

Minutes

Planning & Economic Development Committee

**September 16, 2020, 6:00 pm, Legislative Chambers**

Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Odell, Starks, Muldowney, Harmon, Ward

Others: Tampio, Ames, DeAngelo, Chagnon, Cullen, Aldrich, Geise, Nixon

Chairman Odell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes (8/19/20)

MOVED by Legislator Harmon, SECONDED by Legislator Starks.

*Unanimously Carried*

Privilege of the Floor

Chairman Odell: Madam Clerk, do we have anything under privilege of the floor tonight?

Clerk Tampio: No.

Chairman Odell: O.k., we'll close the privilege of the floor and move right into resolutions.

Proposed Resolution – Designate Chautauqua County Legislature as Lead Agency Responsible for State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) of State Funded Snowmobile Trails

Chairman Odell: It's my pleasure to introduce someone relatively new to the committee but not new to the department, Brendan Cullen, Planning Tech at the Planning office in Westfield. Brendon, welcome.

Mr. Cullen: Thank you very much. Coming to talk today about two resolutions that we've submitted. As Mark said, I'm a Planning technician with the Chautauqua County Division of Planning and Community Development. The County is a local sponsor for a grant administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation to fund snowmobile trail development and maintenance in the County. We have a new addition to the trail that a snowmobile club, the Cherry Creek Snow Goers have applied for. The trail will connect the Boutwell Hill State forest parking lot to the Cockaigne Ski Resort. The trail is named S16A and from talking with the snowmobile club, the trail used to be used for snowmobiling but is currently used as an equestrian trail, part of the Chautauqua County Equestrian trail system

and minimal clearing will have to be done in order to have this trail be useable in the wintertime for snowmobiling as well. So, according to the grant documentation, any new trails to the system will have to go through the SEQRA process so I have submitted these two resolutions to first declare us the lead agency and then second to say that there is no adverse environmental impact.

Chairman Odell: O.k., on the first one, of course Brendan thank you very much for that and welcome to the Committee. This first one is just designating us as the lead agency. We have saved discussion for the actual trail itself if there is any to be had in the second resolution. Anyone have any questions on this one?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Resolution - Environmental Assessment (SEQRA) for Establishment of  
Chautauqua County Snowmobile Trail "S16A" in the Town of Cherry  
Creek

Chairman Odell: As Brendan already spoke, everybody got to go through the documents and just as Brendan stated, the proposed actual will not result in a significant adverse environmental impact. That's always key as we look forward to signing anything on behalf of the County. Any questions from the Committee?

Legislator Starks: So you had mentioned that in the spring time and historically it had been used as an equestrian trail.

Mr. Cullen: Yes.

Legislator Starks: Will that still continue when there is not snow or is it going to be an exclusive snowmobile trail?

Mr. Cullen: No, it will continue to be an equestrian trail as well.

Legislator Starks: Thank you.

Legislator Harmon: What's the difference?

Mr. Cullen: I guess really the main difference is that for snowmobile trails, they like them to be a bit wider so some clearing of the brush around the area will be required but there are no trees or anything that need to be cut down or anything like that. This is really just the initial stages, trying to get New York State to say, we will approve you for possible funding in the future to develop this trail.

Legislator Harmon: These trails are in full operation in the middle of winter, most of these clubs, they groom the trails all on their own in what they do. Will that be a part or obviously they'll take care of this trail as well too?

Mr. Cullen: Yes.

Legislator Harmon: And they won't be infringing on anything, what they are going to be doing, it's just going to be business as usual as far as grooming and getting the excess and doing what they have to do?

Mr. Cullen: Yea, so the Cherry Creek Snow Goers, that's the snowmobile club that will be responsible for this trail. They groom many trails every year and that's what that funding from the State provides or it's for both the equipment, such as these large groomers. But also, funding the club to do that work. So they will just take that on as part of their annual responsibilities.

Legislator Harmon: Now is most of work that they are doing as far as grooming, that's all volunteer correct? People who join the club, volunteer to do what they do.

Mr. Cullen: Yes but it's actually a pretty administered system. They have to put in claims for reimbursement for how many hours they spent, maintaining a certain trail from this hour to this hour and who did it. They are volunteers but they are usually trained within the clubs to be able to use that equipment.

Legislator Starks: There is some accountability to it.

Mr. Cullen: There is accountability, yes.

Chairman Odell: It's all part of what keeps the grant funding flowing. This is a big milestone here because a new trail, S16A, there haven't been new trails in New York in quite a while. They kind of put the limits on those so that was pretty good. Nicely done. This again is going to connect Boutwell Hill State Park to Cockaigne and that's great. Boutwell Hill is a nice open parking lot for trailers and trucks so that can become a destination up there, as it should, connecting to Cockaigne which this summer utilized equine, they had a lot of guided horse riding going on this year at Cockaigne. Hopefully this year we'll get the permits in place or Cockaigne to get skiing up and going. (*Inaudible*) multiple use as the design was for this place as destination only for skiers, horseback riding, festivals, events, and now easier snowmobiling. For the economic development side Cockaigne is quite happy that this is coming. I've talked with Carol Rasmussen last week, she was thrilled, Andrew Nixon, who is on with us now for the tourism aspect, is only going to make things better. So we're very glad to see this coming.

Legislator Ward: Some of this is private land?

Mr. Cullen: Yes.

Legislator Ward: How many owners?

Mr. Cullen: I'm not exactly certain. That's a good question for the snowmobile club. They are the ones who maintain the relationships with the private landowners.

Legislator Harmon: These are usual easement agreements that – (*cross talk*)

Mr. Cullen: Yea, so the grant just requires that we have permission and that that permission is up to the club to decide. Usually they are not formal easement agreements because very often a trail will reroute so they don't do that to disrupt the trail system year to year.

Chairman Odell: Anything else?

Mr. Geise: If I could just add one other thing. This only helps the equestrian system because the snowmobile clubs are very able. They have a lot of equipment, a lot of manpower and then when they build trails, they build them. So this is only going to help the equestrian folks as well because they will really build these trails up so it's a win/win.

Chairman Odell: O.k. thanks Mark and Brenden thank you for being here tonight. If there are no other questions, all in favor?

*Unanimously Carried*

Proposed Motion – Proclaiming October 3-10, 2020 as 4-H Week in Chautauqua County

Chairman Odell: A nice motion coming through from Mr. Hemmer and Mr. Pavlock which we'll all be happy to sign on, I'm sure. No action to be taken on that. O.k., moving into discussion.

Discussion - Committee Updates

Discussion - New IDA Revolving Loan Fund – Mark Geise

Presentation – Tourism Update - Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau - Andrew Nixon

Other

Chairman Odell: Do we have anything under “other”? If not, motion to adjourn.

MOVED by Legislator Starks, SECONDED by Legislator Harmon to adjourn.

*Unanimously Carried (6:41 p.m.)*

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,  
Olivia Ames, Deputy Clerk/Lori J. Foster, Sr. Stenographer