

**COUNTY OF OSWEGO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**

September 29, 2009

PRESENT:

Morris Sorbello, Chair
Louella LeClair, Vice Chair
Jack Beckwith
Shawn Doyle
Art Gearsbeck
Art Ospelt

STAFF/GUESTS:

Philip Church, County Administrator
Legs. Proud, Santore, Hayes, Potter, Kastler
Janet Clerkin, Tourism and Public Information Coordinator
Michael Treadwell, Operation Oswego County
Fred Maxon, Purchasing Director
Jonathan Schell, Cooperative Extension
David Turner, Dir. of Comm. Dev. Tourism & Planning
John DeHollander, Joe Chairvolotti Soil & Water District
Ed Lighthall and Dick Drosse of Tourism Adv. Council
Ted Jerrett, Clerk of the Legislature
Terry Wilbur, Hannibal resident

EXCUSED:

Doug Malone

MEDIA:

Carol Thompson, Valley News; Steve Yablonski, Oswego Daily News; Aaron Curtis, Pall Times

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Committee Chair Sorbello called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM.

1. Minutes of August 25, 2009 and September 10, 2009:

Motion to approve as drafted: Leg. Ospelt

Second: Leg. Gearsbeck

Vote: Unanimous

2. Bid/RFP Report:

Purchasing Director Fred Maxon reported that the contract for the OCO Kitchen in Mexico has been revised so that the grant already received for the project will cover 100% of the cost.

3. Community Development, Tourism and Planning:

A. Resolution – DOT Grant

Planning Director Dave Turner requested Committee support for accepting/dispersing a \$61,000 NYS Department of Transportation Grant. The purpose is to purchase a new bus for rural transit services to be operated by Oswego County Opportunities.

Motion to approve request: Leg. Doyle

Second: Leg. Beckwith

Vote: Unanimous

B. Resolution – Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Planning Director Dave Turner requested Committee support for accepting/dispersing a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant. The purpose is to offer septic and water repairs to low income families, principally outside existing or planned public water/sewer districts.

Motion to approve request: Leg. Gearsbeck

Second: Leg. Doyle

Vote: Unanimous

C. Resolution – NYS Energy Research and Development (ERDA) Grant

Planning Director Dave Turner requested Committee support for accepting/dispersing a \$24,500 NYSERDA Grant. It will fund energy conservation studies at the Legislative Office Building and the Bunner Street Health Complex

Motion to approve request: Leg. Doyle

Second: Leg. LeClair

Vote: Unanimous

D. Water Chestnut threat to County Tourism – Dick Drosse, Tourism Adv. Council

Dick Drosse provided the Committee with an overview of the Water Chestnut problem in Oswego County Waterways noting successful and failed efforts to control its spread. Mr. Drosse added that rampant spread of the Water Chestnut in the Oswego River threatens to deny use of the waterway to both residents and tourists. He suggested that a long-term program of control with chemicals appears to be the most practical. Legs. Doyle and Kastler agreed that uncontrolled growth of the weed in the Sandy Pond area would destroy area tourism. When asked, John DeHollander of the Soil and Water Conservation District estimated the cost of a chemical control program would be around \$60,000/year. Leg. Ospelt asked if management of the Oswego River is a State or a County responsibility. Administrator Church said “the State”. Leg. Doyle suggested that the County invest in controlling the spread of Water Chestnut because doing nothing would be disastrous.

Motion to request Co. Administrator to include in the 2010 Budget, a \$60,000 line for Water Chestnut Control: Leg. LeClair

Second: Leg Doyle

Vote: All in favor except Leg. Gearsbeck, who voted “no”

E. Department Updates

Community Development, Tourism & Planning Director Dave Turner provided the Committee with a listing of his department’s activity for the month and noted that traffic to the county’s tourism website has more than doubled with the onset of the fall fishing & hunting seasons. He also added that the tourism office had distributed nearly 1,000 fishing & hunting guides over the past week at just two of their many distribution points. Leg. LeClair commended the Promotion and Tourism for its growing successes.

F. Planning Board Discussion

Leg. Doyle urged the Committee to proceed with reconstituting a County Planning Board. Leg. Gearsbeck said he opposes a County Planning Board in that it just slows the process of development by adding another meeting. Operation Oswego County Executive Director Mike Treadwell offered that involvement of a County Planning Board should be triggered by a request from a local planning board.

Motion to proceed with proposal to create a County Planning Board with the stipulations that a County Planning Board 1) will convene only when requested by local planning board, 2) will have a limited response time: Leg. Ospelt

Second: Leg Doyle

Vote: All in favor except Leg. Gearsbeck, who voted “no”

4. NYSAC Dairy Resolution:

Motion to recommend a resolution to the Legislature reflecting the recent NYSAC Dairy Resolution urging the State and Federal Government to provide emergency relief to dairy farmers: Leg. Ospelt

Second: Leg Doyle

Vote: Unanimous

5. Operation Oswego County Project Update:

OOC Executive Director Mike Treadwell listed a series of community/business projects being assisted by Operation Oswego County including:

- Laboratory consolidation and expansion by Oswego Hospital
- Request for State funding to help expansion plans by Fulton Thermal Corporation
- Redevelopment of a vacant commercial site to a new Café
- Retrofitting an existing building at the Oswego County Industrial Park in the Town of Schroepfel to house Otis Products R&D
- A \$2.5 million student housing project on West Utica Street in Oswego
- Healthway's renovation of the Ontario Iron Works Building in Pulaski

Leg. Doyle commended Operation Oswego County for its ongoing efforts and many successes in encouraging business and jobs in Oswego County.

6. BION Update:

OOC Executive Director Mike Treadwell reported that BION representatives were well received at recent meetings with Schroepfel Town representatives and another with the Greater Oswego - Fulton Chamber of Commerce. Leg. Ospelt stated that Schroepfel appeared very interested in the potential jobs and, assuming the stringent environmental requirements of NYS DEC and the Federal EPA can be met, Schroepfel appeared interested in continuing discussions with BION. Mike Treadwell added that the Port of Oswego would play an important role in BION's operation. Leg. LeClair reported recently speaking with a St. Lawrence County Legislator who characterized BION as a great opportunity. Leg. Beckwith added that an opportunity for several hundred private sector jobs is certainly more attractive than government related jobs.

7. Soil and Water District – Ten-Year Report on Reforestation Management:

Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District Forester Joe Chairvolotti provided an overview of the past 10 years of reforestation management conducted by the SWCD on behalf of Oswego County. In summary, it appears to have been very successful in helping to maximize revenues and recreational resources to County residents. Mr. Chairvolotti noted that the contract with Oswego County provides that the first \$20,000 of the annual harvest goes to the District. Unfortunately, that contract arrangement promotes annual harvesting, even in times when timber prices are particularly low. He suggested that a different model would allow management to postpone more harvests until the market recovers so the County could eventually realize a greater return on its timber. Mr. Chairvolotti also suggested that a program of spraying herbicides to control "interfering vegetation" could accelerate the regeneration of desirable trees in harvested areas.

Motion to increase the SWCD's retention of the first \$20,000 from harvesting to \$25,000 with the additional \$5,000 to be used for spraying "interfering vegetation": Leg. Beckwith

Second: Leg. Ospelt

Vote: Unanimous

8. Cooperative Extension:

Jonathan Schell of Cooperative Extension of Oswego County noted that 4-H Achievement Night will be held October 2nd at 6:30 PM at the Mexico High School and invited all to attend.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn at 4:04: Leg. Ospelt

Second: Leg. Gearsbeck

Vote: Unanimous