



# Onondaga County Legislature

**JAMIE McNAMARA**  
Clerk

**TIMOTHY T. BURTIS**  
Chairman

**TAMMY BARBER**  
Deputy Clerk

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## **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 11, 2024** **DAVID H. KNAPP, CHAIR**

**MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Meaker, Mr. Ryan, Ms. Harvey, Mr. Olson**  
**ALSO ATTENDING: Chairman Burtis, Mr. Romeo; also see attached**

Chair Knapp called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. and the previous meeting's minutes were approved.

### **1. PLANNING DEPARTMENT: Troy Waffner, Director** **a. INFORMATIONAL: Quarterly Update on PlanOn**

#### Strong Centers

- Creating walkable communities with retail, housing, recreation, eating – gelling of community
- Making sure municipalities have the tools they need to see it come to fruition
- Working on town planning grants over last several years; continues to be popular with municipalities
- Committed over \$1M to municipalities for updating comprehensive and zoning plans
- Another \$250,000 in discussion with municipalities who are interested
- Foundation on building future plans for town centers or housing

#### Housing

- Housing Needs Assessment came out saying ~24,000 housing units by 2040
  - Empire State Development did similar housing study including all of Central New York with similar numbers
  - Noted that at some point 50% of housing will require some sort of assistance or incentive, which can mean help with infrastructure or other things
- Helping town plans; county cannot mandate town zoning, but can provide tools to help
- Keeping track of residential development – from Micron announcement to today, over 15,000 housing units in development or in process
- Solid base to move forward on; starting to increase

#### **Questions/Comments from the Committee:**

- What is the 15,000 housing unit number based on?
  - Number based on applications, information from developers and municipalities – putting all into database
  - Used to collect building permit information – somewhat useful, but not always complete
  - Includes multifamily and single family homes – will get the number of single family homes
  - Taxpayers paid for PlanOn, and they are going to want to see results, which are happening
- Has Planning considered doing work sessions with the town, village and city planning and zoning boards on PlanOn?
  - Have met with town supervisors and mayors
  - Have the Regional Planning program in March, and this will be part of it
  - Can step up going out and meeting with individual boards

#### Community Mobility

- Have mobility deserts both urban and rural; a community reliant on cars
- How do you get people to work, recreation, school events, etc.
- Work going on for that, but do not have answer now

- Working with SMTC with things like the Route 31 transit corridor, school programs, Brewerton Trail Network, etc.
- Received federal money for Vision Zero study – putting out RFP
  - Bring the number of deaths on roadways to zero

#### Greenways/Blueways

- Important to community – brings people in, gets people outside, walking, jogging
- Great form of transportation for certain communities
- Looking at ways to expand on them and help with maintenance
- Developing grant program to assist municipalities who have ideas
  - Where they can be put in
  - How to maintain them
  - How to expand them
- Scoping RFP to engage planning firm to further assist and identify where these things can happen and interconnect
- Scoping construction costs and next steps to implement

#### Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- Give an example of what would be considered for the grant program
  - Town of Geddes has an idea – taking into account Nine Mile Creek and Onondaga Lake
  - County would provide funding to vision it
  - Conceptual program now; working out the details
  - Municipalities control these, and this gives them some investment to do it
  - Envision something similar to Empire Trail – not only trail for nature, but also economic development

#### Agriculture

- LaFayette Apple Festival – October 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>
- OnFarm Fest – September 21<sup>st</sup> from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. (visiting farms across the county)
- Agritourism Grant Program
  - Winding down
  - Given out over \$790,000 in funding, which has generated ~\$3M in private match investment to over 50 applicants
  - Have hit most of the eligible projects in the county
  - Great projects to help operations grow or expand
- CNY Regional Market
  - Issued RFP for consultant to look at finances, buildings, and to create vision of what it will look like in the future
  - Not small investment when looking at buildings; tens of millions of dollars of investment
  - Received 3 responses and went with Market Ventures out of Maine
    - Mostly what they do is work with regional markets to rebuild and look at future
    - Have worked with markets Onondaga County's size
    - Wholesale and retail elements involved
  - Market Ventures coming this weekend to tour the market when it is and is not operating
    - Tour and look at buildings
    - Will talk to vendors, board members, staff
  - Will have intercept surveys and a summit to find out what people want and what does the market mean to them
  - Take all of this and package it for strategic vision going forward
  - Will have partial report by end of December
    - Not full finances, etc., but enough information for state reps to go to state legislature for possible funding
  - Great piece of real estate and institution in Central New York; time to rebuild

#### Questions/Comments from the Committee:

- At the Regional Market, it is hard to differentiate what is local grown versus not; hopeful there will be some sort of measure to show local versus out of state
  - When walking into local market, hoping the produce is locally grown; can definitely look at that
  - In perfect world, there would be place to aggregate fruits and vegetables for sale for institutions
  - With new American communities – highlight them and what they are trying to grow and sell
- NYS done good job pushing schools and colleges to buy local, but problem is aggregation

- PlanOn - part of it is working to have a food hub that brings in all small producers in area
- Multiple producers can process, package, flash freeze, etc., and deliver, so small producers win
- Large institutions can call the food hub to get a full order of what they want

Ag Council

- Preserving farmland through NYALT (New York Agriculture Land Trust) – ramping up efforts
- Done a lot of outreach and marketing to encourage farmers to apply
- 805 acres permanently preserved, 1,135 acres that should close in next year, and 651 acres to close in 2 years
- ~2,600 acres of preserved farmland, meaning it can never be developed; hopefully stays in farm production

**Questions/Comments from the Committee:**

- Where will PlanOn be in the next 3 – 6 months?
  - RFP going out for second phase of housing study to get to granular issues; work directly with towns
  - More good news from housing end
  - Strong centers moving forward – identifying those
  - Greenways/Blueways will continue to progress at quicker level; if county can get grant program out and RFP going
- Are there any common themes Planning is hearing from the towns?
  - Believe every town wants to be supportive and knows they have to be ready for it
  - Not sure every town understands what that means, but that is where the Planning Department comes in
- Encourage Planning to keep relationships with the towns and encourage them, because the towns are seeing the projects and are trying to make the hard decisions
- GIS plays a huge part for towns and villages – GIS department (led by Mr. Jordan) is saving towns thousands of dollars by doing GIS for them, so the towns do not have to invest and hire people
  - GIS department – create maps; the work that goes into the maps is amazing; they provide a wide variety of things

The meeting was adjourned at 10:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMIE McNAMARA, Clerk  
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
DATE: **SEPTEMBER 11, 2024**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Anne Leighli	Capitol
Larry VanWeef	COMPTROLLER
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Troy Weffner	Planning
Joe Fratroschi	Council
Jim Beebe	Leg.
John DeSantis	Leg.