

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, PLANNING & TRANSIT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - July 22, 2009
MEETING HELD AT: UCAT – One Danny Circle, Kingston, NY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Legislator Hector Rodriguez – Chair Legislator Wayne Harris
 Legislator Gary Bischoff Legislator Joseph P. Roberti Jr.
 Legislator Peter Loughran Legislator Catherine Terrizzi
 Legislator Mary Sheeley

ABSENT OR EXCUSED: No One

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Lydia “Lee” Reidy, Exec. Director of Cornell Co-Op

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and asked for a motion to approve the June minutes. **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Sheeley. All were in favor.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Contract Management Processing – update on contact by Chairman Rodriguez with County Executive on issue of lengthy processing time of contracts discussed at June meeting. County Executive indicated staff is doing best they can but was made aware people feel things could be improved upon.

Discussion: Legislator Sheeley brought up Kehonkson Bridge work still hasn't started due to waiting on contracts. Majority of members recognized there are a number of variables involved with contracts but still feel steps need to be take to shorten the processing time of contracts.

Legislator Terrizzi relayed an incident where a college contract was processed and upon needing to be specked out and bid, the delay came in due to no one being available to do this. Upon inquiring with the County Executive's Office, they concurred they have no one in this position and readily available.

Letter will be sent by Legislator Rodriguez on behalf of the Committee requesting status report from Contract Management on current contracts pertaining to Econ Development and Departments affiliated with Econ Development.). **Motion was made by Legislator Sheeley, seconded by Legislator Harris. All were in favor.**

NEW BUSINESS:

Lee Reidy of Cornell Co-Op gave a report. *First quarter County payment arrived which Lee was happy to receive and hopes is an indication paperwork is in place and has been processed so future payments will happen more quickly. New rules and regulations, across all levels of funds – County, State and Federal - have Lee spending money upfront in*

her programs and then seeking reimbursements which is at times very difficult but she is doing the best she can.

Late blight has hit hard in tomato crops across the Eastern US and this is serious within the ag community. Cornell Co-Op is working with farmers, box stores, etc – to address the issue and contain the spread. Can spread to other crops such as potatoes and eggplants.

The rain this year has been very harmful to numerous crops this year – creating fungus, rot, lack of pollination, small growth, etc. Very problematic as the majority of crops in our area are sold at fresh markets. Dairy Farming has also been impacted as hay has been difficult to grow which is used by the Dairy farms.

Summer Update was handed out which overviews the activities and events Cornell is involved with or sponsoring. Ulster County Fair will be coming up, starting Tuesday, with opening ceremonies on Wednesday evening. Legislators should notify Ag Society if they plan on attending/participating in opening ceremonies. Senior Citizen Day will be Thursday. Some concern that rain will be problematic as it has been all summer. Should be a great fair as there are lots of things going on, improvements to the building and wonderful entertainment scheduled. Price did go up to \$15 entrance fee (first increase in 10 years) but it's inclusive of events and rides so it's still a good bargain. Lee invited any members who may want to come to the fair and be given a guided tour of the buildings and grounds to just call her and she'll set up it up with the 4-H Staff and students.

Open House will be held in August with regard to the new office up in Phoenicia (in the old Black Bear Café). Contract with NYC DEP to do community development work project within the watershed district (reservoir area – up rte 18) with groups, organizations, individuals, Soil and Water Agency, etc

Melinda Beuf of UCDC could not make the meeting (Lance Matteson in China) but provided an update on issues, projects, etc which was handed out.

UCDC will be hiring another individual for the UCDC office (Director of Business Development)

Dennis Doyle of Planning also was unavailable for the meeting and provided an update on issues, projects, etc which was handed out.

Tri-County Housing Project was briefly discussed. Chairman Rodriguez pointed out that this project will be calling for affordable housing and very likely within communities that have not wanted or have even been resistive to having such housing.

Chairman Rodriguez discussed with the committee that he would like to see more of the members interfacing with the Ulster Chamber and even more so, with the local Chambers in their districts. Several committee members (ie Legislators Rodriguez, Sheeley, Bischoff) already do but he would like to see all members be involved with the Chambers. Perhaps a coordinated effort could be made.

Legislator Sheeley discussed a concern she has with the expenditure of an energy block grant Ulster is receiving for \$750,000 that apparently is being spent in “dribs and drabs.” Legislator Sheeley has a building in her district that she asked Vince Cozzolino of TSEC and his team to come review in terms of what might be able to be done in terms of solar energy initiatives with the building. An evaluation was done and it's ideal for geo-thermal - which if

done, could serve as a model for not only Ulster County but other counties as well. In discussion on funding of such a project, (\$540,000) the feeling by TSEC is that the energy block grants being given out are intended for these types of projects (large scale, viable and progressive). In this instance, heat and cooling of the entire building along with providing some lighting, would be the end result. She is asking her colleagues for their thoughts and support.

Legislator Bischoff clarified for Legislator Sheeley that the block grant wasn't really being spent piece mail. It is being spent on several projects – studying energy at salt shed, vehicles, exterior lighting at Golden Hill and county building energy audits – several of which likely have to be done. The grant was applied for with these things in mind and suggested that Legislator Sheeley should get in the pipeline for next year's grant.

Chairman Rodriguez suggested consideration be given to pursuing an IDA loan. Legislator Roberti suggested a member item be pursued. Legislator Loughran suggested working with Tom Lynch who is at NYSERTA and may be able to point Legislator Sheeley in a direction to obtain NYSERTA funds. Discussion continued and Chairman Rodriguez advocated that perhaps the County could come up with some funding which would allow for matching funds, etc to be pursued. Some committee members indicated they would reach out to County Executive Hein.

Chairman Rodriguez informed the committee that County Executive Hein assured him that he would be part of the search committee for the new Transit Director.

RESOLUTIONS:

Appointment of John J. Pezzo to the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) Board (Replaces J DeNicolo who resigned in May). **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Roberti. All were in favor.**

Motion to Adjourn:

**Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Sheeley
All were in favor. Meeting adjourned at: 7:20 PM**

Submitted by: Mary L. Carey, Clerk of the Legislature