

**COUNTY OF OTSEGO INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
OTSEGO COUNTY CAPITAL RESOURCE CORPORATION**

**PROJECTS COMMITTEE
JUNE 11, 2020
MEETING MINUTES**

CALL TO ORDER

The COIDA's and OCCRC's joint Projects Committee meeting was called to order at 8:39am at the Otsego Now offices located at 189 Main Street, Suite 500, Oneonta, New York. Committee members present were:

Cheryl Robinson
David Rowley
Tom Armao

Craig Gelbsman
Jeffrey Lord
Jeffery Joyner*

Also, in attendance:

STAFF

Jody Zakrevsky, **CEO**
Meaghan Marino, **Dir. of Finance and Admin.**

*Departed before end of meeting

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Projects Chair, Cheryl Robinson, welcomed committee members and staff. She mentioned that she has been working with J. Zakrevsky on the project charters and making sure the correct information to relay to committee members and the board is in them. She asked that committee members provide feedback when reviewing them.

MEETING MINUTES

C. Robinson requested a motion to approve the May 14th Project Committee meeting minutes. Committee members were given a draft copy of the minutes prior to the meeting for review. There being no corrections to be made, D. Rowley made a motion to approve the meeting minutes. J. Lord seconded the motion and the motion was approved by remaining board members.

CEO REPORT OF PROJECTS

J. Zakrevsky recapped some of his activities since the May Board meeting until now. He also provided members with a detailed update of some of the IDA's priority projects. The following topics were discussed in greater detail:

- **Catskill Packing** – J. Zakrevsky reviewed the Catskill Packing project charter with committee members by going over the complex budget funding structure and the milestones for the project. Catskill Packing was awarded a \$200,000 grant from Empire State Development, and with the COVID-19 pandemic, the owner is concerned that New York will not distribute those funds. Because that grant is reimbursable, Catskill Packing is considering holding off construction until they are certain they will be reimbursed the funds. The committee briefly reviewed the updated tracker and offered some feedback, and discussed reasons why the timeline is being delayed.
- **Custom Electronics** – J. Zakrevsky reviewed the updated project charter for Custom Electronics. He spoke about the status of their CDBG grant and Custom Electronics' expansion project. J. Zakrevsky also asked for feedback on the activity logs and if they are too cumbersome to review. Committee members agreed to keep the expanded activity logs to avoid updating two documents, and allows committee members to go back to review past work.
- **Andela Products/Ruby Lake Glass** – This project started as Andela Product's business expansion, and it wasn't until Cynthia Andela expressed an interest in putting her expanded business in the Richfield Springs Business Park (owned by the IDA) that the IDA got heavily involved in this project. J. Zakrevsky updated the project charter to focus more on developing the Richfield Springs Business Park, and less on the expansion of Andela's business. J. Zakrevsky asked committee members if they wanted the charters to reflect Andela's expansion and any issues that might be facing. The secured ESD grant, and the anticipated EDA grant are both infrastructure grants and do not have a job creation component. Therefore, you could view the development of the park, and the expansion of Andela as two separate projects. J. Zakrevsky reviewed the timeline for the development, and explained that design work and bidding for construction work is on hold until we know if we've secured the EDA grant, which could be announced in three-eight months. C. Robinson commented that the connection between the two projects would be that we are developing the park to accommodate Andela, so what would that look like if she were to pull out? J. Zakrevsky mentioned that he spoke with EDA about that, and they suggested they would be disappointed if the project didn't move forward, but they wouldn't penalize the IDA.
- **Rail Yards** – J. Zakrevsky reviewed the updated project charter with the committee. He briefly spoke about how he broke down 'budget and funding' for the project; Master Plan and Infrastructure Improvements. The Master Plan was budgeted for and is currently being completed by the MRB Group and Elan Planning. For Infrastructure Improvements, in 2016 the IDA had received an ESD award for \$1million to build a \$15 million bridge from I-88 to the Rail Yards. However, that project was deemed unfeasible and the board agreed to close the grant with ESD. ESD offered a \$500,000 award for a \$5.2million project instead. Should a business, like Custom Electronics, want to expand into the Rail Yards, the IDA could use that grant for the development of a new facility. J. Zakrevsky explained that the \$5.2million is identified as the budget for 'infrastructure improvements', but it is highlighted in red until a project is identified. J. Zakrevsky and M. Marino reviewed the draft master site plan for the Rail Yards. Of interest to the committee, the site plan has identified that there are approximately 38 developable acres. J. Lord

questioned when we the MRB Group would estimate the costs associated with developing the park sans buildings (i.e. water, sewer, gas, clean-up). J. Zakrevsky advised that we should have cost estimates within the month. He also noted that the IDA anticipates applying for an EDA grant, which would be a 50% match or more, because the Rail Yards are in a federal Opportunity Zone. D. Rowley noted that on the draft master plan, part of the existing Roundhouse Road encroaches on the wetland buffer zone and asked if it would have to be moved for development. J. Zakrevsky explained that Elan Planning advised that because the road is existing it should be able to stay as is. Because the site plan advises that storm water must be retained in storm water basins (which takes up developable property), as opposed to using the wet-lands, D. Rowley questioned if there had been any discussions about water mitigation. J. Zakrevsky advised that you can move a wetland if you replace it within proximity of where it currently is. It is also a very costly operation, and probably would not go over well with the community. M. Marino asked the committee if they would like the consultants to come to the June board meeting or the July projects committee to go over the draft site plan and cost estimates. Committee members agreed that they should attend the board meeting, so more members will be present. C. Gelbsman also requested that Elan Planning bring the wetland documentation they used as it contradicts past site plan maps developed by them for the Rail Yards GEIS. Under 'objectives', on the project charter, for developing the Rail Yards, J. Lord recommended adding "cluster development", as its something the agency has been working towards for some time. Should a business, like Custom Electronics, move into the Rail Yards, we want to develop similar companies around them to grow the cluster.

- **A&D** – J. Zakrevsky advised the board that A&D Taxi came to the IDA requesting space in the Oneonta Business Park to park approximately 20 vehicles for the next three months. The property in question is on Corporate Drive, across from Apple Converting, and is owned by the IDA and partially paved. Committee members agreed that J. Zakrevsky could work with A&D Taxi to make sure their insurance indemnifies the IDA of any liability, and to set a fee that seems fair to both parties.
- **Marketing Proposal** – Vibrant Brands worked with the IDA to create an RFP for a marketing campaign to target downstate/out-of-state residents and businesses to look to move to Otsego County. J. Zakrevsky advised that the City of Oneonta is also doing a marketing campaign, but only showcasing their downtown businesses. They have asked the IDA to contribute funds to this endeavor, but being a County-wide organization, J. Zakrevsky advised that the IDA wants to be involved in a campaign that markets the entire County to prospective businesses/residents. C. Robinson questioned the timeline for the date of execution for the marketing campaign. J. Zakrevsky advised that the RFP identified August as the start date, and all RFPs are due back to the IDA by June 30th. C. Robinson, C. Gelbsman and T. Armao were concerned at the late start of the campaign, since it seems more people would be inclined to move in the summertime, as opposed to September when school starts. C. Gelbsman noted that this initiative is something that should have started long ago, but even with the late start, this is something that we can use moving forward as a plan for our agency's marketing.
- **Housing** – T. Armao advised the board that he recently had discussions with J. Zakrevsky about the lack of housing in our County. He questioned if there is a way with the County can work together as a whole (Richfield Springs, Cooperstown, Town/City of Oneonta, etc.) to apply for grants to extend central services (infrastructure, sewer/water) so that contractors can then afford to do housing development. By taking care of the infrastructure needs on a County level, you take away the burden from the contractors, who do not have to pass on those costs to prospective buyers, making homes more affordable. He suggested conversations with local, county

governments to be pro-active in looking for ways to extend these services. C. Robinson reminded the committee that housing was an issue that came up during the IDA's strategic planning meeting at the beginning of the year, along with other infrastructure shortfalls our county faces. Among those issues was the energy shortage our County faces, which seemed to take priority at the time. She asked J. Zakrevsky and M. Marino how, with a staff of two, we could carve out time to address other infrastructure issues. There was a brief discussion over what areas in our County have sewer/water and what areas are on septic. T. Armao commented that although housing may not be something that our agency is prioritizing, it should be something we are keeping an eye on, as the County is dependent on bed tax and sales tax, and with a larger housing base, we would increase the County's tax revenue and not have to depend so heavily on the other two. He also noted that with an increase in development and jobs, and a marketing campaign targeting downstate and out-of-state residents, the housing issue must be addressed.

NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no new or unfinished business to attend to.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, D. Rowley made a motion to adjourn the projects committee meeting at 9:47am. T. Armao seconded the motion, and it was approved by remaining members.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

The next Projects Committee meeting will be held on July 9th, 2020 at 8:00am.