

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM #318
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairman Gouldman, Legislators Addonizio & Scuccimarra

Wednesday

6:30PM

May 13, 2015

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairman Gouldman who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator Addonizio and Chairman Gouldman were present. Legislator Scuccimarra was absent.

Item # 3 – Approval of Minutes- April 16, 2015

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to waive the rules and accept the minutes as submitted; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Item # 4 – Discussion/Putnam County Chambers Legislative Priorities Booklet/Putnam County Chambers of Commerce Chairwoman Jennifer Maher

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to accept the additional; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Putnam County Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Jennifer Maher stated this year the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber of Commerce”) created their first “Legislative Priorities Booklet” which discusses issues the Chamber of Commerce believes to be important. She stated some of the issues are signage issues, high vacancy rates in commerce districts and redevelopment plans being denied. She stated she believes a county-wide master plan that would encompass the local municipalities would be beneficial. She stated those that sit on the Town zoning and planning boards are not necessarily educated or knowledgeable on putting together more suburban centers. She stated the former Economic Development Corporation (“EDC”) received criticism for not focusing on “new” retail projects. She stated it is important to have more pedestrian friendly areas and more parking for people to spend time and money in the County for several hours; such as the Village of Cold Spring. She stated there is an opportunity to put in a mixed use development. She stated it is important to attract young people and retain them because our County’s only growing population is the Seniors.

Legislator Addonizio stated she believes that not having job opportunities for young people is an issue for our County.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated she agrees with Legislator Addonizio, but she does not know how the County can create job opportunities in our area. She stated it may be beneficial to have affordable housing for young people to attract them to live in our County. She stated young people are relocating to places such as Beacon.

Chairman Gouldman questioned if the County has ever created a master plan.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated she believes there was a master plan proposed.

Legislator Albano stated he is familiar with former County Executive Bondi mentioning a master plan.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated she has heard of the master plan but has never seen a physical document of the master plan.

Legislator Nacerino questioned how a master plan would include individual municipalities. She stated different communities have different dynamics.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated each town has different landscapes. She stated there cannot be a “one size fits all” master plan. She facilitated the discussion further by providing an example of the Town of Philipstown and sign ordinances in which there needs to be a flexible master plan.

Legislator Naceirno stated a lot of foot traffic from the Village of Cold Spring is going to Beacon because of the activities in that area.

Legislator Albano stated the County needs to create a plan to provide guidelines for the towns.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated she understands the concerns with mix use properties; however the rental market is “hot”. She stated also having a full-time EDC president is important for the County’s economic development. She stated two (2) issues that the Chamber of Commerce believes are important to discuss are the high sales taxes and having extra fees.

Legislator Albano stated the biggest fees come from the towns.

Chairman Gouldman questioned if there is any specific fee that needs to be cut.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated on a County level, contractors have a heavy burden in terms of the fees they are required to pay. She stated the high sales tax hinders businesses. She stated there needs to be a consolidation of services or in a school setting to benefit the tax payers.

Chairman Gouldman stated currently there is discussion of potential police consolidation.

Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher stated she views the police consolidation as a merge and therefore believes such consolidation would not save money. She stated the restrictions for watershed need to be reduced. She restated the importance of filling the EDC president position.

Item # 5 –Verbal Update/Industrial Development Agency Chairman Richard Ruchala

Legislator Addonizio made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional; Seconded by Chairman Gouldman. All in favor.

IDA Chairman Richard Ruchala stated the Industrial Development Agency (“IDA”) does not receive any funding to run their organization. He stated EDC and the Visitor’s Bureau receive funding from the County. He stated the IDA CEO needs to be more educated than the EDC president due to the types of transactions that need to be completed. He stated through the years the IDA has produced \$31.5 million in property and school taxes. He then handed out information to the Legislators.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional information; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Chairman Gouldman questioned if the 4,315 jobs created by the IDA is a total accumulation over the years.

IDA Chairman Ruchala stated that is correct. He stated in Dutchess County, they are proposing to merge the IDA and EDC together.

Chairman Gouldman stated the Committee previously requested to see a proposal and a formal written request with the amount of funding the IDA needs. He stated the Legislative Office has yet to receive such in writing.

IDA Chairman Ruchala stated the IDA originally planned to receive a loan from the County but rejected the proposal due to the restrictions it would place on the IDA. He stated the IDA is an outside agency and should receive its “power” from the Legislature. He stated traditionally, the IDA received funding in bonds. He stated in fact, in 2007 the IDA had approximately \$235,000. However, in 2008, State Mandates placed on the IDA created a negative financial impact.

Legislator Addonizio questioned if the IDA and the EDC merged in the past.

IDA Chairman Ruchala stated in the past the IDA and EDC worked in the same office; which created a better dialogue between the two (2) organizations. He stated he was against having the EDC move in the County Office Building. He stated ideally he would like to receive funding in the amount of \$125,000 to have money for a CEO, CFO, training, and auditors.

Chairman Gouldman stated the Legislature needs to receive a formal request in writing.

Legislator Albano stated he agrees with Chairman Gouldman in the need for a written formal request.

Legislator LoBue stated in the past both the IDA and the EDC shared services. She stated under the current Administration the IDA and EDC were separated. She stated the EDC President position was changed to a full-time position which then raised the salary from \$50,000 to \$75,000. She stated the surrounding counties are disbanding the EDC. She stated the “financing arm”, the IDA, is the organization that brings economic development to the County. She stated she suggests that the money that was supposed to go to the EDC should be given to the IDA. She stated the IDA has mandates to fulfill that require money; therefore the IDA should be funded and the EDC should receive funding through commission. She stated the taxes are so high there is no incentive for businesses to come to our County. She stated she believes the

“model” is broken. She requested the Legislature receive an accounting of what the EDC spent last year.

Legislator Albano stated he would be in favor of looking into the appropriations of funding for the IDA and the EDC.

Item # 6 – Approval/Memorialization/Dutchess County Resolution/Requesting Home Rule Legislation in the New York State Legislature to Repeal the Temporary State Energy & Utility Service Conservation Assessment

Legislator Nacerino stated she is in favor of the proposed memorialization.

Legislator Addonizio stated the Committee was just discussing the challenges businesses face and high energy rates is a perfect example. She stated the energy costs are expensive for businesses.

Legislator LoBue stated the State Energy & Utility Service Conservation Assessment is an attempt to offset the costs of the lower counties. She suggested the Legislature reach out to the State Senators and our State Assemblypeople.

Chairman Gouldman made a motion to approve the memorialization to request Home Rule Legislation in the New York State Legislature to repeal the temporary State Energy & Utility Service Conservation Assessment.

Item # 7 – Unemployment Report-FYI- Duly Noted

Item # 8 – Foreclosure Report- FYI- Duly Noted

Item # 9–Other Business- None

Item # 10 –Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:30 P.M. Chairman Gouldman made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.