

Minutes
Planning & Economic Development Committee
February 19, 2025, 6:00 pm, Legislative Chambers
Livestreamed on YouTube
Gerace Office Building, Mayville, NY

Members Present: Harmon, Gustafson, Dickey, Penhollow, Larson, Johnson

Others: Chagnon, Lee, N. Quattrone, Swan, Geise, Zafuto, Sharp, McCoy, Wurster, Aldrich

Complete video of meeting can be viewed on YouTube

Chairman Harmon called the meeting to order at (6:04 p.m.)

Approval of Minutes (1/15/25)

MOVED by Legislator Gustafson, SECONDED by Legislator Penhollow.

Unanimously Carried

Privilege of the Floor

Legislator Larson: I would like to use the Privilege of the Floor, Mr. Chairman. I'm Legislator Fred Larson, District 12. I've made the point once or twice, either in the committee or the full Legislature that our 1998 Charter that we still operate under – it's our law. And in the Charter, as well as our Code and our own Legislature rules – we are supposed to – and specifically this committee – we are supposed to by June come up annually with objectives, goals and measurements of how we do. How the County government does. It hasn't been done in years. I don't know when it stopped. It doesn't matter, it just has been a long time ago. So, I went back and I'm going to hand out the action of our committee, the same committee from 2000. So, twenty-five years ago. There is one here for Planning and one for Economic Development IDA. And what happened then and for a number of years sometimes it was called a Policy Conference. The Legislature had an extra meeting in June I believe. So not the regular meeting but an extra meeting they called it a Policy Conference where they met just to vote on the goals, objectives, measurements that each Legislature Committee had established for the departments that they were responsible for. This is what they did for Planning and Economic Development that year. I've given a copy to Mark Geise already this evening and the representative of their Planning. So, here is two for your seatmate. There is two. I did pass on to the Chairman, Mr. Harmon, what I call a sample 2025/2026 Economic Goals, Objectives, and Measurements just to help our committee get started on making a good faith effort to meet the commands of the Charter, the Code. I cannot say that any Legislature lived up to the intent of that Charter in 1998. To go back, our first Charter had the election of an executive for the first time in 1974. So, there was a Charter back in the 70's but by '98, people felt that the County government should be structured differently and that gave us the Charter we operate under today. I can't say that any Legislature fully lived up to the concept of that Charter that the Legislature would truly be the policy making entity of County government – not the County Executive and his department heads. Not even by

coincidence in making these photo copies the District Attorney who is independently elected, the District Attorney was required to take part annually in the goals, objectives and measurements. So, the Legislature did try. It's hard work. But they tried. And I don't know that I can influence this whole body but I was hopeful at least the Planning and Economic Development Committee we'd make a good college try. That by June we could say to the Executive, and to his department heads that we're involved in, look folks, this is what that we as independently elected legislators, this is what we believe the objectives should be. Whether it's more manufacturing jobs, well how many? And how would we go about doing that? I've already asked for example; we need the help of the Planning Department. We don't have the expertise here to say to the county to facilitate the creation of 500 new manufacturing jobs. We don't know how many acres of industrial park land we would need to acquire and develop to do that. But with the help of our Planning people, they can help us understand today's manufacturing if it's five jobs an acre – we need 100 acres to have a chance at 500 new jobs. So, if we could all make a commitment to work on this, think about it for our March/April/May meeting by June meeting. Hopefully, we would put together our own resolution and submit it to the legislature itself and then if the legislature ratifies what we've done it goes on to the County Executive and he's supposed to under the Charter, take it into account when preparing his budget for the following year. If we said that we want a hundred acres of new industrial park by 2026, well that costs money and we'd want that to be in the budget. So, this just is a starting point but it does give us a fighting chance of the Legislature being a policy making body or at least policy influencing. Tonight, we will have a presentation, and we appreciate the presentation and a 2025 Work Plan, but we have had no real input. It's not anybody else's fault but ours. We've had no real input in whatever the 2025 Work Plan is. I don't think we as a committee voted on any goals, objectives or anything to put into that plan. So, it all comes from the Executive and the Administration and that's not what the '98 Charter had in mind. It wasn't supposed to be from the Executive down to the Legislature it was supposed to be the Legislature down to the District Attorney, the County Clerk, the County Executive. So, let's give it a good college try and try to convince people in Mayville that the Legislature really does have something to do with establishing policy not just reacting to resolutions from the Executive branch. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Legislator Gustafson: Can I make a comment?

Chairman Harmon: Yes, please.

Legislator Gustafson: Fred, I thank you for putting this together. The majority of it – one through four at least – looks quantitative. I think prior to confirming these numbers, what we'd like to see is historical averages of at least five years, so that we could accurately establish rightsized goals with year over year changes. I don't know who would be, where we would go for that information?

Legislator Larson: I guess Planning – we need their help.

Legislator Gustafson: Thanks for putting this together.

Legislator Johnson: Can I comment? This used to be my line of work. And you just hit it. I really agree that the Legislature ought to get ahead of this process as outlined in 205 of the Charter section C. Which is pretty nicely written. And by the way, there is a comprehensive plan out there somewhere which this is supposed to come from. So, that's a starting point. But I don't see to your question, how we do this without having some good staff work ahead of time – so we in fact have a sound numerical background both internal financial numbers but also physical numbers of what's going on in our areas of responsibility. And if we don't have some dedicated staffers to help with it, I really doubt that just a committee of old folks are going to get it done properly and then it won't be done properly and it will be going to disrepute and that's what happened before because we didn't have the resources to do it right.

Chairman Harmon: Well, I just want to thank you for bringing light to that and along with Jamie, this is something we are certainly able to look at, look into and you said by June I think we might be able to probably throw something together that would satisfy the masses. As long as we get the numbers that we're going to need and all the information that's going to be pertinent to any decision or anything going forward.

Legislator Johnson: So, could I suggest that we get together a side meeting on this subject alone. Because it's a big responsibility to tell the Executive what we expect of the Executive.

Chairman Harmon: Absolutely. I know his wife – we'll be all set. *(laughter)*

Legislator Johnson: Well, okay. I meant the Executive – as the whole department. I'll take your point of interest being strong. *(laughter)*

Mark Geise: Mr. Chairman, can I say something?

Chairman Harmon: Absolutely Mark, go ahead.

Mark Geise: I don't want to get into it now because we are going to be presenting in March on the IDA. But Mr. Larson said you know this Charter is about County government, you know, the Planning Department not the IDA. The IDA is not County. That's very clear the IDA is not County. The IDA is one that is trying to create the business parks, doing loans, doing incentives for projects. It's not really the Legislature that should be dictating what those benchmarks should be because the IDA is not the County. And we'll get into that more, but certainly one thing we're going to do tonight with our presentation with Planning which has three divisions, we'll talk about what we do and how we do it and provide some benchmarks and those are all I think fair game. But *(inaudible)* the IDA, that's something different. And we'll talk about that again.

Chairman Harmon: Thanks for bringing that to our attention. Mark thank you. Do we have any discussion on the Privilege?

Proposed Resolution – Calling a Public Hearing Pursuant to County Law §254 Upon a Proposal to Extend the Center Chautauqua Lake Sewer District from Midway State Park through Point Chautauqua on the East Side of Chautauqua Lake - *Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman of the Legislature, Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Recommendation to Progress the Center Chautauqua Lake Sewer District Extension Phase 3 Project and Establish Chautauqua County as Lead Agency - *Presented by Pierre Chagnon, Chairman of the Legislature, Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget – Occupancy Tax Funded Projects - *Presented by Samuel Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance, Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator, Nathan Aldrich, Economic Development Coordinator*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2025 Budget to Replenish the Lake Maintenance Fund – *Presented by Samuel Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance, Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator, Nathan Aldrich, Economic Development Coordinator*

Unanimously Carried

Proposed Resolution – Amend 2024 Budget for Year End Reconciliations – Planning and Economic Development - *Presented by Samuel Zafuto, Deputy Director of Finance, Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator, Nathan Aldrich, Economic Development Coordinator*

Unanimously Carried

Presentation – Department of Planning & Development 2024 Accomplishments, and 2025 Goals & Objectives by *Mark Geise, Deputy County Executive for Economic Development, Dave McCoy, Chautauqua County Watershed Coordinator Nathan Aldrich, Economic Development Coordinator, Rebecca Wurster, Planning Coordinator for the Department of Planning and Development*

MOVED by Legislator Gustafson, SECONDED by Legislator Dickey to adjourn.

Unanimously Carried (7:46 p.m.)

Respectfully submitted and transcribed,
Olivia Lee, Clerk of the Legislature/ Nancy Quattrone, Senior Stenographer