grant opportunities, Mr. Wohl had attended various conferences on how best to promote Warren County.

Ms. Switzer stated the original Option Agreement on the property at the QIP was between the County and EDC; however, she said, they subsequently received some additional grant funds which necessitated an assignment. She explained the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC) was formed by the EDC and responsible for up-front soft costs on capital-type projects, such as the QIP. However, she stated it was their desire to amend the Option Agreement, thereby transferring the asset from EDC to HRLDC, which would accomplish both the financial and liability issues. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Monroe, Ms. Switzer responded that no funds were being exchanged, just an assignment of the option.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Sokol that the Option Agreement between Warren County and EDC be amended as outlined above.

Ms. Switzer added that attached to the Option Agreement was a letter from the attorney for HRLDC to the County Attorney describing the need for the transaction. Mr. Sokol asked whether this assignment would be subject to County Attorney approval and Mr. Monroe replied affirmatively.

After discussion, Mr. Monroe called the question and the previous motion was amended to include "subject to County Attorney approval". The motion was carried unanimously and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16, 2007 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

With respect to Item II, Mr. Fosbrook indicated they were apprised that Warren County now qualified for Foreign Trade Zone benefits, which were similar in structure to the Empire Zone benefits. He said if a company were granted Foreign Trade Zone status, their import tariff would be assessed upon the sale of the product; however, he explained, no tariff would be collected on any imported products that ultimately became part and parcel of a final product. Mr. Fosbrook indicated they were currently working with an organization examining available properties that fell under the auspices of the Foreign Trade Zone and EDC would submit the \$15,000 commitment to receive these benefits.

Ms. Switzer added that Capital District Trade Strategies had assisted them in identifying properties, educating businesses, collecting documentation and providing cost benefit analyses to the various entities. Mr. Fosbrook stated it was their desire to include all County industrial parks within the Foreign Trade Zone. In response to an inquiry by Mr.

Monroe, Mr. Fosbrook replied there was no limitation to the size of the parcel, just a concurring letter from the adjacent property owner. While this was a Federal program for some time, he said, the guidelines prevented them from becoming involved until recently.

Mr. Fosbrook stated that he anticipated many businesses becoming involved in the Foreign Trade Zone, thereby realizing a return on their investment. Since the EDC had an option on the County-owned QIP, Mr. Fosbrook related only a concurring letter would be needed. Ms. Switzer explained that it was her belief that no resolution would be required at this time; however, she suggested that any letters of support should be made a part of the application.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. F. Thomas requesting letters of support for County-owned parcels located within the Foreign Trade Zone.

Mr. F. Thomas queried whether this was a one-time opportunity or whether other County-owned parcels could be added to the Foreign Trade Zone. Ms. Switzer replied that once parcels were identified within the Foreign Trade Zone, they could be transferred, swapped or added to other properties within the County and their benefits were much more flexible than those within the Empire Zone. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Monroe, Mr. Fosbrook stated these Federal Trade Zone benefits applied to County-owned properties located throughout Warren County and not just business parks. Furthermore, he said, they anticipated advertising a public informational meeting whereby manufacturers who imported products were invited to attend.

After discussion, Mr. Monroe called the question; the motion was carried unanimously as outlined above; and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16, 2007 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Relative to Item III (EDA Technical Assistant Grant), Mr. Fosbrook referred the Committee to the brochure attached to the agenda, and in particular, the blue area depicted on the northwest corner of the Airport property. As part of the Master Plan, he said, this designated area had potential to be an Airport Aviation Light Industrial Park. Last month, he said, he received approval from the Airport Committee to apply for an EDA Technical Assistance Grant to have a feasibility study performed that would determine the cost of developing this parcel pursuant to Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) guidelines. While this grant required a 50/50 match, he said, the estimated cost of the feasibility study was approximately \$30,000 to \$50,000 and EDC was committed to providing the \$15,000 to \$25,000 match.

According to discussions with the New York Central Office, Mr. Wohl apprised that the feedback he received was extremely positive and their organization was hoping to utilize these funding opportunities on a number of projects. Mr. Fosbrook added that he and Ms. Switzer would be reviewing the EDC Budget in the coming weeks and they would be allocating between \$30,000 to \$50,000 for these two projects. Mr. Fosbrook indicated if a taxiway were installed, an airport-related business may find the Airport Industrial Park a favorable location and this would be revenue stream for the County. At the

present time, he said, he would recommend the County lease the property rather than sell and perhaps consider EDC as the prime developer. In response to an inquiry by Hal Payne, Commissioner of Administrative & Fiscal Services, Mr. Fosbrook indicated this particular parcel was currently maintained. At some point, he suggested the Committee adopt a Resolution in Support of the grant application and/or be the applicant, if necessary.

Motion was made by Mr. Sokol, seconded by Mr. F. Thomas and carried unanimously authorizing a Resolution in Support of the EDA Technical Assistance Grant; and the necessary resolution was authorized for the November 16, 2007 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

With respect to Item IV, Mr. Wohl apprised the Adirondack Regional Business Incubator (ARBI) submitted an application as it related to the Restore New York Funding, a \$100,000 allocation by the State, to support the renovation of buildings and increase job opportunities in distressed areas. He stated a \$2.1 million application was submitted approximately one month ago to bridge the gap between local and Federal funds received for the renovation of the building located at 136 Elm Street in Glens Falls. He said they asked Empire State Development to perform a site visit both prior to and subsequent to the application being submitted and the feedback was extremely favorable. Mr. Wohl stated that they anticipated receiving a response by December 31, 2007 with funding to be disbursed during the first quarter of 2008. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Sokol, Mr. Wohl responded these funds would be utilized for renovations and reconstruction to the building within which the ARBI resides. Mr. Monroe queried whether receipt of these funds would have any impact on the proposed sale/leaseback. If they were successful in receiving these funds, Mr. Wohl replied there would be no need to move forward with the sale or leaseback approach.

Mr. Wohl briefly reviewed some of the EDC projects that were occurring within the City of Glens Falls. With the assistance of Mr. Wheatley, he commented that EDC had taken advantage of many funding opportunities through National Grid, totaling approximately \$113,000 that involved renovations to existing structures, and there was an additional \$50,000 pending.

Mr. Tessier entered the meeting at 10:48 a.m.

Mr. Monroe asked whether these grants had a specific purpose and Mr. Wohl responded the Main Street grants focused on the renovation and reconstruction of buildings to offset some of the expenditures to developers, as well as other entities performing similar work. If they met the necessary criterion (increased job opportunities and investment), Mr. Wheatley added the maximum amount awarded under each grant was \$50,000.

Mr. Wohl noted that their organization sponsored a study on the potential uses of the Glens Falls Civic Center. Due to the cooperative efforts by their Department, the City of Glens Falls (administration and Council), the Chamber of Commerce and *The Post Star*, he said, a public forum would be scheduled to discuss the findings of this study to determine which option was best for the Civic Center.

Mr. Wohl commented a majority of the City of Glens Falls Industrial Development Agency (IDA) benefits focused on new construction; however, he said, after meeting with them, the EDC recommended the Glens Falls IDA amend the scope of their assistance packages for entities undertaking major renovations in downtown Glens Falls.

Mr. Belden entered the meeting at 10:51 a.m.

Mr. Wohl apprised that EDC was attempting to assist in the Revitalization of South Street and suggested utilizing some Brownsfield Opportunity funds for planning purposes to develop a vision for South Street.

In summation, Mr. Wohl stated the Economic Development Corporation continued to pursue other State and Federal funding opportunities for those projects that would benefit Warren County.

There had been some previous discussions about hiring a grant writer and Mr. Mason queried whether that was through the City of Glens Falls or EDC and Mr. Wohl responded it was not through their Department. Mr. Fosbrook added that they had yet to formalize a working relationship with the City of Glens Falls, although they continued to offer their assistance under the auspices of their responsibility to provide economic development throughout the entire County.

Mr. Fosbrook apprised they were researching potential options to assist the new owners of the Balsam House in Chestertown with their renovations. In addition, Mr. Fosbrook said a meeting had been scheduled with Empire State Development relative to an expansion program involving Creative Stage Lighting. If they were successful in achieving Empire Zone status for Creative Stage Lighting, he stated, the owners would receive significantly more benefits.

Mr. Fosbrook noted that he and several representatives from Empire State Development toured the Barton Mines Company in North Creek and their processing facility in North River. He commented that this company continually researches opportunities to broaden its product line, as well as utilizing the available resources they currently produced. Mr. Fosbrook stated that Barton Mine representatives explained that only five percent of the rock they mined was garnet and they were seeking alternative uses for the remaining ninety-five percent of the stone which would create additional jobs.

In summation, Mr. Fosbrook stated these were the projects that the EDC staff were currently working on County-wide.

Mr. Monroe stated that Creative Stage Lighting must employ fifty individuals to qualify for Empire Zone status. He said it was his opinion the size of the township within which the business is located should be included in the Empire Zone criterion.

Mr. Monroe commented that the Town of Chester applied for a Restore New York Grant for the Glendale property in Pottersville. If they were successful in receiving these grant funds, he said, he was hopeful a manufacturing company would occupy the space.

Ms. Behlmer informed the Committee that 23 individuals signed on as new members of the Economic Development Corporation, bringing the total membership to 137, a ten percent increase from 2006. Mr. Fosbrook related that it was important for their organization to increase their private membership to assist in controlling expenditures.

Currently there was \$1 million of Smart Growth funds available to townships located within the Adirondacks and through the efforts of the Warren County Planning & Community Development Department, Mr. Monroe advised a grant application would be submitted for broadband services enabling individuals to work from their homes. He further stated that last week a representative from Steeple.com requested assistance from municipalities in applying for this Smart Growth Grant so cell phone antennas could be installed inside church steeples. He added that it was his understanding that only municipalities could apply for these grant funds.

At a recent Nano-tech meeting sponsored by the Empire State Development, Mr. Fosbrook related a discussion ensued involving the existing need for economic developers to move projects forward, such as better infrastructure inside the Adirondack Park.

There being no further business to come before the committee, on motion by Mr. Sokol and seconded by Mr. F. Thomas, Mr. Monroe adjourned the meeting at 11:07 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Debra L. Schreiber  
Legislative Office Specialist