

ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE MEETING

NAME OF COMMITTEE: Education, Culture and Economic
Affairs Committee

DATE: September 23, 1993

TIME: 6:00 P.M.

PLACE: Ulster County Community College

LEGISLATORS PRESENT: Chairman Dunn and Legislators
Sfregola, Every, Irwin, Contini,
Felicello, O'Reilly, Schneller
and Bertone

LEGISLATORS ABSENT: None

OTHERS ATTENDING: Robert T. Brown, President, Ulster
County Community College;
Alice Cocalas, Executive Director,
Ulster County Development Corp.;
Peter Gallagher, Ulster County
Development Corp.
Joseph Munster, Ulster County
Information Officer

A quorum being present, Chairman Dunn called the meeting to order at 6:15pm. He thanked Vice-Chairman Sfregola for a job well done in the Chairman's absence last month. He also noted that Lee Reidy of Cornell Cooperative Extension was unable to attend because she was at Cornell. Chairman Dunn then recognized Alice Cocalas, Executive Director of the Ulster County Development Corp. (UCDC)

Mrs. Cocalas reported that her agency had been very busy - there are many things happening at the same time. At the workshop in August they separated into groups, among them a fundraising campaign group. Their goal is to raise \$130,000 in 30 days, and at this time

\$72,000 has been pledged. The committee had met to target specific industry groups: first banking, where the bulk of the money had come from, and then they may look towards realtors, manufacturers, etc. Mrs. Cocalas said that over 400 businesses are targets to bring into the County.

UCDC will shortly be choosing a marketing consultant firm. They will be sending brochures in the mail and will also have a direct contact campaign.

Following up on the workshop, where over 50 people attended, five groups have been developed one of which will be getting public opinion and ideas such as what do business leaders think should be done to get the economy moving again. They are presently concentrating on funding and marketing.

With regard to the marketing consultant, Mrs. Cocalas said that the search has yielded five different companies who have presented their proposals for the campaign. Four are from Ulster County and the fifth from outside. Also, a sixth proposal had been received from a New York City firm, but the committee felt it was too far out of the area. Chairman Dunn asked what the monetary impact would be, and Mrs. Cocalas replied \$60,000 for the marketing campaign to start; however, the cost is dependent upon contributions - it may be higher.

Regarding Kingston Community Development Agency, UCDC has received a proposal to administer the revolving loan fund. It involves about \$246,000. A new Director, Debbie Nugent, has been hired; however, her expertise is not in the revolving loan area. For this reason UCDC has been asked to administer the fund. The proposal is for \$250.00 per month to administer that fund. Under a separate contract, UCDC has already processed two loan packages for them.

Mrs. Cocalas informed the Committee that in September she was chosen as Treasurer for 1994 for NIDA, the Northeastern Industrial Developers Association. This means that in five years she may become President of that organization, which is a 12-state regional professional organization which shares problems and solutions to various economic matters.

She also advised that Hasbrouck House in Stone Ridge has a prospective buyer looking for industrial bonds to make it into a tourist destination. This will create 24-40 jobs. Mr. Sfregola asked what "tourist destination" meant, and Mrs. Cocalas said it included Bed & Breakfasts through small hotels with restaurant and fitness center. This particular project would be an executive retreat type of business operation. A general discussion was had regarding Hasbrouck House history, ownership and problems. Mr. Schneller said he thought

that the whole building had been renovated and refurbished. Mrs. Cocalas said the sprinkler system is in the plans. Mr. Sfregola said he believed the closing had not yet taken place, and Chairman Dunn thought it would be a boon to Stone Ridge and the surrounding area.

Regarding IDA Legislation, the Senate and Assembly have changed the activities IDAs can do. Procedures have been altered; Ulster County IDA must report yearly to the State Comptroller. There are other changes as well. All procedures now have to be written out and placed in a procedural manual. Some local policies are not written and will have to be written out and put on file. In response to a question from Mr. Schneller, Mrs. Cocalas said that there have been no specific changes in the types of income/jobs targeted. She did say that retail establishments can no longer be funded by IDA bonds. Only wholesale, manufacturing, tourist destination, etc. Mr. Sfregola asked how it gets around wholesale businesses that have retail outlets. Mrs. Cocalas said it goes on a percentage; however, she is not sure since it is so new.

Regarding prospects, Mrs. Cocalas referred to the partial list in her written report. There are many more inquiries this year than last year. She also said the Revolving Loan Fund has been revitalized, for which she credited Peter Gallagher. Chairman Dunn asked if she had any idea of the percentage of actual serious applicants and continued applications. Mrs. Cocalas said she had, to date, 367 inquires. Of those inquires, there have been 7 people come to the committee. Mr. Sfregola said that part of the increase in inquiries might be due to the economy. Mrs. Cocalas added that there is more public relations advertising being done; at least once a week. Chairman Dunn said that the irony is that there have been no IDA loans; the impact is to give the ability to apply for IDA loans. Mrs. Cocalas said one of the concerns of Industrial Development Bonds is that the bonds have no guaranty, either from IDA or the County. They are only guaranteed by the financial strength of the company. There followed a general discussion of IDA bonds.

At this point, Mr. Irwin asked about a rumor that a luggage company was going into the old Schrade Cutlery building; however, no one had any knowledge of this.

Mrs. Cocalas said another activity is modifying and improving the permit process. There have been many complaints of delays, etc. and many requests for modifying permits. Mr. Sfregola said he believed it would be more appropriate to bring this matter to the attention of the County Supervisor's Association and establish a dialogue with them.

Mr. Schneller said he knows this is a problem and there is a growing concern among a number of Boards that it is a detriment to many people. Even the State has begun some work on how to coordinate between various municipalities and agencies. If people have to wait forever they will go someplace else and he cited the example of

Empire Brick in Saugerties. After a 4-year wait they went someplace else. Chairman Dunn said it would be a benefit county-wide and area-wide to rationalize on forms and lengthy procedures. He said we have been over-regulated and in ways we are our own worst enemies.

Mr. Contini said that the Esopus Town Hall had 200 angry people with the planning processes of the Town Board and Planning Board who are coming up with new rules and regulations which are going to be more restrictive. Mr. Schneller said there was too much over-lapping of agencies. The process itself should be streamlined and coordinated.

Mr. O'Reilly wanted it on the record that he felt that to merely facilitate an existing process was one thing, but he would not want to see any local laws or zoning regulations circumvented. Mr. Sfregola said that was not the intent. Chairman Dunn suggested that Mrs. Cocalas request an appearance before the Supervisor's Association to address them on that subject. He said that we are emphasizing economic development and need to be able to facilitate that goal; however, we do not want a full-blown industrial area.

Chairman Dunn then asked about a six figure amount of financial aid that could come into the Hudson Valley from New York State and asked if that had anything to do with TEAM Hudson Valley, and if was a grant applied for to create a regional revolving loan fund. Mrs. Cocalas said the chances were good that it is a \$1.5 million appropriation. The monies will be used in conjunction with local financing. Chairman Dunn asked if all things go as planned, is her office going to be very crowded, and Mrs. Cocalas said has been discussed that their quarters are much too small, with three full time and one part time employee. In addition, there is an accumulation of over 16 years of files. The IDA files have to remain active for 20-30 years. UCDC is quietly seeking larger quarters. Ms. Bertone remarked that the Management Recording Committee is also looking for space and will look into a committee being formed to look for larger buildings.

Mr. O'Reilly asked if anything was new on the IBM buildings and the State prospect. Mrs. Cocalas thinks that was a premature statement. Calls to several State agencies have come up with nothing. If there was a prospect, it was too early to mention anything. Mr. O'Reilly said that Mercedes had gone to Connecticut or to the Carolinas.

The report of the Ulster County Development Corporation being concluded, Chairman Dunn recognized Robert T. Brown, President of Ulster County Community College.

At this point, Mr. Sfregola wanted in to go on the record that the Committee thought the 30th Anniversary and Dedication Ceremony and reception were outstanding, very well planned, and most enjoyable for all who attended.

President Brown thanked the Committee and advised them that the Chancellor of the State University had cancer surgery, which was very successful and he is recovering satisfactorily.

He also reported that the Board of Trustees had committed to hire Brinnier and Larios to design the new roofs. The County Administrator had advised the college not to submit the name until the project is ready to go. There seems to be no problem with using a local firm. Chairman Dunn asked when the roof resolution would come before the Committee, and President Brown said he did not think it would be before November, after the bidding process is complete. There are other issues pending which will go on the agenda for the next meeting.

In view of the activities regarding the Dedication and 30th Anniversary celebration, President Brown said he would waive a report for this month.

At this point Chairman Dunn recognized Joseph Munster, Ulster County Information Officer, who stated he received notice of the matching funds grant for this year from the State. We will receive \$48,807 on a request of \$151,330. Ulster County has received, over the past 18 years, more than \$1 million from New York State in matching funds.

Mr. Munster then passed around a full page ad from the New York Times which was purchased for the cut rate of \$9,000. The usual cost is \$37,000. There was also an ad in the Daily News at a cost of \$6,000 as a stand-by.

Regarding matching funds, Mr. Schneller asked how much was received last year and Mr. Munster said \$32,000. He referred the Committee to the chart distributed by him showing monies received over the years. Chairman Dunn said he knows the telephone in the County Office of Information is very busy, and Mr. Munster agreed.

Mr. Munster also reported on the Saugerties Garlic Festival scheduled for the coming weekend and explained what the Festival does. Next year it may be a two-day event. It has become very popular, with cooking demonstrations, how to grow and harvest garlic, craft booths, etc.

Returning to matching funds, Mr. Irwin would like the record to show that the County acknowledges that the State has helped us reach that goal. Mr. Munster said that we are one of seven counties - the other areas were regions. He said he has the full faith and backing of the County to apply for the maximum amount ever year.

Mr. O'Reilly asked how spending compared this year with last year and whether we should be spending more now. Mr. Munster said spending was the same this year, but that he putting a request for \$45,000 in next year's budget -- \$15,000 for each of the three proposed festivals, which are Woodstock II, Jazz Festival, and the Hudson Valley Film Festival. These festivals have to be promoted in order to promote tourism, and it has to go in the budget now.

Mr. Munster also reported that New York State DEC is putting in an application to ISTE A for a hiking trail which will link up with the railroad going to the Interpretive Center by walking across a bridge which will be built. Rock Cut washout has also been repaired. The trail will be from Phoenicia to Cold Brook and a steam locomotive will be used. He also said that the dining car and three other cars presently located by the Holiday Inn will have to be moved.

Regarding the DEC ISTE A application for a hiking trail, and upon request of Mr. Munster, and after a discussion of ISTE A money, Mr. Sfregola moved that the Committee send a letter of support to DEC of its application. The motion was seconded by Mr. Contini and upon voice vote unanimously passed.

Mr. Sfregola also informed the Committee that the Department of Public Works was also looking to put in a proposal for ISTE A monies under the enhancement portion for work on the Ferrines Bridge. There followed a general discussion of the Ferrines Bridge, the repairs needed and the responsibility for those repairs.

Mr. Munster said that because of ISTE A regulations, the railroad must apply through the County for money, and he may be coming back to the Committee. There are two new line items which he has added to the revenue line, but he cannot spend any money until he comes back to the Committee. He said the Catskill Valley Railroad does pay \$6,000 per year to the County for rent.

Regarding the Catskill Interpretive Center, Mr. Munster had no up-date. There is final statement that has yet to be released, but there is no other progress at this time. He said there would be an informational meeting in the County Office Building on the second Friday in October between 1:00pm and 3:00pm. Chairman Dunn requested Mr. Munster to put out a notice to Committee members. The report of the Office of Public Information was concluded at this time.

Chairman Dunn then recognized Mr. O'Reilly who informed the Committee that the Town of Saugerties has agreed to host the Woodstock II Festival, and asked for the County's cooperation in streamlining the process. Chairman Dunn questioned if the Town of Saugerties realizes the liability it is going to undertake.

Mr. O'Reilly also advised the Committee that a manufacturing outlet has applied to build a 200,000 square foot outlet directly opposite Winston Farm, North of Howard Johnson's. They project \$40 million in annual sales and expect to bring in \$3 million in sales taxes. It would be similar to Woodbury Commons and is in the preliminary stages.

Chairman Dunn said it should be noted that the Town of Warwarsing is getting a new food shopping building, which will also have space available to rent. It is a good start for expansion. Mr. Sfregola added to Chairman Dunn's comments that the Department of Public Works was instrumental in having an Ulster County contractor involved in site preparation for that facility.

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Irwin and seconded by Ms. Bertone, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30pm.

Respectfully Submitted:

Vincent Dunn, Chairman
Education, Culture and Economic Affairs Committee