

MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 2, 2022 10:00 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Johnson, Groat, Chatfield, Robusto, Lasher and Miller, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Wayne County Cooperative Extension Executive (CCE) Director Elizabeth Claypoole, CCE Fruit Specialist Craig Kahlke, Tourism Director Christine Worth and Economic Development/Planning Department Director Brian Pincelli.

Minutes from the January 5th Committee meeting were approved as written.

Ms. Claypoole reported there have been problems with freezing water lines within the Extension Office in Newark; there has been extensive damage to two offices.

Mr. Kahlke was introduced to members. He has been an Area Extension Specialist for Cornell Cooperative Extension-Lake Ontario Fruit Program for the past six years, stationed out of the Niagara County CCE Office. In addition, he specializes in fruit quality management. The Lake Ontario Fruit Team is a regional Extension program of Cornell and provides educational programs for the commercial fruit industry, using research-based information to help the tree fruit and berry industries in New York compete in the world market and provide safe, high-quality produce for consumers. The five county area that is involved in the Fruit Team oversees the largest fruit tree growers in the State.

Mr. Kahlke spoke about a Motts project and research that is underway with encouraging additional growth of processing apples in the State, in particular, Wayne County where Motts is located. He has been in meetings with Motts managements and Motts growers about potential ways to increase the processed apple crop. Mr. Kahlke has been working the CCE Geneva Experimental Station on rootstock development for process apples that will grow particularly well in the local soil and obtain a higher density yield. In 2023 CCE will fund two orchards in their Fruit Team Regions, one being in Wayne County, to grow a sampling of the three varieties of rootstock apples so data can be compared regarding their yield. Original test at the Experimental Station showed good results. Mr. Kahlke said this is a long-term project and will take six to seven years to have the sample trees up to full production. These particular trees can be planted closer together than other orchards and will still allow for the majority of mechanical equipment to pass between rows. The cost savings of utilizing automated equipment was stated. How moveable platforms make it easier for pickers was stated. There are two local producers of motorized platforms in Wayne County. Growers of fresh apples have used automation; those with processing apples have generally not. This project will help increase the adoption of new practices and technology for process apple farms to increase profitability. A change in their nursery stock and equipment can be costly to growers, but the benefits of high yield production can earn them a higher amount of money.

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The monthly activities report for the Tourism Department was distributed with the agenda. It included a list of meetings attended by Mrs. Worth and the Outdoor Recreation Coordinator. Mrs. Worth remains active with the County's Bi-Centennial Committee, the children's activity book is complete, and a press release was sent out about the two-year bi-centennial calendar. Wayne County is working with Cayuga and Seneca County's on a birding app; it will highlight birding along the Erie Canal. Fourth Quarter Matching Funds reports are complete and have been sent to the State. A Sport Show was held this month in Syracuse, with others scheduled in February in Massachusetts and March in Hamburg, New York. Mrs. Worth reported she has filled the vacant clerical position in her Office. The County's Visitor Guide should go to graphic designer later this week.

A travel writer who was in Wayne County in August 2020 is currently writing another article and is planning to return this summer for future assignments.

The following transmittals were presented for the Economic Development and Planning Department:

--Authorization to bid a comprehensive housing study and amend the budget for this \$50,000 cost. The State will pay for 95% of this study with CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) funds. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to bid a business park feasibility study and amend the budget for this expense. The State will pay half of the \$60,000 expense through an Empire State Development grant. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to appoint Jean Johnson, Laverne Bliet and Daniel LaGasse to the Wayne County Water and Sewer Authority Board. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to appoint Thomas Lyon as the County's Fair and Equitable Housing Officer. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to appoint Duane Crandon, Zachary DeBadts and Jody Bender to the Wayne County Agricultural Board. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to set a date for a public hearing for inclusion of land in a Certified Agricultural District. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign a CDBG-CV grant application requesting up to \$3 million to establish local farm worker housing, public infrastructure and farmer safety improvements. Approved 5-0.

--Authorization to transfer \$902,819 from the general funds unassigned fund balance into the Industrial Site Fund. These funds are being rolled over from unutilized 2021 funding. Approved 5-0.

Mr. Pincelli said the Department is discussing applying to the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets for funding to update the County Farmland Protection Plan. He will be presenting a transmittal at the March Committee meeting requesting authorization to apply.

Mr. Pincelli reviewed the need for the County to update the County Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP), as required by NYS DEC, which expired in 2012. Without an approved County plan, haulers operating in the County could be restricted from bringing solid waste to landfills in New York State. The Planning Department is currently licensing haulers in the County and attempts to collect data on the volume and type of solid waste collected. Verification and management of this process is difficult and very hard to enforce. Mr. Pincelli suggest outside expertise in evaluating the existing local law, SWMP, County operations, along with recommendations for improvements and development of an updated plan with recommendations for consideration. Mr. House suggested that he and Mr. Pincelli reach out to other counties and develop a strategy for moving forward for development of a Solid Waste Management Plan.

The Annual Report for the Economic Development and Planning Department was received and filed. The Economic Development Department continued to focus on business retention and expansion, workforce development and business development. There were numerous business expansion projects, most notably Pace Electronics with a \$4.3 million investment. Concern with the workforce remains an issue. Efforts continue to grow a qualified workforce locally through the Edge Factor and on regional and Federal levels. An Economic Development Specialist was hired in 2021; this position is focused on business attraction efforts. The Wayne Economic Development Corporation's 3rd Annual Pitch Competition was held, with Sodus Bay Outfitters winning the \$25,000 prize. The Economic Development Department is currently managing 18 different loans made from various funds. The Industrial Development Agency continues to provide project assistance in the form of tax benefits; they are currently managing 36 PILOT (Payment In Lieu Of Taxes) agreements. The County Planning Board reviewed 121 referrals of which 99 received approval. The Department completed a Brownfield inventory in early 2021, leading into implementation of a \$600,000 EPA Community Wide Assessment Grant. Funding is being used to complete Phase I and Phase II studies at priority Brownfield sites across the County. The County's Broadband Study completed in 2017 determined approximately 6,800 unserved households. Efforts are underway to get service to every address in Wayne County. Staff continue with efforts to evaluate and address the current condition and future demands of housing across the County. The Department was awarded a grant through the NY State Office of Homes and Community Renewal to perform a Comprehensive Housing Study in 2022. The Planning Department, along with other County Departments, is working to establish a GIS (Geographic Information System) for the County, local governments and the public to use. A grant was received by the Department for implementation of a shared GIS database program across County and local governments.

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next meeting of the Economic Development/Planning Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 2nd at 10:00 a.m.