

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, PLANNING & TRANSIT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - October 28, 2009
MEETING HELD AT: UCAT – One Danny Circle, Kingston, NY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Legislator Hector Rodriguez – Chair Legislator Catherine Terrizzi
 Legislator Gary Bischoff (left at 7:20)
 Legislator Peter Loughran
 Legislator Mary Sheeley

ABSENT OR EXCUSED: Legislator Wayne Harris (excused), Legislator Joseph P. Roberti Jr.

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning; Lydia “Lee” Reidy, Exec. Director of Cornell Co-Op
Lance Matteson, President of UCDC;

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM and asked for a motion to approve the September minutes. **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Legislator Loughran will be looking to have an Informational Session for the entire Legislative Body on the Crossroads Venture Project after the start up of the new year. It was felt this would be a good time to do so given there will be new Legislators pending the upcoming election and documentation was still being completed in terms of Albany.

NEW BUSINESS:

UCDC Presented:

UCDC is asking for \$400,000 budgetarily, divided in to two payments which is the same funding level as last year. President Matteson provided an Economic Development update as well as a summary narrative. He pointed out that some of the 2009 figures are projections/estimates as the year is still progressing. They are retaining jobs, growing and expanding companies, facilitating start-ups and attracting new businesses.

Tech City has significant activity going on with getting the property improved so it's more financeable and environmentally sound therefore more appealing to companies. There are currently over 1500 jobs housed at Tech City and more seasonally.

Benchmark submission was done recently for January through June. Fundraising was not heavily focused on the first half of the year although the recent UCDC dinner was very well attended and quite a success.

Legislator Loughran raised concerns that he hasn't seen hard and fast data regarding UCDC retention vs. new jobs vs. expansion. This information is provided in terms of the submissions that go into the Legislature for incentive payments but President Matteson will

gladly give Legislator Loughran and others the information if they need/want it. Legislator Loughran would like to see more businesses interfacing and contributing to the funding base of UCDC. President Matteson is convinced that UCDC is working hard and doing all they can, given the Economic climate, and feels the documentation demonstrates the County money is being invested well in UCDC. Recognizes that a more diversified funding base is definitely needed. It was pointed out by President Matteson that Ulster County Economic Development is funded below average compared to other Counties across the state and a not-for-profit agency is typically preferred to manage economic development.

Legislator Terrizzi questioned why is economic development being done by Planning and a Deputy Economic Director under the County Executive and is work and efforts being duplicated. It was indicated that the Deputy Economic Director has an entirely different role to play in economic development than UCDC. Everyone compliments each other and works on different aspects of development. UCDC deals with incentives, site locations, real estate, workforce, etc. Deputy Economic Director champions development within the Executive Branch - deals with all County departments, municipalities and the State agencies. Can put in place political support as well as financial support (ie stimulus monies, grants, etc.) that UCDC can not pursue directly.

Legislator Sheeley advocated that Economic Development be left to an independent agency headed by professionals rather than a department within the County. We can then hold the agency accountable via the funding rather than have an ongoing funded department. She would like to see Tourism handled by an independent agency as well.

Legislator Bischoff spoke well of the work of UCDC and per capita, it's not a great deal of money the County is spending on development. Saugerties is certainly benefitting. Legislator Sheeley, whose area is not doing well, echoed Legislator Bischoff that UCDC works hard and has been responsive. Legislator Rodriguez joined in support.

President Matteson will provide the Committee members with data on job creation, FT vs PT vs seasonal, as requested as well as information that supports that UCDC is funded below average.

Chairman Rodriguez asked that the committee go on record and support UCDC. **Motion was made by Legislator Rodriguez, Seconded by Legislator Sheeley. All were in favor**

Planning presented:

Director Doyle passed out a 2008-09 rental housing survey that was not released publically yet. Marketing people tend to use this data. Vacancy rates are up but are still below 5% and HUD fair market rates are starting to match rates in Ulster County. Subsidized housing continue to remain at full occupancy, even with the additional housing that has been done.

United Nations formed a commission and is looking at housing and possibly making lack of affordable housing a human rights violation.

Thanked the Legislature for recognizing Housing Awareness Month and the work of the Housing Consortium in general. November 20th there will be a presentation of a Housing Needs Assessment with a community lunch at Wiltwyck.

Launch of Housing website, sponsored by Ulster Savings Bank, will be done in January of GiveHousingAVoice.

Legislator Loughran asked if there is any data kept by Planning as to where people re-locate from, especially with regard to subsidized housing. Planning indicated they did not have such data but would inquire if such data might exist.

Intermodal Center will be resurfacing and a public hearing will be held in the upcoming year. Old Parking Garage area in uptown Kingston will be looked at for site location. Interstate 587 (Col. Chandler Drive) will be looked at. Federal and State Transit monies are becoming more difficult to obtain and it is being recommended that if you have money available now, leave it on the table to work with next year. Our local Transportation Council and regional staff have taken steps to retain control over monies coming into our region rather than allow departmental staff to make decision on how monies will be spent and what projects will be done.

Legislator Sheeley requested of our County Transportation department that families, mainly elderly, who have been left stranded on the eastern side of the bridge due to work on the Kerhonkson Bridge. Chairman Rodriguez contacted UCAT Director Bob DiBella to request that an arrangement be worked out for people to get picked up by our buses and transportation be provided at least once a week so they can shop and take care of essentials. Director Doyle will work with UCAT and Legislator Sheeley to get something in place.

Cornell Co-Op Presented:

Executive Director Reidy expressed that she is looking for the Legislature to support Cornell Co-Op being budgeted for. This year, to her surprise, Cornell Co-Op and Soil and Water, are no longer automatically budgeted for as was the case the past several years but rather have been listed under Legislative initiatives. Budget information and supportive documentation was passed out. Chairman Rodriguez would contact Legislator Lomita, Chair of Ways and Means, to find out what the process would be for advocacy to occur and amendments/appeals made. Information that was put together for presentation to the County Executive is now being given to the Legislature for their review and reasons to support Cornell Co-Op. County is about 21% of Cornell's funding – so County gets a 4:1 return on their investment. Money goes to core staffing and programming along with some equipment. Majority of the programs are funded by grants. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Healthy Communities grant was awarded to Cornell Co – Op this year and it's a prestigious grant to have obtained. Occasionally Co-Op is questioned why they are involved with issues that other Departments have responsibility for (ie nutrition program). Co-Op partners with other departments, agencies, organizations as it's an educational agency...teaching about nutrition, public speaking, sciences to children, agriculture, finances and the environment. Evaluation of programs is continuous to make sure the programs are worthwhile to keep in place and were effective/successful.

Legislator Terrizzi inquired if the Committee was going to go on record to support Cornell Co-Op as they did UCDC and Chairman Rodriguez agreed the Committee should do so if they wish. Chairman Rodriguez asked for a motion to support Cornell Co-Op at the funding level they received last year. **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor**

RESOLUTIONS:

Appointing Member to the Ulster County Planning Board – Town of Shawangunk
Motion was made by Legislator Bischoff, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.

Ulster County Farm Worker Housing Rehabilitation Program Phase III – Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Classification of the Project as Type II Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA – 6NYCRR Part 617) – Department of Planning **Motion was made by Legislator Sheeley, Seconded by Legislator Loughran. All were in favor.**

Ulster County Housing Rehabilitation Program Phase II – Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Classification of the Project as Type II Under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA –6NYCRR Part 617) – Department of Planning **Motion was made by Legislator Sheeley, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Setting a Public Hearing on Proposed Type II Actions SEQRA for the County of Ulster on Wednesday, February 3, 2010 at 6:00 PM **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Bischoff. All were in favor.**

Director Doyle of Planning indicated that this has been worked on for several years and reviewed by numerous departments and individuals. It allows the County to determine a list of exemptions that are not addressed by the existing law, removes ambiguity and allows for standard, routine actions to take place that do not have a significant impact on the environment. (ie street openings for maintenance of utilities) Hoping this County list will serve as a model for municipalities once adopted.

Adopting Introductory Local Law No. 10 of 2009 (A Local Law Revising the Kingston/Ulster Empire Zone Boundaries), Hereinafter Known as Local Law No. 8 of 2009 **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Director Doyle passed out boundary revisions. Ellenville requested to be removed from the zone, parking lots removed from zones in the city of Kingston, Tech City swapped areas of their property and Prism and Kadeem Winery being added.

Chairman Rodriguez asked if section lots and blocks could be obtained and Director Doyle indicated they did not have the information in section lots and blocks. He was asked to speak to Legislator Maloney who wished to have the information.

Motion to Adjourn: **Motion was made at 8:05 PM to adjourn by Legislator Sheeley, Seconded by Legislator Terrizzi. All were in favor.**

Submitted by: Mary L. Carey, Clerk of the Legislature
Nov. 30, 2009
