

**SPECIAL
Economic Development Committee Meeting
Held In Room #318
Putnam County Office Building
Members: Chairman Birmingham & Legislators DiCarlo & Tamagna**

Thursday

February 9, 2012

The meeting was called to order at 7:00p.m. by Chairman Birmingham. He requested that Legislator DiCarlo lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Chairman Birmingham and Legislator DiCarlo, were present. Legislator Tamagna was absent.

Chair Birmingham made a motion to waive the rules and accept the additional;
Seconded by Legislator DiCarlo. All in favor.

Item #3) Approval/Eco Dev Mtg. minutes January 26, 2012

Chair Birmingham stated that the minutes were accepted as submitted.

Item #4) Tourism

Chair Birmingham approved to accept the additional and waive the rules;
Seconded by Legislator DiCarlo. All in favor.

President of the EDC Kevin Bailey stated that fifteen years ago Putnam County was the last County to apply and get Tourism. He stated that the Tourism Director from New York State came down and gave him and others a crash course on Tourism. He stated that they needed someone with a tourism background. He stated that Valerie Hickman's name was proposed. She was recommended because of her background of running Tourism in Aruba. He stated that Ms. Hickman was approached and agreed to take the brand new product of "Tourism" in Putnam County and bring it to what it is today. Ms. Hickman has run so many successful events in Putnam County in the past fifteen years. She had the ability to get people to volunteer. He stated she educated everyone who worked with her. He stated that he and Ms. Hickman worked very well together.

Tourism Director Valerie Hickman stated that she would like to begin by thanking Kevin Bailey. She stated that he has been a wonderful working partner and has always stood by her and supported her in all of her decisions and efforts. She reminisced over the past years. She stated that her late husband, Barrett Hickman was a judge who conducted court in the very room we were sitting in. She stated that two, of his many cases, were related to tourism. One was saving the Tilly Foster Farm and the other was to put in the Centennial Golf Course, rather than Townhouses. She shared several interesting stories of her late husband's time serving as Judge for Putnam County. She stated that the family name "Hickman" and the name she has today been around a good solid 200 - 300 years doing great things. She stated that when she was approached to bring Tourism to Putnam County she had just finished her work in Aruba running

tourism. Her efforts in Aruba had successfully turned it into a destination island. It was a collaborated effort of hotel owners, casino owners and the Government. She stated when she agreed to head up tourism in Putnam County it was unchartered territory. She stated that then County Executive Bondi was a big help in the beginning. He gave them space to open the Tourism Office in, and he purchased a piece of equipment that cleaned the lake in the Veterans Park, which is used in the triathlon event. She stated that she publicly wanted to thank Dave Radovich & Dave Cook, two gentlemen who were tireless volunteers of any event she ever asked them to help out with. She stated that Putnam has tremendous supporters and volunteers, that contributed to all of the events running so smoothly. She stated that she had not planned on retiring at this time, however after meeting with County Executive Odell, she respects that she as the new County Executive has her own ideas. Therefore after much thought and consideration she believes that it would be best for her to leave at this time. She stated that she did look over the past 15 years and is proud to report that in all of those years when she came to the Legislature there were never any votes against her in the negative, not a one. She stated that she takes great pride in that. She thanked everyone in the Legislative Office and a special thanks was given to Kevin Bailey for all of his help and support over the many many years. She stated that she hopes that the Legislature works to keep the I Love NY Program.

Chair Birmingham stated that Val Hickman's spirit will never be forgotten. He stated that he agrees with Mr. Bailey in that Ms. Hickman brought Tourism to Putnam County. It did not exist before she took on the challenge. He stated that she put Aruba on the map – and she has done much more than that for Putnam County. He stated that he will miss her professionally in Putnam County. He read a Resolution that will be presented to Ms. Hickman at the March Full Legislature Meeting and voted on. The resolution included a recommendation that the process of finding a new Project Director be an open process to be undertaken by the Putnam Visitors' Bureau, Inc., to be assisted by the New York State Department of Economic Developmental and a Blue Ribbon Panel of interested community governmental and tourism representatives.

Chair of the Legislature Mary Conklin stated that on behalf of the Legislature she wanted to thank Valerie Hickman for the wonderful job she has done in bringing tourism to Putnam County.

Sheriff Smith stated that he too would like to thank Valerie Hickman. He stated that he did want to mention that in the reading of the proposed resolution he did notice that a couple of the events that Ms. Hickman brought into Putnam County were missing from the list.

Chair Birmingham stated that he will get the complete list of events from the tourism office and amend the resolution accordingly for consideration at the Full Legislature Meeting on March 6, 2012.

Valerie Hickman stated that she would like to thank Sheriff Smith and the Kent Police force. They were always available to assist at the different events. She stated that every time she approached Sheriff Smith he and Undersheriff Convery they were always accommodating and supportive. She stated that she really could never have run the events without their support.

Sheriff Smith stated that Ms. Hickman always put safety first. He stated that he would like to induct her into the Sheriff's Honor Corps. If it is appropriate, he would like to do that at the Full Legislature Meeting on March 6, 2012. He stated that he too would like to thank her for her many years of service.

Legislator LoBue stated that she would like to volunteer to be on the Blue Ribbon Panel that will be formed to select the new Project Director.

Chair Birmingham made a motion to accept the Resolution as Amended; Seconded by Legislator DiCarlo. All in favor.

Gil Tarbox who worked on bringing the Pow-Wow event to Putnam County stated that when he first approaching Val Hickman on this proposal she was open minded to the idea. He stated that now the Pow-Wow event is extremely popular and brings many many people into Putnam County. He concluded by saying that it has always been a pleasure to work with Valerie Hickman.

Item #5) Other Business - None

Item #6) Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:35p.m. Chair Birmingham made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator DiCarlo. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Trabulsy
Administrative Assistant