

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: ECONOMIC GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

DATE: APRIL 29, 2013

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS TAYLOR
MONTESI
MONROE
WOOD
MASON

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION:
JOHN WHEATLEY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST
CHARLES BARTON, EDC BOARD MEMBER
KEVIN B. GERAGHTY, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
JOANN MCKINSTRY, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
FRANK E. THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISORS GIRARD
STRAINER
WESTCOTT
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
CHARLENE DIRESTA, SR. LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

In the absence of the Committee Chairman, Vice-Chairman Montesi called the meeting of the Economic Growth & Development Committee to order at 10:34 a.m.

Privilege of the floor was extended to John Wheatley, Economic Development Specialist, for the Economic Development Corporation (EDC) Warren County, who distributed copies of a handout to the Committee members, which he reviewed in detail; *a copy of the handout is on file with the minutes.*

Mr. Wheatley stated the EDC was in a transitional period while they searched for a new President and he wanted to inform the Committee members about the activities which were in process. He reported the year-to-date activity included ten inquires of which five had been from companies outside of New York State. He noted there had been forty outreach visits to businesses, six requests for information and representatives of the EDC had attended thirteen external meetings. Pertaining to outreach visits, Mr. Wheatley explained there had been a concerted effort over the last two years to complete outreach visits to the existing businesses in Warren County to determine growth potential. He said the forty outreach visits this year had resulted in fourteen new project opportunities. Concerning the requests for information, Mr. Wheatley advised these were full responses to the Regional leads received from various sources.

Mr. Wheatley informed there were twenty one active projects in the EDC pipeline, which included two potential threats and eight of the projects were from outside of Warren County. Of the twenty one projects, he continued, fourteen were manufacturing companies; two were retail companies; two were distribution centers; one was a back office company; one was in the hospitality industry; and one was recreational. Mrs. Wood questioned the meaning of a project being a threat and Mr. Wheatley replied there was a threat of the investment being made outside of Warren County. Charles Barton, EDC Board member, explained the threat was that the business would locate or re-locate outside of Warren County. Mr. Montesi asked if any of the active projects were contingent on additions to the existing infrastructure and Mr. Wheatley replied in the negative and added that the process took time to complete. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Wheatley reported the upcoming EDC sponsored or co-sponsored meetings, seminars and events, as follows:

- ▶ the SUNY (State University of New York) Plattsburgh Leadership Forum to be held at the Queensbury High School on May 1, 2013;

- ▶ Get Your Municipal Project Ready for CFA's to be held at SUNY Adirondack on May 7, 2013;
- ▶ the EDC Annual Luncheon at the Great Escape Lodge on May 17, 2013, featuring Dr. John Kelly, of IBM (International Business Machines) as the Keynote Speaker;
- ▶ the Southern Adirondack Planning & Zoning Forum on September 19, 2013 which was co-sponsored by the Lake George/Lake Champlain Regional Planning Board; and
- ▶ the New York State Economic Development Council Annual Meeting in Saratoga on May 22-24, 2013.

Mr. Barton apologized for the EDC Annual Luncheon being scheduled for the same day as the Board of Supervisors meeting; however, he continued, he welcomed the attendance of the Board members if their meeting ended in time. Mr. Wheatley explained the Queensbury South Vision Plan included the former Ciba Geigy property and surrounding areas. He said a re-development plan for the area was in process. Mr. Montesi noted the former Ciba Geigy property was the prime location but they were also looking at other South Queensbury areas. He commented there were some serious hindrances to developing the former Ciba Geigy site. He stated there had been suggestions that the site would be ideal for a solar farm.

Continuing, Mr. Wheatley said the Connect New York White Space Broadband Project involved the Town of Thurman which had applied for grant funding for the project. He advised there would be a Familiarization tour in June for the University of Albany President, Dr. Robert Jones, who would tour the area to familiarize himself with the business, industry and commercial opportunities that were available.

Pertaining to Marketing and Communications, Mr. Wheatley announced the re-launch of the EDC/HRLDC (Hudson River Local Development Corporation) Site Competition in which potential businesses were offered an opportunity to "win" one of three building sites for their business. He noted the winner must complete construction within one year of the award. He explained the award was one of the three building lots at no land cost however, he continued, there would be a transfer fee to cover the legal costs. He pointed out the application deadline was June 28, 2013 and the winner would be announced on August 9, 2013. A discussion ensued pertaining to the sewer infrastructure at Northway Exit 18.

Continuing, Mr. Wheatley announced a re-design of the EDC website with an anticipated launch date in mid 2013. He said the use of GIS (Geographic Information System) was an issue and he inquired about the possibility of incorporating the County's GIS web page into the EDC website. A brief discussion ensued which resulted in a consensus of the Committee that the EDC should contact Wayne LaMothe, County Planner, pertaining to the possibility of establishing a link from the EDC website to the County GIS web page.

Mr. Wheatley stated the EDC would improve their visibility on existing and future social media sites. He added the Empire Zone reporting, compliance and administration was an ongoing project. He advised the EDC had upgraded their existing computer server and software. He noted the EDC put out a bi-weekly newsletter entitled the EDC Insider. He mentioned collaboration efforts with the Warren County Local Development Corporation were ongoing.

Mr. Barton apprised the EDC had established a Search Committee to assist with the search for a new President. He explained when the position had been vacant three years prior, a National search had been conducted to find a suitable candidate. He said the search had found Victoria Pratt-Gerbino, former President of the EDC, and her resignation resulted in the current vacancy. Mr. Barton stated that Ms. Pratt-Gerbino had been very knowledgeable and was successful at pointing out areas which required improvement. He mentioned that Ms. Pratt-Gerbino had pointed out the need for the EDC Warren County to have more of a National presence and to improve collaboration efforts. Mr. Barton advised the EDC was searching for a new President who would be able to take their collaboration

efforts to the next level. He advised the Search Committee had collected approximately twelve resumes and they were in the process of conducting the first round of interviews. He added they hoped to commence the second round of interviews during the month of May and to announce the new President by the end of May.

Mr. Montesi commented that Governor Cuomo had opined the Adirondacks were not part of the North Country when it came to economic development but were included in the Capital Region. He asked if there was a representative on the Capital Region Economic Development Council from this area and Mr. Wheatley replied affirmatively. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Girard reminded the Committee that when Len Fosbrook had been the President of the EDC, he had been in support of development at the Floyd Bennett Memorial Airport. He noted several large private businesses used the Airport to receive vital parts for their companies. Mr. Girard commented that Ms. Pratt-Gerbino had never voiced her opinion on the development of the Airport and he questioned EDC's current position and if they anticipated the new President would be supportive. He stated the Adirondack Gateway Council had offered their support of developing the Airport. Mr. Barton responded the EDC's primary focus was on the economic development of the private sector and he added community development was the arena for the elected officials. He stated the Airport was a sensitive issue and some studies would need to be completed to determine the best course of action. He suggested the possibility of bringing in a third party to evaluate the needs of the Airport.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Taylor entered the meeting at 11:19 a.m.

Mr. Mason said the possibility of a third party opinion was discussed at a previous County Facilities Committee meeting and the Airport Manager had commented that grant funding could be obtained to do so. Mr. Wheatley stated there was no doubt that the Airport was an asset. Mr. Girard pointed out that Rich Schermerhorn was one of the largest developers in Warren County and he had stated that he had never met Ms. Pratt-Gerbino. Mr. Barton responded that he could not answer for Ms. Pratt Gerbino and was unsure if she had ever attempted to meet with Mr. Schermerhorn. He stated that although the Airport was a community development project and not an economic development project, the EDC was ready to assist the County if needed.

Mr. Westcott advised that Tori Riley, the President of the Washington County EDC, had resigned and he asked if any consideration had been given to the possibility of joining forces and hiring one President to represent both counties. Mr. Barton replied that Ms. Pratt-Gerbino had encouraged further collaboration with Washington County. He said Ms. Pratt-Gerbino and Ms. Riley had a very strong working relationship which had evolved to the Washington County Local Development Agency having a Board seat on the EDC Warren County. Mr. Westcott asked if there had been discussions with the Washington County EDC pertaining to coordinating on the hiring of a mutual President and Mr. Barton replied that the Washington County and Warren County structure was currently different. He added they could discuss the possibility but no discussions had been held thus far.

There being no further business to come before the Economic Growth & Development Committee, on motion made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mrs. Wood, Mr. Montesi adjourned the meeting at 11:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Charlene DiResta, Sr. Legislative Office Specialist