

**Economic Development & Energy Committee Meeting
Held In Room #318
Putnam County Office Building
Members: Chairwoman Scuccimarra & Legislators LoBue and Gross**

Monday

6:30 P.M.

June 10, 2013

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairwoman Scuccimarra. Legislator LoBue led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislators LoBue, Gross, and Chairwoman Scuccimarra were present.

Legislator LoBue made a motion to accept the Other Business for this meeting. Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Legislator LoBue made a motion to accept the additional for this meeting. Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Item # 9) Other Business

Item #9a) Tourism Update/Director of Tourism Libby Pataki

Director of Tourism, Libby Pataki, stated that this past Friday, New York United States Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, as well as Congressman Maloney and State Senator Gipson were at Boscobel. She stated that Senator Gillibrand feels that area legislation should be introduced because we need to continue to access federal matching funds for projects going on in the area. She further stated that the second item that Senator Gillibrand discussed was the National Parks Study. She stated that this is a process which would draw additional tourism and federal investment on the economic side jobs to the region. She stated that the third item discussed by Senator Gillibrand was the Highland Protection Conservation Act, which includes farms, farmlands, and water quality. Director Pataki distributed information on this topic to the Committee. She also stated that the Hudson Region Package was also delivered to her office today. She stated that the package is rather large and if anyone would like a copy she will be happy to forward it to whoever would like it.

Legislator LoBue requested a copy of the package be sent to her email.

Director Pataki stated that Tourism is increasing dramatically from year to year so from an economic standpoint, it is all good news as far as Tourism in New York. She further stated that one of the happiest Tourism events she has been to is in Rhinebeck which was the National Country Living Fair which is great for the Mid-Hudson Region. She stated that this is the first time that this Fair was in the Mid-Hudson Region and this Fair also goes to London, England, Atlanta, Georgia, and Columbus, Ohio. Director Pataki went on to state that the Fair was absolutely fantastic and extremely well run. She stated that all of the vendor space was sold out and they are expanding and coming back next year. She stated that another benefit of this Fair was that all of the historic sites in the region were visited including Boscobel. She stated that a great deal of restaurants and hotels were visited also. She reported that visitors came from thirty-three states and they had almost seven thousand pre-sold tickets.

Item #3) Discussion/PC EDC President Meghan Taylor
Item #3a) Consolidated Funding Application

President of the Economic Development Corporation, Meghan Taylor, explained the process of Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to the Committee. She further stated that the third round of CFA funding is officially underway. She informed the Committee that she can provide the large packets which explain the CFA process to whomever would like them. She stated that these packets outline all the different programs along with the money that is available. She stated that the application opens to the public on June 17, 2013 and submissions are due no later than 4:00 P.M. on August 12, 2013. She stated that the scoring of the Council will be due on September 24, 2013. She stated she has had four meetings with applicants from the CFA today and is confident that Putnam will have many applications going into the CFA process.

Legislator Oliverio stated that the onus with this tax exemption falls back on us as taxpayers because these businesses are not paying their sales tax, property tax, or school tax. He stated that this is not a very equitable situation.

Item #3b) PC EDC Projects

President Taylor stated that she is currently working on a call center project that would create approximately 100 jobs. She stated that they are in the process of looking for a 30,000 square foot facility at this time. She stated that she believes that they have found a facility that would work for the Center. She stated that NYSEG is going to be doing a workshop on June 19, 2013, from the hours of 10:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. at the Bureau of Emergency Services. She stated that they will be there to assist customers with filling out applications and answering any questions that anyone may have regarding funding which is available to help people with the effects from the Superstorm Sandy. She stated that if anyone knows of any businesses or municipalities that may be interested in this funding to please pass along that information, as this funding is on a first-come, first-served basis. She stated that there is two million dollars available for funding at this time, but once the money is gone there will be no more money available.

Legislator LoBue asked what the lead time was from NYSEG.

President Taylor stated none.

Legislator LoBue stated that this is always the problem with communication as the information has to be distributed in such a short period of time to let businesses know that the funding and reimbursement is available.

President Taylor stated that she completely agrees and NYSEG had stated that they sent letters out in the beginning of May. She further stated that the application deadline is August 1, 2013.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra asked if President Taylor had reached out to municipalities regarding the funding that is available.

President Taylor stated yes she had.

Legislator LoBue asked what types of businesses have approached President Taylor regarding this funding.

President Taylor stated there are a few municipalities that have approached Putnam County EDC for help. She stated that the Governor has put something out called the Opportunity Agenda. This is the designation of an opportunity area which would be based on population, median income, and things of that nature, to help in the revitalization of different opportunity areas around the State. She stated that the Village of Brewster has been proactive at trying to clean up and revitalize their main street and that is their economic drive. She stated that she believes the Village of Brewster could fit into this aspect well. She stated that as the Committee knows, the Village of Brewster is rather small with a population under the 5,000 mark. She stated that the Opportunity Agenda calls for encompassing its surrounding area, which would actually fit Brewster into the Opportunity Agenda criteria and what that would do is have them score higher in the CFA process. She stated that there are a few non-profits and two manufacturing companies that have approached the PC EDC for help as well.

Legislator LoBue asked what was happening with the Paladin Group, which is a technical training facility, located on Seminary Hill Road in Carmel.

President Taylor stated that Paladin is in communications with a couple of opportunities at this time to expand their efforts. She stated that she is not at liberty to speak about the situation at this time.

Legislator LoBue asked if it is true that they had returned the funding to the State from last year.

President Taylor stated that they did not return the funding as they never received it.

Legislator Gross asked if there was any thought of using the same structure that the schools use.

President Taylor stated absolutely. She stated that she has checked with the Putnam County Industrial Development Agency to see if there are different programs that they can create or use to entice companies that are coming in.

Item #4) Presentation/Scenic Hudson – Hudson Fjord Trail/Mr. Mark Wildonger

Representative from Scenic Hudson, Mark Wildonger, gave a brief overview of the Hudson Fjord Trail to the Committee. He stated that Scenic Hudson sees this as a regional project and can become the sign of an emerging trail network here in the Hudson Valley. He stated that he feels that the Hudson Fjord Trail is the spine for connecting all of the other trails together. He stated that Scenic Hudson is trying to look outside of the jurisdictional boundaries and they are seeing that what benefits one community really benefits the region. He stated that we already see that this area is a tourist attraction when driving down Route 9D on any beautiful weekend. He stated that one sees the parking lots and shoulders of the roads are filled with cars. He stated that some folks get into some precarious situations walking cross Route 9D where that area is a

55 MPH zone. He stated that if you are getting off at the Great Neck Train Stop that some people are walking down the railroad tracks to get to access the trail. He stated that Metro North sees that as a liability and has lent their support to the project as well. He stated that this is not an easy project and that is why they have reached out to Philipstown and Cold Spring.

Mr. Wildonger further stated that they have received quite a bit of funding for this Master Plan process. He stated that the Town of Fishkill has given them \$11,000.00 from the New York State Greenway for the project, the Town of Philipstown had received a grant for \$5,000.00, the Hudson Highland Land Trust also put in another \$5,000.00, and Open Spaces another \$5,000.00. He stated that they have also heard from a donor who sees this as a world class project and is willing to contribute, most likely, up to another \$150,000.00 to the project. He stated that the cost of this project would be roughly twenty million dollars. He stated that the Town of Fishkill will be releasing the Request For Proposal in the next two weeks and that will be about a ten month process. He stated that the NYS Department of Transportation staff has given Mr. Wildonger a sketch plan which he then presented to the Committee. He stated that at this time one of the greatest opportunities that we have now is the Federal Transportation Grant. He stated that recently the Federal Government has opened up their Transportation Enhancements Program, which is a program that funds other types of facilities rather than typical Highway Work. He stated that the application process is now open and is due on August 16, 2013. He stated that they are looking for a sponsor for the project at this time and that the sponsor should have experience with Federal Transportation Grants. He stated that he understands that Putnam County does have experience with this.

Legislator Oliverio asked what Mr. Wildonger needs from this Legislature.

Mr. Wildonger stated that the Letter of Support is part of the Grant Application Package. He stated that they are really looking to work with the Putnam County Planning Department, if they will be willing to be a sponsor for the project.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated that Commissioner Ruggiero has some concerns and invited him forward to voice them to the Committee.

Commissioner Ruggiero stated that he wants to be cautious with these sponsorships as in the past it does not mean that there is no liability to the County. He stated that just because we are a sponsor, the grant is essentially with the County and that means that the County has all the liability for the project. He stated that depending on if the County works out an agreement stating otherwise, that the County would be responsible for all of the work. He stated that there are fees, etc., associated with this and this does not mean that this is not a good project. He stated that the Legislature must keep in mind that there is a cost associated with that and asked who would bear the cost for that. He stated that there could also be an 80/20 match that has been done prior.

Legislator Oliverio stated that the Bike Path is one of the greatest assets that has come to this County.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she is not clear on the fiscal responsibility or accountability of the 80/20 match and how it affects the County. She asked if the fiscal responsibility is segregated through County to County.

Commissioner Ruggiero stated that it depends on what we are applying for. He stated that this looks like we are just applying for Cold Spring and Philipstown.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated that it is amazing how many people come to walk the Bike Path. She asked Mr. Wildonger, if the County were to consider this, how we would need to proceed.

Commissioner Ruggiero stated that he needs to have more dialogue with Mr. Wildonger to work out the details.

Legislator Gross stated that he is not familiar with the territory that they have been speaking about and he can see people getting injured and this would become a liability issue with the tunnel being in this plan.

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated that there still is a lot of planning to be done.

Item #5) Discussion/NYSAC Letter – Governor Cuomo’s “Tax Free NY” was duly noted.

Item #6) Discussion/Putnam County Energy Consortium

Legislator LoBue stated that she has been researching the ability to reinstate the Energy Committee and after much research, she has found a Mid-Hudson Regional Sustainability Plan that we have been involved in pertaining to the planning process. She stated that Westchester has passed a Legislative Resolution certifying this Plan and she will give each one of the Legislators a copy so that next month this Committee will be able to discuss this. She stated that there is also a large amount of funding associated with this Regional Plan, which is quite comprehensive. Legislator LoBue stated that she has the Executive Summary here with her this evening and she is going to read a Resolution to the Committee that she hopes we can pass, which has already been passed in Westchester. Legislator LoBue read the Resolution to the Committee. She stated that this Resolution would involve all of the towns and the County would be the umbrella. She stated that it has not been decided just how this will be implemented as of yet, but Legislator LoBue wanted to begin the discussion with her colleagues. She stated that her colleagues that have been with her on this Legislature know that she has been talking about energy efficiency for some time. She stated that three years ago they had started an Energy Committee that was not that successful and now with the aid of this Plan which outlines a lot of energy efficiencies that can be implemented. Legislator LoBue stated that she would like each of the Legislators to take a look at this Plan so they can decide how to proceed.

Commissioner Ruggiero stated that this is a wonderful Plan and he had worked on it in Westchester and said that Putnam is really not that far behind.

Legislator Gross stated that the Planning Board Chairman of the Town of Southeast has also been speaking about getting into the matter of codes to improve electricity and efficiency. Legislator Gross stated that he feels that this is all going in the right direction.

Item #7) Verbal Update/FYI/New York State Bid List-Procedure/Chairwoman Scuccimarra

Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated that in the Audit Committee Meeting last month we had a local businessman attend and he wanted to know why he was not utilized by the County for his product. She stated that we realized through this conversation that there was a disconnect between companies in Putnam County and how they are able to get in New York State Bid Lists. She stated that the gentleman's thought was that we encourage people to Shop Putnam. She stated that at the meeting it was asked why don't we encourage the County Government to Shop Putnam as well. Chairwoman Scuccimarra stated that she had spoken to Chairman of the Legislature Othmer, President of the EDC Taylor, and Putnam County Director of Purchasing Mazzotta about having a workshop for local businesses on how to navigate through the State's Bid List and how to apply to be on that list. She stated that the bid process, from what she understands, is a little confusing and she believes this type of workshop would help business navigate the bid process.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she does not have concerns about the workshop itself. She stated that she does have concerns regarding the purpose of a Procurement Policy and the objective of a Procurement Policy, as it is supposed to be open and transparent and to give everyone an equal opportunity to bid on a job. She stated that her concern is that perhaps we may be going down a slippery slope by tailoring and only working with certain people for tailor-making a bid to a certain vendor.

Chairman of the Legislature Othmer stated this will not be tailor-made for anyone. He stated that all they are going to do is educate businesses that do not know how to properly do the bidding. He suggested that the Committee send Legislator Nacerino's concern to our Legal Department for their opinion.

Chairwoman Nacerino agreed.

Legislator Oliverio stated that it should just be said that there will be a workshop for all businesses in Putnam County to understand the bidding process.

Legislator Nacerino stated that she does not want anyone to think that she is against the concept. She stated that she just wanted to put food for thought out there and feels that it should be duly noted for the record. She stated that she also feels that she is not quite sure that it is the role of government to handhold a vendor through the process and she is glad that the suggestion was made. She stated that it is encumbered upon that businessman to learn the ropes. She stated that if you are capable enough to bid on the job, then you should. She stated that it should be encumbered upon that businesses know what the criteria is to win the bid. She stated that it is great that there is going to be an informative workshop and it should be open to everyone who wants to gather this information.

Item #8) Unemployment Report/FYI was duly noted.

There being no further business, at 7:40 P.M., Chairwoman Scuccimarra made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Claire E. Muller, Administrative Assistant.