



Onondaga County Legislature

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Chairman

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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – APRIL 16, 2025 **DAVID H. KNAPP, CHAIR**

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

ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Brown; also see attached

Chair Knapp called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

1. PLANNING: Troy Waffner, Director, Planning

a. Calling for a Public Hearing on the Proposed Inclusion of Viable Agricultural Lands Within Certified Agricultural Districts Pursuant to Section 303-B of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law (June 3, 2025 @ 12:50 p.m.)

PURPOSE:

This resolution calls for the authorization of a public hearing and the publication of a public notice for the consideration of the annual addition of predominantly viable agricultural lands to Agricultural Districts in Onondaga County.

OBJECTIVE/ WORK PLAN:

New York's Agricultural Districts Law, Article 25-AA of the NYS Agriculture and Markets Law was enacted in 1971 to help keep farmland in agricultural production. Agricultural districts are designed to protect agriculture through a combination of landowner incentives and protections that discourage the conversion of farmland to non-agricultural uses.

Responsibility for the creation and review of the State's agricultural districts lies within the authority of the county legislative body. AML Sections 303 (district creation), 303-a (district review), 303-b (annual inclusion/addition of lands) and 303-c (district consolidation) detail the role county agricultural and farmland protection boards and legislative bodies play in district creation and review and prescribe the public notice and public hearing requirements.

Per Section 303-b, landowners can submit requests during an annual thirty-day period for the inclusion of predominantly viable agricultural lands within certified agricultural districts. Pursuant to Onondaga County Resolution No. 71-2004, that thirty-day period is to occur January 1-30 of each year.

The Onondaga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) then prepares a report with a recommendation as to whether the land to be included in an agricultural district consists of predominantly viable agricultural land and presents it to the County Legislature, who is to hold a public hearing and then make its finding. The County Legislature then submits the final report with its finding to the Commissioner of Agriculture & Markets for certification.

During January 1-30, 2025 landowners made requests to add two parcels totaling 28 acres in the Towns of Manlius and LaFayette to an agricultural district. The Onondaga County Department of Planning prepared a report, and at its March 25, 2025 meeting the AFPB reviewed and voted to forward the report and recommendation for the inclusion of predominantly viable agricultural lands within a certified agricultural district to the Onondaga County Legislature. Following this authorization, the Onondaga County Legislature shall conduct a public hearing and will subsequently make its finding at the same meeting.

FUNDING SOURCE: No fiscal impact

BUDGET: No fiscal impact

- 2 land owners applied to be included in the agricultural district
 - Mabie Brothers in Manlius with 9.59 acres
 - Stout family in LaFayette with 18.41 acres
- AFPB recommended parcels be added for both families
- 2024 had 7.34 acres requested to be placed in Agricultural Districts
- 2023 has 121 acres requested to be placed in Agricultural Districts

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Inclusion of viable agricultural lands within agricultural districts is done annually
- There are 4 agricultural districts that rotate each year
- Land can be added or removed if a situation has changed
- This resolution is for zoning purposes, not tax purposes
 - There is ~ 180,000 acres of land amongst all 4 agricultural districts

A motion was made by Mr. Meaker, seconded by Mr. Olson, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

- 2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Bob Petrovich, Deputy County Executive – Economic Development & Planning; Marty Skahen, Director, Community Development; Kevin Sexton, Chief Information Officer
- a. Amending the 2025 County Budget to Provide for the Appropriation of General Fund Balance to Support Housing, Economic Development, and Technology Initiatives (\$33,000,000)**

Semiconductor Supply Chain – \$27,000,000

\$27M of loans to the Onondaga County Industrial Development Agency (OCIDA) for the purpose of acquiring real property to support the semiconductor supply chain ecosystem. OCIDA will create sites to support the location of companies in the microelectronics manufacturing/semiconductor supply chain industry.

- Deputy County Executive – Economic Development & Planning
 - \$27M will be a loan fund in support of supply chain activities in support of Micron and the greater ecosystem within Onondaga County
 - Micron does business with ~900 vendors
 - Involved with helping vendors stand up a supply chain that will support Micron and others in this space
 - TTM Technologies recently located to Syracuse
 - Onsemi will be coming to repurpose the NextGen facility
 - Currently engaged in conversation with supply chain companies from Europe, Asia, and United States
 - 5-10% of the 900 vendors would be a significant impact to community
 - This money will assist with shovel ready sites to show companies where they can fit in within the larger ecosystem

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Why is Micron not paying for this themselves?
 - It is not Micron's responsibility
 - Making sites ready for potential companies is part of the scope of economic development in Onondaga County
 - Companies are stand-alone businesses that do business with Micron as well as others
 - ie: GlobalFoundries, Onsemi, and potentially Intel (Ohio)
 - Business relationships will not be exclusive to Micron
- To clarify, this land is for supply chain companies that work with Micron and others, not just for Micron?
 - Yes
- Will money be taken away from fund balance?
 - This is a loan, and part of the business transactions with the company
 - The expectation is that some will be paid back through fees when companies locate to the County
- How long is the loan term?
 - Terms have not been established yet

- Is there a timeframe for when the money will be allocated and used?
 - Have ~24 month window
 - Micron breaking ground in November and will take 2 years to build fab
 - Supply chain provider will need to be ready 3-6 months before fab is ready for equipment
- Will property be sought throughout the County?
 - Yes, will be looking for opportunities that already have infrastructure either at or close by Micron
- Is this process common across the country when a large scale company comes in?
 - This is not an uncommon practice
 - Chandler, AZ has existing semi-conductor ecosystem with TSMC and Intel
 - Hillsboro, OR went from almost no one living there in 1976 to 26,000 people as a result of Intel's investment
 - There is also an expanded supply chain that supports Intel and other advanced manufacturing
- Please expand on the idea that companies coming in are looking for shovel ready property
 - Trying to knock down barriers to facilitate the decision making process of Asian supply chain companies to do business in America (Korea, Taiwan, Japan)
 - Barriers might include shovel ready property, right to build approvals, SEQR, etc.
- These decisions could have companies choose Syracuse instead of Idaho because the hurdles are less?
 - Yes, Micron will not be here by themselves with supply chain coming in from a far away
 - Micron has identified companies that are important to their success
 - Other companies are considering coming to this area to not only do business with Micron, but also to expand the opportunity across the state ecosystem that exists with GlobalFoundries, Onsemi, and IBM
- Is there agreement that the major returns on investment are property tax and sales tax?
 - Yes, at full scale, Micron is talking about 9K employees
 - Additional 5-6K employees associated with supply chain companies
 - Will have a significant impact on community in terms of property tax, and sales tax

Onondaga County Housing Initiative Program (OCHIP), - \$5,000,000

\$5M expansion of the O-CHIP program targeting the creation of much needed housing. To date O-CHIP has been very successful awarding \$6.94M to projects that will create over 1,700 units for a total investment of over \$600M.

- Director – Community Development
 - Program has been incredibly successful
 - Allocated to create over 1,700 units
 - \$7M has been given out in grant awards so far
 - Leveraging over \$600M worth of development throughout the county
 - 53% of units are market rate
 - 19% of units are mixed income
 - 28% of units are affordable

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- What is the mix between City of Syracuse and suburbs?
 - 68% of units are inside the city
 - 32% of units are in the suburbs
- Where in the city?
 - All over, some examples are:
 - Deys Plaza is adding more apartments
 - VIP did Webster's Landing
 - Skinner Companies is taking old American Legion on James Street and turning into apartments
 - Clinton Street Apartments is changing to mixed use

- What is the difference between mixed income and affordable housing?
 - Mixed Income – has regular market rate as well as affordable apartments
 - Affordable – dedicated for people with lower incomes (60-80% average median income)
 - Housing Visions has 32 homes called Creekside Landing throughout the south side
 - A Tiny Home for Good is converting St. Paul's rectory to apartments for homeless men over 55
 - The City requires that a certain percentage of any project has to be considered affordable
- Thank you, Marty Skahen, for Main Street program, Hotel program, etc., seeing good results in targeted areas
- What is the average award size?
 - \$7M divided by 44 = \$159K
- What is the process in determining what the grant award is going to be?
- Does it go by units, overall cost of the project?
 - Grant awards are \$5K per unit up to \$250K
 - Regionally significant projects will create more economic impact and can get \$750K
 - ie: Great Northern proposal would be considered regionally significant
 - Developer reaches out the Community Development and fills out application
 - Application is reviewed and voted upon by Marty Skahen, Community Development; Chairman Burtis, Legislature; Isabelle Harris, County Executive's Office; Dan Hammer, Purchasing

AI and Technology Investments – \$1,000,000

\$1M to procure 350 computers for Social Services and other county departments to replace computers that are not certified to run Windows 11 or receive security updates and other software updates. Additionally, expand ongoing initiatives to implement AI-driven solutions, leveraging technologies such as Machine Learning, Chatbots, Natural Language Processing, Computer Vision, Data Engineering, and Data Analytics. These advancements aim to enhance customer service, streamline operations, reduce manual processing, and drive efficiencies which potentially provide cost savings across county departments.

- Chief Information Officer – Information Technology
 - Windows 10 goes off support in October 2025
 - Funds will help get more departments engaged with AI and to build on solutions for current users
 - The following are examples of AI solutions that departments are currently piloting:
 - DOT can better control traffic signals during peak times
 - SNAP is implementing solutions to support their call center
 - Module to read the callers Rights and Responsibilities and transfer calls
 - Answer calls about SNAP program
 - Solution for training procedures based on existing policies
 - IT is working on a chatbot for websites
 - Pilot for Sheriff's department is going well
 - There are many opportunities – predictive analytics, smart infrastructure maintenance, document management, audit improvements, fraud detection, document analysis and document summarizing, etc.
 - Will not be able to get to all departments this year
 - May come back in the future for more funding to increase AI investments

Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Will the 350 computers be purchased from State contract or separate bid through Purchasing?
 - Mainly State contract, receive good funding and quicker process
- Going through the State is quick and easy, but not always the best price
- Can try purchasing from the RIC through BOCES for a better price
- Have to follow procurement policy, but can put out to bid and see if there is a better price available
 - Tough to compete with Dell for County workstations, laptops, and surfaces

- What percentage of funding will the Microsoft upgrade be?
 - Starting working on it 1 ½ - 2 years ago with operational funding; down to the last couple hundred PC's and laptops
 - This will help to get over the line
 - Outside of Social Services, down to 200 and currently have purchases for computers as well
 - Will be back later this year with a CIP for other hardware needs including computers down the road
- What is most important to get done right away?
 - Social Services
 - The State will be sending updates that current computers will not be able to receive
- Thank you, Kevin Sexton, for tremendous job working with Verizon Fios to get broadband to the most remote parts of the County

A motion was made by Mr. Olson, seconded by Ms. Fiato, to approve this item. Ayes: 4 (Knapp, Meaker, Olson, Fiato) Noes: 1 (Harvey); MOTION CARRIED.

Chair Knapp took agenda items out of order

3. GREATER SYRACUSE LAND BANK: Katelyn Wright, Executive Director; Pat Hogan, Chairman, Board of Directors

b. INFORMATIONAL: Annual Report

2024 Annual Land Bank Report on file with the Clerk

- Acquired 77 properties, sold 86 in 2024
- Of the 800 properties in current inventory, 150 are structures, <100 are demolitions, 50 are rehabs
 - Many are listed for sale
 - Some are in the process of being listed for sale
 - Some are occupied
 - Do not resell to owner
 - Try to turn tenants into owner occupants if possible
 - Contract with Catholic Charities for relocation assistance if needed
- 655 demolitions to date; 44 done in 2024
 - Do as many demolitions as funding is available for
 - Significantly catching up with the list demolition candidates
- There are 31 land banks across the state, Greater Syracuse Land Bank is the most proactive at acquiring properties
 - Awarded more state grant money due to having more shovel ready sites
- Shrunk the number of vacant and abandoned structures in the City of Syracuse by 44% since the start
 - Continue to work on vacant buildings as quickly as possible

**Pre-Development for
Resurgent Neighborhood Initiative
Infill Construction**

We are thrilled to see Home Headquarters, Inc. getting started on new construction of eight single-family homes on Woodland, Baker, and Garfield Ave.!

The Land Bank has been working to prepare these sites, and many others, for new construction under the Resurgent Neighborhoods Initiative since 2015. These 8 construction sites were initially 12 separate parcels. The Land Bank acquired 10 of them from the City via tax-foreclosure, purchased 1 blighted house from Fannie Mae for \$10,000 so it could be demolished, and 1 was a mortgage-foreclosure donated to us by the lender. We completed 9 demolitions to clear the way for new construction, using approximately \$250,000 in various grant funds. Lastly, we applied to the City Planning Commission for 6 re-subdivisions, to combine lots or adjust lot lines to create 8 lots that are appropriately sized for infill construction. The Land Bank sold these lots to HHQ for \$1,000 each, subsidizing the cost of infill construction.

It may not always look like much is going on with Land Bank properties, but we are working to prepare sites like this for clustered development all over the City!



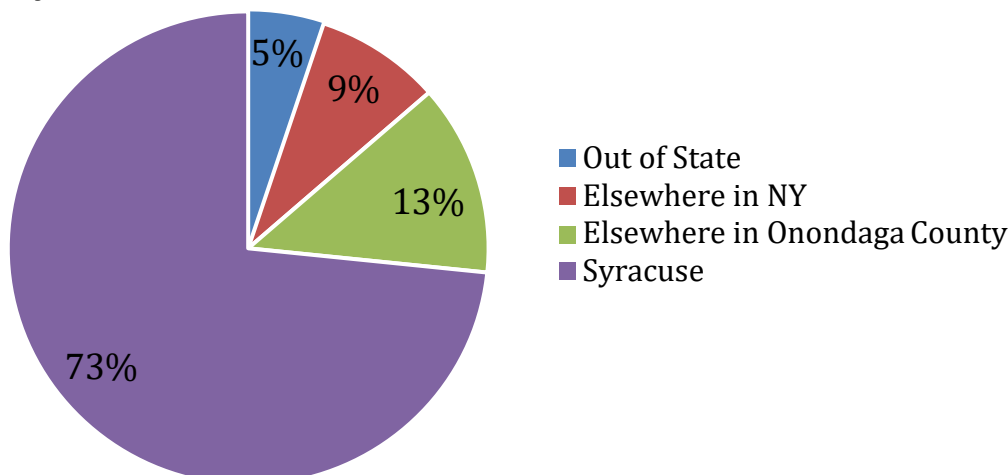
- Doing site assembly once buildings demolished
 - Many properties are small due to being built prior to cars needing driveways
 - Adjacent properties get assembled and lot lines get moved around to make them buildable
 - Typical lot size is 33 feet; would like 50 feet to build on
 - Per State building code, need 6 foot set back on one side
 - 12-14 feet on the other side for a driveway
- Have ~350 buildable sites in current inventory, will build when money is available
- County funding allowed Home Headquarters to build 5 single family homes in 2024 that were sold to owner occupants
- Housing Visions will be breaking ground on 3 2-family lots funded by the County
- Working with Community Development to get single family homes built in Elbridge
- The cost to build a single family home is \$350-\$450K in Onondaga County
 - Relying on government subsidies to get homes built in lower income areas
- Private builders are approaching Land Bank about higher end neighborhood of Tip Hill
- Would like to get private developers to build homes on all lots
 - The Board voted to subsidize a private builder to build 2 homes on Hubbell Avenue in the Strathmore neighborhood
 - 1,900 square foot home
 - 3 bedrooms, 2 ½ bath
 - Will cost \$350K to build (15% profit built in to cost)
 - Can sell for \$325K
 - State grant will fill the \$25K gap
 - Builder would not build if profit was 0
 - 1,300 square foot home
 - 2 bedroom, 1 ½ bath
 - Can sell for \$240K (verified with independent appraisal)
 - Believe there will be a \$75K gap
- The below map shows where Home Headquarters and Land Bank will be building
 - Land Bank
 - Applying to NYS for funding to build:
 - 10 2-family homes
 - 25 Single family homes
- Spent \$250K of County money to demolish 7 homes on Fitch Street last year



Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Where are the homes on Hubble Avenue?
 - Outer Strathmore, across from Holy Rosary church
- How many private investors are there compared to Home Headquarters?
 - Vast majority of homes sold are fixer uppers to local private investors
 - Would like them to make more money so they come back to buy more from the Land Bank
 - Rehabs can now be paid for with a flip, used to be able to only make money if it was a long term rental
 - Increasing property values are attracting more private investors
- Are the increasing property values attracting local investment or outside investors?
 - 73% of buyers are from Syracuse
 - Would like investors to reinvest money locally

Buyers' Address at Time of Purchase



- Does the Land Bank still have all City of Syracuse foreclosures?
 - Land Bank is the default recipient for all City of Syracuse foreclosures
 - City and County both opted out of NYS Real Property Tax Foreclosure law
 - County used to sell properties to the Land Bank for \$1 each
 - Due to Tyler vs. Hennepin County, Land Bank can no longer request for \$1 because property owner receives the difference between the sale price and fair market value
 - The city is now using the Nelson Style Notice – owners receive notice prior to foreclosure so they have an opportunity to file claim prior to a given date; the right to file a claim is automatically waived if date not met
 - The majority of properties are abandoned, nobody responding to letters or filing a claim
 - If claim is filed, an appraisal needs to be done
 - The notification process narrows the property list
- When does the Board meet?
 - 3rd Tuesday of every month at 8:00 a.m., will forward meeting information to the committee

a. 2025 Transfer Resolution (\$250,000)

A motion was made by Mr. Olson, seconded by Ms. Fiato, to approve this item. Passed unanimously; MOTION CARRIED.

* Mr. Olson left the meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammy Barber

TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE	
COMMITTEE: PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	
DATE: APRIL 16, 2025	
NAME: (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Jim Barber	Leg
Ethan LaMontagne	Leg
Heather Whelan	OCB
Mike Luthi	OCB
Krista Smiley	Fire
Brian Dunne	CE
Dan Krup	CE
Mig Costan	Planning
Troy Waffner	Planning
Kevin Sexton	LT
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Joe Frateschi	Legal Counsel
Ben Yans	Co. Attorney
Bob Petrovich	CE Econ. Dev. & Planning
Marty Skahan	Community Development
Katelyn Wright	Land Bank
Pat Hagan	Chairman of Board (Land Bank)
John DeSantis	Leg