

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – JULY 19, 2022

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
PRESENT: Griffith, Campbell, Hicks, O'Brien, Shaw, Skellie-zoom, Ferguson-zoom

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS  
ABSENT: None.

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, Fedler, Nolan-zoom, Hogan, Wilson-zoom, Clary-zoom  
Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board  
Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – May 24, 2022
- 3) Broadband Update
- 4) Tourism Updates
- 5) Other Business
- 6) Adjournment

Chairman Griffith called the meeting to order at 10:50 A.M. in the second floor classroom, Room B214, and via zoom.

A motion to accept the minutes of the May 24, 2022 meeting was moved by Mr. Campbell, seconded by Mr. O'Brien, and adopted.

Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, addressed the following items:

- Various Funding Opportunities:
  - Restore NY – Applications have been released for Restore NY funding. If any community that has a project in their community which is intended to remediate eyesores, brownfields within the community that are inhibiting growth and development in the municipality can apply for funding. Requires the municipality to submit a letter of intent to the NYS Department of State and those letters are due by August 11<sup>th</sup> and full applications are due by October 10<sup>th</sup>. She does know of municipalities that plan to submit. Mr. Nolan believes the village of Greenwich plans to apply for the Dunbarton site. The grant requires site control, the municipality has to own or control the site.
  - DRI - Downtown Revitalization Initiative – Funding just released. The State also has a program called NY Forward that is funding out to the village and town level rather than large cities like the DRI. Each region will be able to select two or three projects across the region that will be awarded between \$2.25M to \$4.5M. Funding is open and requires a letter of intent. Primarily what they are looking for is activity in development and investment on the table. Help the community make those developments and investments move along, a reason to believe the funding will make a significant difference.
  - County is submitting grants for the joint County and Fort Ann Highway barn and a CDBG to assist Homefront. It was discussed at the Health and Humans Services Committee meeting the possibility of submitting a CDBG grant partnering with the Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board but it does not look like that is going to happen because the partnering agencies just did not think that they could do it. She assisted the Kingsbury/FE Senior Center with their application to get a new nine passenger van. Worked with the Washington County Fair on a \$600,000 project to get broadband, broadcasting capacity and other measures that are really going to help the fair with their internet and then increase their

marketing and broadcasting capacity. They were awarded \$512,000 towards the project and have a match of \$128,000. Another grant application was submitted regarding septic for the fair and hopefully will know if awarded in September.

- Tourism Update:
  - Looked at the January to May gross sales and tax revenue for short-term rental market and in sales tax only Airbnb not Vrbo. For the first five months comparing 2021 to 2022 our gross revenue is up 2% but if you compare our tax collection for the same period it is down by 3%. So even though gross revenue is up we are getting less money because Airbnb distinguishes between taxable and non-taxable revenue which could be due to the number of thirty days and over stays has increased and cleaning fees are increasing and are non-taxable.
  - Saratoga Living Magazine – Full page add in the magazine.
  - Wine and Cheese Video – The latest video focuses on the wine and cheese tour and it has received 2700 views in ten days.
  - Additional Postage – Previously requested a budget amendment in the amount of \$700 for postage cost related to mailing out the Haunted Tour I Love NY guide. The office has spent the additional \$700 in postage and has a request to mail out another two hundred copies. Unsure how many more requests will be received and planning to wait until further in the year to amend budget.
  - Meeting of the Minds – Planning to schedule an informational meeting to get some of the Airbnb hosts together sometime in September.
  - Boat Launch on Hudson River - Mr. Shaw brought up the idea of exploring a County boat launch on the Hudson River. He brought this up several years ago also and stated right now the Hudson River is booming with increased usage. There is a lot of potential right now and grant funding opportunities. This needs to start at the town level.
- Broadband – New York State is putting out a broadband map and the website address is [mapmybroadband.dps.ny.gov](http://mapmybroadband.dps.ny.gov). The Economic Development Director stated the map is reasonably close to our effort of identifying broadband addresses. There is a feedback button if you see something inaccurate. The FCC has been working on a similar map using more data than the State map. All the federal broadband money is going to be allocated to the states based on the FCC mapping. Efforts are underway to address some inaccuracies found between the State and FCC map. The Director of the State Broadband Office left which may put the State behind a little bit. The County has access to the FCC data and the Economic Development Director is working on getting registered with the FCC. It is likely 2026 before any funding. The County is down to about 1,500 unserved addresses. Request was put in to Representative Stefanik for \$1M in broadband funding and selected as a project to move forward to the Appropriations Committee. Hopeful if awarded will see hookups sooner than 2026.

#### OTHER BUSINESS:

- Ag District Eight – Laura Chadwick, Director of Real Property Tax Services, reported that the eight year review of Consolidated Ag District No. 8 will be coming up shortly and the Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board will need to meet to start their review process .

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 A.M.

*Debra Prehoda, Clerk*  
*Washington County Board of Supervisors*