

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Parish, New York

June 24, 2008

Chairman Vigus opened the meeting at 4:48 p.m. Commission members in attendance were Mrs. Schuler along with Messrs. Stone, Reader, and Talgo. Staff members included Mr. Bartow, Mrs. Collins, and Mr. Baxter, along with guests Leon Heagle, mayor, village of Parish; Steve Stelmaschuck, supervisor, town of Parish; Deborah Haab, superintendent APW CSD; Mary Anne Phillips, councilperson, town of Parish; and Edmund Lescenski, board member from Amboy.

In the absence of Commissioner Yerdon, Chairman Vigus appointed Mrs. Schuler as acting secretary at today's meeting.

On a motion made by Mrs. Schuler and seconded by Mr. Talgo, the agenda was approved as presented.

On a motion made by Mr. Reader and seconded by Mr. Talgo, the minutes of May 27, 2008, were approved with one correction being made - first page, third paragraph, change the wording from "Barry Brothers" to "Berry Brothers."

Chairman Vigus welcomed members and guests and introductions were made.

Mr. Bartow briefed members and guests on the tour held at East Coast Resorts today's meeting. Chairman Vigus thanked Commissioner Reader for helping to arrange the tour and extend his thanks to Mr. Fabian Russell for hosting the tour. Chairman Vigus apologized for not being able to attend as he had to work last night and needed the rest before coming to today's meeting.

Chairman's Report followed.

Commissioner Maciejko and his wife, Carolyn, have graciously offered the use of their camp at Brantingham Lake once more so that we may hold the Commission's staff retreat. Originally we had discussed meeting on July 22, then we moved the date to July 16, however, the Maciejko's have a scheduling conflict on July 16, so we will now revert back to our original plan and hold the retreat and Commission meeting on July 22. Commissioner Maciejko has also arranged for the use of the 3-G Fire Hall for our routine business meeting prior to the staff retreat. As part of our meeting on the 22nd, we will vote on Tug Hill Sages. The award presentation for the Sages will be held in September. In May, the Commission meeting location had to be changed from Redfield to Parish as there was a conflict in obtaining the use of the Redfield Town Hall. The commissioners then opted to hold the September meeting in Redfield and by resolution, the meeting location was changed. Since the Sage recognition awards will be presented at our September meeting, it has now been decided that the location for this meeting should not be in Redfield but Camden as it is more centrally located.

Chairman Vigus called for a resolution to amend the Commission calendar to reflect the change in date for July's meeting and change in venue for the September meeting. On a

Attendance

Acting Secretary

Agenda Approved

Minutes Approved with Correction

Welcome

Today's Tour

Chairman's Report

Staff Retreat Date Changed & Commission Meeting Location Changed

Resolution to Amend Commission Calendar

motion made by Mr. Stone and seconded by Mrs.

Schuler, members approved the following resolution:

RESOLUTION # 2008-3

RESOLVED to amend the Commission's meeting calendar to reflect a date change for the Commission's staff retreat and business meeting from July 16, 2008 to July 22, 2008 and to change the venue for the Commission's September 23, 2008 meeting from Redfield, New York, to Camden, New York.

Chairman Vigus noted that with our retreat in July and annual meeting in September, July's meeting will be the last time commissioners will meet to conduct business matters until October. He will be mailing commissioners several items over the summer to keep members informed on what is occurring at the Commission (i.e., budget reports, etc.). He also reminded members that should the need arise, a special meeting could be called.

There is a memo in members' packets from the Sage Nomination Committee (Commissioners Chereshnoski, Schuler and Yerdon) on recommendations for potential candidates for the Sage award for members' review and consideration. Chairman Vigus thanked the committee for their assistance in the initial screening process and for their input on this task. He noted that copies of all the nominations received by the Commission could also be found in members' packets. There were 13 quality nominations this year and Chairman Vigus urged members to review them all in preparation for our discussion at our July meeting. He went on to add that if anyone had any questions on the pre-screening process that they should feel free to contact any of the Sage committee members prior to our next meeting.

The Executive Director's report followed.

The Projects Committee met on June 17th. Commissioner Talgo reported that it was a productive meeting and the highlight of the meeting was a discussion on eco-based systems and the indicators survey that needs to be completed.

Mr. Bartow met with each of the council of governments during the month of June and presented them with the Commission's *White Paper*. Mr. Bartow noted that while attending these meetings, he received feedback on ideas for questions for the next local leaders' survey to be done in five years. The *White Paper* will be mailed to the Governor and legislative delegation as well as others in the next week or two.

The Sage Nomination Committee (Mrs. Schuler, Mrs. Chereshnoski and Mr. Yerdon) met on June 20 to discuss nominations received and prepare a list of candidates they felt met the criteria to become a Sage. On June 24th, Chairman Vigus sent a memo to members notifying them of the Sage Nomination Committee's recommendations. He also sent them copies of the nomination forms received by the Commission for these candidates so that members would have ample time to review prior to our next meeting in July when voting will take place. The Committee also discussed creating a formal sage criteria list that would become part of the *Members' Manual* that members could use as a point of reference in the selection process.

The Commission is looking into training opportunities for staff. Management Confidential is now offering online programs through SUNY Binghamton for staff at no charge. The Commission does not have all the details at this time, but will inform everyone as soon as this information becomes available.

**Resolution #2008-3
Commission Calendar
Amended**

Sage Update

**Executive Director's
Report**

Projects Committee

**Commission's
White Paper to be
Distributed**

**Sage Nominations
Committee**

**Staff Training
Opportunities**

On October 8-10, APA will hold a conference panel in Rochester to

discuss regional sustainable planning. The conference is sponsored by GOER (Government Office of Employee Relations). Commission staff was asked to sit on the panel for watershed projects to discuss how we are dealing with sustainable development.

Blueway Trail

The Martinsburg Blueway Trail was awarded \$55,000 funding.

Parish Home Rule

Parish Home Rule message for their sewage treatment plant has passed the Assembly – it has been three years in the making.

Special Areas

Mr. Bartow showed members and guests the Commission’s special areas map delineating projects the Commission is engaged in at the local level. It is anticipated that the Commission will soon add important water resources to this map as well. The Commission we will need to amend the Tug Hill Reserve legislation to eliminate important scenic areas as “special areas.”

Indicators Survey

Work is still being done on the indicators survey. Funding for this project is not panning out as the Commission had hoped. The Commission would still like to do this project as a telephone survey, however it looks as though this project may not be done this fall. The Commission is working in conjunction with Center for Community Studies at Jefferson Community College on this project.

Recommendations Presented

The Northern Forest Sustainable Economy Steering Committee has presented their recommendations for revitalizing the economy of the four-state Northern Forest. They have requested that our congressional delegation help with federal policies, programs and funding that will benefit the region. Information on this initiative can be found as a handout in members’ packets.

Low Volume Roads Bill

The low volume roads bill languished in the Assembly. Thirty-seven communities in the Tug Hill region along with the Nature Conservancy, Adirondack Park Agency, Open Space Committee, etc., worked on this bill. The bill would codify what many communities already do – designate roads that don’t meet state highway standards as low-volume and to reduce maintenance costs during the winter.

Contracts Approved

Contracts have been approved for Sandy Creeks Ecosystem-based Management.

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust is processing an application for funding through the Royal Bank of Canada for the bank’s Blue Water Project that will provide \$50 million over 10 years to support charitable initiatives that foster a culture of water stewardship. Grants are awarded to programs that address watershed protection and access to clean drinking water. Watershed protection grants focus on programs ensuring that watersheds, particularly those that are heavily affected by human use, continue to provide ecosystem services such as drinking water supply, critical habitat for plants and animals, areas of natural beauty, use of water for cultural purposes, and water bodies for recreation. The project awards funds in three areas: Visionary grants, Leadership grants, and Community Action grants.

Financial Report

The Financial Report followed.

Governor Paterson has created a new initiative called the “Program to Eliminate the Gap” (PEG). Through PEG, he can issue spending reduction targets for individual

APA Conference

state agencies whenever he deems them necessary to address either potential

current-year shortfalls or out-year gaps.

After Governor Paterson has called for a PEG, agencies will then have one month to develop plans to achieve their targets. Once these plans are approved by the Governor and the Division of the Budget (DOB), summaries will be posted on DOB's website. A PEG Oversight Board consisting of Secretary to the Governor Charles J. O'Byrne, Director of the Budget Laura Anglin, and Director of State Operations Paul Francis has also been created to monitor agency savings plans. If required reductions are not achieved, the Oversight Board may take corrective actions such as instituting a hard hiring freeze at non-compliant agencies or withholding budgeted funding. The 3.35 percent agency spending reductions plans called for in the 2008-09 Enacted Budget will serve as a pilot for the online component of the program. Commission staffer, Mr. Zembiec, has added a percent column to the Commission's regular reporting statement to conform to the Division of Budget's request to show compliance with the program in meeting our percentage ratios. The Division of Budget approved the Commission's request to not do a live webcast at our public meetings since most areas where the meetings are held do not have the technology nor the services available for the Commission to broadcast. The Commission must still video record the meetings and post to our website within 72 hours of the meeting.

Chairman Vigus opened the meeting to public comment.

Public Comment

Mr. Stelmaschuck thanked commissioners and staff for coming here for today's meeting. He went on to thank the Commission for keeping our state legislature abreast on the Dillenberg case. Mr. Bartow commented that the Commission is also keeping all of our councils of governments informed as well so that they in turn can keep their communities up-to-date. Mr. Bartow noted that he had recently received a letter from Assemblyman Barclay thanking him for sending him a copy of the presentation on state land payments and that Assemblyman Barclay will continue to monitor this case and will work with his colleagues to explore possible legislative options. A copy of this letter has been placed in members' packets for their review.

Mr. Bartow stated that he has been sharing information with the Adirondack North Country Association and they were willing to act on this, however, Mr. Bartow advised them that they would have to represent others as well if they embarked on this.

Ms. Phillips requested information from the Commission on who she should write to on this issue. Mr. Bartow informed her that he would send her a copy of the article and other pertinent information.

Ms. Phillips also inquired as to future training opportunities provided by the Commission since she was a newly-elected official and would be interested in what the Commission offered. She also mentioned that the Commission may want to consider going to a two-day format for the Local Government Conference. Mr. Bartow explained that unfortunately the Commission cannot, at this time, extend the conference to two days, however, Mr. Bartow suggested she let us know what topics for training sessions she'd like to see the Commission offer and we'd work on arrangements for future training session. Ms. Phillips also inquired as to why the Local Government Conference was held each year in March. Chairman Vigus explained it was based on Jefferson Community College's availability since this is the only facility large enough to accommodate this size crowd. Jefferson Community College is closed for spring break during March, hence we are able to hold the event there at that time.

On a motion made by Mrs. Schuler and seconded by

Mr. Talgo, members moved to go into executive session at 5:26 p.m. for the purpose of discussing a litigation in the matter of Blackburn vs. Tug Hill Commission. Members requested the presence of Mr. Bartow.

On a motion made by Mr. Stone and seconded by Mr. Reader, members moved to reconvene to the regular portion of the meeting at 5:57 p.m.

Based on discussion held during Executive Session, the following resolution was approved by members on a motion made by Mrs. Schuler and seconded by Mr. Talgo.

RESOLUTION # 2008-4:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Commission is hereby authorized to expend \$22,500 to file an appeal on the Blackburn vs. Tug Hill Commission litigation.

There being no further business, a motion was made by Mr. Stone and seconded by Mr. Reader to adjourn the meeting at 5:58 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne C. Schuler
Acting Secretary

Reconvene

Resolution Approved

**Resolution #2008-4
Blackburn vs. Tug Hill
Commission**

Adjourn