

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

July 29, 2008

2:00 p.m.

Conf. Rm. E, 4th Floor, Legislative Office Building, Oswego, NY

1. Roll Call: The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

PRESENT: Legs. Shawn Doyle, Chairman, Morris Sorbello, V. Chair., Jack Beckwith, Louella LeClair, Douglas Malone, and Kimberly Seager

EXCUSED: Leg. Arthur Gearsbeck

GUESTS: Leg. Lockwood, Leg. Brown, Leg. Kastler, Ned Waterbury, Richard Henry, John DeHollander, Mike Treadwell, Paul Forestiere, Charles McChesney, and Sue Pringle

STAFF: Janet Clerkin, Chairman Leemann, Phil Church, Dave Turner, and Deb Wise

Approval of Minutes – June 24, 2008

Chair Doyle asked for an approval to the minutes of June 24, 2008 with one change that being on Page 4, last paragraph before Adjournment, Marshall's farm, should state Marshall Brown's farm (GMBee). Motion by Leg. LeClair second by Leg. Sorbello to accept the minutes with the change. All were in favor. Motion carried.

2. Lake Ontario Water Levels Correspondence

Chairman Doyle introduced Mr. Waterbury from the Ramona Beach Association who came to discuss the landowner's concerns with lake levels, as proposed by the International Joint Commission. From what we have learned and there is a lot of concern along the low lying areas of the lake, that proposed high levels will drastically affect property owners. For fifty years the water has been controlled at certain levels. If this current plan goes through there are property owners that will have a huge amount of erosion, property damage and loss of property value. Chairman Doyle stated that Wayne County is taking a position, we just received their letter here today, they are opposing the current plan, there was public comment available until July. Dave Turner, John DeHollander and Dave White from Sea Grant, all attended the public meeting that was held by the International Joint Commission in Oswego.

Chairman Doyle asked Mr. Turner to speak about what transpired at that meeting. Mr. Turner stated that this is about the fourth revision to this plan to try and regulate the lake levels, this is the 2007 Plan Amendment B+. Mr. Turner stated that the public meeting that was held in Oswego was very well attended. Originally they had asked that those that would speak would keep their comments to 5 minutes and if you were going to speak about something that had already been spoken about that they were asked not to speak. Mr. Turner stated that all of our concerns were addressed by several others, so we never spoke. Our concerns were to protect the property owners along the lake, this includes operators of marinas, other marine services, hotels, we felt that our concern was that over the last fifty years, the lake has been maintained at a fairly steady level. 243 – 247 feet above sea level, we are about in the middle of that at about 245 feet. Mr. Turner stated that a lot of money has been spent over the last fifty years, on the assumption that the plan called for maintaining the water levels within that range, so the marinas and roadways built, piers, walkways, water treatment facilities, public water intake, industrial intakes, millions of dollars have been spent for engineering based on the lake staying in that range. Mr. Turner

stated that if there needs to be a change it should include some criteria to maintain levels in that range in order to accept the plan.

Chairman Doyle introduced Ned Waterbury, as the president of the Ramona Beach Association. Ramona Beach is on the eastern shore of Lake Ontario in the Town of Richland. Mr. Waterbury introduced Richard Henry, he will help me with the figures and the scientific aspect of our concerns. Mr. Waterbury stated that we are landowners concerned with the erosion, property damage that occurs with the high water levels of the lake. Mr. Waterbury stated those of us at Ramona Beach have invested in our properties, to many, these are our vacation homes. Defending our properties could be very costly. Mr. Waterbury stated that the 1958 plan for fifty years this didn't factor in recreational boating and environmental factors, this plan isn't ideal but we have adapted. The damage to shoreline property owners is devastating, in the spring and in the fall with lake levels up. Mr. Waterbury stated that we have had cabins flooded, private roads have flooded, this affects property assessments, this could have a very negative impact on the area. Mr. Henry stated that the lake level of 247 feet above sea level is the highest level that we can tolerate. He continued that the 1973 – 1974 flooding that occurred, the level of the lake was at 248 feet. Mr. Henry stated in his opinion the level should never rise above 247 feet. Mr. Waterbury stated that the 2007 B+ plan would be the most devastating to our landowners. Chairman Doyle stated that the northern part of the county is more active in this. We need to write a letter of support to go to the full Legislature. It was decided after much discussion that the Legislature would draft a letter and a resolution to keep the lake level no higher than 247 feet. Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Sorbello in support of sending a letter to the International Joint Commission to maintain the lake levels no higher than 247 feet and a resolution to send to state officials, these will go before the full legislature on August 14th regarding the plan and the lake levels. All were in favor. Motion carried.

3. Community Development, Tourism and Planning

a. IAGT Contract

Dave Turner stated that we are looking for authorization to accept the contract with IAGT (Institute for the Application of Geospatial Technology) for the processing of the recently acquired LiDAR data. They are a very specialized firm. Mr. Turner stated that they will process our LiDAR data that we have collected recently. We now have billions of data points and this institute will process the data, so that it can be used to produce maps, 3-D models for various applications, etc. The whole county has been flown, now we can put that information into a form that we can use. Chairman Doyle stated that if you look at the information, we are really ahead of the game with this we are doing things that other counties aren't. Leg. Malone asked will this cost more than the \$21,296? Mr. Turner stated no, this is what was budgeted for. John DeHollander stated that this will be used by local communities that participate in the FEMA Insurance Program. Chairman Doyle stated that this sounds like a valuable project. Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Beckwith to accept this proposal and enter into a contract for professional services with IAGT. All were in favor. Motion carried.

b. Waterfront Access Projects

Dave Turner stated that in 2006 we worked with the Town of Scriba and the Town of Hastings to apply for 2 grants through the Department of State, Division of Coastal Resources for the purpose of looking at the Lake Ontario coastline and the river corridors (Oswego and Oneida Rivers) and Oneida Lake shoreline within Oswego County. The purpose of these 2 projects would be to take a look at all of our public access or lack there of in those areas. We worked with the 2 towns as the county wasn't able to

access the funds at that time, now they are. This doesn't require any action by this committee or the Legislature. Mr. Turner stated that there is no expense to the county, we will be offering services from our staff, this will help to leverage cash from the state and have a consultant come in and tell us what we need to have.

c. Pro-Am Tournament

Dave Turner stated that this tournament has been going on for 14 years in the County, it brings a lot of people into the County. We had people from 6 different states and 38 communities outside of Oswego County. We know for a fact that the team captains aren't all from around here, one team that I spoke to had members from Ohio, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, it does bring in a lot of people from out of state. They probably spend around \$100,000 in the county when they are here.

d. Filming Project

Dave Turner stated we are promoting the county and looking at different ways to do that. To support the sport fisheries and as part of the tournament we had a team here from an outdoor television production company. Mr. Turner stated they went out in a boat, gathered information and we're putting that together. They also took video footage of Oswego County, aerial photography of Salmon River Falls, the river corridor, and the Oneida Lake shoreline. We hope to use that for possibly a commercial for internet based programming. This will be our first big venture in trying to use a video for advertising of our county.

e. County Fair Report

Dave Turner stated that we had a contest in the Tourism Public Information building. We raffle off a basket and part of the reason for doing this is to get information on people that come to the fair. This year there were visitors from 15 counties and 3 states that stopped in to the Tourism Public Information building, which is a wide representation. Janet Clerkin stated that we raffle off a basket and a lot of the products in the basket were donated, by local museums, plus bait and tackle shops, altogether we had almost 500 people register for the drawing. Ms. Clerkin stated that this gives us a good view of who attends the fair and those people will be entered into our database. We had 8 County departments represented at the fair, those included the Sheriff's, Youth Bureau, Health Dept., Emergency Management, Tourism, Legislature, Social Services and Office for the Aging. Ms. Clerkin stated that there were 8 tourism businesses, attractions, that also had displays at the fair. Ms. Clerkin stated that there were 21 volunteers and staff of the Tourism department, Mary Ellen Barbeau from Tourism does a great job arranging the volunteers. The Tourism staff demonstrated the tourism website, that went well, 2 areas of most interest were the fishing reports and history and genealogy. Chairman Doyle stated that Frontier Phone Service supplied the free internet, to the Tourism building and the Heritage building. Leg. Sorbello stated that we need to do something to the front of the building so that we can attract more people there. There was some discussion. Ms. Clerkin stated that the location of the building gets overlooked a lot, we need something friendlier. Chairman Doyle stated that the fair was a good success and we had a lot of Legislators at the fair this year.

f. Regional Marketing Initiative

Dave Turner asked Jan Clerkin to speak about this effort. Focus is more on our immediate neighbors. Jan Clerkin stated that there are a couple of projects that they are working on right now, one is driving itineraries with our regional partners in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties. These are scenic drives to take place in the fall and the I Love NY marketing chain will be selecting what they would like to include

in their state website. Ms. Clerkin stated this gives us the opportunity to show the attractions that we have, some of them are Fort Ontario, the Fish Hatchery, we will have 3 different routes. The second includes history, historic sites and the third is Creature Comforts, such as Salmon River Falls, art galleries, fine arts, and the Salmon River Reservoir. Ms. Clerkin stated we did make arrangements to have literature distributed at the Salmon Run Mall in Watertown, and the Watertown Chamber of Commerce, which are two new venues for us. We have always had information going to the visitors center at the International Bridge. Chairman Doyle stated that people are staying in the area, a lot of people are staying in the county. Chairman Doyle stated that it would be great if we could make the driving tours available on the website, and possibly snowmobile information on the website. Especially the parking for the snowmobilers, so that we don't have the same problems as we had last year. Much discussion followed.

Leg. LeClair stated that she had gotten an email about the Richardson-Bates House, what committee does that fall under? Chairman Doyle stated that he is president of a historical society, he had also gotten that email, I have emailed other people about this. Chairman Doyle stated that funding was cut off, as well as many other non-for profits and authorized agencies in 2003. Most people weren't here then, those that were know what a time that was, most organizations have been able to adapt. Chairman Doyle stated, I think that our historical society is thriving right now, we have never gotten any funding. Leg. Brown stated that the Pratt House has never received any either. Chairman Doyle stated that we have adapted, we have 15 trustees and every one of them does volunteer. He also stated that the Richardson-Bates house is a very beautiful house, they need to be more proactive. Leg. Kastler stated that some of the displays in the Heritage Building, are just amazing and the genealogy information is excellent. Phil Church stated that for the committee's information, the Historical Society will be requesting a budget package this year. Chairman Doyle stated that there are ways of funding out there, you just have to do the leg work.

4. Operation Oswego County

a. IDA Loan Projects

1. Oswego YMCA

Mr. Treadwell stated that this is lease financing for equipment for the Oswego YMCA, for \$85,000. This will help to retain 8 jobs, and will allow for the expansion of a 139 year old not-for-profit health, fitness and wellness service organization. Mr. Treadwell stated that this is for your information.

2. Pathfinder Industries, Inc.

Mr. Treadwell stated that this is lease financing for equipment for the Pathfinder Industries for \$92,500. This will create 7 new jobs and will allow for the expansion and acquisition of a new machining center and equipment needed to meet their increased customer demand.

3. Southern Graphics Systems (Bridge Funding)

Mr. Treadwell stated that this is for conduit financing through Operation Oswego County, this is temporary funding for a ESDC grant secured by Sen. Wright, this will help to finance the acquisition of an automated copper plating system. This will be expedited by the conduit funding for the State grant. This bridge funding is necessary to access the \$80,000 approved by Empire State Development. This will help to retain 26 jobs.

b. Annual Report

Mr. Treadwell stated that the Annual Report 2007 that was distributed at Operation Oswego County's Annual Meeting in compliance with the U.S. Small Business Administration, the report has been filed. Mr. Treadwell stated that this is for your information.

5. Agency Reports

a. Cooperative Extension

Chairman Doyle stated that he asks for these reports so that this committee knows what is going on. Leg. Sorbello stated that recently we had two hail storms come through the county, this has raised havoc with fruit and vegetable growers, hard crop farmers, such as corn and so on. I really believe that we should have a disaster declaration be declared in this county. I would like to see a resolution made at legislature asking the governor and passed on to declare this county a disaster. Leg. Seager asked do we have a number for this? Leg. Brown stated that there were apples damaged at Torrice's farm. Leg. Sorbello stated that this is something that the county should do, to make our state officials aware, this should go to the governor as a declaration as well as the federal government. Leg. Sorbello stated that we think there should be a motion for a declaration. We need to know if this damage is within the threshold. Chairman Doyle stated that we don't usually do a declaration at this committee level. We can do a declaration pending the data. Motion by Leg. Sorbello second by Leg. Seager to request a state disaster regarding damage to crops from hail storms. All were in favor of supporting such a request from the state.

Paul Forestiere stated that at the Fruit Valley Orchards there was damage, there were others and they weren't all in a straight line. Leg. Seager stated that the damage isn't all in one area, if the news media had reported wide spread damage in the county then the governor would've been aware and now there is a lot of acreage damaged but the governor is unaware. Mr. Forestiere stated that Cooperative Extension will report damages, but the data has to be documented in order to report it. If these fields are going to be unproductive with onions, then the onions need to be cleaned up before they start diseases. The FSA is actually the one that will determine the value of the damages. We don't do this peace meal, we will report the whole thing in the County. Leg. Seager stated that Ted Jerrett will draft the resolution. Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. LeClair to accept the Cooperative Extension report. All were in favor.

b. Soil and Water – Weed Harvesting

John DeHollander stated he would pass out some materials. Mr. DeHollander stated the blue sheet is more historical than anything else, this shows the aquatic vegetation control program in Oswego County since 1989. The second page handed out is the future status of the control program, by the end of 2008, the District will no longer provide the voluntary service of mechanical harvesting. Government should not compete against private enterprise, there are presently 2 contractors in Oswego County that do this work. Mr. DeHollander continued that the third handout was suggested by my Board of Directors, this is the Aquatic Vegetation Control Program this gives some of the ideas that we have been working on in the County, which is limited to two activities. Mr. DeHollander stated the activities are mechanical harvesting and chemical control, which has just been brought into the limelight in the last few years. Leg. Beckwith stated that 90% of the harvesting done is in the Town of Granby. Leg. Beckwith continued that the County would need two more weed harvesters to get the water chestnuts under control, which would be quite costly, this would cost \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year. First we should go with chemical control. Leg. LeClair stated that the outside of Fulton is a mess, something needs to be

done. Mr. DeHollander stated that this is very big concern, we have to be thinking of a bigger picture, and how we can get rid of the water chestnuts. The last item is a long range control program that was put together by myself and my counterpart in Onondaga County.

Leg. Sorbello stated that the Granby Clear Water Association was lead agency in looking into the chemical treatments. This is a serious problem, affects tourism and water properties, I was under the impression that Soil and Water has the opposite attitude, there has to be other avenues for money. The DEC has this philosophy that it's flowable water then we can't use herbicides. Let's get some action going whether it be federal or state, we felt that Soil and Water was very capable of doing this. I understand that the mechanical harvester has been a burden. Leg. Sorbello stated that now we are going to quit, what will happen with the weeds? Mr. DeHollander stated that we will still be in the business of water chestnut control we just aren't using the harvester after this season. There was some discussion. Leg. Sorbello asked how can we control these? We need to do something, Onondaga County has a plan and they have something working. In addition to FL-LOWPA Onondaga County tied into another funding source. Leg. Brown asked if we stop using any control how much will this impede water flow? They could cause flooding, backup and more silt, slowing down everything.

Chairman Doyle stated that Leg. Sorbello could contact Mr. Piro he owns property along Ox Creek. Mr. DeHollander stated that Ox Creek has had a private contractor, they cut and release back into the water. Mr. DeHollander stated it is against the law to transport and spread the water chestnuts. I would suggest that the landowners write letters to their state representatives.

Chairman Doyle stated that he was told by Ted Jerrett, that there are a lot of phone calls inquiring about the water districts. There are no records of water districts. He asked Dave Turner if the planning department could accept these records? Mr. Turner stated that Marty has asked about water district maps. We haven't been able to get a complete set of maps. We've asked for digital maps, so that we can actually view them and overlay them. So far the engineering firms have been reluctant to hand over these maps. Oswego County could make this a requirement for the installation of a water district in order for that to go through. The town or entity would be required to provide a digital map at the very least to the County. There is no mechanism now requiring that.

Paul Forestiere stated that the Director of Planning and the Director of Soil and Water share my concerns, Oswego County is heading for a problem. We are spending a tremendous amount of resource to put fresh water into the County and no one is thinking about where this water is going. A majority of the septic systems in Oswego County, are way beyond capacity, we are headed for disaster. Mr. Forestiere continued this is not necessarily a County problem, we need to convince the Towns that they need to look at the outflow. Chairman Doyle stated that he would talk to Leg. Chair Leemann about this.

II. Adjournment

Chairman Doyle asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 4:04 p.m.

Motion by Leg. Seager second by Leg. Sorbello to adjourn the meeting. All in favor the meeting was adjourned.