

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

Lowville, New York

June 17, 2019

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting 10:08 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Mdm. Ritter, Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Yerdon and Scriber and Maciejko. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, Jennifer Harvill, Carla Fowler, RACOG Circuit Mickey Dietrich and CTHC Circuit Rider Angie Kimball. Guests – Supervisor Randy – Town of Lowville, Eric Virkler – Executive Director Lewis County Industrial Development and THC counsel Lee Wilbanks.

Attendance

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Yerdon, members approved the agenda as presented.

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Maciejko and seconded by Commissioner Ritter members approved the minutes of May 2, 2019.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone and thank the Lewis County Economic Development for hosting. Introductions were made. He thanked the town of Lowville for their membership in RACOG. Betsi Bentz provided a tour of the JCC extension center prior to the meeting. Chairman Bogdanowicz stated there have been challenges in Lowville. Water usage in the community is up. Kraft and Heinz have merged. He sees good things happening and potential for growth.

Welcome

Executive Director's report followed.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Malinowski reported that she has been in contact with an attorney at civil service regarding the Paid Family Leave. We are waiting to hear back.

Administration

Interviewing for the planner position is in progress. Four candidates are being interviewed. Two interviews were completed last week, with applicants from Ohio and New York. Two interviews are scheduled for next week, with applicants are from Calcium and Syracuse. A decision for the position will be made as soon as interviews are completed.

Strategic Plan

In your packets is the strategic plan survey monkey preliminary results. A draft strategic plan will be available at the retreat. The resident and landowner survey by JCC is done. We'll have the results in July, which will be available at the retreat in August, and Joel LaLone will provide an overview of the survey at our annual meeting in November.

In your packets is a COG comparison sheet. The sheet shows the number of members each COG has, as well as membership dues. NorCOG and SRCG will take over Mr. Baxter's mileage. They will also be looking for an associate circuit rider to assist him. NOCCOG, CTHC and RACOG had previously taken over mileage costs. CTHC will be looking to fill Kay Chapman's position when she retires this year. Circuit riders are stretched with covering meetings.

COG Comparison

Legislation is on hold. It passed the senate last week. We hope to plan a meeting with Assemblyman Barclay and Assemblyman Magnarelli and some others at the Tailwater Lodge this summer and provide a tour of minimum maintenance roads.

MMR

Number Three has the most going on currently. Ags & Markets has concerns about relocating pole structures out of fields or burying lines. DEC issues include invasive, certificate conditions related to bats; prohibits project components within occupied upland sandpiper and northern harrier; wetlands and streams. Construction may begin later this year.

Wind Farm Updates

Deer River had supplemental information submitted on May 28.

Mad River submitted PIP tracking log in February 2019, intervenor funding reports filed by FDRLO, THARP, last communication on Worth was submitted in April. Nobody currently at the office in Redfield.

Eric Virkler – Roaring Brook received NYSERDA funding recently and expect construction to start later this year.

The new Tug Hill recreational guide is in progress and will be done later this summer. It will include sites in all four counties. The commission and land trust are partnering on this, with the commission generating all the maps. Norah Machia will do some writing. Each map will be available to download for use on mobile devices.

Tug Hill Recreational Guide

The bill to allow OCWA (Onondaga County Water Authority) to provide municipal water to the town of Parish was passed last week in the NYS Assembly. The bill previously passed in the NYS Senate. The bill is now awaiting the governor's signature.

Parish Water

The court consolidation for the towns of Lorraine and Worth is moving forward. It will require legislation next legislative session. We will talk with legislators on this in the fall.

Lorraine/Worth Court Consolidation

Informational handouts were provided on the proposed Lake Ontario National Marine Sanctuary.

Marine Sanctuary

Eric Virkler – Provided an overview of LCIDA purchase of the former Climax Manufacturing facility which they purchased last October. They are envisioning it as a business park. They reached deal with Carthage Specialty for them to lease 80,000 square ft. for materials. NRG Group, a cell power and communication company is using 8,000 sq. ft. There is 30,000 to 40,000 ft. of operational space that other businesses could use. 7,000 sq. ft in office space and another 5,000 in other areas. LCIDA and the Lewis County Chamber of Commerce both moved into the building within the last couple of weeks. They intend to make some co-share working space available to rent office space, desks or office equipment. The Journal Republican and a new consulting business are also leasing space. They have room for two or three more businesses.

Mr. Dietrich, RACOG Circuit Rider reported on several RACOG projects. The LED lighting project will have 15 communities when completed. They are working on a local government efficiency grant for smart controls on the LED lighting. For example, the village of Carthage will save close to \$49,000 yearly once lighting is taken over.

COG Report

RACOG is interested in adopting a walkable community policy. Mr. Dietrich and Mrs. Waterbury plan to talk with BOCES to work on bike racks, benches, kayak racks, etc. They will also investigate funding opportunities. Carthage is very interested.

RACOG is also looking at various energy programs and how they can be applied in RACOG communities.

Once the Black River has lowered, the Carthage Chamber of Commerce is looking to do an Octoberfest, including a kayaking event. The railroad development is ongoing, with peddle cars from Lowville to Croghan a goal.

Interns from Monroe Community College continue to work on the RACOG resource management inventory. Mr. Dietrich will take the information and combine it with the demographics. The data will be put onto the racog.giscloud.com map viewer. RACOG may receive an intern through Fort Drum's program in the next several months.

Mr. Dietrich will present a refresher course on NY-Alerts for all municipalities. A town highway garage was inspected by the EPA. They have been asked to put together a list of things for communities to be aware. This might be a topic to next year's LGC. Lastly, both the villages of Lowville and Carthage submitted applications to the North Country Regional Economic Development Council's Downtown Revitalization Initiative competition.

Randy Schell, town of Lowville Supervisor is looking forward to getting something going on the river. It was the main reason for joining RACOG.

Angie Kimball, CTHC Circuit Rider reported: the town of Worth will hold a special meeting tomorrow. The community is upset about the wind law that was approved in April without the town's knowledge. CTHC continues to deal with MMR issues.

In your packets is the financial report. We are only a few months into the fiscal year. Staff received 2% cost of living increases. Some are due step increases but haven't received them yet, we are working with the comptroller's office to correct. We are doing more training than usual due to having Mark Fenton present, however, that will be reimbursed by FDRHPO. There are still a few expenses to be processed from the last fiscal year.

Finance Report

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment.

Public Comment

A brief discussion on projects took place. Commissioner Yerdon shared he attended the Sandy Pond meeting on flooding.

There being no further business before the board, on a motion made by Commissioner Scriber and seconded by Commissioner Boxberger members adjourned the meeting at 11:44 a.m.

Adjourn

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger
Secretary