

## ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY PLANNING BOARD

### APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

December 10, 2009

County Courthouse, 48 Court Street, Room 226 A and B, Canton

#### I. Initial Business

A. **Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum.** Welch called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. **Members present:** K. Bellor, K. Bisonette, S. Burns, W. Dashnaw, D. Duff, J. Furnia, T. Jenison, R. Matthews, D. Mullaney, W. Palmer and D. Welch. **Members Absent:** W. Davis, L. Mattice and J. Miller. **Staff present:** M. Larson and J. Pfothauer. M. Gazin arrived at 7:06 pm.

B. **Action on the Agenda.** Pfothauer announced a full review project in the Town of Gouverneur would be added to the agenda, as well as identifying members to serve on a model wind law committee with the Environmental Management Council. Pfothauer also requested time to discuss forming a nominating committee for new officers. The modified meeting agenda was unanimously approved (Matthews/Mullaney).

C. **Action on Meeting Minutes.** The November 12, 2009 meeting minutes were unanimously approved (Dashnaw/Bellor).

Pfothauer explained he received a call from Dawn Howard, Soil and Water Conservation District Manager who requested making some clarifications to the November meeting minutes. Howard explained the Trails Coordinator position established by the Board of Legislators will focus on extending trails for ATVs and other recreational activities to other counties, and said the county's snowmobile trails are already linked regionally.

Jenison asked if the County would consider selling land to defray its budget costs. Pfothauer explained that when land was purchased from the State at a reduced rate, the State retained the right of first refusal should the County consider selling the land. Bisonette added selling County land back to the State would not be the best revenue generator as State land is exempt from County taxes. Bisonette also said that depending on the law that was enacted for the State to acquire land, the law may also exempt the land from property taxes.

II. Public Comment No public comments were made.

III. 2010 Census Presentation John Tenbusch reviewed the origins and reasons for conducting a national census; described changes to the decennial census; and explained the annual American Community Survey. Tenbusch reviewed the County's assessment of "hard to count" populations; efforts to update the Census Bureau's master address files; and recommending locations in the county for the Census Bureau to count as communities.

Jenison asked if all hamlets in the county were recommended for counting. Tenbusch said hamlets that satisfied the Census Bureau's eligibility criteria were recommended for counting.

Tenbusch said the Census Bureau is looking for temporary employees in Northern New York who would be willing to work for approximately six months in 2010. Tenbusch then discussed the County's Complete Count Committee's efforts to promote and educate the public about the census process, and to encourage college students to identify Canton or Potsdam as their place of residence. Jenison asked how the committee will reach out to college students. Tenbusch replied Census personnel will deliver presentations to student life staff; all four college campuses will be asked to send out mass emails to students; advertisements will be published in campus newspapers; announcements will be posted on college websites; and a Facebook profile will be established. Tenbusch said he is attempting to identify a single sentence to compel college students to declare Canton or Potsdam as their place of residence on the census form.

Tenbusch also reviewed a grant application submitted to the Department of State to reach out to "hard to count" populations. Duff offered to deliver presentations to the Town of Macomb to promote participation in the 2010 census. Jenison said the first census director in New York was from Somerville, and listed the director's involvement in other state projects. Bisonette suggested a sentence to compel college students to declare Canton or Potsdam as their place of residence: It will help keep taxes and tuition costs down. Furnia asked if the federal funds that are allocated based on census data goes to the State's general fund. Tenbusch replied no, and explained the allocation of federal funds, such as HUD's Community Development Block Grant program.

#### **IV. Projects Reviews**

##### **A. Projects returned for local action under MOU.**

Gouverneur (V): Newvine Auto Parts, Area Variance. Mullaney asked where the proposed addition would be constructed on the lot. Pfothner provided a project description.

##### **B. Full Reviews.**

Gouverneur (T): Brian Walton, Special Use Permit and Area Variance for Auto Detailing Business, and Use Variance for Auto Sales. Larson delivered an overview of the project and explained how the property is unable to satisfy some of the development standards for approving a special use permit, and that it is unable to satisfy any of the considerations for approving an area variance, or any of the legal tests for approving the use variance. The County Planning Board unanimously disapproved the applicant's request for a special use permit and area variance to establish an auto detailing business at 35 Quarry Road, and unanimously disapproved the use variance to establish auto sales at the same location (Dashnaw/Bellor).

Hammond (T): Raymond Bray, Two-lot, Waterfront Subdivision. Pfothenhauer delivered an overview of the proposed subdivision. After noting the project satisfies the minimum subdivision standards, Pfothenhauer recommended the project be returned for local action. Pfothenhauer affirmed for Duff the right of way leads to the new lot. Duff suggested a recommendation that the right of way be recorded in the deed to prevent the creation of future land-locked parcels. The County Planning Board unanimously agreed to return the project for local action (Dashnaw/Matthews).

## V. Reports

- A. **Executive Committee.** Welch said the Executive Committee met on November 24<sup>th</sup> to set tonight's meeting agenda.
- B. **Board of Legislators.** Burns reported the County passed its 2010 budget. Duff asked Burns to comment on today's editorial in the Watertown Daily Times about the Board of Legislators's consideration to raise the sales tax to 4%. Burns replied he didn't know if there were enough votes for its passage. A discussion of the proposed sales tax hike will take place at the next finance committee meeting on December 21<sup>st</sup>. Burns confirmed for Jenison that the tax hike wouldn't come into effect until September 2010.
- C. **Staff Report.** Larson reviewed the December 1<sup>st</sup> land use training session at the County Human Services Building. 56 people were in attendance, and suggestions for future training topics included avoiding Article 78 proceedings, preparing good findings for board action, and maintaining good meeting records. When reviewing other topics in the staff report, Furnia asked how long will federal subsidies continue for the County's transportation system. Pfothenhauer replied the bus system is a public service, and is not a revenue generator for any unit of local government. The bus fare will increase from \$1.50 to \$2.00 beginning January 1<sup>st</sup> to help offset operating costs, and noted if the fare is too high, then no one will ride the bus. Pfothenhauer said the Board of Legislators will need to consider what to do when federal and state subsidies go away. Welch added ridership will likely increase when fuel costs rise again.
- D. **Model Wind Law Working Group.** Pfothenhauer said the County Environmental Management Council would like to reconvene the model wind law committee with members of the Planning Board to revise the County's model wind law ordinance. The intent is to meet after the New Year; assign tasks to committee members; then reconvene after the CDBG grant deadline in April.
- E. **Planning Board Retreat.** Pfothenhauer requested discussion topics for the January 9<sup>th</sup> Planning Board retreat. Furnia suggested a presentation by Jon Montan on grass pelleting. A suggestion was made to schedule the pelleting presentation for the regular January meeting. Dashnaw offered to deliver a PowerPoint presentation on a new software program that reduces highway project costs and time. Jenison recommended identifying and quantifying state and county land that is not subject to local land use regulations. Dashnaw suggested reviewing APA subdivision regulations. Welch recommended discussing the APA's role in

implementing land use regulations, and identifying where they overstep their responsibilities. Matthews requested an overview of the Ft. Drum Town Hall presentation held in Gouverneur. Jenison requested a discussion of the County's Agricultural Districts program. At a future regular meeting, Furnia suggested scheduling a presentation by Curran on his pelleting efforts in Massena. A suggestion was made to schedule a tour of the pelleting plant during the Board's spring meeting in Massena.

- F. Nominating Committee.** Welch requested volunteers to serve as the nominating committee to identify candidates to serve as Board officers. Pfothenauer said he will confirm the terms of service for the present officers. Welch said he would contact members who are absent to see if they would be willing to serve on the nominating committee.

**VI. Other Items**

- A.** Welch collected travel vouchers from members in attendance. Larson reviewed a free online training resource available by the Department of State.
- B. Correspondence.** None reported.
- C. Next Meeting Dates.** The Executive Committee will meet on Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm in the Planning Office Conference Room. The Full Board will meet on Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm in Room 226 of the County Courthouse in Canton.

**VII. Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dawn Mullaney  
Secretary

Minutes prepared by M. Larson

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