

MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT/PLANNING COMMITTEE

Wednesday, October 4, 2023 10:03 a.m.

Present: Supervisors Johnson, Groat, Lasher and Eygnor, County Administrator Rick House, Fiscal Assistant Brian Sams, Tourism Director Christine Worth, Economic Development/Planning Department Director Brian Pincelli and Wayne County Cornell Cooperative Extension Representatives Maggie McHugh and Christy Hoepting. Supervisors Chatfield and Robusto were not present for the meeting.

Minutes from the September 6th and 20th Committee meetings were approved as written.

The monthly activities report for the Tourism Office was distributed with the agenda. The report listed meetings and events attended by Mrs. Worth and staff during September. Work continues on this year's Apple Tasting Tour; so far, activities are going well. The Office is working with other counties on a collaborative Erie Canal program; the World Canal Conference is scheduled to be in Buffalo in 2025. Ms. Worth is working toward Wayne County being included in the event. This year's Holiday Brochure has 32 partners and is currently at the printer. Mrs. Worth continues her efforts with the yearlong celebration of the County's bicentennial. A volunteer recognition luncheon is planned for October 29th at the Lyons Community Center. The Department will remain involved with solar eclipse events as they develop and Mrs. Worth will continue to attend County preparation meetings. She will prepare and send a newsletter regarding the event to area businesses. The Tourism Office purchased about 3,000 pair of glasses that can be worn to view the eclipse, which will be distributed to tourism businesses.

An out of State travel request was presented for Mrs. Worth to attend the Dream Destinations Travel Show in Springfield, Massachusetts, on October 21st and 22nd. There is no County cost associated with attending the event. Approved.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Vegetable Program Specialist Christy Hoepting addressed the Committee regarding onion farming in Wayne County. Cornell Vegetable Program Specialist work together with Extension Educators statewide to address the issues that affect the vegetable industry. They have varying areas of expertise but work as a team to provide educational programs and information to commercial growers, processors and argi-business professionals. Six Extension Vegetable Specialist work in a 14-county area in Western New York; five farms in Wayne County with 400 acres grow about 7% of the State's onion production. In Wayne County, the majority of onions are grown on muck soil. Extension has a 'Scouting Program' on each of these farms that measures the effectiveness of the growers pesticides spray program; information is shared with all farmers. Because Wayne County onion growers diligently follow fungicide resistance practices, they spray only when needed instead of weekly; saving money. Mrs. Hoepting has 23 years' experience with Extension and provides educational outreach to onion farmers and introduces improved ways to manage insect and weed control.

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

--Authorization to set the date for a public hearing on the County's eight-year review of Certified Agricultural District #1 and approve the review schedule. Approved 3-0.

--Authorization to set the date for a public hearing on a proposed local short Environmental Assessment Form for agricultural district review and modification. The State request municipalities adopt this form; the change requires a public hearing. Approved 3-0.

--Authorization to accept Federal Environmental Protection Act Brownfield Coalition Assessment Grant funding for \$1 million. The funds will be used for Brownfield revitalization, to include assessments, clean-up and revolving loan funds. Approved 3-0.

Mr. Pincelli informed the Committee he is actively participating and representing the County in the process of updating the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development five-year Strategic Plan.

Supervisors were informed Buffalo, Rochester, and Syracuse submitted a Federal application to serve as a Regional Technology and Innovation Hub Phase I of II. The Economic Development Agency (EDA) will designate at least 20 Tech Hubs across the country and will separately award approximately \$15 million in strategy development grants to accelerate the development of future Tech Hubs. The Tech Hubs designation will be a widely recognized indicator of a region's potential for rapid technology-led economic growth. In Phase II, EDA will make at least five implementation awards to designated EDA Tech Hubs. Only Tech Hubs that EDA designates during Phase I are eligible to apply for Phase II. In an effort to be well positioned to take advantage of this designation, Economic staff are focused developing strategies and taking steps necessary to have shovel ready sites available to take advantage of this potential designation, the Micron project in Clay, NY and other opportunities.

The live Pitch Competition will be held on November 15th at 5 p.m. at the BOCES Conference center in Newark. Mr. Groat questioned how submissions are rated and if employment factors matter. Mr. Pincelli replied that the impact on the County's economy, including job creation was one of several factors playing into how the judges score applications.

Mr. Pincelli noted there is a portal on the Department's web page that provides info on Commercial Real Estate listings as a way to help market available real estate for attraction projects. Properties not listed with a broker can still be added to the portal by filling out an information sheet found on the website and returning it to staff.

The Annual Legislative Breakfast is scheduled for this Friday at the Palmyra VFW. Workforce Development is the topic of presentations.

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The meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled of the Economic Development/Planning Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8th at 10:00 a.m.