

St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency
Minutes of September 16, 2014 Meeting ~ Town of Louisville Municipal Offices, Massena NY

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman McNeil.

Roll Call/Determination of Quorum: Mssrs. McNeil, Murphy, Strait and Carroll attend. New York Power Authority Representative Michael Huvane joined the meeting via conference call, while Karen White from NYPA was in attendance. A quorum is recognized.

Public Notice: Public notifications were sent on September 8, 2014 to, at a minimum: St. Lawrence County's newspapers designated for the publication of local laws and other matters required by law to be published. Notification also sent to other local media sources and websites.

Presentations: Michelle Capone, Director of Regional Development for the Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) discusses the Drum Country Business Regional Marketing Initiative. Drum Country Business will compose a draft RFP that will go out in October to hire a marketing consultant to represent St. Lawrence, Jefferson and Lewis Counties, whose main purpose is to outreach businesses outside and within NYS, including Canada, to obtain leads for our region. Mr. Murphy inquires about marketing to firms in the 3D Printing field, as well as those companies that will utilize the milk supply in this region. Chairman McNeil adds that Agri-Mark is already doing a great job marketing the milk supply in our area. Mr. Huvane counters that marketing milk is a big challenge, as NYS is having a difficult time producing enough milk to meet current demand, particularly now that NYS has been dubbed the "Yogurt Capital of the World". Ms. Capone advises the group this is an awareness campaign to get this region on the map. She advises the group to work with Drum Country to include topics it wants addressed in the scope of services that will specify the work that the consultant will do, though adding additional marketing topics might increase the price somewhat. She notes that New York State's initiative appears to be a positive guideline to follow. She says that the cost of participation in the marketing program will be covered by the annual fee of \$5,000, noting that there are three other organizations paying the same and that the whole amount is matched by National Grid. She suggests getting the RFP out there and then negotiate what is affordable. Finding someone who specializes in connecting with people to get a foot in the door will allow the opportunity to sell our resources, while demonstrating our proximity to markets. In response to the question concerning current marketing efforts, Mr. Plastino advises the group this will be a continuum of tradeshow and other marketing initiatives we are already doing – it will not replace these. Mr. Plastino will share 3D Printing information with Drum Country as they gather items as part of a needs assessment to be included in the marketing consultant RFP.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Huvane corrects some terminology in the draft minutes so they refer directly to the Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Board as the gatekeeper for the proceeds of the monetized power in the North Country to be referred to as. Carroll/Strait motion to accept approval of the amended August 26th meeting minutes. The minutes were passed unanimously.

Financial Report: Mr. Plastino reviews the August financial reports, noting that the increase in utility expenses over budget for Lot 18 are mainly due to a malfunctioning heating unit in the building and to the fact that the Agency began this year to heat the whole building (and not just the office area to about 40 degrees during the winter. Mr. Strait expresses concern over paying utilities while the building is vacant. However, he understands a maintenance fee would be charged even if the utilities were shut off. Mr. Plastino reminds the group there are still potential clients looking at the building and have an interest. Murphy/Carroll moved approval. Motion passes unanimously.

Committee Reports: None

Old Business: Chairman McNeil asks Mr. Huvane if the RVRDA could get reimbursed for marketing expenses through the Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Board, similar to other projects in the Western New York area that were funded for their marketing efforts. Mr. Huvane notes that the Board will not be created, nor will funds start accumulating, until the bill is signed into law by the Governor. Then eligible applicants must go through the review process to be awarded funding. Mr. Huvane gives an example of a detailed marketing plan that was accepted in Western New York, whereby efforts were made to attract and keep people in the Niagara Falls area.

New Business: Chairman McNeil reviews the 2015 tentative budget with the members. The Chairman poses a question to Mr. Plastino concerning the large decrease in budgeted operating revenue for 2015 compared to 2014, as it pertains to interest income for loans. Mr. Plastino notes that he will return to the board with an explanation, but the numbers were put into place with reasonable assurances only, considered only a tentative budget at this point. Chairman McNeil expresses concern over the great deal of expenses associated with Lot 18. Mr. Plastino notes the main focus of the marketing budget is to get a tenant for that building. Mr. Plastino reminds the group of the terms of the CDEIP agreement whereby the maximum amount allowed for appropriation for the next year is up to 5% of the budgeted amount as of December 31st of the current year (subject to audit calculations based on end of year actual figures). Thus, for budgeting purposes, as well as for the ability to utilize all eligible funding opportunities, the amount proposed for the 2015 CDEIP budget is \$465,273. Strait/Carroll motion to accept the tentative budget and CDEIP budget for 2015.

After listening to the information presented by Ms. Capone, Chairman McNeil suggests moving the Community Development and Environmental Improvement Program to the Northern New York Power Proceeds Allocation Board to review, award and fund through monetization. The timeline for announcing awards would have to be reconsidered, but the Chairman would like to further discuss the potential for such a process with the group in the near future.

Staff Report: None

Public Comment: Lucia Daily thanks the members for putting a dollar amount in the budget for the 2015 Community Development and Environmental Improvement fund. She asks for feedback from the members regarding their thoughts on past CDEIP projects. Ms. Daily recalls an article she read depicting stable growth communities having a greater quality of life rather than those with exponential growth.

Tom Sullivan, Executive Director for the Business Development Corporation for a Greater Massena, states that although a lot of jobs have yet to be created through the CDEIP, many jobs have been retained in this region and that's important.

Executive Session: Carroll/Strait motion for Executive Session at 7:11 PM to discuss the financial status of a couple of companies. Motion passes with unanimous consent.

Return to regular session at 7:35 PM, upon the motion by Carroll/Murphy.

Mr. Murphy suggests changing the scheduled meeting date of November 18th to November 11th. All in favor.

The meeting is adjourned at 7:36 PM, upon the motion by Murphy/Carroll.

Note: The next regularly scheduled meeting of the St. Lawrence River Valley Redevelopment Agency will be held at 6:00PM on Tuesday, October 21, 2014 at the Town of Louisville Municipal Offices.
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