



Onondaga County Legislature

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Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI
Deputy Clerk

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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – JANUARY 19, 2022 TIM BURTIS, CHAIRMAN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Garland

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Liedka, Mr. D'Agostino, Mr. Bottar, Mr. Kwasnowski, Ms. Velasco, Mr. Yaus, Ms. Murphy, Mr. Frantzis, Mr. DeSantis, Ms. Vilardi

Chairman Burtis called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. *A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn and seconded by Ms. Gunnip to waive the reading of the minutes of the previous committee. MOTION CARRIED. A motion was made by Ms. Kuhn and seconded by Ms. Gunnip to approve the minutes of the previous committee. MOTION CARRIED.*

1. **VISIT SYRACUSE:** Dan Liedka, President/CEO

- a. Amending the 2022 County Budget to Make Surplus Room Occupancy Funding Available for use in Support of Visit Syracuse (\$250,000)

Mr. Liedka:

- Through the pandemic money was compromised and rightly so – room occupancy was low for obvious reasons
- Last year was perfect storm – typically spend \$150k for transportation to and from hotels – now need two buses to social distance – had \$10k in budget because didn't anticipate events yet we spent \$200k on transportation – had a positive effect on room tax – give good incentives to get groups to Syracuse
- Website is outdated - usually have a 5 year life – done a great job with existing staff despite the aged website – demand is there for the website – today's world wants everything visual – cost of video is astronomical – website has to be handicap accessible – new website allows staff to identify people based on their interests – helps drive traffic to hotels based on their interest – grows database – now can target groups and better spend money – website is \$100k – haven't had resources with pandemic
- Film was one roll of dice that had to be made – took over in 2019 – was one person at Onondaga County ("OC") – film had a high of \$6m – hoping to get \$8m in 2019, \$10m in 2020, and \$12m in 2021 – first year was \$32m – all based on marketing efforts – website is a big part of the tools used to attract films – was on track for \$40m and COVID hit – shifted gears to television commercials – only \$250k per shooting still managed to do \$15m – car commercials used 13 curves towards Marcellus
- First market to be prepared to bring back movies – on track to do \$50m this year – this money pays for everything that was just mentioned

Ms. Kuhn:

- Asked when you drive traffic to hotel do you get paid – Mr. Liedka answered we don't get paid – we just want to guests to stay in OC – the website will help them drive down their amenities – pool, long term stays prefer a microwave – current website is five years old which is the normal shelf life – constantly being changed
- The last time you presented and showed us the website was that the new one? – Mr. Liedka answered no that was the old one – new one will be ADA compliant – navigation isn't great on the old one – consumers are looking for more visuals – more interactivity with new website

Ms. Gunnip:

- Are room occupancy rates still down – Mr. Liedka answered – May-October 2021 numbers were almost back to 2019 levels – occupancy calculation is tricky – rate doesn't tell the number of rooms – during pandemic may have fewer rooms available because of lack of crew to have all rooms available – looks like they were able to do full

occupancy when in reality it's only 50% – January is looking rough which is normal – starting to see numbers rebounding – looking like things are on pace to be back to 2019 levels with rate increases – Liverpool and Carrier Circle are behind downtown as far as average rate and occupancy – planning initiatives in those districts to raise the percentages – currently behind by 15%

Mr. Burtis:

- Asked what the budget is for this year? Mr. Liedka answered approximately \$2.36m for this year's budget – Hopkins Road and Carrier Park is now under new management –they operate the tournaments and Visit Syracuse will market the tournaments and handle the housing – when the game is over the participants have 10 hours – Visit Syracuse will be the concierge for these people – will help elevate suburban hotels

Ms. Kuhn:

- Why haven't you marketed Hopkins Field before with the softball and it will be softball this year – Mr. Liedka answered good question – had operators that had been there a long time - when the County started talking about a sports complex the light bulb went off – if it stays as is we want to maximize the most revenue we can to go into those parks – when I worked for Marriott first job was to go around where they were building sports complex and help perspective owners understand the viability of building a hotel in the area – coach and sports broadcaster for 30 years well versed in how these come together - very excited

Ms. Gunnip:

- District 8 comes to the Town of Salina fields how about working with these people – Mr. Liedka answered he doesn't believe district 8 pays to use those fields – he is also the president of his little league - most will try to keep it in little league fields because keeping the concession revenue is vital – will benefit that little league with concession revenue which is significant when there is a tournament

Mr. Liedka:

- Build out takes about six months and you'll be the first to see it – thank you for your support

A motion was made at by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Ms. Kuhn to pass this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

2. **SYRACUSE ONONDAGA COUNTY PLANNING AGENCY:** Daniel Kwasnowski, Director
 - a. Authorizing the County Executive to Enter into Agreements with the State of New York and the Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board Relative to the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council

Mr. Kwasnowski:

- This is a 10 year agreement that is currently up for renewal – you hear about transportation funding with State and Federal DOT – all these people have to work together and this work is done by the SMTC – organization is authorized by federal funding – in order for them to exist they need a host which is OC – these agreements have been around since they started – host agreement is with NY state and it is the same across the state – boiler plate agreement – beneficial to OC because highly populated and has the most need
- Another agency that relies on this is Central New York Regional Planning Board (“CNYRPB”) – Mr. Bottar from CNYRPB and Mr. D’Agastino from Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council (“SMTC”) are in attendance for questions
- OC acts as a pass through agency – funding received from NY is really Federal money – this money passes through OC
- No changes to this agreement – any numbers are projections – enables them to exist and operate
- CNYRPB and SMTC occupy the same space in a building

Ms. Kuhn:

- Seems to be a more complex contract than it was ten years ago – is there a reason for that? Is it related to the infrastructure bill?
- The contract references central staff – Mr. Kwasnowski answered this is CNYRPB staff

Mr. Yaus:

- Same exact agreement only difference is there is more money available – terms and conditions remain the same – same contract between CNYRPB and OC except Dan’s name is different because he is new

Mr. Kwasnowski:

- Money goes through OC and then is sent to CNYRPB who then sends to SMTC – doubles the planning department’s budget – the money comes in and goes out – during pandemic there was a slight timing lag

Mr. Knapp:

- Out of curiosity what would happen if we say no – Mr. Kwasnowski answered Jim would shut the doors and let everyone go

Mr. Agostino:

- All Federal and State funding ceases to exist until that agreement is figured out

Mr. Burtis:

- There are annual and monthly reports submitted – agreement is from April 1, 2022 through March 31, 2032

A motion was made at by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Ms. Kuhn to pass this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

A motion was made at by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Ms. Kuhn to adjourn the meeting. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



MELANIE VILARDI, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2021

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Danny Liedka	US
El. Fed. Zap	Parks - Zoo
D. Bortol	COM RPOB
Jacqui Foss	Animal Alliance of Greater Syracuse
Isabelle Harris	CE
Arclure Watson	Fac
Brian Kelly	Parcs.
MS	Cl
Tenesha Murphy	CE office
Matthew Police	County Law Dept
Dan Kwasnowski	Soc&A
Tara Vendetti	
Steve Morgan	
Ryan Frantzis	
Darcie Lesnat	