

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, PLANNING & TRANSIT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES - JUNE 24, 2009
MEETING HELD AT: UCAT– One Danny Circle, Kingston, NY

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Legislator Hector Rodriguez – Chair Legislator Wayne Harris
 Legislator Peter Loughran Legislator Joseph Roberti (left 7:30)
 Legislator Mary Sheeley Legislator Catherine Terrizzi

ABSENT OR EXCUSED: Legislator Gary Bischoff - in Ireland

OTHERS ATTENDING:

Dennis Doyle, Director of Planning; Lydia “Lee” Reidy, Executive Director of Cornell Co-Op;
Cynthia Ruiz, Director of Public Transportation

Chairman Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 6:11 pm and asked for a motion to approve the May 26, 2009 minutes. **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Harris. All were in favor.**

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

Committee recognized Cynthia Ruiz, Director of Public Transportation, for her years of service to Ulster County. Cynthia will be leaving the County after more than 22 years, having accepted a position with Dutchess County Transit. Presented Cynthia with a plaqued Pride of Ulster County and a gift to a spa – celebrating with food, cake and drinks (coffee and ice tea.)

***Cynthia Ruiz** shared with the committee that she was unaware of replacement being found yet and she will be remaining on a consultant basis for (4) months to assist with transition period; she feels she has left the County Transit department in good shape and financially sound*

Asked what challenges Ulster should expect and Cynthia indicated controls on internal data is one; accurate and good data is key to transit and getting the federal funding – making sure federal regulations, policies and procedures are being followed

Dennis raised challenge of Intermodal Center development and Cynthia quickly indicated that a transit person should be involved and someone who can stay on top of the project on a daily basis

Issue of merging City and County transit was raised and Cynthia saw a number of concerns, one being the Unions and overall, feels it would be costly. The only way she could see it readily working would be for the City to decide to get out of the transit business and the County pick up the entire operation of transit.

***Lee Reidy** shared with the committee what activities are currently going on with Cornell Co-Op (ie Master Gardeners Program at Mohonk; Rain Garden Project – recently did one in Town of Ulster and one in Saugerties;) Farm communities are struggling this year with the heavy rains*

we've been getting. Some alternative energy sources are being utilized by farmers this year but the use of alternative energy sources in general continues to be looked at. DEP is providing \$2mil with regard to cleanup of the Esopus and stream restoration, Cornell Co-Op will assist with administering the funds and Soil and Water will be providing technical assistance. UC Fair is going to be July 28-Aug 2nd.

Family Consumer Science Program will be addressing nutrition training for low income families. Co-Op is talking to farmers about migrant workers as well as year round workers possibly participating. Participants need to commit to training across several sessions, inclusive of testing.

Expressed grave concern that 60% of staffing is paid through grants and current County contract management system is creating extensive delays in people getting paid, programs being able to operate, etc. Fears programs will need to be shut down or no longer be set up as funding is not being provided in a timely manner. While review of contracts is necessary, it appears that review is subjective pending who is looking at the contract and consistency in time frames for turn around is lacking. Federal contracts can not be changed and our contract people did not seem to realize this – Lee expressed that Contract management should have someone who is familiar with government contracts which are different than “private” contracts. Lee was very frustrated and asked for support and assistance from the Committee.

Dennis Doyle concurred there are issues but feels it is systemic in that the oversight consists of so many departmental reviews, inclusive now of the Comptroller, and these checks and balances are needed and driven by the Charter.

Cynthia Ruiz feels some of the new reporting requirements being placed in contracts will assist going forward with payment schedules.

Committee assured Lee they would speak to County Executive's Office.

Dennis Doyle shared with the committee that the addition of a Deputy Director of Economic Development and the funding changes with the Development Corporation have significantly impacted what is going on with economic development in the County in a positive manner. (Some examples of what is in the works - Restore NY Grants for Gardiner and Ellenville, Broadband \$5mil ASK, Established Bank Consortium, Branding Campaign with Tourism)

Legislators Sheeley, Harris and Terrizzi and Chairman Rodriguez voiced to Dennis dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Tourism Campaign was handled, the marketing as well as the computer upgrades, not being brought to the attention of the Committee who has oversight for Tourism initiatives. The committee was made aware by a person from the community. Dennis pointed out that the full legislature was reached out to and Mary Carey confirmed that an Informational Session would be presented in July.

Chairman Rodriguez acknowledged that the County Executive does not answer to the Legislature but as a courtesy, the Committee should have been communicated to along the way rather than at the end of the project. The two branches should be working together on these Countywide initiatives. The discussion further addressed that the Tourism Committee would appreciate Rick Remsnyder being able to attend the monthly meetings. Since tourism is now under Economic Development within the County, the request was made of Dennis, who Rick reports to and who could bring it back to the appropriate individuals within the County Executive Office. Chairman Rodriguez suggested that the County Executive's area be made aware of the expressed concerns and consider reaching out to the Tourism Committee members going forward.

Dennis requested that the Legislators not let the communication breakdown be reason to hold up what is a great project for the County as a whole, involving numerous individuals who dedicated a lot of time and energies.

Dennis brought up that a State Legislative Memorandum of Agreement with NYSDOT, earmarking \$1mil for development of rail- trails in the Route 28 Corridor, exists presently. The Trails Advisory Committee was informed of this funding and Wally Cook will be part of a small subcommittee to look at and make recommendations as to how the monies should be assigned.

Dennis announced the Tri-County Housing study is complete and Ulster is waiting on other Counties to sign off, then numbers will be released shortly. Public Information campaign continues to be worked on –draft ads are done and website will be obtained.

Main Street Program award (\$50,000) was given to County and will be applied to Phoenicia, Pine Hill and Boiceville areas.

\$500,000 Grant for Smart Growth Initiatives in Southern Ulster available - Lloyd, Marlboro and Shawangunk are the communities being worked with.

Kerhonkson Bridge project along with a number of other public works projects are moving along and are on target due meet stimulus money deadlines.

RESOLUTIONS

Adopting the inclusion of additional lands in agricultural districts within Ulster County as recommended by the Ulster County Farmland Protection

Motion was made by Legislator Rodriguez, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi to amend this resolution – removing S. Wine parcels (86.1-1-37.11 and 86.1-1-37.12) all were in favor.

Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Terrizzi on amended resolution – all were in favor.

Dennis Doyle would present language

Appointing an alternate member to the Ulster County Planning Board from the Town of Hurley – Karl Brueckner **Motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Loughran – all were in favor.**

Supporting the grant application to the Hudson River Valley Greenway to initiate the development of a Greenway Pact for Ulster County **Motion was made by Legislator Loughran, seconded by Legislator Sheeley – all were in favor**

Dennis Doyle explained County was given \$49,000 award to identify priority growth areas throughout the County; Begins process of getting communities to join compact so communities will agree to grow in a certain manner with design guidelines, etc.

Motion to Adjourn:

Motion was made by Legislator Harris, seconded by Legislator Loughran – all were in favor. Meeting adjourned at: 8:12 PM

Submitted by: Mary L. Carey, Clerk of the Legislature