

COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
MEETING MINUTES

January 21, 2021– 11:00 A.M. ZOOM

Supervisor	Present	Absent	Late	Time In
MOSES	X			
Ostrander	X			
Jones	X			
Magliocca	X			
Stokes	x			

PRESENT:

Committee: **Cliff Moses**, Joe Ostrander, Dave Jones, Joe Magliocca, and TJ Stokes

County Staff: Ellen Bowe, Karin Bump, Cindy Edick, , Melissa Martel Felton, Scott Flaherty, Kipp Hicks, Scott Ingmire, Jamie Kowalczk, Becky Marsala, Mark Scimone, Eve Ann Shwartz, Myron Thurston, Tina Wayland-Smith, and Gwen Williamson_

Additional Present: Philip Rose

Meeting was called to order at 11:01 A.M. by Moses.

A-1: The January 21 2021 minutes were approved on a **MOTION** by Magliocca and seconded by Stokes at 11:02 A.M. 5/0/0

A-2: Cindy Edick presented the Sales Tax Update. The sales tax receipts total after the February distributions was less than last year by 9% due to NYS having retained \$179,250.00 for the Distress Nursing Home and Hospital Fund.

A-3: Becky Marsala presented the Treasurer / Real Property Update. There is a certain parcel in the town of Madison being considered for either auction or competitive bidding. This parcel was a former quarry and has been inactive since 1939. Marsala contacted the auction company to have them research the value of the property. Research results will be reported at a future meeting. Marsala noted there are 13 or 14 more additional properties for inclusion in the auction.

Occupancy Tax Collection Discussion: Governor Cuomo's executive budget allows for tax on vacation rentals, BRBO's and B&B's. Each municipality needs to develop codes. Regarding registrations, Marsala prefers that the municipalities review them for approval based on their own codes first, before they come to the Treasurer's Department. There is a form on the Treasurer's webpage that Melissa Martel Felton will review and make suggestions for changes if needed before sending to the towns.

A-4: Ellen Bowe presented the Career Center Update. A letter went out to Madison County manufacturers regarding potential training funds from NYS Apprenticeship Program. They were also notified of the online platform "Tooling U" as an option for upscaling the workforce. Harbor Freight will be hiring soon and plans to open in April. The unemployment rate for Madison County is 5.8%. Green Empire Farms is also hiring and recently attended a virtual job fair in Oneida County. Moses asked if Madison County could consider a virtual job fair. Bowe said yes; they can get the employers to participate but it is hard to get the people.

A-5: Kipp Hicks presented the IDA Update. A Chittenango concrete company is a possible candidate for a revolving loan fund. There is the potential startup of a manufacturer of flexible solar panels in the Cazenovia area. Hicks has been in discussion with CNY Regional Planning and Development Office and a National Grid Development representative regarding potential funding of a feasibility study to look at

putting a rail spur on Elm Street. They continue to share information from Small Business Administration and Empire State Development Programs. He is in conversation with the mayor on an Oneida property regarding PILOT agreement.

A-6: Karin Bump, and Myron Thurston presented the CCE Update. The free seniors tax program is up and running. CCE staff will be training on the New Smart Energy Choice Program, which is specific to farms and includes one for vegetable producers. A regional group is working on program materials for solar on farms that will potentially become a series of webinars. Bump has been in contact with Eric Faisst from Public Health with an offer to host community webinars for information on COVID-19 vaccinations. The CCE building was offered as a pod site for PPE. Bump is writing letters of support for the CAPTA Microloans to farms. Myron shared information on a mapping project with a work study student through Colgate that will be mapping farm locations, farms needing help, conservation easements and agricultural districts in order to get a true sense of the farming community in Madison County. Thurston thanked Ingmire for his assistance. Thurston is also working with Flaherty on an Agri-tourism project for a historical focused bus tour that would include visits to Mansion House and Abolitionist Hall of Fame. Off the Muck is a mail-order vegetable distribution company coming back to Madison County. They will be located at the Growing Upstate Food Hub site in Canastota. The Ag. Team is offering the Ag. Disaster Prep. Course in partnership with NYCAM as a 2-day training in mid-March. Participants will be offered a 10% discount on local farm and family insurance from the American National Insurance Company.

Questions and answers resumed about the Off the Muck business including: whether or not local farmers will be providing produce in the future, if meat products might be offered, and how this could fit in well with other local farm programs already in place.

A-7: Scott Flaherty presented the Tourism Update. The governor is now allowing weddings and larger events to take place as long as certain requirements are met and there is input from the Health Departments. MC Health Dept. has said that it will be offering guidance for wedding venues and events very soon. The Boxing Hall of Fame Induction Weekend is cancelled for this year. Flaherty said that according to national travel data, 81% of those surveyed plan to travel in the next 6 months. Tourism ads running currently are focused on winter outdoor adventure, getaways, and weddings. Phillip Rose, FREE Center President, noted that they are not doing in-person tours either, and instead are using grant money to help fund video tours, which should be available in the spring. Moses mentioned the Governor's executive order allowing indoor entertainment to resume at 25% capacity and outdoor entertainment to resume at 33% beginning April 9 with the sale of tickets permitted.

A-8: Scott Ingmire presented the Planning Update. A staffing change was made in the Planning Department and Scott will expand on this information in executive session if requested. In light of changes to NYS regulations for siting of renewable energy projects, there has been a recent surge in solar and wind project activity. NYS is putting new regulations in place, moving away from Article 10, and developing a new series of detailed application processes that will not require as much municipal involvement. There is a new website showing Article 10 projects that had previously applied but were never created being transferred to the new regulations 94-C. The new office of the state: ORES – Office of Renewable Energy Siting will be permitting these projects using a different faster process. Tina Wayland-Smith informed the Committee that she has been slammed with negotiating PILOT agreements, including price per megawatt. Tina believes that the Planning Committee or Planning Department should be looking at these agreements first. She said that the Governor is proposing to create a standard methodology for assessment of solar and wind projects greater than 1 megawatt and large projects will be removed from SEQR review. Scott shared a map of small projects and a spreadsheet listing PILOT projects, projects in process, and proposed projects. Tina explained that the newer wind turbines are massive compared to what we have now, 600 feet as compared to 300 (approximated). Concerns discussed were neighborhood properties, farmland preservation, visibility, and disruption of communication towers. Thurston emphasized that if the projections hit the goal, 15% of all farmland will be covered by renewable energy projects by 2050. Bump offered help through contacts with the ag. and farm agencies. Rose shared his experience with having been contacted by Liberty Renewals and promised “the moon” if he signed, and the money was attractive but there was no consideration whatsoever for scale, people, community or farmland. Rose emphatically urged that the County come out in strong support of Home Rule, which he described as “sacred law”. Tina explained that

these agreements and leases are very restrictive and hard to understand. She is concerned that anyone who signs one of these agreements without the benefit of a lawyer may not be able to perceive the full consequences of their signature for now and the future. Shwartz mentioned that the whole process is reminiscent of the gas lease issues. Jones agrees that the lease agreements are tricky to understand. He suggests more research and development is needed, as technology is ever changing and perhaps smaller or newer systems can be just as effective. It was stated that solar and wind power can be very positive means of renewable energy if regulated appropriately, and the Committee believes that this regulation should not be taken out the municipality's control. Municipalities need to have input and control in order to protect the very communities that are affected. It was commented that the state has already begun this legislation and a legal battle would most likely be ineffective and very expensive. Shwartz reminded everyone that during the gas lease issue, landowners organized, educated themselves and hired experts. The Farm Bureau was also very involved in protecting farmers. She urged that we do not throw in the towel too quickly, but to really look into it.

A-9: The resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into an extension agreement with Environmental Design and Research, D.P.C. was unanimously *approved* on a **MOTION** by Stokes and seconded by Magliocca at 12:14 P.M. 5/0/0

A-10: The resolution extending an agreement with EMJ Premier Services LLC was unanimously *approved* on a **MOTION** by Jones and seconded by Stokes at 12:16 P.M. 5/0/0

A-11: The resolution calling for a public hearing regarding the submission of a Community Development Block Grant application was unanimously *approved* on a **MOTION** by Magliocca and seconded by Ostrander at 12:17 P.M. 5/0/0

A-12: Following a detailed explanation by Ingmire and discussion from Martel Felton regarding easements and surveys, the resolution authorizing a contract with the Madison County Soil and Water Conservation District for maintenance of the drainage network in the Cowaselon Creek Watershed District was unanimously *approved* on a **MOTION** by Magliocca and seconded by Stokes at 12:28 P.M. 5/0/0

A-13: The above resolutions are to be included in the preferred agenda on a **MOTION** by Moses and seconded by Stokes at 12:29 P.M. 5/0/0

A-14: *There is no new business.*

A-15: Next meeting is March 18 at 11:00 A.M.

A-17: Meeting was adjourned on a **MOTION** by Jones and seconded by Stokes at 12:29 P.M.

Respectfully submitted: Gwen Williamson