

Economic Development Committee Minutes
August 3, 2016 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Chairman Art Johnson; Supervisors Ed Kinowski, Jack Lawler, Paul Lent, Tom Richardson and Jon Schopf; Chad Cooke, Spencer Hellwig, County Administrator; Jason Kemper, Caroline Ross, Planning; Steve Dorsey, County Attorney; Todd Shimkus, Annamaria Bellantoni, Saratoga County Chamber of Commerce; Shelby Schneider, Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership; Press.

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order and welcomed all in attendance.

On a motion made by Mr. Schopf, seconded by Mr. Richardson the minutes of the June 8, 2016 meeting were approved unanimously.

Mr. Johnson welcomed Todd Shimkus and Annamaria Bellantoni to the meeting, Mr. Shimkus distributed a handout and gave an update with regard to Saratoga County tourism. Saratoga County Occupancy Tax receipts for 1st and 2nd quarter are down from 11.9% vs the same time in 2015 however the figures are still the 2nd highest in history. Saratoga County STR report for running 12 months show hotel occupancy down 10.8%, average daily rate up 3.3%, RevPar (revenue per available room) is down 7.9%, supply is up 6.8% due to the addition of several hotels in the area, demand is down 4.7% and revenue down 1.6%. Mr. Shimkus said that these figures are for the County not including Saratoga Springs.

Mr. Shimkus went over a report on the Chambers revenue and expenditures for marketing strategies in 2016. Advertising plan includes digital media, television, radio, social media, joint promotions and consumer print ads. Digital media has become the most significant medium used by the Chamber. The Chamber works with a company called Goodway for behavior and geo-targeting online. At the end of June over 14 million impressions were delivered online. Online reports with Goodway are tracked weekly.

Tourism sweepstakes were changed to one large package this year, as of June 30, 2016 there were 18,832 entries and 5,400 unique email addresses gathered compared to 4,586 entries and 1,751 emails in 2015. The Chamber also partnered with Saratoga.com by promoting the Chamber through Saratoga.com's social media presence. The Chamber also emails a monthly e-newsletter.

Mr. Kinowski reported that Browns Beach is open, the lake is healthy, safe to swim in and is a large draw for tourism. Mrs. Bellantoni said that they will be promoting the lake in an upcoming television show called Fishing University, Saratoga Lake will be featured.

Mr. Johnson said that he is a member of the Board of Directors of Saratoga County Chamber and commended the work of Mr. Shimkus and his staff.

Mrs. Schneider gave a brief update on the activities of the Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership. Since the last update, they are working with over 27 active clients within Saratoga County, over 16 business and expansion projects, over 8 new clients of which 6 came from a trip Marty Vanags and Alyssa McClenning attended, Semicon west in San Francisco. Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership has an event scheduled for at the Saratoga Casino Hotel, they will be hosting Chris Steele, a corporate site location advisor for Investment Consulting Associates.

Mr. Steele will be giving a presentation explaining how corporate site location works and how communities can position themselves to gain the attention of companies. The event will take place on Thursday, August 11 at 11:30am.

Mrs. Schneider said that she has had a lot of opportunity to meet with existing businesses in Saratoga County. Many of the companies she is working with are in a hiring mode and are struggling to fill certain jobs. They are working together to help meet skills gaps and connecting them with resources such as Saratoga County one stop center, regional workforce development boards, representatives at the Department of Labor, school districts and community colleges.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Lent to enter into the necessary agreements to apply for, accept and administer a New York State snowmobile grant in aid program grand, and authorizing the issuance of a negative declaration under SEQRA. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper distributed a memo to the board. This annual grant is based on snowmobile registrations. The funds are pass through funds that go directly to the clubs in Saratoga County. The Saratoga County Association of Snowmobile Clubs currently has 6 clubs that develop, maintain and operate 164 miles of state grant funded trails through 17 municipalities in Saratoga County. Registrations are down due to the mild winter last year. There are two reroutes to the trails this year, one in the Town of Edinburg and one in the Town of Greenfield. The County will be working with the Mulleyville Snowmobile Club to complete review and SEQRA as part of the resolution.

A motion was made by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Lent to rescind resolution 104-2016 due to the Historic Hudson-Hoosic Rivers Partnership's decision to purchase timber for the Gateway Visitors Center from the Timber Frame Guild. Unanimous.

Mr. Kemper said that in April the Board approved the donation of timber for the construction of the visitor center. The Hudson Hoosic Partnership has now decided to purchase the timbers directly rather than use the timber available from County forestland. Saratoga County needs to pay Saratoga Land Management \$2,247.50 for services rendered prior to HHP notifying the County that they no longer needed the timber. These costs will be reimbursed by HHP.

Mr. Kemper gave a brief update on the Zim Smith Trail, they have met with Mr. Tanski and several land owners. There is the possibility of a significant amount of federal funding that would complete the trail. Archeological work on the trail is almost completed.

On a motion made by Mr. Lawler, seconded by Mr. Lent the meeting was adjourned unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
Therese Connolly
Legislative Clerk