



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

MELANIE VILARDI
Deputy Clerk

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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE – MARCH 16, 2022 **TIM BURTIS, CHAIRMAN**

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Kuhn

ALSO PRESENT:, Mr. Skeval, Mr. Skahen, Mr. Mulvihill, Mr. Adams, Ms. Murphy, Mr. Frantzis, Mr. DeSantis, Ms. Lesniak, Ms. Vilardi

Chairman Burtis called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. *A motion was made by Mr. Knapp and seconded by Ms. Gunnip to waive the reading and approve the minutes of the previous committee. MOTION CARRIED*

Mr. Burtis:

- Remind and encourage you to think about the people, especially the children, from the Ukraine

1. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Martin Skahen, Director

a. Authorizing the Transfer of County Property Consisting of Two Vacant Lots at 209-217 Charles Ave Solvay New York to Home Headquarters, Inc.

Mr. Skahen:

- Looking to transfer a parcel of land in Solvay over to Home Headquarters (“HH”) for \$1 – was acquired from the tax auction for \$1 – they will build two single family homes and will be sold at market rate
- HH has a real estate and development arm
- Answered Mr. Garland’s questions the property was acquired in 2015 – home owner has to live in the property for 10 years – they sign a contract saying they will stay 10 years so would break the contract if less than 10 years
- Answered Ms. Gunnip’s question that property will return to tax rolls when sold

Mr. Burtis:

- Has happened before that owner didn’t stay 10 years – if county helps in getting a mortgage then someone might not be able to qualify – parameters are more liberal to allow borrowers to access a mortgage – shooting for owner occupied – some say they will occupy and then don’t – serious challenge in the city – depend on city to monitor and take appropriate steps

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

2. INFORMATIONAL: Cornell Cooperative Extension Update (“CCE”) David Skeval, Executive Director

Mr. Skeval:

- Thanks for the invitation – nice to give a background on CCE
- Been in Onondaga County (“OC”) for 109 years – started out as Farm Bureau – Abe Lincoln approved land grants in 1960 – hard sciences weren’t taught – ushered in land grant university – developed better ways to plow and raise animals – all research was staying in the universities – then decided to extended it down to the farms – first one in Broome County
- Operate four areas, ag, environment, health and nutrition, 4H – operate 38 different educational programs

- Ag program in OC – ag is 3rd largest sector in OC – \$350m per year – biggest section is dairy which accounts for \$200m in economic impact
- The variety of landscape allows farmers to grow a variety of products – 7th in State for dairy, 16th in apples – have hops to maple syrup
- Challenges for farmers – have farmer round tables to see what is needed – pricing is an issue – falling down with competitive market – we are in competition with every other county in the US – aggregation of soil makes the difference
- Talked to dairy farmers about an additional plant for yogurt or cheese – only makes sense if demand increases
- Other issue is labor – creates real challenges – CCE can't change labor laws – a lot of labor comes from Guatemalans – depth of relationships with Guatemalans – farm workers are pretty well paid 50-60k
- Challenges are with Guatemalans kids go to school or the women dealing with culture – also is a 4h issue and health and nutrition
- Regulations is the other big challenge – last ag census says we had 75 and then 5 years later have 36 – smaller farms being gobbled up by larger farms – increase regulation that NYS has brought to farms – how do you squeeze in 2 hours of regulatory work when you come out of the field
- Land use conflicts are a challenge – a lot of dirt, noise, dust that comes with farming –
- Farmland conservation – program OC runs is farmland protection program
- Weather resiliency ag practices change to the weather
- Always an invasive species that comes into the US – have to be monitored
- Potential eco maintenance – farms dispose of waste – quite a bit of odor and pathogens– methane digesters are used where methane is drained off and applied to the field

Mr. Burtis:

- Cousins own farm in Cayuga and Tompkins county – both have Guatemalan workers – do acts of kindness
- Interesting to me that we don't have labor in the US to do the labor

Mr. Skeval:

- To that point – need to be conditioned to the life – have a population that comes willing to do labor – culture issue – need ways to bridge the challenge
- Our ongoing belief is that there is no reason a kid in the city could become a farmer – kids raised on farms don't want to be farmers – should be offered to every kid in the county – needs exposure

Mr. Gunnip:

- I heard in certain areas they weren't considered essential workers – OC stepped up and made it happen – Knapp made LaFayette apple fest available for vaccine site

Mr. Skeval:

- Answered Mr. Garland question about water leeching into the wells – someone buys land and puts well on downward slope – water goes downhill and has potential to go downhill – raw manure will adhere and will stay on the ground until it is plowed under

Mr. Burtis:

- Regulated by NYS – have to account for every cow's waste - required 1 acre per cow for manure

Mr. Skeval:

- Can't spread manure on hay fields – use of digester allows elimination of solids so could spread on hay fields

Mr. Knapp:


- Really encouraging farms to invest in equipment which injects manure into the land and covers it – can apply more per acre and doesn't run off – eliminates the smell

Mr. Skeval:

- Our hills to south and west are usually 10 degrees colder and not fit for growing tomatoes

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

Respectfully submitted,



MELANIE VILARDI, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEV COMMITTEE**
DATE: **MARCH 16, 2022**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
David Skewes	CCE ONONDAGA
Marty Skellern	Community Development
Dan Mulvihill	Financial Operations
Eston Adams	Comptrollers
Tenesha Murphy	CE office