

**ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

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

**DATE:** June 7, 2010

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

**PLACE:** Library Conference Room, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
244 Fair Street, Kingston, NY

**LEGISLATORS PRESENT:** Chairman James Maloney, Legislators Rodriguez, Frey, Petit, Sweeney, Terrizzi, Loughran and Donaldson 5:00 P.M.

**LEGISLATORS EXCUSED:** Legislator Hayes

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Arthur Smith Budget Director, Rick Remsnyder Tourism Director, Dennis Doyle Planning Director, Lance Matteson President Ulster County Development Corporation (left at 5:25 P.M. for another meeting), Carl Meyer Co-CEO Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC), James Hanson County Exec Office, Carl E. Meyer The Solar Energy Consortium, Victor J. Melville LWV Observer Corp., John Johnson UC Agricultural Society Board, David Porter, Alan Kraus, Harry Ellis, Nettie Tomshaw Legislative Staff, Karen Spinozzi Deputy Clerk of Finance

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

- Attendance
- A motion by Legislator Rodriguez was made to accept the May 3, 2010 Committee Meeting Minutes, seconded by Legislator Frey, all were in favor, Carried.
- Dennis Doyle, Director, Department of Planning:  
2010 Agricultural Districts Inclusions

Dennis reviewed the process for district inclusions. He explained that recommendations from the Farmland Protection Board to the Legislature reflect consensus based on the limitations of the criteria that is in the statute.

Legislator Rodriguez stated that there is one ongoing problem and concern. The property in the Town of New Paltz owned by Susan Wine has been rejected by the County Legislature for inclusion every year that it has applied. The Town ZBA ruled against their application to become a winery on property that has been in a residential area. It has gone to court and they were found against by State Supreme Court. Ms. Wine and Mr. Ransom have also sued the County over this. For the past four years we have always removed that parcel because we support the home rule in the Town of New Paltz. In addition, more recently the Town of Shawangunk has passed a resolution asking the Legislature to also similarly remove a parcel from inclusion into the Ag District. (See Letter from Town of

Shawangunk Supervisor John Valk, Jr.) In reference to what Dennis Doyle has said, The Farmland Preservation Board has their hands tied because they are forced to use a certain criteria. It is up to the Legislature to do what is right.

#### Discussion

Chairman Maloney would not like to see the properties removed when there is a public hearing scheduled for next week. It would send a very bad message to remove parcels and then ask the public to speak on them.

Legislator Donaldson asked Dennis Doyle Q./ Why are these properties in question recommended by the Protection Board to be included in the Ag Districts? A./ The nature of farming is changing. The economic viability of agriculture for some of these operations has come down. Some applications are for intensive farming. Members of the Board are recognizing these changes and the need to accommodate some of these more intensive agricultures. The one parcel in Shawangunk is a "spin farm." Some of the Board members believe that this type of farm is absolutely economically viable.

Legislator Donaldson recalled a letter from the Congressman in support of the Wine property in prior years.

Dennis informed the Committee that all applications for inclusion are posted on the County Planning Dept.'s website for anyone to view.

Legislator Terrizzi wanted clarification from Dennis regarding the Shawangunk property. Q./Is that the property with 43 chickens on 2 acres or is it a raised bed vegetable farm? A./ There are chickens there but it's two parcels with a spin type of agriculture in a raised bed system.

Legislator Rodriguez said that he voted no on this parcel because the municipality expressed reservations with regards to it and he will be consistent in that policy. It will fall on the Legislature to be the ultimate decider of whether or not something is truly viable or truly appropriate.

Chairman Maloney requested that at the public hearing Dennis have aerial maps of the parcels in question on easels so the Legislators could get a full scope of the surrounding areas.

Legislator Loughran: Q./ How does being in the Ag Districts benefit these properties? Can they no longer be considered residential areas? Is there a change for tax purposes? A./ They can still be residential districts. The farm is exempt from special district taxes with one exemption- the farmstead. The farmstead itself would have to pay special district tax. Being in an Ag District provides for protection from Nuisance suits from your neighbor.

Legislator Terrizzi: Q./ If you are given Ag district designation and you are growing grapes, does that give you the right to run a business, a winery, have traffic and 100 parking spaces on 2 acres? A./There is no exemption from the local zoning statute as it relates to running a business. There is an exemption in the local zoning statute as it relates to things that are open to the public as a farm. One of those things is called Agro/Ecotourism. However, Ag and Market says it's not a free pass to get around Public Health and Safety.

Legislator Rodriguez: Q./ Does inclusion in an Ag District give standing in any way shape or form to the Commissioner of Ag and Markets with regards to lawsuits? A./ Yes

Legislator Petit: Q./How many times can the same applicant reapply for inclusion after being denied? A./There is no restriction on the number of applications.

With the permission of the Chairman, John Johnson distributed a handout of the Rivendell Winery Schematic Masterplan. He feels this is not a viable farm. The grapes planted there are concord grapes which are not wine producing. Mr. Johnson asked the Committee to please keep them excluded from the Ag District.

With permission of the Chairman, New Paltz resident David Porter addressed the committee. Mr. Porter stated that the Town has defined this as a retail operation and the residents are objecting to a retail operation in that location. Farming grapes is a different issue.

With the permission of the Chairman, UC resident Alan Kraus addressed the committee. Mr. Kraus said this property is in an agricultural district, not a residential district. They are free to grow grapes in their location. However, this property has no agricultural use.

Chairman Maloney confirmed with Dennis Doyle that there is not a resolution for June session. Dennis said there is a draft but a resolution will come after the public hearing. Chairman Maloney ensured that the committee was in agreement to not remove any parcels before the Public Hearing on June 15. He stated that the committee will have an additional meeting before June 30<sup>th</sup>, the resolution deadline. Dennis said the Legislature will need to act in July to stay within the requirements of the statute.

Dennis Doyle also informed the committee of the following:

- The Town of Gardiner passed a resolution that indicates that they will try to raise the capital necessary to meet the required match for buying the development rights to Kiernan Farm. There is a capital program passed by the Legislature that includes \$50,000 for open space recreation protection and we expect that we may see a request from the Town of Gardiner to have the county participate in helping to meet that match. This will require the establishment of a capital project by the Legislature. It is recommended for funding in the capital program for 2010.
- Sustainable Communities HUD NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability) Grant- There is about \$150 million of funding coming out from the Federal Gov't to deal with issues that talk about sustainability challenge grants, affordable housing, etc. There has been engaged conversation between Planning Dept. staff, regional non profit organizations and other counties about the role the county can play in terms of implementation of these grants. There is probably about \$3 to \$5 million that we can access between the three counties.

1) Draft Resolution No. 0610 – June 15, 2010: Appointing Alternate Member To The Ulster County Planning Board – Town Of Shandaken

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

2) Draft Resolution No. 0611 – June 15, 2010: Appointing Alternate Member To The Ulster County Planning Board – Town Of New Paltz

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

3) Draft Resolution No. 0612 – June 15, 2010: Appointing Alternate Member To The Ulster County Planning Board – Village Of New Paltz

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

- Rick Remsnyder, Tourism Director: (Handed out Tourism Information packet)  
-**New Ulster County Travel Guide**- 100,000 copies distributed at 3 Thruway stops, via direct mail requests, at all the county one-day fairs and festivals, and at all tourism displays and kiosks in the county

Chairman: Q./ No section on Restaurants? A./No. It changes so often that after print it could be inaccurate. All restaurants are listed on the website. We will print out list and have it available at several locations, and create an in-house document that we can update ourselves to maintain accuracy. Q./Looking at the make-up of the hotels section, how do you get these listings? Some information/descriptions are questionable. A./ Yearly we send out e-mails and faxes requesting info be sent to us from all the properties.

Legislator Sweeney: Q./Have you ever talked about working with the Chamber of Commerce b/c the two magazines contain a lot of the same information. Doesn't it make more sense to pool resources and come out with one source? A./ The UC Chamber is membership driven and therefore paid for. Everything we put out is done for free. We may be able to share information.

Legislator Petit: Q./ We have magnificent advertising on the subways but visitors get dropped off at Rhinecliff or Poughkeepsie. Where's the information on how to get over to us and are the travel guides available at those drop off locations? A./ We have the UCAT scheduling information on the website. We can check into working more closely with Metro-North and Amtrak. The Town of Lloyd is working on getting the caboose visitor center up and running hopefully this year.

Chairman Maloney: Q./We have an opportunity with the water taxi between Rhinebeck and Kingston. Have you approached UCAT to see if we can get a loop to go up to Woodstock or somewhere else if people want to come over? A./ Rick will speak to Bob DiBella about it.

#### **-2010 Marketing Plan**

1010 WINS and WCBS-FM Radio Campaigns- June 14<sup>th</sup> - July 9<sup>th</sup>

-Rick played the existing :30 spot for the Committee. There will be two additional spots created with different voices but the same information.

Legislator Loughran: Q./ What is the cost of the entire campaign? A./ \$56,000 for the two stations for 6 weeks including the spot production cost.

Rick told the Committee that the results will be trackable via website hits on the web address in the ad. He also said the campaign is enhanced by tremendous giveaway packages. (See Giveaway Packages handout inside Tourism information packet)

Legislator Terrizzi: Q./ Can you partner with local businesses to get gift certificates i.e. restaurants, a round of golf, etc. to make the packages more comprehensive and enticing? This could be barter: advertising in the travel guide for the gift certificates. A./ Definitely. This is the first time Tourism has done this type of thing and the response from local business was very favorable.

#### WABC Television Campaign

The Ellenbogen Group was hired to produce the spot. Production has not started. Refer to handouts WABC TV Commercial Shot List and story board for spot content.

Legislator Loughran: Q./ Where's the tag line? A./ That will come at the end when we show url. "Where the Catskills Meet the Hudson" has been replaced with [ulstercountyalive.com](http://ulstercountyalive.com).

Chairman Maloney suggested the tag line, "Ulster County: Where You Can Have it All," and the url below that.

Legislator Donaldson: Q./ Once produced, can we have DVD copies? A./ Yes. UC will own all footage. We will display it wherever we can. It will also enable us to provide b-roll to other media outlets upon request.

#### General Tourism Discussion:

Legislator Sweeney commented that he attended the Tourism conference at the Holiday Inn last month. It was well put together but would advise to keep the speakers limited to Tourism professionals and marketing experts.

- Carl Meyer, Co-CEO Solar Energy Consortium (TSEC)

There are two initiatives that will benefit Ulster County:

1) Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) Report, put together yearly by the Hudson Valley Regional Council, with input provided by all the counties, provides a tremendous amount of data which is available to the Dept. of Commerce. It provides an opportunity to obtain federal funding to fit up manufacturing space, infrastructure or buildings. Tech City has been identified as a building project where we can apply for and receive some fit up dollars from the federal gov't. Vinny Cozzolino has been approached by Willie Taylor from the Economic Development Administration, who has access to this funding, wanting to know why UC hasn't seriously applied for it. Projects are teed up in the CEDS Report and then there is a formal application process. If a project is not in the CEDS Report then it is excluded from consideration in the application process. These projects have been in the CEDS Report for many years but there hasn't been a lot done in the past. We will make a formal application this year in the Aug./Sept. timeframe for fit up dollars for a pilot manufacturing line, the road infrastructure, and consolidation of some of the UC offices.

Chairman Maloney: Q./ What kind of dollars are we talking about? A./ Total almost \$15 million.

Q./ Would you be buying the building or still in the lease? A./ The building would have to be purchased and owned by, for example, the IDA in Ulster County and then there would be a 15 to 20 year lease that you would have to work out. It would have to be managed by a not-for-profit which is where TSEC would come in. TSEC can't own the building. Ulster County would have to work out the ownership responsibility.

Legislator Donaldson commented that the current mindset at Tech City provides for the best opportunities.

2) Trying to find a marketplace for the solar panels that Solar Tech Renewables will be manufacturing. We are working in a collaborative effort to get solar projects cited in the Hudson Valley. We are working thru the NYPA RP which allows for citing them at municipal places such as the UC landfill, and community college. We are also looking at sites that are owned and controlled by Central Hudson. It's even of interest to match up with Agriculture because there is a lot of land where we can put solar panels. It is essential that we find a good market for these panels because the manufacturers can only sustain themselves for so long.

Legislator Loughran: Q./ I recall NYC pushing green technology. Has anyone reached out to NYC gov't?

A./ Tomorrow I will be in NYC at the Solar Energy Summit. It involves the city of NY and there will be all kinds of people there who are in the solar business. We are reaching out to find a market there too.

Legislator Terrizzi: Q./ Is there any work you are doing with NYSERDA? They are sponsoring a lot of energy audits being done at schools and colleges, etc. A./ Yes. Pat Courtney is now working part time for TSEC and bringing NYSERDA contact into us. Q./ Even the county, can't we use solar panels somewhere...the prison and the larger buildings that we have? A./ There is question on whether or not it is cost effective. All the energy efficiency measures have pay backs of a few years but solar panels are further out.

Legislator Loughran: Q./ What about hospitals? A./ Benedictine Hospital is putting up solar thermal panels now. We did an analysis with Federal Health and Human Services and found that the panels should be used to preheat all of the water there.

Legislator Terrizzi commented: We have this wonderful manufacturing technology here and we need move ahead to help these companies sell the product to be successful and not create a retention issue.

Chairman Maloney handed out the UC Development Corporation May-June 2010 Newsletter on behalf of Lance Matteson who left at 5:25 P.M. to attend another meeting.

The meeting was adjourned to continue the meeting later with a motion by Chairman Maloney at 6:28PM. All in favor.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**James Maloney/vf,  
Chairman Economic Development & Tourism Committee**