

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: MAY 2, 2012

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
CONOVER
WOOD
MASON

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

SUPERVISOR MONROE

OTHERS PRESENT:

VICTORIA PRATT GERBINO, PRESIDENT OF WARREN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
WAYNE LAMOTHE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
PAUL DUSEK, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS McDEVITT
MERLINO
STRAINER
THOMAS
FRED ENGELMANN, RAINMAKER NETWORK SERVICES
JOHN STROUGH, COUNCILMAN, 3RD WARD, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY
BLAKE JONES, *THE POST STAR*
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Taylor called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 9:32 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Victoria Pratt Gerbino, President of the Warren County Economic Development Corporation (EDC), who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Ms. Pratt Gerbino updated the Committee by informing that the EDC was currently working on 13 active projects of which 5 were new businesses in Warren County and 4 were expansion opportunities. She added the remaining 4 projects were very clear threats and explained that she meant they were existing businesses that needed to make investments which could be made in a variety of locations and if those investments were not made in Warren County it could result in a negative impact to employment or future investments.

Ms. Pratt Gerbino distributed an information sheet on a Business Plan Competition for a site at the Queensbury Business Park (QBP); *a copy of the information sheet is on file with the minutes.* She explained that the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (HRLDC) owned two lots at the QBP which have received shovel-ready designation: Lot 3 which was 11.53 acres and Lot 4 which was 3.80 acres. She apprised the HRLDC along with the Warren County EDC had decided to host a Business Plan Competition for which the grand prize was Lot 4, a 3.8 acre parcel valued at \$250,000. She advised the application would be available on the EDC website, www.EDCWC.org, and a selection committee would review the applications. She noted applications were due by July 31, 2012 and the award would be announced on September 30, 2012. Mr. Taylor inquired as to the selection criteria and Ms. Pratt Gerbino responded that the preferred business would not be retail oriented, and she noted they were seeking a venture, such as: a manufacturer who could relocate

with or without their logistics component; a back office or shared services center; a technical support or operations center; a warehouse or distribution center; and especially a business which supported other businesses in Warren or Washington Counties. She continued by saying the HRLDC had modified the Covenants for the QBP which were in conjunction with the Town of Queensbury zoning regulations. She said they would consider applications from developers who had a tenant that met the criteria and a five year lease commitment. She advised the applicant would need to be able to show that they could break ground within 12 months of the award and that they would create or retain a minimum of 10 full time equivalent jobs on the site. She said the site was approved for the construction of a building up to 25,000 square feet. She stated the applicant would also need to be able to secure a bank commitment within 90 days of the award and submit engineered plans within 60 days of the award.

Mr. Taylor noted the next item on the agenda was a request on behalf of the HRLDC to extend the purchase options on the parcels owned by Warren County at the QBP. Ms. Pratt Gerbino distributed a map and list of the lots at the QBP to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. Paul Dusek, County Administrator, distributed copies of the original agreement and the supplemental agreement to the Committee members; *copies of same are on file with the minutes*. Ms. Pratt Gerbino explained that the County owned six lots totaling 26.27 acres and the HRLDC owned two lots totaling 15.33 acres. She said the HRLDC had purchase options on all of the lots and they were requesting to extend those options. Mr. Dusek explained the original agreement had been between Warren County and the Warren County EDC and was later transferred over to the HRLDC. He said the agreement originated in 2000 after the County had foreclosed on property located on County Line Road in the Town of Queensbury which consisted of 72 acres of land. He said the Warren County EDC had wanted use of the property with an option to purchase the property in the future and have it conveyed to them. He further explained that the supplemental agreement was drafted in 2004 due to the EDC being unprepared to purchase the entire parcel and therefore they had proposed that they be granted the option to purchase one lot of the property at a time until November of 2011. He stated the agreement included the option price of \$2,560 to retain the right to purchase the property in the future, as well as a price of \$1,600 per acre for each lot purchased. He noted the EDC had also agreed to be responsible for the full sub-division of the property. Since the option had expired, he continued, it was now necessary to extend the option to allow the HRLDC to continue to purchase lots at the QBP. He said the question before the Committee was whether they wished to continue the agreement to allow the HRLDC to continue purchasing the remaining lots.

Following a brief discussion, motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to extend the purchase options of the Hudson River Local Development Corporation (formerly Warren County Economic Development Corporation) on parcels owned by Warren County within the Queensbury Business Park totaling 26.27 acres (Lot Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6, 8 and 9). *The necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18, 2012 Board meeting.*

Ms. Pratt Gerbino distributed copies of a draft version of the revised Covenants for the QBP to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. She said the Covenants had been slightly amended and the HRLDC would be considering their adoption on Monday, May 7, 2012. She apprised the HRLDC owned two of the nine lots at the QBP and said the Covenants could be applied to all nine lots if the County approved. Ms. Pratt Gerbino stated the Covenants had been drafted to ensure they attracted the type of economic development projects which were desired at the QBP. She noted that much of the Covenants echoed language from the Town of Queensbury zoning regulations. Mr. Taylor asked why the noise requirements in the Covenants did not list maximum decibel levels and Ms. Pratt Gerbino replied she believed the maximum decibel levels were listed in

the zoning regulations. Mr. Mason suggested the possible adoption of the QBP Covenants by the Committee should be tabled until the next meeting to allow the Committee members and the County Attorney an opportunity to review the document. Ms. Pratt Gerbino noted the document had been drafted for the HRLDC and the County Attorney would want to make minor adjustments pertaining to the County. It was the consensus of the Committee to table the revisions of the QBP Covenants until their next meeting.

Ms. Pratt Gerbino distributed copies of the Garner Economics LLC Report dated April 2012 to the Committee members; *a copy of same is on file with the minutes*. She said she had been unable to obtain a copy of the Forbes Report as it was not currently available online. She noted the Garner Economics LLC Report was an MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area) Report and the Glens Falls, New York MSA was listed as having average weekly earnings of \$780 for which it was ranked 90; and showed a six month average annual earnings growth rate of 4.1% for which it was ranked 149. She announced the Forbes Report had ranked the Glens Falls, New York MSA as No. 8 out of 242 for best small cities for jobs. She noted the Glens Falls MSA was comprised of Warren and Washington Counties.

Ms. Pratt Gerbino informed the EDC Annual Luncheon would be held on Thursday, May 17, 2012, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Great Escape Lodge. She said the keynote speaker would be Darin Buelow, of Deloitte Consulting, who would discuss the topic of "Competing for Business Investment in 2012 and Beyond". She explained that corporate real estate executives tended to hire consultants, known as site selectors, to assist them with major investment opportunities. She noted Deloitte Consulting was one of the largest firms of this type and Mr. Buelow was their Principal & National Practice Leader.

Mr. Taylor introduced Fred Engelmann, of Rainmaker Network Services, and said he would be discussing WiFi capabilities in Upstate New York. Mr. Engelmann stated he was a Network Engineer from the Town of Chester and he said he wanted to discuss the flip side of economic development and how it related to rural broadband. He apprised economic development involved bringing companies and employers to the County to increase the employment rate. He said he recently received a report of a survey associated with a new project in a rural area which showed that the majority of the residents received some portion of their income from internet related businesses. He advised the flip side of economic development was economic search and rescue which involved trying to retain residents in the area and allow them to pursue their income from sources such as the internet.

Mr. Engelmann expressed the quest to make broadband available to all residents had been lengthy and the reason it was so difficult was because the cost of servicing a rural area was approximately \$30,000 per mile to install the necessary cable. He noted existing carriers had the same problem as establishing the necessary infrastructure was costly. He added existing carriers usually had a minimum number of households per mile density requirement in order to justify the expense. He commented that DSL service was capable of covering approximately 18,000 feet from the radio tower. He mentioned the real issue was with last mile distribution and lack of physical infrastructure which made extending service to rural areas difficult.

Mr. Engelmann explained that satellite service to rural areas was problematic as the satellites had to be pointed downward which caused interference from trees and mountain ranges. He noted satellite service providers also had a tendency to impose data caps which limited the amount of data usage per user. He commented that the cellular companies marketed their internet products but

their data caps were usually more restrictive than the satellite providers. He said until recently the only other solutions were fixed options, such as WiFi, 4G or WiMax, all of which utilized the microwave band at various frequencies. He explained the problem with microwave frequencies was that they were absorbed by water molecules in foliage and could not penetrate buildings or rock formations.

Mr. Engelmann announced that last December the FCC (Federal Communications Commission) had approved the use of old television band frequencies, UHF and VHF channels. He noted these frequencies were capable of penetrating through foliage and broadcasting around hills. He said the ability of television frequencies to travel one to two miles from the base station meant that one radio would be capable of servicing up to twenty homes in a one-mile radius. He stated television band frequencies were the last mile solution for rural areas. He commented that the cost of this solution was closer to \$80,000 to serve 80 residents and businesses compared to other current projects which were costing \$600,000 and did not serve any residents or businesses. He pointed out that the television band frequencies would be unlicensed which meant there would be no charge to use them. He added that completion of a project would be a matter of months versus a matter of years and would cost tens of thousands versus hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Mr. Taylor questioned the difference in speed between WiFi and Broadband and Mr. Engelmann responded the technology he was discussing was neither WiFi nor Broadband as it was radio technology. Mr. Engelmann explained that speed would be determined on the design of the network and the number of households serviced by each radio. He added the less subscribers per radio, the faster the speed. Mr. McDevitt inquired about the negative aspects of television band frequencies and Mr. Engelmann replied that the technology would not work well in densely populated areas. Chairman Stec inquired as to the next step for any rural community that was interested in pursuing television band frequency service and Mr. Engelmann responded that the Town Supervisor should contact his company to schedule a meeting. Mr. Engelmann noted an additional benefit was that once the infrastructure was established it would be municipally owned. He said developing a model for each rural area involved completion of a propagation study to determine the equipment needs based on terrain.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development, who distributed copies of the agenda to the Committee members; *a copy of the agenda is on file with the minutes.*

Commencing the agenda review, Mr. LaMothe requested to amend Resolution No. 299 of 2010, which established Capital Project No. H312.9550 280 First Wilderness 2008 Building the Future, to change the revenue code to H312.9550 280 3897, to reflect a State revenue code. He noted this was a request from the County Treasurer's Office request and was merely a change in revenue code for bookkeeping purposes.

Motion was made by Mrs. Conover, seconded by Mr. Mason and carried unanimously to amend Resolution No. 299 of 2010 as outlined above. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18, 2012 Board meeting.*

Mr. LaMothe requested to establish Capital Project No. H.334 9550 280, First Wilderness 2011, in the amount of \$463,116 for administration of the Local Waterfront Revitalization Program grant.

Motion was made by Mrs. Wood, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to establish Capital Project No. H.334 9550 280, First Wilderness 2011 as outlined above and to forward same to the Finance Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. LaMothe requested authorization for an agreement with the Lake George Park Commission to allow the Planning & Community Development Department of Warren County to provide technical support as needed for a term commencing January 1, 2012 and terminating December 31, 2012. He noted there had been a contract in place for several years pertaining to GIS (Geographic Information Systems) services and the contract was necessary in order for the Lake George Park Commission to forward payment to the County.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to authorize an agreement with the Lake George Park Commission as outlined above. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes and the necessary resolution was authorized for the May 18, 2012 Board meeting.

Mr. Dusek stated that the next item on the agenda pertained to the reorganization of the Planning & Community Development Department. He explained that a decision was made during the budget process to re-organize the Department with a single Planner and modifications had been made to the Departmental staff. Recent developments had required a change of plans, he continued, including the retirement of Patricia Tatich, Director of Planning & Community Development, who had offered to continue on a part-time basis. He commented that Mr. LaMothe had planned to retire but had decided to remain to oversee the completion of ongoing projects. Mr. Dusek commented that the recent developments and the re-organization had resulted in a more efficient and productive Department which had the added benefit of being less costly to the County.

Mr. Dusek explained that the Department no longer had a Director, as Ms. Tatich had assumed the title of Planner. He stated the Planning Director salary for 2011 was \$77,136 and the Assistant Director salary was \$62,753 with a First Wilderness Heritage Corridor (FWHC) Stipend of \$4,751. He noted the FWHC Stipend was contingent on continuation of the grant funding. He said that he had completed a salary study pertaining to the Planning Director position and he reported Planning Director salaries as follows:

- ▶ NYSAC (New York State Association of Counties) survey of similar sized counties \$45,000 to \$103,000;
- ▶ Livingston County - \$44,000 to \$77,000;
- ▶ Saratoga County - \$87,000 to \$109,000;
- ▶ Madison County - \$65,000 to \$66,000;
- ▶ Washington County - \$44,000 to \$49,000; and
- ▶ Fulton County - \$55,000 to \$89,000;

Mr. Dusek noted that Fulton and Madison Counties did not charge employees for health insurance coverage which should be considered when evaluating their salary ranges. Based on the salary study and discussions with Mr. LaMothe, Mr. Dusek suggested a salary of \$69,000 for the Planning Director position with the FWHC Stipend of \$4,751 for a total salary of \$73,751. He said he had discussed the salary with Mr. LaMothe who had indicated it was acceptable.

A brief discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mr. Conover, seconded by Mrs. Wood and carried unanimously to approve the request to fill the position of County Planner, annual base salary of \$69,000, effective May 21, 2012 and to delete the position of Assistant Planning Director, annual base salary of \$62,752; thereby amending the Department's Table of Organization, and to forward same to the Personnel Committee. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Concluding the agenda review, Mr. LaMothe provided program updates by informing the Committee members that a grant application had been submitted to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) under the Flood Mitigation Program in the amount of \$473,780. He advised the application had been submitted electronically and the NYSDEC contact person was no longer available. Mrs. Wood indicated she had also been attempting to determine the appropriate contact person at the NYSDEC and would try to contact the Region 5 Director to determine the new contact for the grant. Mr. LaMothe informed of the Department's work on the requests for flood damage assessments. He thanked the Office of the County Administrator for their assistance in compiling the necessary information from the communities which had been an onerous task. He noted the request had pertained to flood damage to infrastructure at the County level, local level and businesses within the communities. He advised \$3.3 million in damages had been reported and added that the grant announcements were anticipated for September of 2012.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Mr. Conover and seconded by Mrs. Wood, Mr. Taylor adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist