

## MINUTES

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING COMMITTEE

**Wednesday, April 7, 2021 10:00 a.m.**

Present: Supervisors Spickerman and Lasher, Fiscal Assistant Ken Blake and Economic Development/Planning Department Director Brian Pincelli, via ZOOM Supervisors Johnson, Lasher, Eygnor and Miller, Tourism Director Christine Worth and Wayne County Cornell Cooperative Extension Executive Director Elizabeth Claypoole.

Minutes from the March 3<sup>rd</sup> Committee meeting were approved as written.

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

--Authorization to re-appointed Ron Thorn, Larry Lockwood, Jim Wedman, Bert Peters and Rob Burns to three-year terms on the Wayne County Planning Board. Approved 3-0, Supervisors Groat and Robusto were not present for the vote.

--Authorization for the Chairman of the Board to sign an agreement with Lamar Advertising to design six billboards and have them installed for a price not to exceed \$85,000. This is a budgeted expense. Approved 3-0, Supervisors Groat and Robusto were not present for the vote.

Supervisor Groat joined the meeting at 10:04 a.m.

--Authorization to submit a Community Development Block Grant application through the Economic Development and Planning Department to the New York Housing Trust Fund Corporation for improvements to the HVAC system in the County's Public Health Building and for funding to support small business to address costs associated with COVID recovery. Mr. Pincelli noted this is a competitive grant and the Office is making sure the project qualifies for these funds. Approved 4-0, Supervisor Robusto was not present for the vote.

Mr. Pincelli reported the County's Broadband Committee continues to meet. Mr. Pincelli reminded the Committee there was a countywide study performed in 2018 that concluded there are were about 6,800 households in Wayne County that were unserved by broadband at completion of the study. Since then, Planning Department staff have worked to monitor and collect data on expansion of service in the County. It is currently estimated there are 3,400 homes without coverage. Mr. Pincelli is working to bring a transmittal to the Committee to authorize a release of Requests for Qualifications to solicit a partner to work with the County to close the gap of broadband service. The State's 2020-21 budget includes funding for the expansion of broadband services, and it is believed there will be Federal dollars made available for these projects. If Supervisors are interested in obtaining estimated coverage information they can contact the office. They may be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement depending on the level of detail they request.

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Supervisor Robusto joined the meeting at 10:09 a.m.

Ms. Claypoole noted the difficulty many people have with technology and once additional broadband services are available; there may be a need to work with the community to make people comfortable with its use. Mr. Pincelli stated the service fee must be affordable. He stated the firm that partners with the County on this project would work with the County to refine the scope of the project, technology solutions, partnership model, and funding.

Mr. Pincelli reviewed the current and potential uses of the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) by his Department and other departments in the County. Mr. Pincelli suggested the current GIS is underutilized and could be used in a more robust and informative fashion. In order to modernize the County system there would have to be significant investment to modernize and aggregate data. ESRI is discussing an approach for the County to illustrate benefits of the investment. Mr. Spickerman said this may require a discussion by the full Board.

Cindy Kimble President of The Finger Lakes Tourism Alliance joined the meeting to review the possibility of the Finger Lakes Region receiving Federal distinction as a National Heritage Area. She noted the National Park Service agreed to fund \$500,000 for a feasibility study of the area in 2019. She would like the County to formally state their engagement in this project through a Board resolution. She told Supervisors the Alliance is looking to obtain letters of support from any organizations within the community for this designation. A public comment period for the Finger Lakes National Heritage Area feasibility study is being conducted through June 1<sup>st</sup>. Input from the public regarding the creation of a Nation Heritage Area in the Finger Lakes is critical. Ms. Kimble said the study is being performed to assess the natural, historical, cultural, educational and recreational resources of the Finger Lakes. The study will assess if the Finger Lakes is worthy of National recognition. The following counties are identified to be part of the Finger Lakes: Cayuga, Chemung, Cortland, Livingston, Monroe, Onondaga, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tioga, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates.

Ms. Claypoole spoke on the following:

- Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team: This is a partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, and Wyoming Counties. The Team saves resources and allows farmers to have specialist to work with. The Team offered a series of Ag educations programs to help growers do the right thing, at the right time, in the right place, with the right amount. The local Office has assisted area farmers during the pandemic. Ms. Claypoole noted Wayne County has a very large beef industry; most sold through auction. Improved quality of beef can get more money when selling. A discussion took place on the economics of growing hemp; there is an existing hemp manufacturing plant in Newark.
- Regional Commercial Vegetable Specialist Team: The Cornell Vegetable Program is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and Associations

in 14 counties – Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Oswego, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne and Yates – serving the commercial vegetable, greenhouse, potato and dry bean industries in New York. This Team spends a great deal of time on food safety and how bacterial transformations can be limited. Wayne County is the largest fresh produce market grower in the State.

- Finger Lakes Grape Program (FLGP): Is a regional Extension program of Cornell Cooperative Extension, serving the grape and wine industry of the Finger Lakes where more than 300 farms produce over 125 varieties of grapes from approximately 10,000 acres of vineyards. The FLGP provides unbiased, research-based information to the industry in all areas of grape production including vineyard and pest management practices, vineyard nutrition and soils, new vineyard establishment, and farm business management as a means of supporting the industry's growth and long-term sustainability. This year additional efforts are being put into weed control.
- Lake Ontario Fruit Program: Is a partnership between Cornell University and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in Monroe, Niagara, Orleans, Oswego and Wayne. Counties. Wayne County produces more than 50% of the regions apples. The affects local conditions have on the quality of fruit was noted.

Ms. Claypoole noted a farmer can only apply controlled substances to their crops if they have a certification to do so. The local Extension Office offers a certification class annually, with 90% of participants receiving their certificate. This year the class was done virtually, only 50% of the class obtained their certificates.

Mrs. Worth reported the 20% withheld from 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter Matching Fund payments were released; no new information has been given about 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter claims. A Travel Writer had a six-page spread in *Food & Wine Magazine* on his visit to the County in late September and early October. The well-written article included many photographs. *The Boston Globe* has shown interested in obtaining information on Erie Canal Adventure rentals. One hundred parking spaces will be added at Chimney Bluffs State Park on the opposite side of the road. The Tourism Office e-mailed area businesses new COVID guidelines for catered events as provided by the County's Public Health Department. The 2021 Visitor's Guide will be complete by mid-April. The new Office website allows businesses to enter their events for review and submission on the Tourism website.

The monthly progress report for the Tourism Office was distributed with the agenda. The report listed meetings Mrs. Worth and staff attending in March. Mrs. Worth submitted the County's Apple Tasting Tour app to the State Travel Industry Association Awards Program and the Rochester Chapter of Public Relations Society of America Prism Award Program. She is working to refine the 2021 app for the Apple Tasting Tour. The Tourism Office is assisting with the creation of a two-year bicentennial calendar. Mrs. Worth reviewed the Finger Lakes Photo Hunt that will take place this year. Postcards will be printed to promote the hunt; a pdf on the card will download to the Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council website. The hunt will start and end

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at the Finger Lakes Visitor Center, on the northern shore of Seneca Lake. Participants will need to take photos of themselves at participating locations to qualify for the prize. A staff member is scheduled to retire this year; the position will need to be refilled.

The meeting adjourned at 10:55 a.m. The next meeting of the Economic Development/Planning Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m.