

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**NAME OF COMMITTEE:** Economic Development & Tourism Committee

**DATE:** July 6, 2011

**TIME:** 4:45 P.M.

**PLACE:** County Office Bldg., Legislative Chambers, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** Chairman James Maloney, Legislators Rodriguez, Aiello, Hayes, Sweeney, Terrizzi, Donaldson, Loughran

**LEGISLATORS EXCUSED:** Legislator Frey

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Arthur Smith Budget Director, Rick Remsnyder Dir. Tourism, Dennis Doyle Dir. Planning, Lance Matteson President UCDC, Carl Meyer Co-CEO Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC), Vic Melville LWV, Nettie Tomshaw Legislative Employee

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Maloney at 4:50 PM.

- Attendance (Leg. Sweeney excused 5:30pm, Leg. Rodriguez excused 5:40pm)
- A motion by Legislator Sweeney was made to accept the May 9, 2011 Committee Meeting Minutes, Seconded by Legislator Rodriguez, all were in favor, Carried.

**Resolutions:**

- 1.) Resolution Draft No. 0701 - July 7, 2011: Approving 2011 Appropriation And Guidelines For Funding The Kingston / Ulster Empire Zone

**Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Sweeney, All in Favor, Unanimously Carried.**

- 2.) Resolution Draft No. 0705 - July 7, 2011: Appointing Member To The Ulster County Planning Board - Village Of Saugerties

**Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Aiello, All in Favor, Unanimously Carried.**

3.) Resolution Draft No. 0706 - July 7, 2011: Adopting The Inclusion Of Additional Lands In Agricultural Districts Within Ulster County As Recommended By The Ulster County Agricultural And Farmland Protection Board - Department Of Planning

**Motion offered to move Resolution forward by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Aiello, All in Favor, Unanimously Carried.**

Lance Matteson President UCDC Update:

- China Initiative update - 2009 visit has created visibility & support for NY business - trying to encourage Ulster County interest through the NYS Small Business Development Center International network located in Albany. The director of the center (Mr. Chang - American/Chinese) has an office in Beijing and has a good understanding/presence of our needs. China event (Shandong Province) at SUNY New Paltz, last week - a match making event - focus of event was for NYS - regional, however we were able to steer attention toward Ulster County. HV Business magazine referenced the event. A lot of activity - business to business discussion. Received at least 1 or 2 active leads for distribution, space or warehousing or possibly manufacturing. Also had a relationship building meeting in Albany with a Shanghai representative 3 wks ago - interested in renewable energy and love to have some of our american technology. We are very cognizant of (IP) intellectual property issues, concerns. A new Chinese firm Hali-Power Products opened a sales and distribution office in West Hurley - portable batteries and chargers - considering assembly & manufacturing here. They helped promote our area at the SUNY New Paltz event. Also a number of companies in Ulster County are exporting product to China.
- Loans - Ameribag was approved by the Revolving Loan Fund Committee and closed on their loan - good retention support project. They added warehouse space at Tech City and helped with cash flow issues. Ameribag is one example of a company that does business with China - 27 stores in China. Also, a small New Loan Fund was approved by the same committee for a New Paltz services business. Retention work is ongoing with businesses in Kingston, Ulster, New Paltz & others. Primary activity for UCDC is working with existing companies helping them to solve problems to stay in business & or to stay in Ulster County.
- Shovel Ready - Committee has initially approved the bonding for shovel ready road improvement project in Marlboro, Riverview Dr. working with D. Doyle and B. Havranek. Around \$80K.
- UCDC's Director of retention & project management is spending one day a week in Ellenville - working with grant applications, etc. - going very well. Lot of things to do in Ellenville - tough troubled community but there are signs of life.
- Public Authority Update - UCDC is current, however there was a mistake by the state listing UCDC as delinquent on an unemployment insurance payment - an \$11K error that the state says will be corrected. Makes UCDC look bad - if this happens to us it happens to others.

Carl Meyer, President & CEO TSEC Update:

- Actively prospecting/speaking to (3) global solar manufacturers from China, India & Switzerland - want to be one of the first in the US. Two are actively looking for sites in the Hudson valley - spoke with Tech City owners, neither liked Tech City in its current state - would like move in condition. Companies want to move in 60-90 days, new modern 100K SF space - want to come here as soon as possible. New construction, space, time frame and cost are a problem - a big challenge. Offered Colony Liquor Warehouse site and Steve Finkle's Industrial Park which has tremendous upfront costs, didn't interest the global companies at all - want to get on the ground fast. Ellenville sites VAW and Schrade didn't attract them either - sidebar - years ago Central Hudson looked at running a natural gas line down 209 to Ellenville - federal funding was available which would have helped their growth of industry - gas being more cost effective than oil or electric. Funds are long gone. TSEC is actively looking for a company that will fit into the manufacturing interests of Ellenville. The Chinese company wants to manufacture panels, cells and glass - want to be vertically integrated (make everything). The last Chinese company who showed interest said our utility rates were too high thus TSEC sent them up to Niagara to Global Specialty Metals. Some other company discussions have their sites set for relocating well down the road. They all like being located in close proximity to IBM and NYC, yet rural. We are getting a lot of support from the Lt. Governor's office - the state office is helping us along. Hopefully in the next few weeks we will have some good news to talk about.  
Leg. Aiello - Q Why would China want to come here - cost of living etc? A - President Obama has given the Dept. of Defense and federal agencies the directive to purchase a minimum of 50% of their renewable energies, components/stuff from American companies that manufacture components on American soil, value added panels - higher quality vs. knock offs mass produced in China - this policy has gotten the attention of other countries.  
Chairman Maloney stated the needs of these clients do not exist - they want new, large square footage, ready to move in. We don't have this type of inventory - county receives calls all the time. The ready to go program is working on sites w/pre-approvals on a generic space so they can get in the ground quicker.  
Leg. Terrizzi - asked if the solar panels are getting closer to affordability for the average consumer. A - Carl Meyer responded, we are still a few years away- 2020, will not happen over night and subsidies are needed to continue. There is ongoing work to reduce all costs associated with solar. Mass production always brings down the cost - which comes first, chicken or the egg.  
Leg. Hayes - We have the location, 3 thruway exists just not the infrastructure.  
  
Carl Meyer noted the SUNY New Paltz Solar Car will be attempting to set a land speed record with the Guinness book of world records on hand at Stewart airport in August. Chairman Maloney asked Carl to let our office know the date in case committee members would like to attend.

Bob DiBella, Director UCAT Ridership Update: (Graphs / Spread Sheets Attached)

- UCAT ridership up 7323 from last year
- UPL ridership up 3444 from last year

- NPL ridership down 5675 from last year
- New Paltz route lost 6000 customers in the last 6 months
- Overall up 1000 passengers from last year
- Cash Passengers and Cash Fares up from last year
- Agency Passengers and Agency Fares down from last year, (Medicaid) state program will be administering the Medicaid ridership. Mtg. on the 21<sup>st</sup> w/ Medical Answering Service to download our routes into their system. Medicaid ridership went from UCAT to private agency where ridership went down, and now to NYS Medicaid program. Some discussion if it will be more or less profitable for the county than in years past.
- Doctors write scripts for clients transportation, taxi vs. other modes of transportation
- Total Passengers and Total Fares up from last year
- Total revenue miles down from last year
- Fare Collection System Trapeze, will go live end of month
- Fleet wide software for equipment manager will go live end of this month (ability to have all fleet - vehicle information at a glance)
- AVL Software part of the fare collection system will allow us to know exactly where buses are in route
- Some route changes will be made - to be evaluated in November.
- 6 Hybrids (not as efficient on long runs), 2 new diesels in January. UC has extended warranties on the hybrids propulsion systems.
- UCAT buses do not take passengers outside of the county

#### Rick Remsnyder, Director of Tourism Update:

- Guide feedback all positive
- (2) web videos, TV commercial, radio
- Dining Guide publication due out in Sept. - 25K full color copies (no real dining info in regular guide - keeping them separate) Suggestion to have wine tours in UC - similar to "Taste of Kingston" - great way to celebrate ones birthday! Also suggesting putting a coupon in guide for sales tracking purposes ex; Walk Way Over The Hudson
- Lisa Berger on facebook and twitter - the social media is free advertising (asked that everyone on committee friend Lisa on facebook)
- Plans on having a tourism blog
- 2012 will offer Ulster County phone applications (phone apps)
- Kudos all around to Rick Remsnyder from B. Aiello & Rick R. to Lisa Berger for her excellent overall work and Rick R. to the Environment Dept. for creating the map in the back of the guide.

#### Google Analytics Report May 23 ~ June 22, 2011

##### Visits:

- Traffic to site up 56% month to month
- Web traffic increase as much as 61% month to month at the beginning of the run on 1010 WINS
- Traffic initially peaked the Tues. after Memorial Day with a steady decline bottoming on Sat., higher as we approach July 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Seeing peaks in visitation on Mon., Tues., & Weds. Following airing of commercial.

Visitors:

- Are viewing 2.98 pages
- Stay on the site for an average of 3.08 seconds
- Mostly viewed on Mon. & Tues. with declines over the weekend.
- 76% are new visitors
- 41% bounce rate
- Top five locations (in order) for where visitors are from in NYC; Long Island; New Jersey; Pennsylvania, Massachusetts

Traffic Sources (June 14, 2010 ~ August 16, 2010)

- Google Organic - 78.66% new
- Direct - 63.92% new
- Visit The Catskills - 81.95% new
- UC Government - 79.67% new
- Bing - 65.14%
- Yahoo - 79.94%
- WCBS / NY - 96.35% new

Content In Order Viewed:

- Front Page, Recreation, Lodging, Explore-Our Towns, Calendar, Camping home page, Where is Ulster County, Wineries & Breweries, Farms, Arts & Culture.
- Key Words in order: Ulster County, Ulster County Tourism, Ulster County Alive, ulstercountyalive.com, ulster county events

Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning Update:

- Economic Development - Dennis and March Gallagher are very involved in a lot of these issues including the shovel ready program - wrote RFP & formation of program
- Transportation Council - Has adopted a new TIP, monies tight if not non-existent. Don't think they can maintain what we have, given the current federal funding. Other options need to explore - efficiency of county bridge crew how it compares to private sector and technology. Discussions are headed towards what bridges to fix and what to close! Going out for Transportation Enhancement Grants funded for projects that are not on the TIP. Also soliciting for Safe Routes Programs - coming out shortly.
- JARC - (Job Access Reverse Commute) how Medicaid people use the bus-transit system to & from jobsites. Looking into using federal dollars for a mobility manager for work force development. Application due mid July. Working in tandem with B. DiBella and Nancy Schaefer, Dept of Employment and Training.
- On this month's abstract; Agreement for consultant to develop a Transit Systems Coordination and Development Plan for the County. 95% federally funded & 5% county funded. Bob DeBilla & Dennis Doyle to co-chair the study.
- Working with municipalities on Main Street work, Ulster, Lloyd, Shandaken & others.
- Wawarsing & Ellenville flooding caused by the aqueduct- discussions \$3.6 - \$3.8 million Catskill flood buyout match program, County to develop guidance how to use funds only if the homeowners are in agreement - tied to income guidelines because the statute wasn't amended. Under the state program if you make too much money you will not qualify for assistance. DEP will ask for a waiver against additional/future lawsuits. Land will be owned by Ulster County - just like the regular buyout program. Leg. Hayes

feels if homeowners do not qualify for state funding then the DEP should buy the land from the county so homeowners receive full market value for their property. Unsure how many homes are affected - possibly 40 homes. Buyout bill language loosely states any homes within 2 miles of the aqueduct that experiences seepage problems qualify.

- Continue to work on the Lower Esopus with respect to turbidity.
- Continue to support the Housing Consortium - working with Michael Berg on a lot of different issues - strategic plan for housing in the county.
- Grant applications filed for BOA - brown field opportunities grant
- Working with UCDC and others for community development block grant - primarily directed at Main Street, Mike Riner enterprise fund.
- Mid Hudson Valley Planning Partnership Program - \$61million available nationwide. EPA, DOT and HUD put a sustainability application NOFA. Working with Patterns, Housing Consortium and three other county planning departments.
- Economy picking up as seen in the referral process and more construction ongoing.
- Healthy Housing Mix covers senior affordable housing, regular market rate housing, tenure, rental opportunities to meet our population growth. Leg. Donaldson - Noted not many affordable villas available in our area for middle class people that want to downsize from their large homes.
- UC Railroad Advisory Committee reviewed/approved an application for a license to access county owned railroad land - crossing to access future landlocked project site Kingston Meadows Senior Housing off Hurley Ave. and now will go to the Public Works Committee for review and then to this committee.

- July Abstract provided to committee members.

Adjournment:

The meeting was respectfully adjourned at 6:25 PM with a motion offered by Legislator Terrizzi and Seconded by Legislator Loughran, with all in favor, carried.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**James Maloney/nt**  
**Chairman Economic Development & Tourism Committee**