



Onondaga County Legislature

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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 12, 2023 **TIMOTHY BURTIS, CHAIR**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Olson, Mr. Garland

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mr. Knapp

ALSO ATTENDING: See attached list

Chair Burtis called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

1. DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING: Dan Kwasnowski, Director

a. Approving the Inclusion of Viable Agricultural Land within Certified Agricultural Districts Pursuant to Section 303-B of the New York State Agriculture and Markets Law

- Introduce Lisa Welch; taking over agricultural responsibilities
- Ag additions include 5 properties
 - 4 in Tully totaling 114.76 acres (Dutch Maple)
 - 1 in Elbridge totaling 6.2 acres (Cannabis)
- District 4 is up for renewal next year
- Working on consolidating all Districts into one

Questions/comments from the committee:

- Do you see more cannabis type farms coming in?
 - No, not yet
- LaFayette has Beak and Skiff selling Heirloom brand including gummies
 - Beak and Skiff already in the district
- Going into one district would be contiguous?
 - Yes
- Is the county considering a moratorium on cannabis farms?
 - Leaving up to each community to vote on what they want to do

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

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: Marty Skahen, Director

a. Authorizing the Acceptance and Sale of Real Property Located at 3309 Howlett Hill Road in the Town of Onondaga

- 3309 Howlett Hill Rd took from tax auction
 - Cannot get inside tax auction homes prior to purchase
- \$43k to remove asbestos
 - Community Development will look into suggestion about class action lawsuit to help with removal costs

- \$15k in carpentry to repair hole in house from water coming up from ground
- Currently have \$70k into house
- Can only sell a house for a certain amount of money
 - Must sell to low income, first time home buyer
- Outside architect hired to evaluate what needed to be done
 - Became too expensive to sell
- As a non-profit, can only sell, build, demolish, rebuild/rehab
- Trying to focus more on Land Bank houses, where walkthrough options are allowed prior to purchase
- Asking to give back to county where people can bid on buying

Questions/comments from the committee:

- What happens to money expended?
 - Probably nothing, may be able to get money back if auctioned off
- Is Howlett Hill Road home “fairly” close to public transportation as stated in SEQRA?

Law Department answered

- There is a bus stop a little down the road

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

b. INFORMATIONAL: 2023 Update

Lead Program

- Expended \$1.7M in housing rehab assistance
 - 119 completed household projects
 - Identified lead paint hazard in 76 homes
 - 51 in city
 - 25 in towns and villages
- Partner with city
 - City takes applications, vets applicants, and closes out cases; city program expires October 2023
 - Community Development does production work; program expires June 2024
 - City designated ARPA funds for lead projects
 - Community Development will continue production for city
- There is shortage of contractors that do lead work
 - 2 or 3 lead contractors came on board this year
 - Community Development and Health Department working with \$8.7M (\$5M from last year, \$3.7M in ARPA)
 - Paying for people to become RRP certified (Renovate, Restore and Paint)
 - Must be certified to work on lead jobs
 - Using lead money to pay for people to take course to become certified supervisor through EPA
 - Ran program with SCSD construction students to become certified
 - Pushing to get 6 more contractors on board

Question from the committee:

- Will the lead abatement program with schools be ongoing or expanding?
 - The training is geared for those that can work for the contractors
 - Plan on doing rounds at SCSD whenever there is a class ready to graduate
 - Class costs \$250 per person

Shape-Up / Shape-Up for Veterans Program

- \$1M approved for Shape-Up for Veterans; ~ \$40k spent
- \$392k spent on 30 homes for entire Shape-Up program (including Veterans)
- Shape-Up program helps owner occupied, low income elderly, handicapped or veteran owned households
- 35 veterans in the application process
- Completed 10 jobs; 6 more in the pipeline

Request: Community Development to follow up with Veterans Services to explain Shape-Up programRamp Program

- \$118k spent providing accessibility modifications for 10 families
- Program provides up to \$15k for modifications to help clients remain in their homes

Home Ownership Program

- Sold 4 homes; 2 currently for sale; 10 being worked on

Questions/comments from committee:

- What is the median price of homes sold?
 - Rehab in housing development near Liverpool HS sold for \$200k
 - Allen Street in East Syracuse sold for \$175k
 - When home sells for \$175k, the mortgage is \$145k; \$30k lien
 - North Street in Jamesville for \$165k
 - Medford Road in Lyncourt for \$170k
 - Watson Street near Shop City for \$165k
 - Wilshirl Drive in North Syracuse currently listed or \$175k
- Is there follow up with families?
 - Affidavits are sent annually to ensure homeowners are still living in home
- Selling prices are reasonable with how the market is today
 - Houses get appraised when complete
 - After grant is applied, homeowners have equity in home

Commercial Rehab Program

- Received NYS Main Street Grant in 2022
- Working on cluster of 7 businesses in village of East Syracuse near fire department
 - 4 projects out to bid; 3 being worked on

CDBG Funding from HUD

- Awarded 14 capital projects; \$800k for towns and villages
- Fair Housing and Arise receive a portion of funds

Emergency Solutions Grant

- Helps homeless prevention, emergency shelter, and rapid re-housing street outreach
- Awarded \$175k for 6 agencies to receive funding

Questions/comments from committee:

- Is My Fathers Kitchen a recipient?
 - No, they do not want government funds

Lead Initiative:

- Community Foundation started a window and door program
 - Lead dust caused from friction surfaces
 - Focus on low income, poverty neighborhoods
- County providing Community Foundation additional \$500k for another round of program
 - County will copy program and provide \$1M to those who do not qualify for HUD program
 - Income driven program based on how many people living in home
- Health Department has additional programs

O-CHIP (Onondaga County Housing Initiative Program)

- Provides \$5k per unit, up to \$250k for developers looking to build housing and in need of financial assistance
- Committee reviews applications
 - So far approved 14 projects for \$1.7M

Main Street Program

- \$5.4M allocated
 - Awarded to 14 municipalities for 70 projects
 - \$2.1M matched from people receiving funding
- Currently in 3rd round of program
- \$15.4M awarded since inception
 - \$13.7M received matches
 - 238 projects funded

Questions/comments from the committee:

- Is the program rolled out to all 14 municipalities?
- Has not started on the South Side yet, where is it going to be?
- Would like it closer to the city
 - Everyone awarded was notified in February or March that funding and contracts were ready
 - Work began during the summer
 - South Salina St. needs to fill out application and forward to city, then to Community Development

Home Building Program:

- Home Headquarters is building 5 homes on Southside (Furman and W. Kennedy St.)
 - Lots acquired through Land Bank
 - Homes sold to low income, first time home buyers
 - Provide \$30k subsidy; lien removed after 10 years
- County building 3 duplex homes
 - Housing Visions won bid
 - Building homes with ARPA money awarded from HUD under HOME program
 - Units must be occupied by individuals or families at 30% median income or lower and need services
 - Homes will be managed by Housing Visions
 - Will use Coordinated Entry List provided by the Housing and Homeless Coalition to place people in homes
 - Will supply supportive services to families
 - Housing Visions will apply for additional money in spring

Questions/comments from the committee:

- Housing Visions owns homes on Genesee St.?
 - Yes
- Community Development also has Public Arts program?
 - Steve Butler from CNY Arts is running the whole program
 - Community Development administers of the money; does not have any art oversight
 - CNY Arts is a funded authorized agency
- Thank you for the update and thank you for all the work Mr. Skahen and Team is doing
- The programs provided are helping people who need them the most
- Fortunate to have Mr. Skahen in this position
- Wish more people could participate
- County tries to make programs well known and for people to accept help

3. VISIT SYRACUSE: Danny Liedka, President & CEO

a. Designating Visit Syracuse as the Agency Authorized to Make Application to the New York State Department of Economic Development and to Receive Matching Funds Therefrom Under the New York State Tourist Promotion Act for January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024

- Annual application for I Love NY for matching funds program shared with regional partners
- Benefits Visit Syracuse with \$60k that NYS will match

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

b. INFORMATIONAL: 2023 Update



The infographic features the Visit Syracuse logo in the top left corner. The main title is '2023 SALES & SERVICES SUCCESSES'. On the left, two statistics are listed: '36,000 Definite Rooms booked as of end of August 2023' and '54,000 Projected Definite Rooms booked by end of year 2023'. In the center, text lists 'Major 2023 conferences/events: NYS Fire Chiefs, Syracuse Nationals, Skills USA, Special Olympics, NJCAA World Series & Savannah Bananas' and '120 groups serviced since January 1, 2023'. On the right, there are three photos: a large indoor event space, a blue vintage car with its trunk open, and a pink vintage van.



ONONDAGA COUNTY BED TAX

2017:
\$6.3M

2022:
\$11.9M



MARKETING SUCCESSES

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY ATHLETICS CAMPAIGN

Visit Syracuse entered into a multi-year partnership with Syracuse University athletics to promote the region to SU alumni and ACC opponents. This plan includes in-game radio ads, digital ads across the ACC, a presence on Cuse.com and more!

The campaign also features a social media aspect with two promotions running: “Where Do You Cheer From” and “Why I Love Syracuse.” Impressions were over 132K with over 8K engagements.



FAN365 RETARGETING ADS

Creating an engaging connection for Visit Syracuse and positioning with fans across the country. We drove specific traffic to the Visit Syracuse website with our first party proprietary data audiences.

<p>Syracuse - 1/11-4/30/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 523,674 • Click-thru rate: 38% 	<p>NC State - 1/13-2/13/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 262,501 • Click-thru rate: 36%
<p>Boston College - 1/5-2/5/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 262,503 • Click-thru rate: 39% 	<p>Duke - 1/17-2/17/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 262,501 • Click-thru rate: 35%
<p>Virginia Tech - 1/5-2/5/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 262,502 • Click-thru rate: 20% 	<p>Wake Forest - 2/3-3/5/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 262,501 • Click-thru rate: 32%
<p>North Carolina - 1/5-2/5/23</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impressions: 262,501 • Click-thru rate: 17% 	







The 2023- 2024 portion of the campaign starts off strong with football. Already Visit Syracuse was able to be a part of an on-campus activation event for the SU vs. Colgate Football game, with an informational table and giveaway raffle.

WEBSITE: ORGANIC SESSIONS

With Google Analytics recently switching to GA4 some of our website measurements have also changed.

Pageviews: 23% 
685,050 vs. 554,993

Average Session Duration: 2:55
5%  in Industry Average

Top pages: Things to Do in Syracuse, Best Restaurants, Events This Weekend

VISITORS GUIDE

Visitor Guide Ad Sales totaled: \$34,000

We have distributed over 26,000 of the 50K printed copies and have had Visitor Guide requests come in from 29 different states, and Puerto Rico as well as Canada and four additional countries

The 2022 Visitors Guide won a New York State Tourism Award for Excellence in Tourism Marketing Campaigns, Projects & Programs, Printed Materials

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Worked with new PR agencies to host vetted social media influencers and journalists

Participating in NYS Tourism Industry Assn. Canadian PR Program, and expanding with sales PR

EVENTS
Team Bonding, Team Building, Casino Dining, Sports Related Events and More are Slamming This Year!

UPROXX Middle Ages Brewing (Syracuse)

TRAVEL | JUNE 6, 2023
The 15 Best Small Towns to Visit in 2023
From an ultramarathon capital in the Rockies to a laid-back village in the Florida keys, these vibrant towns are calling your name.

VAWO

ADVERTISING

Launched digital ad campaigns targeting markets outside of Onondaga County featuring the NYS Blues Festival as well as the Syracuse Jazz Fest. Markets included Massachusetts (MassLive.com) Pennsylvania (PennLive.com) and regions throughout NYS (NYUp.com). Used TBT sponsorship to get air-time during the tournament on ESPN broadcasts.

JAZZ FEST FREE ADMISSION

NYS BLUES FEST FREE! ADMISSION

Featured additional area festivals on VisitSyracuse.com throughout the spring and summer, as well as via social media video posts.

JAZZ FEST JUNE 21 - 25 SYRACUSE, NY

OPINION
Blues and jazz festivals cement Syracuse as music destination

FREE! NYS BLUESFEST

- ~ \$2M economic impact from Jazz Fest and Blues Fest
- *(Jazz Fest and Blues Fest campaigns with Advanced Media on file with the clerk)*
- *(Visitor's Guide on file with the clerk)*

Questions/comments from the committee:

- Tourism continues to increase?
 - Yes
 - 2017 tourism economy was ~ \$775M
 - 2022 will be ~ \$940M; not including film
- People do not realize that tourism varies because of seasons
- What is your definition of tourism?
 - Overnight stay is holy grail of tourism, but tourism is bigger than staying in a hotel
 - Money spent in the area is tourism (going to a show, a game, buy something at the mall, fill up tank, eat)
- Destiny once made a comment that Syracuse was 5 hours from 80 million people
 - That is true
 - Syracuse is within 5 hours of 30% of the population of North America

SYRACUSE

Amtrak print advertising in NY By Rail magazine and year-round digital campaign on NYbyRail.com and in their e-newsletters.

Local promotion through seasonal marquees within the Oncenter Complex buildings as well as the Landmark Theatre.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Summer is Spectacular in Syracuse!
Start your summer off right with seasonal music festivals, top-rated restaurants and non-stop outdoor fun! Check out two of the targets: live music festivals in the northeast this June with the Syracuse Jazz Fest and the New York State Blues Festival. Be sure to visit our stunning parks and scenic waterfalls and of course don't miss out on our fantastic food scene, featuring plenty of outdoor dining and alcoholic libations.

FOOD, FUN & FESTIVALS

START PLANNING

VISITSYRACUSE.COM

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels have continued to grow again YOY across all platforms (IG, FB, TikTok +more)

Engagement Rate per Impression has increased to 4.1% -- 146.4% ↑

Month	Net Audience Growth
Jan 2022	~100
Feb 2022	~150
Mar 2022	~200
Apr 2022	~250
May 2022	~300
Jun 2022	~350
Jul 2022	~400
Aug 2022	~450
Sep 2022	~500
Oct 2022	~550
Nov 2022	~600
Dec 2022	~650
Jan 2023	~700
Feb 2023	~750
Mar 2023	~800
Apr 2023	~850
May 2023	~900
Jun 2023	~950
Jul 2023	~1,000
Aug 2023	~1,050
Sep 2023	~1,100

Platform	Net Audience Growth
YouTube	268
Facebook	1,147
Instagram	1,276
LinkedIn	60

Metric	Value
Accounts reached	42.8K
Accounts engaged	4,242
Total followers	12.7K

Question from the committee:

- Is YouTube channel linked from Visit Syracuse website?
 - Yes

SOCIAL MEDIA

Some top posts + reels from 2023



SALT CITY SPORTS

Hosted over **100** out-of-town teams for a **\$3.2M IMPACT**

The summer league generated over 1,500 room nights while fall tournaments have 750 room nights on the books as of August 31.



Sizzling Summer in the Salt City
Finish out a fantastic summer with your team in the Salt City! There's still spots available for softball or baseball tournaments from now through August!

Summer Baseball Tournaments



EXPERIENCE SALT CITY SPORTS

Fall Ball Schedule Out Now!

There's plenty of season left, and it's all happening at Center Park and Heekin Red Park. The Salt City season runs through October. [Check out Fall Softball](#) and [baseball schedules today](#) and get your team booked!


Fall Baseball Tournaments





FILM SUCCESSES

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
County ED/Film generates \$10M in production revenue	Visit Syracuse Film emerges and commits to a 5-year goal of revenue growth starting with \$11M in 2019	Production revenue goal set to \$13M – COVID-19 pandemic begins	Production revenue goal set at \$16M	Production revenue goal set at \$35M	Production revenue set to hit \$50M despite writer & actor strike
Actual Production Revenue: \$10M	\$30M	\$16M	\$21M	\$35M+	\$50M



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Film Office works closely with the Syracuse City Schools and the STEAM School curriculum.

Additional close partnerships include the Landmark Theatre, The MOST, Redhouse, CNY Arts and the Syracuse International Film Festival







- Asking for 11% increase to \$3.13M for 2024 budget
- Insurance rates up for some employees
- Buffalo, Rochester near \$4M budget

Questions/comments from the committee:

- What is the difference in reach of other counties in terms of what they are promoting?
 - Erie county – \$4.5M budget; Syracuse does not compete with Buffalo
 - Buffalo is higher tier city; competes with Pittsburgh and Cleveland
 - Niagara Falls – Robust budget; funded through Niagara county and city of Niagara Falls
 - Rochester and Albany are on the same level as Syracuse
 - Rochester ~\$4M budget
 - Albany does government per diem business
 - \$3M includes film promotion for Syracuse
- Is there a long term strategic plan?
 - Hired MWB to assist with messaging through a) 81 project and road closures; b) Micron coming in
 - Syracuse will be a brand built on strengths
 - First draft of strategic plan is complete; will be done with process by end of year
 - If funded, the brand will be rolled out by the end of next year
- Museums do not appear in guide, are they featured on digital platform?
 - Arts are prominent on the website, blogs, and weekly things to do
- If there is an event, would it be useful to contact Visit Syracuse?
 - Yes, Visit Syracuse will put event on calendar
- How large is Visit Syracuse staff?
- Are there people of color on your staff?
 - Have staff of 14; do not have people of color
 - Worked with Center State to help inform minorities
 - Had 2 openings within the past year and have not had an African American apply
 - Have Diversity and Inclusion policy; will have certificate by end of year
 - Work with Destinations International and Travel Unity
 - Making every effort; Center State has been a good resource
- Visit Syracuse is trying and the opportunity is there
- Danny is an outstanding individual, very fortunate to have him
- Congratulations on all your successes, great job on promoting the area

- Thank you for believing in us
- Did you create the SYR logo?
 - No, that was done prior

The meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
Onondaga County Legislature

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**
DATE: **SEPTEMBER 12, 2023**

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
John DeSantis	Leg
Melissa Stahn	Community Development
Darcie Lesniak	Leg
Dannu Giedka	Visit Syracuse
Dan Kwasnowski	Dept. of Planning
Lisa Welch	" "
Ben Yaus	Law Department
Jim Beebe	Leg