

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT / PLANNING COMMITTEE

November 21, 2011

PRESENT:

Richard Keaveney, Chairman
Jeffrey Braley
Edward Nabozny
Margaret Robertson
Arthur Bassin
Robin Andrews
Arthur Baer

ABSENT:

Patrick Grattan – notified

ALSO PRESENT:

Becky Vinchiarello, Dep. Clerk
Kenneth Flood
Ann Cooper

Public: 1

Press: 1

Chairman R. Keaveney called the meeting to order 5:01P.M.

Agriculture:

Farmland Protection Plan Development Update -

An email update was sent from Todd Erling. It will most likely be sometime early next year that this plan will be referred to the Board of Supervisors.

Transportation

Expanded Albany Service for the purpose of coordinating Medicaid transportation

Discussion with MAS and NYS DOH. K. Flood explained that an issue that has surfaced is getting buses to arrive in Hudson on time. Solutions to this matter were discussed such as having our buses transport Medicaid clients to an area with a smaller van. It was also mentioned that there may be a need for a mid day run. They are discussing the organization of this with MAS, DOH and DSS. Contracting with CDTA was discussed previously but people had complained. Discussion ensued regarding why the bus passengers get to choose their mode of transportation. The cost to the County for all Medicaid transportation is around 695K a year. By January or February MAS should start providing lists of where they are transporting people to and from. Chairman Keaveney asked K. Flood to check with Mossman on the cost of taxis and how many are used. Furthermore he would like to know what if any choice they are given for their mode of transportation.

Economic Development

Meeting with DSS Employment Office –K. Flood met with Paul Mossman and his employment office. He suggested spending time presenting to businesses in the County the positive reasons for hiring people from the DSS employment office. K. Flood will be sending them a list of projects and a list of businesses that are hiring. He reported that the DSS employment office is very impressive. There reports on placemats were very poor from the past six months but is starting to look better due to new programs. The poor report is due to employees not staying at jobs they were placed in.

Review of Airport Business Plan – The State paid for an airport business plan. K. Flood announced that it was a great plan and had many good points such as the facilities needing to be improved. Future revenue production as discussed. There was a meeting Monday with Department Heads and the Chairman. The Meeting was called in reaction to Richmore saying that the facilities were terrible. This was done to support a grant application that D. Robinson is trying to obtain. As a result of this, it is being proposed that a subcommittee of the Public Works Committee be put into place. K. Flood said that he would rather the County view the airport as an avenue of economic growth rather than something we are maintaining. It was questioned if we could find a private entity to develop the airport. Privatization of municipal owned airports is currently being looked into. Raising prices at the airport was suggested. Suggestions were made in a report that was shared with the committee, such as changing the name of the airport. It was asked if the County should audit Richmor's books to see if the County is getting their fair share.

Regional Economic Development Council Strategic Plan and Columbia County Projects

A web address for a copy of the plan was provided:

http://nyworks.ny.gov/themes/nyopenrc/rc-files/capitalregion/CREDCStrategicPlan2011_onlineversion.pdf

Discussion on what aspects of the plan will affect Columbia County was discussed.

These included the Cattamount project = An adventure park was suggested as well as resort and condos, enhancing tourism. Rail and truck transport were also discussed.

Broadband was a popular idea as well. Columbia County can receive 200K to hire consultants to decide the locations, how to build it out, and under what structure.

Announcements regarding this will be made by the Governor in the middle of December.

Planning

Resolution Request – Appointing a member to the Columbia County Planning Board representing region #8. Consisting of the Towns of Ancram, Copake, and Hillsdale. Motion to approve by A. Bassin, seconded by E. Nabozny, motion carried. **Refer to Finance.**

Tourism

Hudson Valley Tourism Economics 2010

A handout regarding Economic Impact of Tourism in NY was passed around. The growth rate is at 3.8.

2011 Tourism Development Board -

This is a long standing board that advises the Tourism Department on promotion. The Boards composition was handed around and K. Flood announced that he would like to change this. He will be coming back January with a new list that will hopefully prove to be more useful. He would like more of a geographical distribution on the list.

Conference Objective Form – Presentation by NYU Grad Students for Columbia County Study, on 12/15/2011 in NYC. Two people attending. No cost other than train tickets. Motion to approve by A. Bassin, seconded by R. Andrews, motion carried.

K. Flood announced that the greater Albany Realtor Association saw their fifth straight year of a drop in home sale numbers and new construction.

With no further business there was a motion to adjourn at 6:12P.M. by A. Baer, seconded by E. Nabozney, motion carried.

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