



Onondaga County Legislature

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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – JANUARY 15, 2025 DAVID H. KNAPP, CHAIR CNY REGIONAL MARKET

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Meaker, Ms. Fiato, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Olson

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Ms. Cody, Mr. Romeo, Mr. McCarron; also see attached

Chair Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

- Welcome new Legislator and committee member Shawn Fiato
- Thanking Mr. Fisher and staff for hosting the committee

1. **CNY REGIONAL MARKET AUTHORITY:** Bill Fisher, CEO
 - a. **INFORMATIONAL: Update**

CNY REGIONAL MARKET REVITALIZATION PLAN

Onondaga County Legislature
PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING
1/15/2024

at Central New York Regional Market

Audited Financial Statement (year ending March 31st) on file with the Clerk.

- CNY Regional Market Board is appointed by 7 legislatures
 - 3 representatives by the Onondaga County Legislature
 - 6 other counties with appointees
 - Board is the governing body that Mr. Fisher and market staff answer to
 - Recently there was an expansion of the board from 13 to 17 (bill signed by the Governor)
 - Expansion includes 2 appointees by the Onondaga County Executive and 2 by the Syracuse City Mayor
- Regional Market was not doing well; audit by NYS Comptroller was scathing
- Financial statements have a “Going Concern Note” – meaning as of the date the statements were issued (in December), the auditors were not sure the Regional Market would make it another 12 months
- Currently \$5.4M in debt
- Optimistic about selling the warehouse, which is under contract
 - As public authority, required to get an appraisal, which is under way
 - As soon as next board meeting, may have sold the warehouse at a price higher than paid for in 2020
 - Will reduce the debt service and help, but will not get out of the woods; buys time

- More important is the strategic direction of this organization
- Grateful that the County Executive and County Legislature have been working cooperatively together
- Legislature appropriated funds needed for Planning Department to do RFP process
 - Also received money from Empire State Development
- Mr. Waffner (Planning Director) and Ms. Costa (Assistant Director) have been in this every step of the way
- Couple weeks or month away from being finalized; lot of credit to Planning Department
- Introduction of staff:
 - Taylor Beresovoy, Market Manager responsible for Saturday, Sunday and Thursday markets
 - Heidi Poole, Office Administrator who works with Board of Directors; make sure they have information needed

Market Ventures Inc. Scope of Work

Phase 1

- Review previous studies
- Facility & operations review
- Stakeholder interviews
- Summit
- Customer exit survey
- Community internet survey
- Farmer/vendor input
- Market research
- SWOT analysis

Phase 1 report

Phase 2

- Strategy
 - Vision
 - Programming
 - Partnerships
- Facility improvement plan
 - Site plan
 - Design concepts
 - Construction cost estimate
 - Funding identification
- Operations & management plan

Phase 2 report



- Ted Spitzer, President of Market Ventures, has spent entire career on public markets
- Reading Terminal Market in Philadelphia or Pike Place Market in Seattle are mainstays for regional economy there, as well as tourism and travel
- CNY Regional Market is not a tourist market, but could be an attraction
- Scope of work put into 2 Phases
 - Phase 1 report delivered ~30 days ago
 - Phase 2 report delivered a week or so ago
- Phase 1 Report (published):
 - Looked at facilities – almost 50 acres, 19 buildings (own and responsible for 17)
 - 2 land leases: Byrne Dairy has cold storage facility and Wendy's
 - Interviewed stakeholders, which will continue for continued engagement
 - Had a formal summit with presentation and a second that was interactive with community engagement
 - Received almost 5,000 internet surveys; did intercept surveys (ESF students surveyed people shopping)
 - Good information on agriculture and farms
 - Larger farms doing ok; midsize farms not doing well; small farms are where issues are coming from
 - Make sure midsize farms do not hollow out further
 - Looking at building program to help address needs of farm families; some farming since 1804
- Phase 2 Report (will be published soon):
 - Come up with specific strategy and vision proposed by consultants, but becomes the Market's vision
 - Market answers to 7 counties and the board members need to be part of process; as well as community
 - Responsible for site plan for coming up with design concepts
 - Budgeting things – figuring out how to potentially fund these things
 - Planning has the report; hopefully will finalize in next 30 days

Strategy 1: Upgrade and expand the Regional Market's retail facilities while preserving the distinctive customer experience

1. Maintain/upgrade the historic sheds
 - Structural repair, painting, lighting, heat, accessibility
 - Improve signage to designate farmers and local foods
 2. New connector shed
 - Improve safety & comfort along busiest customer route
 - Create pedestrian scale-zone with Commission Houses
 3. Redesign Farmers' Market Way
 - Flexible outdoor market/food truck/event space
 - Outdoor seating/dining zones
 - Vehicular circulation and parking when not events
 4. Repurpose Commission Houses
 - Events and weddings
 - Add outdoor wedding ceremony/reception venue
 - Brew pub, independent restaurant/café
 - Food stores
 5. Expand daily food retailing/grocers
 6. Expand & upgrade welcome center (relocate utilities)
 7. Improve the arrival and parking experience
 - Create gateway experiences at major entrances
 - Expand parking capacity with neighboring lots
 - Remove fencing
 - Repave and stripe parking
 - Make vehicle flow more logical and reduce conflicts
 - Improve wayfinding
 8. Alternative transportation
 - Improved pedestrian access along Hiawatha Blvd
 - Create bus shelter at NBT Parkway and encourage more frequent bus schedule
 - Add bike parking and encourage improved bicycle routes
- 1. Retail Facilities includes A-Shed, B-Line, C-Shed, D-Shed, E-Shed, F-Shed
 - Where the retail markets happen Saturday (strongest market), Sunday (fallen off), Thursday (needs help)
 - In the right place, people know how to find it, plenty of parking, different type of experience for produce shopping
 - Not just restoring, but enhancing the retail facilities
 - A-Shed – winter shed
 - Not only use Saturday mornings, but other nights for people to rent for events
 - Facility not suited yet
 - F-Shed – newer shed
 - Concert will be held there on Feb 22nd
 - Finalizing contract later this week and will see how it goes
 - Make sure stakeholders are happy
 - 2. Connector Shed
 - Customers talk about exposure to rain and snow when walking around
 - At the end of A-Shed and C-Shed imagine something high enough for trucks to get under, but likened to space of the sheds that shoppers can use to move from A-Shed to C-Shed (and maybe others)
 - 3. Redesign Farmer's Market Way
 - Coming off I81 Exit 23 brings people straight to the Market
 - Produce distribution companies are along there in Commission Houses
 - When there is a baseball game, people go motoring through, but there are people with families and strollers or wheelchairs walking around the market
 - Redesign that to be more pedestrian friendly; move vehicles away
 - 4. Commission Houses
 - No longer suitable for produce companies
 - Lot of regulations around cold storage and food safety
 - Can do it, but will not work much longer; want to make sure those that are here will stay here
 - Opportunity to take commission houses and build amazing spaces to repurpose them
 - 5. Expand daily food and retail
 - Building in currently used to be open to buy things
 - Talking about farmer related sales – instead of 1 or 2 days a week, it would be 7 days/52 weeks
 - 6. Welcome Center
 - Needs to be expanded and upgraded; utilities need to be moved out
 - Too much service going into sheds and overpaying; when building new distribution houses getting too little service; talking to National Grid about changing that (part is the Welcome Center)

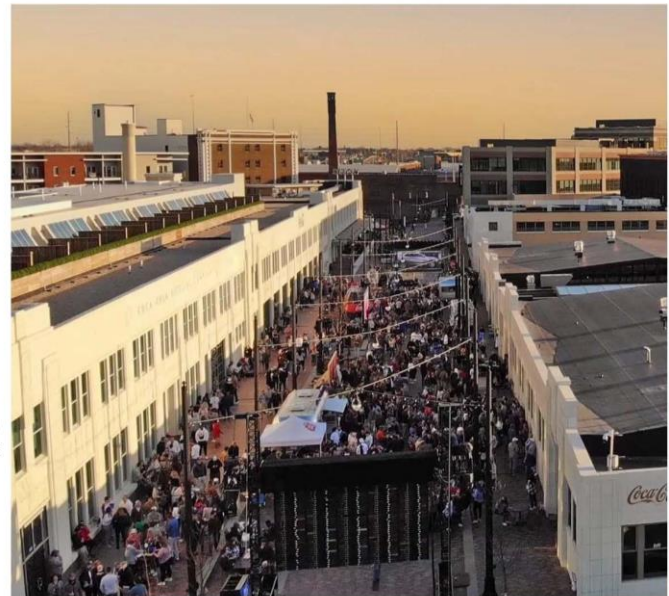
- 7. Arrival and parking is not great
 - Sometimes exit gets backed up and getting there is hard
 - Shared parking at Wendy’s
- 8. Transportation
 - Opportunity to get people to walk, bike, bus
 - Lot of development on North side – would love those residents to know there is a market, since there is no grocery store close by
- People love the experience
- Significant number of farmers that have substantial part of income through Market
- Prices are great; not discounting things to super low, because they want farmers to make money; will get good bargains

Strategy 1: Expand and upgrade the consumer experience: Farmers’ Market Way



Bottleworks (Indianapolis) multiuse street

Redesign and actively program Farmers’ Market Way to allow vehicular access and parking at some times, and have seating/eating areas, food trucks, vendor stalls, performance space, etc.



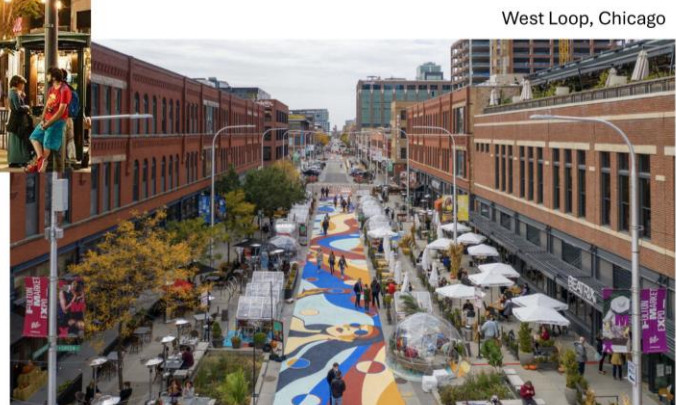
- Indianapolis - Retail sheds on one side and repurposed commission houses on the other

Strategy 1: Expand and upgrade the consumer experience: Farmers’ Market Way



Third Street Promenade, Santa Monica, CA

Landscaping along Farmers’ Market Way can improve the pedestrian environment.



West Loop, Chicago

Strategy 1: Expand and upgrade the consumer experience: repurpose Commission Houses



Commission House interior

The Commission Houses will make desirable spaces for weddings and other catered events.



Mill Top Banquet, Noblesville IN



Mill Dye House, Baltimore



The Loft, Highpoint NC



- Brick, steel, windows; definitely a special space
- Some markets do \$100Ks with events, weddings

Strategy 2: Turn the campus into a branding and educational center for New York food and agriculture

1. Expand office space to cluster food and ag agencies
2. Create hands-on teaching kitchen/cooking demonstration
3. Install edible landscape and teaching gardens
4. Build community gardens
5. Promote Taste of NY and regional agritourism experiences
6. Integrate mission-themed public art
7. Strive for net zero energy and waste

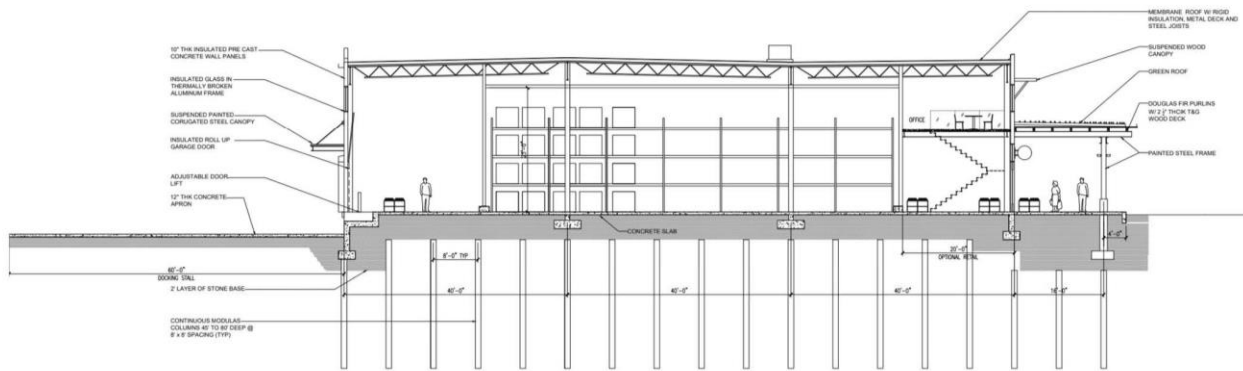


- When the Legislature put this authority together in 1936, they knew it was a statewide facility
- An opportunity to tell the story and get farmers connected

Strategy 3: Construct modern food distribution, production, and marketing facilities that meet the current needs of the Regional Market’s farmers, wholesalers, and buyers

1. Construct modern warehouses
 - (2) ~40,000 sf with warehouses with seven bays, each 5,760 sf (48’x120’)
 - 3-4 high racking system
 - High-efficiency cooling; cold chain and food safety compliant
 - Truck access via NBT Parkway
 - Offer shared cold storage (for farmers, distributors, food rescue)
 - Face the sheds to encourage interaction with farmers and retail market
 - Architecturally enhance the retail zone
 2. Construct facility for value-add food production
 - Support schools and institutional buyers with NYS-grown - ~\$300M potential demand from Exec Order 32 local food purchasing mandate
 - ~15,000 sf footprint
 - IQF (quick freeze), commercial kitchen, packing
 - Operated by independent business
- i.e. Russo Produce has a produce facility in Clinton
 - Take farmer’s produce and package for schools
 - Schools do not order at a market; schools need it to be packaged and ordered in certain quantities
 - Seen benefits of driving food from Russo to the schools
 - With production facility connected to the Regional Market, the Market could amp it up tremendously
 - In talking with Mr. Ball, Commissioner of NYS Ag and Markets, it is a goal of NYS to grow the amount of food that goes into NYC schools exponentially; huge opportunity
 - Talked with GrowNYC, a nonprofit that has a facility in the Bronx that is looking for more things to come from local farmers to be sent to their schools
 - No lateral stack currently, all ground floor; also not contiguous
 - i.e. Russo has 3 spaces with 2 different buildings
 - i.e. Byrne Dairy is racked 4 high
 - Need to build on campus; one in NYC was \$40M; do not think it will be that expensive in Syracuse
 - Also need facility for value-add food production
 - Will try to talk with NYS Legislature and Governor; hoping to see significant commitment from NYS in budget for these 2 buildings

Strategy 3: Construct modern food distribution facilities



1 WAREHOUSE SECTION
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Conceptual design showing four rack high refrigeration inside the warehouse, retail/display area facing the F shed, second floor offices.

- Cold storage, dry storage, office space, semis in back, vans out front
- Architect, part of team, has designed more of these than anyone else in America
- Working with local architects to do finished drawings

Strategy 3: Construct modern food production facilities

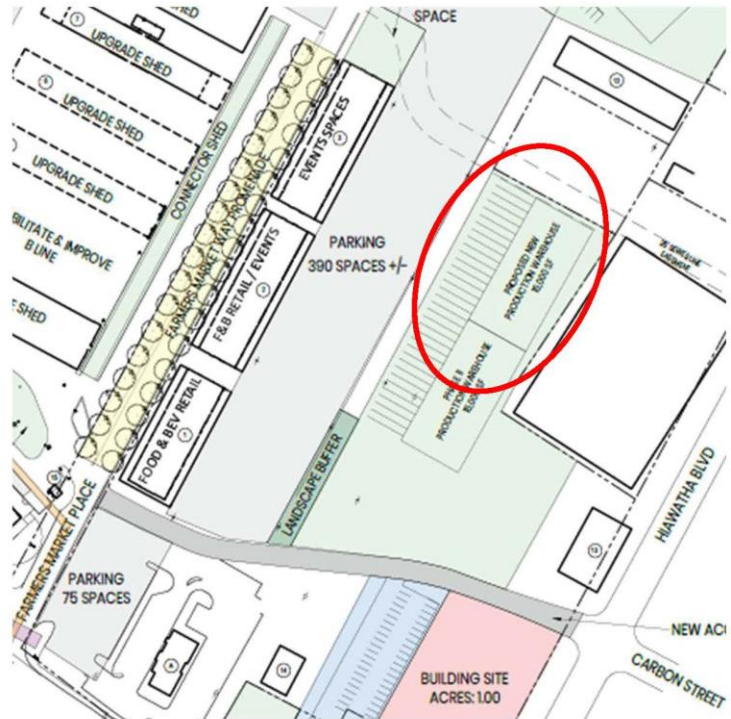


Shared commercial kitchen at Detroit Eastern Market, emergency food box program, local frozen vegetables



Strategy 3: Construct modern food distribution facilities

New 15,000 sf facility designed for food production, located behind Cube Storage, with improved road access from Hiawatha Blvd

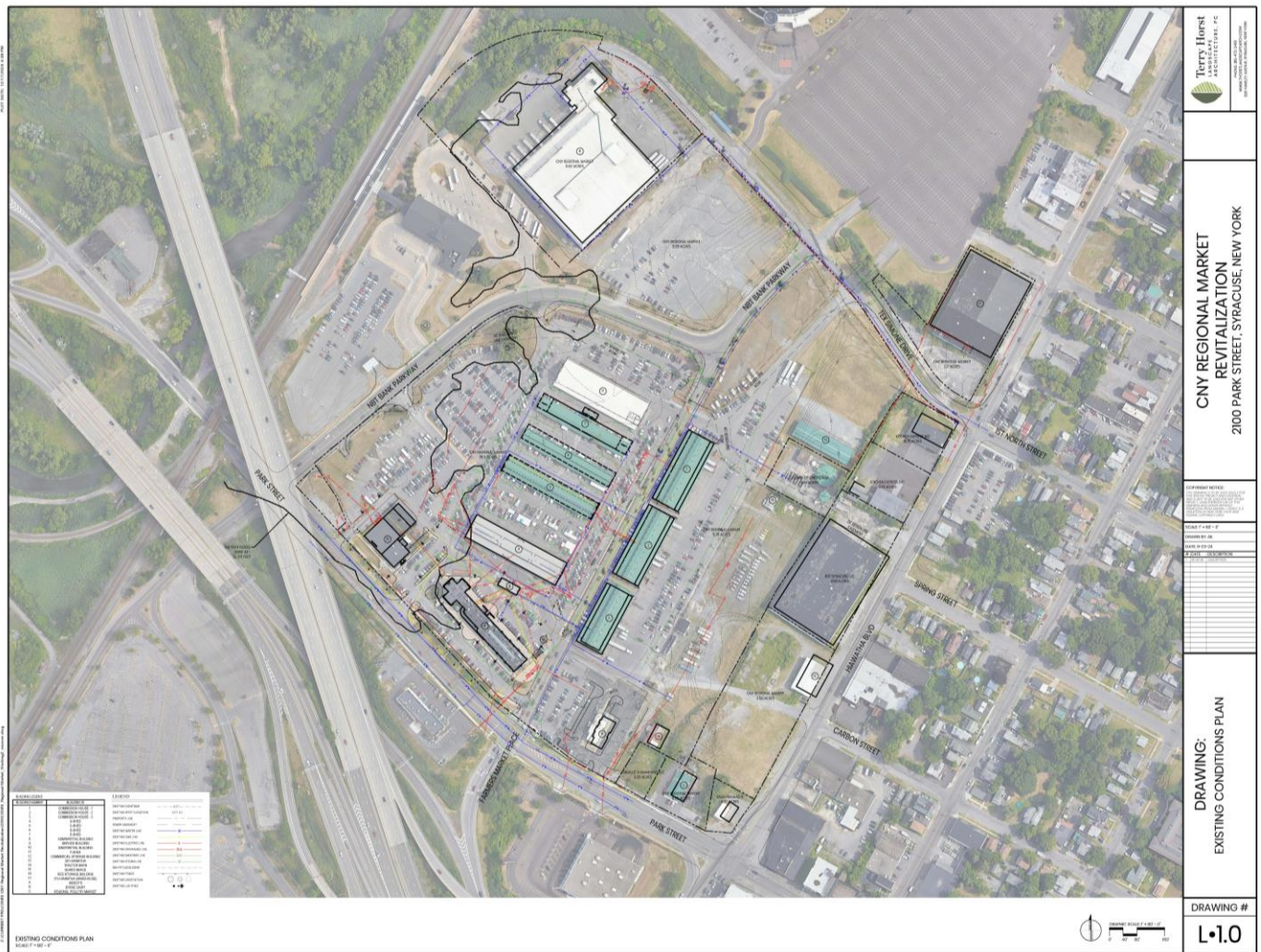


- Early concept was building a facility behind commission houses, but found it needs to be closer to distribution houses
 - Challenging architects to figure out

Strategy 4: Establish ability to invest in new food businesses and programs



- Successful food companies started in a market talking to customers one on one (i.e. Wegmans)
- Want to help incubate these things and help find kitchens to try new things (i.e. food truck with food truck rallies)
- Lot of markets have done that, but will take time
- Not just government or farmers funding this, but there are folks that want to see this type of entrepreneurial activity



- Current site of almost 50 acres; own property to develop and own buildings
- WEP is there with water and sewage flowing underground, which can be a challenge
- Area past WEP is where the first food distribution and food processing buildings would go
 - First building should fill up quickly
 - Looking at a second on the other side of NBT Bank Parkway
- Parking will be improved in short run to support existing customers
- When repurposing the commission houses, they will be retail for farm goods, baked goods, perhaps a brew pub, restaurant experience
- Looking at Commission House 3 to be an events center – make sure there is parking, place for (i.e.) the bride to go
- Current building the meeting is being held in (with bank) needs more fixing up
 - Original plans from 1936 shows opportunity to build up from where M&T Bank branch is for office space
 - Not high on list – possibly Phase II or III
- Market Diner – successful and happy with what is going on
- Middle Eastern Market very successful
- Enough parking, but not easy to find
 - Put out RFP to hire someone to help with wayfinding and signage to make it easier to find parking
- Want it to be easier walking through sheds to know which farms are local, which are in Onondaga County, which are 50% or 100% produced on the farm, etc.
- Aside from building the new buildings, will take existing buildings to make more user friendly

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Who owns Byrne Dairy?
 - Regional Market owns that
 - County owns the parking lot

- For a few days a year, have letter of agreement with Mets Stadium to use as overflow
- Syracuse Mets use it more than the Market
- At one time there was talk about straightening out the NBT Bank Parkway
 - Currently do not have money to straighten out NBT Bank Parkway
 - Challenging designers on where to start, then expand with the road that is there
- Is the philanthropic collaboration like the Allen Foundation?
 - Yes; spoke with them
 - Foundations like to fund community kitchens, entrepreneurial, urban agriculture, etc.
 - One of the consultants on the team runs the Eastern Market and is putting a plan together for how CNY Regional Market can go about developing philanthropic organizations here in CNY into more of what they do
 - Needs to be private and public sector, as well as philanthropic organizations
- Reading in Philadelphia focuses on mini-restaurants; will one of the sheds be like a food court?
 - Maybe not a shed, but one of the commission houses
 - If they rip out the freezers, that could be a great place for that type of food and beverage experience
 - Real successful trend in public markets across the country

Mr. Fisher continued his presentation:

- Part of study looked at operations and built 10 year proforma
- The Market will be here – still have cash and good credit
- Currently spending over \$400K on interest for a budget that does not quite balance
 - Little shy of \$2M in sales and paying \$400K on interest, will not be in business
- By selling warehouse, will cut debt service in half
 - When the market borrowed, debt service was not as high; interest rate of 2.75%, but borrowed with variable interest
 - Interest rate got as high as 8.25%; currently 7.5%
 - Farm Credit East (banker) provides dividends, which reduces the rate by ~1 percentage point - paying 6.5% now
 - Will get it from \$5.4M down to \$3M or \$2.9M
- Building new buildings to rent and backfill buildings they have, will also help
- Doubling the rent does not work; have to bring everyone along with inflation; not huge increases
- Market sells space to customers, who in turn sells farm goods to their customers
- County Executive's Office asked Mr. Fisher to put together a plan
 - About \$4M with funding of study
 - Would make sense to market the Market at an unsustainable level for couple years
 - Want to market to those coming to shop, as well as those who would rent spaces
 - Almost full on Saturday, but could be more full with food and beverage
 - Lot of growth opportunities in offseason, holiday season, Sundays, Thursdays
 - Might have opportunities for night markets
 - Have to get out to tell the story; make it known
 - Have opportunity to market with Onondaga Grown

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Onondaga Grown Campaign under the Ag Council did a little bit in fall; for 2025, the Market is huge piece of Buy Local market; will help to get word out on the improvements to be made
- What is the timeline? What is next?
 - Starting to improve the sheds
 - Assemblyman Magnarelli has \$2M grant
 - Recently been told they are ready to go to a grant of personal agreement, so the Market can start spending
 - NYS seems willing to take things the Market has already spent money on in last couple years and reimburse
 - Makes sense to use some county money to do newer things
 - i.e. Is there a building to launch and get underway
 - To carry out strategy 3, Market will need more money than from a single county or Assemblyman appropriation
 - Getting to those that make decisions about state, federal and philanthropic money
 - Getting message out and repeating it

- It will take time, but believe this will succeed
- Please list out the 7 counties that are part of the CNY Regional Market
 - Oswego, Madison, Cortland, Part of Wayne, Onondaga, Oneida, Cayuga
 - Set to serve 7, but serve over 32 in NYS and one in Pennsylvania
- Where is the warehouse the Market is selling?
 - On the other side of Tex Simone Drive
 - Consultants were asked to look and see if it fits
 - Being built in 1960's, would have to transform
 - Have someone that has good use for it; hopefully will close in 1st quarter
 - Closing statement that the County and state did not have to do this, but it was going to go away; very grateful that the County government has stepped up and taken interest; going forward, load will be shared more broadly

The meeting was adjourned at 10:19 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
DATE: **JANUARY 15, 2025**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Joe Frateschi	County Leg
Ethan LaMontagne	County Leg
TAYLOR BERESOVY	CNY REGIONAL MARKET
Heidi Pooler	CNY Regional Market
RICH McARDER	CONSULTANT
TROY Waffner	Planning Dept.
Meg Costa	Planning
Emily Kenny	Spectrum News
Dan Romeo	Leg
John Desantis	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg
Justin Sayles	CE
Nancy Lowrey	CE
Isabelle	CE
Bill Fisher	CNY Reg Market