

# **FULTON COUNTY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**

**TUESDAY  
MAY 11, 2021  
8:00 A.M.**

**PLANNING DEPARTMENT CONFERENCE ROOM**

## **MEETING NOTES**

PRESENT:

JOSEPH SEMIONE, CHAIRMAN  
JANE KELLEY, VICE CHAIRMAN  
MIKE FITZGERALD, TREASURER  
JOSEPH GILLIS, SECRETARY  
TODD RULISON, MEMBER  
DAVID D'AMORE, MEMBER  
JAMES MRAZ, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
KARA LAIS, FITZGERALD, MORRIS, BAKER, FIRTH PC  
SCOTT HENZE, PLANNING DIRECTOR  
TRAVIS MITCHELL, FULTON COUNTY CENTER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

### **I. MINUTES FROM APRIL 13, 2021 MEETING:**

MOTION : Accept as presented.  
MADE BY : Joe Semione  
SECONDED : Dave D'Amore  
VOTE : Unanimous

NOTE: A transcript of the April 13, 2021 meeting has been prepared and posted on the IDA's website in compliance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order suspending the Open Meetings Law.

### **II. BUDGET REPORT:**

MOTION : Accept as presented.  
MADE BY : Jane Kelley  
SECONDED : Mike Fitzgerald  
VOTE : Unanimous

### **III. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

#### A. Nominating Committee:

- No report.

#### B. Audit Committee:

- Monthly Bank Reconciliation Report: Joe Semione

IDA DISCUSSION: Joe Semione approved the Monthly Bank Reconciliation Reports.

#### C. Governance Committee:

- No report.

#### D. Finance Committee:

- No report.

### **IV. FULTON COUNTY/FULTON COUNTY CENTER FOR REGIONAL GROWTH (FCCRG) REPORTS:**

1. Fulton County Report: Warren Greene, Liaison
2. FCCRG Report: (See attached.) Travis Mitchell

IDA DISCUSSION: Travis Mitchell reviewed the Fulton County Center for Regional Growth's monthly report that was attached to the Agenda. There were no questions.

### **V. OLD BUSINESS:**

#### **A. Nexus Renewables Solar Project:**

##### 1. Status Report:

- Revised Lease and Revenue Sharing Agreements being finalized.
- Easement Agreement being finalized.
- Construction documents being finalized.
- Community Solar Subscription Agreement finalized and distributed to potential subscribers for solar credits.
- Kara Lais working with Nexus's attorney on closing documents for providing sales tax exemptions
- Town of Johnstown Town Board finalizing PILOT Agreement with Nexus
- Nexus is looking to start construction of access road to solar site shortly
- Nexus will use existing road that goes to wastewater pump station to access their road that will go to the solar site. Nexus will be paving the existing road to the wastewater pump station.

IDA DISCUSSION: Jim Mraz reviewed the information on the Agenda. He stated Kara Lais provided comments on the revised Lease and Easement Agreements. He stated he forwarded those to Keith Sandor from Nexus Renewables. Kara Lais stated that she has sent a list of deliverables to Nexus' attorney regarding the application for sales tax exemptions. Jim Mraz asked Kara Lais if she was now comfortable with having the revised Lease, Easement Agreement and Revenue Sharing Agreements executed? She stated "Yes." Jim Mraz asked if it would be best to have all of these agreements, as well as the agreements regarding the sales tax exemptions, executed at the same time? Kara Lais stated, "Yes."

**B. Fulton County Site Inventory and Assessment Project:**

1. Background:

- The Mohawk Valley Economic Development District (MVEDD) and Fulton County Center for Regional Growth (FCCRG) have secured funding to undertake a Site Inventory and Assessment Project in Fulton County.
- Funding is coming from a CARES Act COVID-19 Recovery and Resiliency Planning Grant and a grant from National Grid.

2. Status Report:

- a. Elan Planning/Landscape Architecture/Engineering D.P.C. has been retained by MVEDD/FCCRG to prepare assessment of potential sites.

IDA DISCUSSION: Jim Mraz reviewed the information on the Agenda. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

**C. Option Agreement with Vireo Health:**

1. Background:

- At its October 13, 2020 meeting, the IDA Board approved executing an Option Agreement with Vireo Health.
- The Option Agreement included Lots 1 and 2 in the Tryon Technology Park that comprise approximately 44+/- acres and another 52 acres adjacent to the Tryon Technology Park for a total of 96 acres.

2. Status Report:

- Vireo Health has verbally advised that they intend to exercise their right under the Option Agreement to purchase the 96 +/- acres optioned
- Vireo Health has retained Ferguson & Foss Surveyors to prepare a boundary line survey of this tract of land. The exact acreage of Lots 1 and 2 and the adjoining lands will determine what the final sale price will be.
- Vireo will submit a letter to the IDA formally notifying the IDA of its intent to purchase the property.

3. Appraisal:

- In order to sell this property, Kara Lais advised that an appraisal is needed to establish the fair market value of the 44+/- acres in the Tryon Technology Park.
- CBRE, Inc. was contacted to prepare an appraisal of the 44+/- acres in the Tryon Technology Park.

- Total Fee: \$2,500

IDA DISCUSSION: Jim Mraz reviewed the information on the Agenda. He asked if there were any questions. Todd Rulison asked why an appraisal on the 52 acres is not required? Jim Mraz stated that the IDA had an appraisal done on lands adjoining this 52-acre parcel that was used to establish the value for these acres.

MOTION: To authorize a payment to CBRE, Inc. of \$2,500 to prepare an appraisal of the 44+/- acres in the Tryon Technology Park.

MADE BY: Dave D'Amore

SECONDED: Joe Semione

VOTE: Unanimous

#### **D. Proposed Sale of Former Maintenance Building:**

##### 1. Status Report:

- At the April 13, 2021 meeting, the IDA Board approved selling the former Maintenance Building at Tryon to Lott Holdings.
- A letter has been sent to the State advising of the proposed sale.
- A Waiver of Conflict Letter has been executed.
- The survey of the property the IDA had prepared was sent to Lott Holdings.
- A copy of the Environmental Site Assessment Report the IDA had prepared when it acquired Tryon from the State was provided to Lott Holdings.
- Lott Holdings had contractors in the Building on May 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> to assess building conditions and repairs/improvements that may be needed

IDA DISCUSSION: Jim Mraz reviewed the information on the Agenda. He asked if there were any questions. There were none.

## **VI. NEW BUSINESS:**

### **A. Proposed Amendment to Agreement with Evergreen Landscaping:**

#### 1. Background:

- At April 13, 2021 meeting, IDA Board authorized an Agreement with Evergreen Landscaping to provide mowing services at Tryon.

#### 2. Proposed Amendments:

##### a. Additional Mowing Services:

- Evergreen's proposal included an alternate quote to mow around Building 60 for \$100 per mowing. However, the Board did not award this alternate bid.
- The IDA Board is in the process of selling that building to Lott Holdings.
- However, that sale may take until summer to complete.

- In order to keep building looking acceptable, it is recommended that Evergreen’s Agreement be amended by adding two (2) mowing around Building 60 at a total additional cost of \$200.

b. Landscaping around Entry Sign:

- Evergreen was asked to provide a quote to landscape around Entry Sign and old sign.
- The work would include removing weeds and installing new mulch.
- Total Fee: \$600

IDA DISCUSSION: Jim Mraz reviewed the information on the Agenda. He asked if there were any questions. Joe Gillis asked if the dollar amount of these additional services require going out to bid? Jim Mraz stated, “No.”

IDA ACTION:

MOTION: To authorize an amendment to Evergreen Landscaping’s agreement to add the additional services identified in the Agenda at a total cost not-to-exceed \$800.

MADE BY: Jane Kelley  
SECONDED: Mike Fitzgerald  
VOTE: Unanimous

**B. Board Training:**

1. Input Received from Recent Visits by Corporate Site Selectors:

a. Background:

- On two (2) separate occasions, Corporate Site Selectors from the Site Selectors Guild visited Fulton County to provide input and guidance on Fulton County’s Economic Development Program.
- The following is a summary of the input received:

b. September 2013: Mike Mullis:

1) Petty Politics:

- Mike Mullis emphasized that “petty politics” must be set aside in order for economic development to be successful.
- He stated, with the abilities of site selection firms, like his, to conduct online research, it is very easy for these firms and the companies they represent to know a lot about a community before it even arrives in that community.
- He said Site Selectors read about negative comments made about communities and can see what communities support businesses and who doesn’t.
- He advised local officials not to think you live in a sheltered environment, because the fact is you don’t. The world knows what you are doing.

- 2) Water and Wastewater Services:
- Mike Mullis stated that he has read that there is a belief in Fulton County that if a development occurs in one (1) municipality, there is no benefit to an adjoining municipality.
  - He stated such a belief is wrong and makes no sense.
  - He stated local officials need to be smarter than that and get over that misconception. He stated that if a region can get a company to move there, the entire Region benefits not just the municipality the project is located in.
  - He stated the Fulton-Montgomery region has available water and sewer capacities which represent its best resources. He recommended that the Region aggressively market these resources to businesses.
- 3) Shovel-Ready Sites:
- Mike Mullis recommended that Fulton County:
    - Identify two (2) 200+/- acre sites.
    - Complete the permitting.
    - Get water and sewer services to each site.
- 4) Incentives:
- Mike Mullis stated that incentives can play a key in closing a business deal. He stated that incentive packages are used to help reduce a company's front end costs.
  - He stated that the \$53/\$1,000 combined property tax rate in the Cities of Johnstown and Gloversville is very high. He stated that these high tax rates make a PILOT, not an incentive, but a requirement in order to be competitive.
  - He stated that a PILOT would need to be in the 15-20 year period.
  - He stated that a key with PILOT's is flexibility. He stated communities can't walk into business negotiations and say here is what we offer and nothing else. He stated communities need to take the position of doing what is needed to make this deal.
- 5) Tryon Technology Park:
- Mike Mullis stated that this is one of the best pieces of property he has seen.
  - He stated this is the best site of a former State institution that he has ever seen. It is aesthetically pleasing.
  - He recommended that:
    - a) Tryon be marketed exclusively as a business park.
    - b) FMCC and HFM-BOCES should have a presence in the Park and include developing a major training center on campus for businesses that would locate in the Tryon Technology Park as well as for existing businesses in the Region.
    - c) Big box distribution-type facilities shouldn't go there.
  - He recommended that this project be handled with a business and not a political sense. He stated the long-term plan should be developed and stuck to. Don't take the first opportunity that comes along if it's not part of the Plan.

**c. September 2017: Dennis Donovan, Jay Garner and Jim Renzas:**

1. Fulton County's Strengths that Should be Promoted and Marketed:
  - A. The success of Fulton County's existing industrial parks show prospective companies that Fulton County has the ability and expertise to attract new companies into the Region.
  - B. Fulton County's workforce development initiatives:
    1. PTECH.
    2. Workforce training/educational programming at HFM-BOCES/FMCC.
  - C. Logistics: Fulton County has good access to:
    - Markets and raw materials
    - Albany Airport/Port of Albany
    - Interstates
  - D. Fulton County has good infrastructure capacity:
    - Water
    - Wastewater Treatment
  - E. Fulton County's "fast-track" local permitting process.
  - F. Fulton County government is pro business.
  - G. Fulton County has low occupancy and labor costs.
  - H. Fulton County offers a high quality of life.
2. Fulton County's Weaknesses that Should be Addressed:
  - A. Fulton County has limited "product":
    1. Shovel-ready sites.
    2. Existing buildings.
  - B. Lack of racial diversity.
  - C. School taxes are too high.
  - D. Electric power rates (\$.10 - \$.11/kwh) are high.
  - E. New York State's image as not being a business friendly state.
  - F. 14% of Fulton County's workforce is without a high school degree.
  - G. Lack of rail service.
  - H. Fulton County is not part of a regional organization to market the County with.
3. Ideas/Suggestions Offered to Strengthen Fulton County's Economic Development Program:
  - A. Select Two (2) Targeted Industries to Focus Targeted Marketing Towards:
    1. Fulton County should select two (2) specific industries and focus marketing efforts on them. Fulton County must then learn everything there is about those two (2) targeted industries.
    2. Potential industry clusters Fulton County could pursue include:
      - Any of the Targeted Industries identified in the Tryon Targeted Industry Analysis
      - Packaging of food and beverage
      - Plastics fabrication
      - Back office/help desks
      - Loan processing/backroom operations
      - Medical records

- Miscellaneous metals fabrication
  - Financial transactions
  - Sporting goods
3. Identify the trade magazines for these targeted industries. Call the Editors of those magazines. Ask the Editors what the current hot button issues are in those industries and develop advertising/marketing materials for those topics.
  4. Attend trade shows for these targeted industries.

**B. Strengthen Local Websites:**

1. Local economic development agency's websites are the #1 marketing tool used by Site Selectors.
2. Fulton County's and the FCCRG's websites should be updated so they can be utilized by mobile devices.
3. Fulton County, FCCRG, FCIDA and Tryon websites should add more data that Site Selectors/companies look for when searching for sites including data recommended by the International Economic Development Council's Data (IEDC) Standards.

**C. Tryon Technology Park:**

1. Improve the visual appearance by:
  - a. Demolish existing buildings.
  - b. Cut trees/brush to make sites more visible.
  - c. Remove visible fencing with razor ribbon wire.

**D. Warehouse and Distribution Facilities:**

1. Warehouse/distribution facilities take up large tracts of land in a community.
2. Since Fulton County has limited "product" it probably should not seek out such facilities.

**E. Develop Shell Buildings:**

1. Develop a shell building for manufacturing: 75,000+/- sf expandable to 150,000+/- sf with an interior ceiling height of 30+ feet.
2. Develop a shell building for offices: 40,000+/- sf

**F. Marketing:**

1. Fulton County should annually allocate a minimum of \$3 per capita (approximately \$165,000 per year) for economic development marketing. This is for direct marketing initiatives provided by professional marketing firms and not for staff and normal operating expenses of an economic development program/organization.

**G. 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies:**

1. Fulton County should retain a professional marketing firm to develop and implement a marketing strategy to target 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area.
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies are defined as past the startup stage but not yet mature.



3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies typically have 10-99 employees and generate \$1-50 million in annual revenue.
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies only represent 17% of all U.S. businesses but generate 37% of U.S. jobs.
5. 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies need to expand their markets and teams and obtain capital to support their growth.
6. Fulton County should market its assets to these 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Companies.

**H. Education:**

1. Local school districts must increase the number children completing their high school educations which will increase the County's labor force.
2. Local school districts must lower school tax rates.

**I. Workforce Training/Development:**

1. Aggressively market the P-Tech Program and how it's geared to provide a supply of trained labor.
2. Consider becoming certified as an "ACT Work Ready Community."
3. Consider participating in the "Dream It/Do It" Program run by The Manufacturing Institute.
4. Create programs to assist companies on how to manage cross-generational employees (millenials/Gen-X/Gen Z, etc).
5. Create and utilize apprenticeship programs.
6. Emphasize re-skilling/up-skilling programs as a key component of local workforce training.

**J. Quality of Place:**

1. Fulton County must show itself well and offer a favorable impression to prospective companies.
2. Fulton County should pursue the development of new housing and retail in its Primary Development Areas.
3. Promote the redevelopment of downtowns.
4. Stabilize tax rates.

IDA DISCUSSION: Jim Mraz reviewed the information on the Agenda. He highlighted several areas where recommendations made by the Corporate Site Selectors have been implemented. He stated it is important to go through these recommendations on a routine basis since the recommendations made by these Corporate Site Selectors have high value.

**VII. OTHER BUSINESS:**

**A. Executive Session:**

1. Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting pursuant to a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered, a public body may conduct an executive session for the below enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public moneys:
  - i. matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;

- ii. any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
- iii. information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
- iv. discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
- v. collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law;
- vi. the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
- vii. the preparation, grading or administration of examinations;
- viii. the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.**

MOTION: To go into Executive Session to discuss the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

MADE BY : Dave D'Amore  
 SECOND : Jane Kelley  
 VOTE : Unanimous

TIME : 8:30 a.m.

MOTION : To go out of Executive Session.

MADE BY : Joe Semione  
 SECOND : Jane Kelley  
 VOTE : Unanimous

TIME : 9:44 a.m.

**VIII. NEXT MEETING:**

Tuesday  
 June 8, 2021  
 8:00 a.m.

MOTION : To change the June meeting from June 8 to June 15.

MADE BY : Jane Kelley  
 SECOND : Dave D'Amore  
 VOTE : Unanimous

**IX. CLOSE MEETING:**

MOTION : To close the meeting.

MADE BY : Dave D'Amore

SECONDED : Mike Fitzgerald

VOTE : Unanimous

TIME : 9:45 a.m.