

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

**PROJECTS COMMITTEE
FEBRUARY 2ND, 2021
MEETING MINUTES**

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19), Federal and State emergency bans on large meetings or gatherings, and pursuant to Governor Cuomo's Executive Order 220.1, issued on March 12, 2020 suspending the Open Meetings Law, this COIDA/OCCRC Projects Committee meeting was held via video conferencing, instead of an open meeting for the public to attend. Members of the public were given instructions on how to join the meeting.

CALL TO ORDER

The COIDA's and OCCRC's joint Projects Committee meeting was called to order at 8:14am via video conferencing app, GoToMeeting. Committee members present were:

Cheryl Robinson
Andrew Marietta
Joshua Edmonds

Tom Armao
David Rowley

Also, in attendance:

STAFF

Jody Zakrevsky, **CEO**
Meaghan Marino, **Dir. of Finance and Admin.**
Kurt Schulte, **Agency Counsel**

GUESTS

Chris Quereau, Vibrant Brands**

**departed before end of meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

Projects Chair, Cheryl Robinson, welcomed committee members and staff, and moved immediately into the agenda.

MARKETING CAMPAIGN UPDATE

C. Quereau, of Vibrant Brands and consultant for the marketing campaign, joined the meeting to discuss the status of the marketing campaign. He advised the committee that it is his opinion that the campaign is

doing what it is intended to do, which is making Otsego County an option for people from downstate who are looking for alternative lifestyles. He noted that there have been a lot of questions about ROI and how we can connect the dots between the campaign and actual people relocations here. He feels that is not something we are going to be able to track, beyond inquiries, traffic, and exposure. He doesn't feel that any marketing company would be able to give hard numbers on how much was spent on the campaign vs. how many people relocated to the County. When we started the campaign, the directive was to reach out to the downstate audience, and he asked the committee if that is the audience that we want to continue to communicate with. If so, then the campaign is working, but will need additional tweaks on a quarterly basis to improve the campaign. But if that is not the audience we want to target anymore, then we would need to reassess who we are marketing to. The 2021 IDA budget did allocate additional funding for marketing – C. Quereau suggested continuing the current campaign, as is, even if on a smaller scale, and he offered to submit a proposal on suggestions for using the remaining marketing budget to target additional audiences. C. Robinson asked why C. Quereau is leaning towards targeting a broader audience than downstate. He advised that although we're seeing traffic and interaction with our internet postings, but to throw all of our budget at that group, when he isn't sure most of them are willing to move this far away from the City, would be irresponsible of him to suggest. Other budget suggestions he made were improving the IDA website, expanding the google advertising campaign for people searching nation-wide and state-wide for economic development opportunities, both of which are currently not being worked on. C. Robinson encouraged C. Quereau to provide a proposal to outline who/where the new targeted ads should be focused on. D. Rowley noted that the real estate market in our area saw an increase in residential home purchases, and wonders that now with the vaccine coming out, if the trend will die down and people will go back to working in their offices. C. Quereau agreed, but also noted that, with the pandemic, there will likely be more flexibility for people to continue to work from home. A. Marietta discussed a survey initiative being done by The Roost (destination marketing agency for the Adirondacks area) which questioned tourists about the potential to relocate to their area, what it would take for them to move, are they currently looking for properties, etc. Because our marketing firm, Paperkite, has a contract with our County's Destination Marketing, A. Marietta wondered if something like that could be an opportunity for us. C. Quereau asked that A. Marietta forward him that survey and agreed that it would be great information to have, but cautioned that the problem with surveys is getting people to respond to them and they can be expensive to run. He cautioned that the board could be underwhelmed with the results, as it's likely that if you survey 1,000 people, 50 responses might be high. C. Robinson asked J. Zakrevsky and M. Marino to work with C. Quereau on what is our objective for the marketing, what is our strategic focus, how do we find and define our targets for the year, and suggested reaching out to board members to plan a session discussing these topics.

MEETING MINUTES

C. Robinson requested a motion to approve the January 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. T. Armao 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 January Projects Committee 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:

- **Andela Products** – J. Zakrevsky noted that he spoke with Cynthia Andela and she advised that her accountant is working with Key Bank and Adirondack Bank to put together a finance package for both the building construction and for paying off the debt service for sewer/water extensions. J. Zakrevsky also noted that he sent in the quarterly report to EDA explaining that we currently don't have a funding match for the grant that the IDA was awarded. However, EDA accepted the report and advised to continue working on the project. Cynthia Andela has also been in contact with her partners in the Netherlands about the possibility of them helping her finance the project.
- **Rail Yards** – C. Robinson questioned what the focus is for 2021 for the Rail Yards. J. Zakrevsky advised that presently he is pushing Corning to buy the property from the IDA for the possible construction of their new campus. He noted that their phase-3 expansion of their existing Oneonta plant is important because it shows their continued commitment to Oneonta and Otsego Co. C. Robinson asked what the IDA's strategic approach would be if other potential users for the site came into the picture, and how long are we giving Corning to make a commitment on a project in the Rail Yards. J. Zakrevsky advised that this could go back to the criteria/evaluation of tenants that the committee had suggested earlier in the meeting but noted that it tenants should be tied to jobs and investment in the area. He provided the example of someone who had inquired about potentially opening an athletic gym in the rail yards, which wouldn't be big job creator. J. Zakrevsky also advised that Corning should have until late-Spring, because that's when the IDA would need to make the decision if we want to start clearing some of the property for individual sale/lease. He noted that we did budget funds to clear one of the lots, which has the potential to be sold separately from the large acreage in the park, as it doesn't connect to that land and is in between two existing buildings.

NEW/UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- **MidTel** – The IDA has reached an agreement with MidTel and the Village of Cooperstown for their WiFi project. MidTel will be installing the WiFi units this spring/summer. This project started four years ago, but never moved because those involved couldn't figure out the funding. MidTel has agreed to upfront the costs of the project, and once we are reimbursed by the NYS Dormitory Authority, those funds will be released back to MidTel.
- **Cooperstown Distillery/Custom Electronics** – J. Zakrevsky is completing the final drawdown requests for both projects. Once those funds are received, the State will plan a monitoring inspection to review files on both of the projects, and then both projects will be officially closed out through the NYS Office of Homes and Community Renewal.
- **Corning Phase-3 Expansion** – This is \$19.8 expansion of Corning's existing Oneonta campus, which includes a 13,000sqft. addition onto their building and new equipment. J. Zakresky, as noted before, has begun having conversations with them on phase-4, which would be an approximately \$100million investment into a brand new campus. He noted that the benefits of

building in the Rail Yards is that the area is in a federally designated Opportunity Zone, which would provide increased long-term tax benefits. C. Robinson asked how much time staff will be allocating towards both phase-3 and the potential phase-4 project for Corning. J. Zakrevsky advised that currently he is researching and trying to make the right connections within Corning to advocate for the Rail Yards as the phase-4 project location.

- **Ommegang** – D. Rowley asked if there had been any updates on Ommegang. J. Zakrevsky advised that management of the facility reached out to him and asked that he not speak about their project further. But as of their most recent conversations, they are monitoring the affects of COVID-19 and how it might impact this summer, but they seem like they're leaning towards keeping the facility open.
- **Burr Truck Lease** – C. Robinson noted that in the earlier Audit & Finance meeting the committee suggested creating a checklist with criteria that potential tenants should meet to lease/buy property from the IDA. T. Armao agreed with the revenue that Burr Trucking would bring in through rental expenses, but still expressed concern over the character of the Business Park. C. Robinson noted that we can still outline those concerns in the lease. T. Armao noted that if we have those caveats listed in the lease, he can support it. C. Robinson also reminded everyone about the 1-year lease with potential to terminate after 1-year if lease requirements aren't followed. J. Zakrevsky advised that he will work with agency attorney, Kurt Schulte, on the language of the lease.

D. Rowley made a motion to approve the lease for Burr Trucking and to bring the matter to the full board. T. Armao seconded, and it was approved by remaining committee members.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, D. Rowley made a motion to adjourn the Projects committee meeting at 9:16am. T. Armao seconded the motion, and it was approved by remaining members.

UPCOMING MEETING SCHEDULE

The next Projects Committee meeting will be held on March 11th, 2021 at 8:00am.