



PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COMMITTEE

Time: 1:00 PM

Location: WebEx and 74 Ontario St., 2nd Floor Committee Room 213

November 7, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT

In Person: Supervisors William Namestnik, Christopher Vastola, Dave Phillips, and Mark Venuti.

Necessarily Absent: Supervisors Andrew Wickham, Lou Guard and Fred Lightfoote.

OTHERS PRESENT

In Person: Supervisors Todd Campbell, Peter Ingalsbe, and Dan Marshall, County Administrator Chris DeBolt, Deputy County Administrator Alissa Bub, County Attorney Holly Adams, Finance Director Mary Gates, Sr. Planner Regina Sousa, Economic Developer Ryan Davis, Planning Director Tom Harvey, Sustainability and Solid Waste Director Carla Jordan, Sr. Fiscal Manager Michael Wojcik, Sr. Planners Linda Phillips and Julie Barry, Treasurer Gary Baxter, Soil and Water Director Megan Webster, Casella General Manager Brian Sanders, Visitors Connection Director of Operations Steve Laros, Visitors Connection President Val Knoblauch, Reporter Dave Shaw, and Abigail Marion, and Clerk to the Board Kristin Mueller.

Via WebEx: BOS Chairman Marren, Supervisors Andrew Wickham and Lou Guard, Associate Planner Tim Jensen, Grant Coordinators Sharon Decker and Holly Smith, Sustainability Assistant Kaitlynn McCumiskey, Cornell Cooperative Extension Director Tim Davis, and AJ Magnan.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting of the Planning & Environmental Quality Committee was called to order at 1:00 p.m. by Vice-Chairman Phillips.

MINUTES

Supervisor Vastola made a motion to approve the minutes of the Planning and Environmental Quality Committee meetings held on October 17 & 27, 2022. Supervisor Venuti seconded the motion. The motion carried.

TEAM AGENCIES

- ♦ *Cornell Cooperative*
- ♦ *Soil & Water*

No updates were provided at this meeting.

CASELLA

- ♦ *Update*

Mr. Brian Sanders presented the following updates:

- They are continuing with the header project and most of the tie in work has been completed
- They are putting in extra infrastructure in anticipation of the delivery of the new flare. They are hoping to have it by the end of the month
- The dewatering and expansion project is going well
- The work on the south side is complete and re-seeded
- The leachate tank construction project broke ground last week. The completion date for this project is anticipated to be in early April

SUSTAINABILITY AND SOLID WASTE

- ♦ *Department update*

Sustainability Director, Carla Jordan, let the committee know the consent order press release has been published. All payments have been made and Casella is following the compliance schedule in the consent order. The Town of Seneca voted 5-0 to have no landfill activity past 2028. A group will meet over the next few months to discuss options, such as recycling and organics management, at the site after 2028.

The department is still working on the Local Law, and they hope to have it to committee soon.

The waste characterization study has brought the department in communications with two companies that are interested in organic recycle and diversion in the County.

Ms. Jordan will be bringing to the Ways and Means cycle an HR request regarding a reclassification and upgrade of a position at the landfill.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATION

- ♦ 2023 Finger Lakes Visitors Connection Budget

County Administrator, Chris DeBolt, gave a brief history of occupancy tax and reviewed the discussions that had taken place regarding the 2023 Visitors connection budget at the August 15th PEQ Committee budget meetings as well as the Ways and Means committee full budget workshop on September 26th. The August 15th PEQ Committee were not fully comfortable with the budget but passed it on to the Ways and Means Committee with the desire for the Ways and Means Committee to have discussions about it at their workshop on September 26th. The PEQ Committee also knew that the Visitors Connection would have to come back with their final budget once the actual occupancy tax numbers were available from the Treasurer's Office. At the Ways and Means budget workshop, discussion ensued. It was decided to leave the

Visitors Connection budget at the same amount as last year (\$1.04 Million) and place the extra occupancy tax funds in a special tourism and promotion reserve fund (\$438,000). These reserve funds would only be able to be spent under the same restrictions as the occupancy funds. On October 5th, the Visitors Connection adopted their budget with the full occupancy tax amount of \$1.48 million in anticipation of receiving the full amount as in years past. Mr. DeBolt had a conversation with the Visitors Connection after the adoption of their budget regarding discussions that took place at the Ways and Means workshop informing them the County budgeted the same dollar amount as the previous year and was creating a reserve.

Ms. Knoblauch explained to the Committee they did their budget the way they always have. They have talked with the County over the past few years about working out a plan and a process to better show how and what the occupancy tax funds are being spent on. She has come up with four presentations that she would like to give to the Board that would provide information, so they have a better understanding of how they spend the occupancy tax funds. She also noted that an increase in occupancy tax also provides an increase in sales tax. The four presentations she would like to provide are:

- What is the potential of the tourism industry
- What is the best use of the occupancy tax funds and goals of the agency
- Improvement of their product
- What tourism models do they see are working in other areas

In August, the Visitors Connection commissioned a study that would provide future potential occupancy tax. Using this study, she would like to come up with a plan to move forward with the County.

Supervisor Venuti asked if there were any studies that show what the effectiveness of the Visitor Connection is? He questioned, if tourism is really driven by them or are people going to come to the area anyway. It was also asked what would happen and what goes away if they don't get the full \$1.48 million amount.

Ms. Knoblauch acknowledged that it is hard to explain out the value of their endeavor. She would like to do a presentation on this, by bringing in places that benefit from their work. She can also provide numbers and models from other counties where tourism marketing was removed.

Supervisor Vastola asked how print materials are tracked.

Ms. Knoblauch said they look at the marketplace with the NYS Visitors Center in Geneva, the largest user of their print products. They keep asking for more print material every couple of months. They have

different print items that are directed to different segments of visitors. She also talked about their various print items, new wellness passport, and the John Kucko calendar.

Chairman Wickham thanked Ms. Knoblauch for coming today and for answering questions. He knows that if they were able to get the Airbnb revenue, it would level the playing field for the hotels. He also understands that the State Legislators have told the County they want some of the occupancy tax funds going to more than just the Visitors Connection. That is why they haven't passed the change in occupancy tax in the Senate and Assembly to allow for Ontario County to collect the Airbnb occupancy tax revenue.

Ms. Knoblauch said they are analyzing the data that shows how much occupancy tax they are losing from people staying at Airbnb's and not being able to collect that tax on those places until the Local Law can be changed. She would like to work with the County to make changes to allow for the State to pass our updated Local Law to collect the Airbnb funds. She hopes that the County will allow them to keep with their current budget till a new plan can be figured out going forward.

Supervisor Namestnik stated that he is comfortable with the funding and sees that they are putting a lot of thought behind reinvesting in programs that are already established.

Supervisor Dan Marshall thanked the committee for the great conversation today. He wished this could have happened a few months ago. He said Ms. Knoblauch is correct in how they and the County have done the tourism budget for the past twenty years. The Finger Lakes Visitors Connection doesn't ask for the amount, they use what is provided to them from the Treasurer based on what was actually collected.

Supervisor Baker asked where we are on what we get for the money each year and what are the results and changes of the increases over the years. He also asked about whether the PEQ reviewed the budget, what was presented to PEQ, and were there conversations about staying at the current budget at the PEQ meeting.

Ms. Knoblauch noted they presented a budget for \$1.41 million to the PEQ Committee in August. This was with the understanding if the amount changed in September from the actual number that is received from the Treasurer's office, then the County updates the amount in the budget to the actual number. It was also indicated that she was to return in September to present the budget change. The difference this year is an increase of \$70,000 from what she presented in August. She plans to use those additional funds for a master plan and winter marketing. She

also let Supervisor Baker know that she can do the analysis regarding results and changes from their programs and staff they have put in place. She will get back to him and the committee with this information.

Supervisor Venuti asked what the visitors experience fund does.

Ms. Knoblauch explained that it was put together to help not for profit organizations. They provide matching funds to these organization up to \$5000. The first year they worked with not for profits to be able to apply for funding to help make their buildings more accessible to all visitors. They are adding an additional \$25,000 to the fund this year to help local businesses improve their accessibility. They want to have accessibility for all throughout our County.

Vice-Chair Phillips also noted to Ms. Knoblauch that we need to make sure there are resources and adequate infrastructure for visitors. We need to make sure they have everything they need once her team has gotten them here, such as enough parking at parks like Grimes Glen they are encouraging people to visit. He would like to see a reserve fund that can help with lean years and make sure they have the funds to provide everything that visitors need.

Supervisor Namestnik stated he believes they still need to be provided the real data on how and on what the occupancy tax money is being spent on and how this is benefiting the County. He wanted to know how much can be attributed to the Finger Lakes Visitors Connection work.

Vice-Chair Phillips asked the committee members what should the committee's recommendation be to the Ways and Means Committee?

Supervisor Vastola recommended splitting the difference. Half of the \$438,000 would go to Visitors Connection and half would go into a reserve. Supervisors Venuti recommended giving them what their budget says (\$1.48 million) with the understanding that a plan must be put together for a different budget formula that includes a special reserve going forward. Supervisor Namestnik also agreed with Supervisor Venuti with providing them with the full funding and developing better communication and metrics in place for next year.

The Committee decided to refer to the Ways and Means Committee the recommendation to continue to provide funding as we have done in the past, providing them the 1.48 million that they budgeted. Then, keep the communication going with setting a new plan for the 2024 budget.

TOURISM

♦ Resolutions

Visitors Connection President, Val Knoblauch, presented the following two resolutions:

- Reappointment to the Ontario County Four Seasons Local

Development Corporation – Kenyon, Mordini, Brahm-French

- Appointment to the Ontario County Four Season Local Development Corporation - Holden

Supervisor Venuti motioned to approve the appointment and the reappointment resolutions for the Ontario County Four Season Local Development Corporation as presented as a block. Supervisor Vastola seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

♦ *Budget Transfer*

Sr. Fiscal Manager, Michael Wojcik, presented a budget transfer for the 2021 single audit.

Supervisor Venuti motioned to approve the budget transfer for the 2021 single audit. Supervisor Namestnik seconded the motion. The motion carried.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

♦ *Resolutions*

Sr. Planner, Linda Phillips, presented the following two resolutions:

- Appointment of Nina Tillman to the Ontario County Planning Board
- Authorization to Execute No Cost Time Extension to Intermunicipal Cooperation Agreement with the Town of Gorham to Update the Town's Comprehensive Plan

Supervisor Venuti motioned to approve the appointment of Nina Tillman to the Ontario County Planning Board and the no cost time extension with the Town of Gorham resolutions as a block. Supervisor Vastola seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Sr. Planner, Julie Barry, presented a resolution entitled, "No Cost Time Extension of Contract with Ontario County Soil and Water Conservation District Related to the Healthy Soils Initiative".

Supervisor Namestnik motioned to approve the no cost time extension with the Soil and Water. Supervisor Venuti seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Sr. Planner, Julie Barry, presented a resolution entitled, "Acceptance of 2022-2023 New York State Snowmobile Trail Development and Maintenance Grant In Aid Funds".

Supervisor Vastola motioned to approve the acceptance of NYS snowmobile trail development and maintenance grant funds. Supervisor Venuti seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Planning Director, Tom Harvey, presented the following to committee:

- Local Law No. 6 (Intro.) of 2022
- Resolution entitled, Fixing Date and Notice for the Public Hearing on Local Law No. 6 (Intro.) of 2022

Supervisor Venuti motioned to approve Local Law No. 6 (Intro.) of 2022 and the fixing date and notice resolution as a block. Supervisor Namestnik seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Planning Director, Tom Harvey, presented a resolution entitled, “Resolution Declaring December 2022 as Fair Housing Month in the County of Ontario”.

Supervisor Venuti motioned to approve declaring December 2022 as Fair Housing Month. Supervisor Vastola seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Planning Director, Tom Harvey, presented a resolution entitled, “Authorizing Non-Disclosure Agreement with New York State Department of Public Service for Broadband Data”.

Supervisor Venuti motioned to approve the non-disclosure agreement with NYS Dept. of Public Service. Supervisor Vastola seconded the motion. The motion carried.

♦ *Presentation*

Nichola Ostrander gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on her continued efforts for the small business assistance program helping Ontario County business take advantage of grants and loans.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

♦ *Update*

County Administrator, Chris DeBolt, gave the following updates:

- The Shared Services Plan is being distributed today
- Public hearings will be held at three locations as follows:
 - December 6th at 12:30 pm in Geneva
 - December 7th at 9:00 am in Hopewell
 - December 8th at 6:00 pm in Canandaigua
- The Shared Services panel meeting will be held on December 22nd prior to the Board meeting

BOS CHAIR UPDATE

BOS Chairman, Jack Marren commended the PEQ members on the Finger Lakes Visitors Connection budget discussion and recommendation to the Ways and Means Committee

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Supervisor Vastola seconded by Supervisor Venuti, the meeting was adjourned at 2:42 pm.

Respectfully Submitted, Kristin Mueller, Clerk to the Board

Approved