

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

Members: Chairwoman Addonizio, Legislators Gouldman & Gross

Monday **6:30 p.m.** **May 23, 2016**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 P.M. by Chairwoman Addonizio who requested that Legislator Gross lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator Gross and Chairwoman Addonizio were present. Legislator Gouldman arrived at 6:35 P.M.

Item # 3 – Approval of Minutes- April 14, 2016

The minutes were approved as submitted.

Item # 4 – Approval/Appointment/Putnam County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)/Joe Downey

Chairwoman Addonizio stated the Legislature received an email from Mr. Joe Downey expressing his interest in joining the IDA Board. She stated she requested for him to be present this evening to answer any questions Legislators may have.

Legislator Gross stated he welcomes Mr. Downey and appreciates his interest in joining the IDA.

Legislator Gouldman questioned how many individuals are now appointed to the IDA.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated if Mr. Downey is approved at the Full Legislative meeting, there will be five (5) Board Members.

IDA Board Member Bill Nulk stated the other four (4) members are scheduled to meet for the first time tomorrow, Tuesday, May 24, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. He stated the current members have taken the oaths of office.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned if Mr. Downey can attend the Board meeting being held on May 24th.

IDA Board Member Nulk stated yes.

Legislator Gouldman questioned what towns are currently represented by the IDA.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated the Towns of Kent, Mahopac, and Southeast are represented by the IDA. She stated once Mr. Downey is appointed to the Board, the Town of Patterson will be represented as well. She stated the Town of Putnam Valley and Town of Philipstown still need to be represented.

Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to appoint Mr. Joe Downey to the IDA Board; Seconded by Legislator Gouldman. All in favor.

Item # 5 – Discussion/Proposal/Joint Efforts/Putnam County Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Maher

Putnam County Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman Jennifer Maher stated the Putnam County Chamber of Commerce (“Chamber”) hosted their annual Forum of Putnam’s Elected Officials (“Forum”) on Sunday, April 15, 2016. She stated as a result of the Forum she met with the Putnam County Economic Development Corporation President Jill Varricchio and Putnam County Visitor’s Bureau Acting Director Frank Smith to address the items that are considered “low lying fruit” to work on. She stated one (1) of the proposed projects is the “Keep Putnam Beautiful” community clean up and social media campaign.

Carmel-Kent Chamber of Commerce President Bill Nulk stated he has a video clip to play for the audience that shows the importance of keeping our community clean.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the amount of litter in the County is an issue that is frequently brought up.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated the Legislature addressed this issue at last month’s Health, Social, Educational & Environmental Committee meeting.

Legislator Gross stated the Town of Southeast has a cleanup day every year that really helps clean the litter off the roadways.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated that is great that the Town of Southeast cleanup is successful; however one (1) cleanup day event per town does not do enough. She stated it is a goal of the economic development organizations to create a momentum to get people to take pride in their community. She stated there are not that many tourists in Putnam County, therefore a majority of the litterers are those that reside in the County. She stated the litter along the roadways hinders attracting new businesses and people to the County. She stated it would be beneficial to have businesses and the schools to become involved to help promote and support the notion of keeping our community clean.

Legislator Gross stated there used to be signage from the Adopt-A-Road program.

Legislator LoBue stated there were issues with the Adopt-A-Road program because individuals would purchase the signs, but never cleanup the area. She stated the County no longer utilizes this program. She stated the State still implements the program and the County facilitates it. She stated for the record the County has a contract with Partner. Achieve. Reach. Connect (“PARC”) that is dispatched to keep the roadways cleaned. She stated the Alternatives to Incarceration (“ATI”) program is also enlisted by the County to assist in litter pickup. She stated she is in favor of good press and good public relations, but she does not want to spend any more money.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher believed there is no need to request for funding.

Acting Tourism Director Frank Smith stated the economic development team is interested in developing a culture where people think twice before throwing garbage out the window and

people are more conscious while transporting garbage to a recycling center. He stated this initiative is to remind the County's residents to love their community and keep it clean.

Legislator LoBue stated many of those that litter will only stop if they are fined because it sets the tone. She believed there is a direct connection of litter in our community and property values. She also stated the litter discourages individuals to move to the County.

Chairwoman Addonizio stated in the past there were signs for littering and it was enforced. She stated perhaps if there are signs by traffic lights it may deter people from littering.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated she would be happy to bring the police departments into the conversation. She agreed for the need of littering signs, but she believed community effort in the spotlight of social media also helps the initiative. She believed peer pressure and accountability are powerful tools.

Legislator Nacerino stated she would like to see more encouragement and awareness rather than fines. She stated the County has become a culture of fining and banning, which is not going to provide the desired outcome. She stated there needs to be education to change the conscious thought of littering.

Chairwoman Addonizio believed a combination of things will help solve the littering issue.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the police will be helpful in a bulk situation; however it is very difficult to catch a person tossing something such as a soda can.

Legislator Nacerino stated the County does not have the resources to enforce litter patrol the way they want to. She stated perhaps bilingual signage will help the littering issue as well.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the County's natural beauty is our greatest resource.

President Nulk stated the Chamber of Commerce was discussing the utilization of social media to encourage organizations and businesses to help clean the litter as well.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated she has concerns with the drug paraphernalia left on the streets of Mahopac because it is unsafe for a community member to pick up. She stated bringing many of the leadership organizations together will help in accomplishing the community's goals. She stated the second item that the economic development organizations would like to work on together is hospitality training for local businesses to educate them on attractions in our County. She facilitated the discussion further by providing a situation where people were discouraged from moving to Mahopac due to comments made from a restaurant employee regarding the area.

Legislator Albano stated perhaps local businesses can hand out brochures or have them on display.

Legislator LoBue believed promoting the County is the Visitor's Bureau's responsibility.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the hospitality training would be a benefit for tourism.

Acting Director Smith stated other counties in the Hudson Valley have brought in a speaker and educate those in the hospitality industry about other areas and attractions.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated this education would benefit the businesses.

Legislator LoBue stated she does not understand why there is a need for hospitality training. She believed it should be second nature to promote the area in which one's business is in.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the training will remind business owners of the "obvious" tools of the trade to help their business.

Legislator Nacerino believed the second proposed project also utilized the concept of awareness. She stated the hospitality training will make businesses aware of the resources around them and it will help send a unified message from the business community.

Chairwoman Addonizio questioned how this project would be accomplished.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated a training session or "lunch & learn" can be scheduled.

Chairwoman Addonizio believed it may be challenging to get all of the businesses together for the training.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the training session can be discussed at the local chamber of commerce meetings to "plant the seed" and then training can be scheduled with a follow up of literature. She stated areas that are tourist attractions have hospitality workers who ask the visitor what they are planning to do. She provided the example of a waitress asking questions to a tourist visiting Orlando, Florida.

Mr. Downey stated he visits Vermont regularly. He stated the diners there have travel brochures displayed.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the difference in Vermont is the businesses request for the brochures to be displayed.

Acting Director Smith stated many of the employees at the local businesses are local high school students. He stated he recalls being in Carmel High School and many of his classmates stated there is nothing to do in the area. He stated the hospitality training will allow that message to diminish and a more positive outlook will form.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the last joint effort project the economic development organizations would like to work on is to have kiosks along the bike path. She stated there is a tremendous difference between the bike path in Mahopac versus the Town of Somers with their maintenance and signage. She stated she would like to attract and encourage bike riders off the trail and stop to visit the County. She suggested signage for safety purposes should be put up. She stated she does not want the signage to be a huge billboard or a commercial sign.

Legislator LoBue questioned if this is an issue that the Chamber is bringing up.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated this issue arose from the Forum and from discussions the Chamber has had.

Legislator LoBue stated her constituents informed her that they do not want advertisements along the bike path. She stated the newspapers and the busses struggle to receive advertisements. She stated she does not understand the reasoning for wanting to put up advertisements along the bike path as revenue has been very low.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated she does not want to put up advertisements along the bike path.

Legislator Albano stated safety signage needs to be put up in the intersections of the bike path. He stated at the last Physical Services Committee meeting it was discussed how more funding was allocated to address the intersections. He believed the bike path is a great asset and the County needs to give it a lot of attention.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated the individuals who she spoke to that were originally against signage, all agreed that kiosks at certain areas would not be taking away the beauty of the bike path. She stated the kiosk can be utilized to show locations of restaurants and bathrooms in the area.

Legislator LoBue questioned if the Town of Somers has kiosks along their bike path.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated she does not believe so.

Legislator LoBue questioned what the necessity of the kiosks is.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated it is our job to utilize a great resource that brings people to the County and look at what is best for the community at large; especially the taxpayers who fund the maintenance of the County's resources.

Legislator Gouldman stated many people carry cell phones. He questioned if it would be beneficial for the County or the Chamber to create an application for people to put on their cell phone. Therefore, in lieu of advertisements or other signage, it can be accessed on their mobile device.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated a sign would need to be displayed informing people on the bikeway of the mobile application. She questioned if anyone currently uses the Putnam County Cares cell phone application.

Mr. Downey questioned if it was possible to have a Wi-Fi hotspot sign along the bike path. He believed it would make bike riders feel less intimidated to get off the trail and venture through a town.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated there are other things besides businesses that attract people to our County, such as indigenous plants. She questioned who is responsible for grooming the bike path.

Legislator LoBue stated the lack of grooming is a maintenance issue.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated since it is a big attraction to Putnam County, the County needs to maintain the grounds.

Legislator Nacerino stated the Legislature wants to maintain the integrity of the bike path, but it is the Legislature's job to look at this matter from all perspectives. She stated there are issues of safety, and maximizing our resources. She stated there are some perils of riding along the bike path and not knowing where you are. She stated due diligence needs to be done in how to further attract tourists to our community. She stated there needs to be a balance of having a bike path and still maintaining the safety and welfare of the riders.

Legislator LoBue stated she is not making a blind assessment with her opinion of not putting up signage along the bike path. She stated the Town of Somers does not have kiosks along their bike path either. She stated it is the Visitor's Bureau's responsibility to advertise the County. She stated the Visitor's Bureau has a very large budget to enable them to list all of the County's natural and cultural assets. She believed some of these projects brought forward to the Committee tonight are a duplication of ideas and developments. She stated the "fear factor" was a tactic used last time there was a proposal to install signs on the bike path. She stated the constituents she spoke to feel safe on the bike path. She stated to maintain the bike path costs quite a bit of money and she does not want an added expense of signs. She stated marketing is in place by the Visitor's Bureau and she is confident that Acting Director Smith is able to accomplish the goal of attracting people to the County. She stated Putnam County is surrounded by New York City Watershed and therefore there are constraints for economic development that create the County to be dependent on tourism for revenue. She stated she will look at other bike paths for guidance in making an opinion.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher suggested not to use the Town of Somers as an example to mimic for commerce as they recently lost one (1) of their biggest "anchors" for economic development. She stated the Town of Somers lacks businesses that the bike path intersects. She suggested using towns that are successful in incorporating their bike path in attracting tourists to their community as guidance. She stated she presented the proposed projects to the Committee tonight to create a joint effort. She disagreed with the comments made that each organization is supposed to work on certain items. She believed utilizing a joint effort approach is a great way to accomplish many projects.

Legislator LoBue questioned who will fund all of the proposed projects listed before this Committee.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated once these projects are analyzed, then a plan can be developed. She stated the attitude that "we can't afford to do things" will prevent the ability to make changes to our community for the better.

Legislator Albano stated Chamber Chairwoman Maher brings up a valid point that signage should be analyzed. He stated the County has two (2) options; spend more money or explore a business partnership with the public to improve the bike path. He stated during the April Physical Services Committee meeting, Sheriff Smith gave a presentation on Tilly Foster Farm and he brought up an important point; nature and farmland are not free.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated things can be done to make the bike path more interactive and educational. She stated she does not support the tactic of lead with fear, but safety is a concern on the bike path.

Legislator Nacerino believed that fear is not the driving factor to put signage up. She stated the driving factor is to have more people go on the bike path and to be able to maximize the resources and tourism around us. She stated the first plan for signage was a disaster and the proposal was poorly developed. She stated safety is a factor and the Legislature should be cognizant of that when making the decision to install signage with this proposal.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated when there is more than one (1) organization involved, it can solve funding issues.

Legislator Gouldman questioned in regards to the Adopt-A-Road Program signs, what if the concept changed. He proposed a fee for signage and that fee would pay to keep that certain area clean; therefore it would generate revenue.

Legislator LoBue stated the Adopt-A-Road Program is very complicated as there is a lot of County labor involved. She stated someone has to contact the donor and order the sign. She stated the County actually loses money through said program. She stated she is not in favor of the Adopt-A-Road Program signs nor is she in favor of the blue historical marker signs as it costs the County more money to maintain.

Legislator Gouldman stated the concept and business model would need to be changed in order for it to be a successful program.

Chamber Chairwoman Maher believed a fee was charged for the signs.

Legislator Albano stated as Legislator Gouldman suggested it may be beneficial to look into changing the model of the Adopt-A-Road Program.

Legislator Nacerino stated the issues with Adopt-A-Road Program was that the signage was politically motivated.

Item # 4 – Approval/Appointment/Putnam County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)/Joe Downey (Continued)

Chamber Chairwoman Maher stated she highly recommends having a paid consultant for the IDA to prevent politics from getting in the way.

Legislative Counsel Clem Van Ross stated the matter of a consultant is not under the jurisdiction of the Legislature. He stated it is up to the IDA if they want a paid consultant.

Item # 6 – FYI/Unemployment Report- Duly Noted

Item # 7 –FYI/Foreclosure Report- Duly Noted

Item #8 –Other Business- None

Item # 4 – Approval/Appointment/Putnam County Industrial Development Agency (IDA)/Joe Downey (Continued)

Legislator Nacerino stated she apologized for arriving to the Committee meeting late due to a school function. She stated for the record she has known Mr. Downey for many years and he personifies what is needed on the IDA. She stated she is happy that he has volunteered to be on the IDA. She believed he will be a great asset.

Item # 8 –Adjournment

There being no further business at 7:26 P.M. Chairwoman Addonizio made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Gross. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant, Lisa Sommers.