



NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL COUNCIL

Meeting Notes

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Monday, September 12, 2011 - SUNY Potsdam

Attendance: Lt. Gov Robert Duffy, Anthony Collins, Garry Douglas, Donna Wadsworth, Dan Wilt, Dr. John Ettling, Carl A. McLaughlin, Terry Gach, James W. Wright, Kate Fish, Anne L. Merrill, James McKenna, Mark Tryniski, Bill Murray, Cali Brooks, Eric Virkler

Ex-Officio Voting: Chair Sallie Brothers, Chairman William Farber, Mayor Don Kasprzak, Supervisor Marie Regan

Ex-officio Non-voting: MOA Addie Russell, MOA Blankenbush, Representative from Senator Ritchie

Excused: Adore Kurtz, Carolyn Fitzpatrick, Chair Guy Smith, John Martin, Bridget Hart, Jon Greenwood, John Donoghue, Lisa Weber, Ron Davis, Chair Jim Langley, Chair Randy Douglas, Mayor Jeffery Graham, Senator Griffo, Senator Little, MOA Duprey

Facilitators: Kevin O'Neill

Staff: Irene Baker/Director of Regional Councils, Roseanne Murphy/Executive Director, Cliff Donaldson/Deputy Director, Terry Martino/Council Liaison, Cindy Picunas and Betsy Lowe/Facilitation.

NCREDC Working Session

Lt. Governor Duffy opened the session and stated great progress is being made with the Regional Councils. He apologized for the change in meeting date.

Tony Collins thanked the Lt. Governor for the successful work with DOT in addressing the exchange of land.

Garry Douglas stated the entirety of the meeting will be open today to the public. He said future sessions may include Executive Sessions but in the future, meetings will be open to the public when possible. He expressed his confidence that the North Country Council is on track given the breadth and diversity of the region, we require different approaches.

Roseanne Murphy discussed the code of ethics and requested that members contact the counsel's office and participate in the webinar, emphasizing that all members need to comply with this process.

Kate Fish-Vision Statement –She reviewed the elements of a vision statement and emphasized that visioning takes you beyond your present reality. It should capitalize on core competencies, be inspiring, purpose driven. Guide for “Where do we want to be?” She then presented the working group members who developed the statement and explained that the final statement was result of collaboration of all members of the Planning Working Group.

The North Country will lead the Economic Renaissance of New York State’s Small Cities and Rural Communities by:

- Energizing our micropolitan cities, building on growth in the aerospace, transit equipment, defense, biotech, and manufacturing industries
- Attracting and nurturing entrepreneurial pioneers to cultivate innovative clusters in our rural communities
- Mobilizing the creativity, capacity and graduates of our outstanding and collaborative places of higher education
- Catalyzing the highest per capita rate of small business start-ups in the state
- Elevating global recognition of the region as one of the special places on the planet to visit, live, work and study
- Activating tourism as a pathway to diversify our economies
- Propagating an agricultural revolution as we help feed the region and the world
- Creating the greenest energy economy in the state

Kevin O’Neill then facilitated Council discussion on the statement. Following were concerns expressed and discussed:

- Broadband: Sallie Brothers was concerned re: placement of broadband within the vision statement, this critical infrastructure that should not be ignored;
- Transportation: Sallie Brothers also discussed need to improve access throughout the region and advocated for including a statement supporting I-98 within the vision statement. She emphasized the lost opportunities in her County and the fact that this is a truly regional project, it has direct impact on five of seven counties. She does not believe that this should be a sub-bullet, it is not in the best interest to ignore this in relation to the region.
- Tourism: Addie Russell spoke to the need to expand our vision and address a broader approach, for example to include heritage tourism, also focus on our military history. Jim McKenna believes it can be addressed in the expanded statement.
- Arts and Culture: Tony Collins wants to have expanded points be inclusive of the arts, they are entrepreneurial and should be included
- Community Development: Cali Brooks believes the statement is a good fit with the needs of this working group, this is a terrific document.
- Co-chairs: Tony Collins: I-98 and other infrastructure projects enable the vision to be achieved and should never be part of any vision statement. The Infrastructure committee needs to identify the key infrastructure projects that are critical to achieving the region's vision.
- Co-chair: Garry Douglas: This is inspiring, where we would want to be if we could get there. The plan will lay out all of the steps. Those projects will get into plan through the work of the working groups.

- Garry Douglas asked Kate Fish to work with Sallie Brothers and make sure that her concerns are worked into the expanded vision statement.

A motion to adopt the vision statement as presented was made by John Ettlting, seconded by Bill Murray and passed unanimously

Public Participation - Eric Virkler: Arrangements have been finalized for first round of public forums starting tonight at 6PM in Plattsburgh. The intention is to explain the process and solicit comments on process and issues/opportunities that are of concern to public. These comments will then be sent to Working Groups to be incorporated into the plan.

The Public Participation Program that has been developed by the committee focuses on three different types of outreach for public participation.

- Public Forums: They will be held in each County. Three public forums will be held next week in Plattsburgh, Tupper Lake, Watertown; forums will be scheduled for late October in remaining Counties. The first series to outline the process and receive public input for the key strategies and vision. October will be more specific to key elements of the strategy.
- Second area of focus—use of website, email, facebook. All three areas are active North Country Open for Business
- Virkler also discussed the use of community meetings across the seven counties to chambers and other public sessions, all of which are opportunities for the council members to engage with the public. He said there is a PowerPoint available for any of the members to use in public meetings.

Eric pointed out that the Public Participation Plan is part of agenda handouts. Questions then followed. Sallie Brothers asked if Council members are being asked to attend meetings and make these presentations.

Garry Douglas said members can reach and he encouraged them to do so. He also pointed out that a speakers bureau would be set up, Terry Gach thought this would be very useful. Anyone interested, should contact Roseanne. Eric Virkler pointed out that forms have been developed to track what happens at the meeting and that the style for individual presentations could be up to the Council members.

A motion to adopt the public participation plan as presented was made by Marie Regan, seconded by Don Kasprzak and adopted unanimously.

Irene Baker presented a PowerPoint on the consolidated funding application (CFA). She said the CFA application is now live and walked through the process. This is an online single funding application for 17 different programs. She then reviewed the process as it relates to the Regional Council. Once CFA applications are completed, a copy is sent to the Regional Councils for review and endorsement.

Working groups with Council Members will then review and score all applications. November 14 the strategic plan is due, it will include prioritized projects and all of these priority projects must have a completed CFA applications. Agencies will still administer their programs, applicants will have to meet their eligibility criteria, but the Council will help to direct projects through their review and endorsement. Council endorsement is up to 20% of each project's overall score and could have significant impact on agency decisions. CFA available on line, it is also posted in the Contract Reporter (publication of all NYS agency contract bids). Agencies are also aligning their technical scoring with the visions of the Councils. Roseanne Murphy can identify the applications and help to move along very

quickly. Baker provided discussion points on how to address confidentiality of components of the application and said this is being considered.

The endorsement phase: She said the Council will set up a work group to review CFAs. Regional Council members may not review, discuss or vote on CFA where they have an interest. She provided the ethics officer number 518-474-8494 for Seth Agata, Ethics Officer.

Review of regional plans: State agencies will review plans as a team. Four regions will be awarded \$40M each; 6 regions share the remaining \$40M. This is the \$200M that is strictly for strategic plan priority projects. All of these projects are also able to tap the \$800 M in additional funding available in other programs.

Questions:

- Is there a way to learn the process online? Irene will look into this; there is also a help desk for questions.
- How have we reconciled differences in priorities in the state agencies within the region, i.e. DOT multi-year projects, how to reconcile with the 80/20 formula? Irene said the technical scoring now aligns with the scoring that the councils will be using. Agencies have changed their scoring to align with the regional models. The scoring that DOT uses now for the funding criteria now mirrors the scoring that the Council will be using.

NCREDC CFA Endorsement Criteria: Bill Murray, speaking on behalf of the Planning Committee explained their approach. They had a priority to establish criteria that would “do no harm”, yet at the same time would not be a rubber stamp. This is a unified process, a single entry point to gain access to the \$1B in economic development funding. Guidebook lists all of the agencies. He then reviewed the endorsement process. Strategies are the most important part of it. A Regional Council may award an application up to 20 points; agencies then provide up to 80 points. He reviewed the questions and number ranking that the council will use and how the questions lead up to 20 points. This process was set up to support public and private sector economic development applications.

Questions:

- What is the timeline for delivery/awards? Irene stated that the Councils will submit their endorsements. The goal is for awards to be made by mid-to late December.
- Applications being submitted by the State? Douglas discussed how the working groups can bring these projects to the attention of the Council and the State, e.g. federal projects that are needed in the North Country.

A motion to adopt the NCREDC CFA endorsement standards was made by Mark ??, seconded Kate Fish and unanimously adopted.

Priority project selection criteria: This is the task for our next meeting. If we get the \$40M what projects will be selected by Council to be included as our plan? Garry Douglas said the work groups should be identifying a list of potential projects that will be moved to the Planning Committee for consideration. Kevin O’Neill then facilitated broad level discussion on the priority project selection criteria. The criteria should be strongly aligned with the plan. What balance should there be, e.g. issues of ‘ruralness’ vs. metropolitan cities. Rural areas are often left out by classic economic development models. How do we make sure relatively important projects are not left out?

Council then broke out into small groups to address two questions:

- 1) What weight should the strategic plan have in the project priority and selection criteria/
- 2) How do you account for variations in the traditional metrics of economic development of jobs? Variations in geography—i.e. jobs in Long Lake vs. jobs in Watertown; 5 jobs in Long Lake equal 100 in Watertown—are they in fact economically comparable? And broadband—critically needed infrastructure vs. direct job creation.

Following are breakout reports:

Breakout 1: Marie Reagan reporting. How do we prepare and prioritize projects that create 5 jobs in Long Lake versus 100 in Waddington? We think you have to take into consideration population, geography and type of job because it will make a difference in a rural area vs. a micropolitan area. If there are 5 jobs in Long Lake it will impact them more than 100 somewhere else.

Breakout 2: Donna Wadsworth reporting. Discussion of short and long term jobs including funding, jobs creation and synergy between small and large communities. Outcome was: what are good jobs, jobs that have a great economic impact, and does the project promote small business synergy. That is the main question.

Breakout 3: Bill Murray reporting. The group came up with criteria factors, questions such as; what was the economic impact, what the number of strategic planning items that the project hits - the eight in the vision, or multiple ones, sustainability of the project, short and long term impacts, and infrastructure should have a high value.

Breakout 4: Addie Russell reporting. The group tried to place a percentage on how weighted the strategic plan should be. They looked at scoring in relation to strategic plan and vision statement, sustaining business assets, the quality of jobs. The plan should play a prominent role in the decision making process-50%. This will make a bold statement-by putting a high weight on the strategic plan we would be saying this is a great plan and the plan is addressing quality over quantity. Kevin O'Neill thanked everyone. Their work now moves back to the planning committee. He suggested that they look at economic development literatures and address parity as a way to get around disparity.

Tom Sauter of Planning Committee discussed planning process and committee outputs. He updated everyone on activities of the Planning Committee. He discussed the full-day planning retreat facilitated by O'Neill and follow-up discussion which led to the vision statement. Priorities will be a significant piece based on today's discussion. This will result in a priority project scoring matrix. Work is proceeding on developing a template that will enable the Planning Committee to assimilate, edit and compile into a strategic plan information. Deadlines for the SWOT: by the end of this week (9/16); identification of strategic issues by 9/28. Projects from the Planning Committee will be available for the October public forums. Sauter recognized the St. Lawrence County planning staff and the research provided by DOL. Based on this research, the top five industry clusters forest products, biomedical, materials processing, food processing and travel and tourism - all of these areas are being evaluated by the work groups.

Sue Matton discussed plan implementation; she said the regional implementation agenda is a portion of the strategic plan. She said this will be 15% of the score and will feed into different parts of the plan. She said we will work with the State to determine what the process will be and to ensure a smooth exchange of information for priority projects from the Council to the State and back. Elements will

include a schedule over a five year period; resources to advance the Strategic plan; actions need to implement the strategies, and a project implementation matrix to track progress. There is need an organizational structure and operational arrangements. A work group will need to be formed that will include members of the council to evaluate the projects against the CFA criteria and priority project selection criteria. We need to be evaluating strategic projects now. A brief discussion of the implementation matrix followed—including separate elements of implementation steps, lead organization, costs, constraint removal needed. Any comments-direct to Matton.

Working groups—each group provided an overview

Adirondack Park- Bill Farber: this group is different. Not to pit one area of the region against the other. Barriers in the Park that may not exist in other areas of NYS. Some of their focus is to engage the APA to ensure that permitting processes for a small business align with the Regional Council. Thrust is to ensure strategies of small business are implementable in the Park; economic strategies that will fit the Adirondacks and allow the Adirondacks to take the advantage of opportunities. Size and scale will allow the Adirondack's some opportunities.

Infrastructure - Jim Wright: Committee has focused on assets of the region are, presentation by DOT regarding multi-modal transportation and learning about levels of funding in relation to transportation projects. DOT has five-year plan designed with priorities. Our interaction in the process will require some compromise. Plans to complete SWOT analysis and determine how legislation impacts how we set priorities. Discussion has also included broadband of where we are and where we see the region headed.

Tourism Development - Jim McKenna: Committee meets weekly in different parts of the region, bringing people in from other non-profits for discussion. Overall the consensus is that we are positioned very well for growth in the industry. Under \$1B spent in tourism, coming from one counties, one town. There are gaps - we are missing products, e.g. lodging. Our focus is gearing in on those areas. Amenities for tourism are also needed for job creation. Tourism is an important base for job creation.

Community Development - Cali Brooks: Spoke of heartening experience of working with the group and the completion of the SWOT analysis, reaching out to state agencies. SWOT analysis identified a number of issues sent out the Roseanne Murphy. Please send other committee input that will also engage this committee.

Small Business Development - Jim Murphy: Small business is defined differently throughout communities. North Country does not lend itself to one size fits all solutions leading to a disconnect between state services and community business needs. Support tools must recognize each community is unique. Take vision down to the community level. Have a community driven agenda where resources can be applied. Regional resources should be channeled and customized to meet community needs. There is a gap between workforce skills needs and what is available and the need to prepare today's workforce. There are opportunities for small business development. We need for North Country branding and to take a new look at business assistance.

Canadian Connection-Garry Douglass: They are working on their SWOT. This committee is looking at less tangible but locational asset, different from generating projects. Hope to finalize a report to the planning committee soon. This committee cuts across sectors, and will set priorities that will be in the strategic plan, and recommendations to be a key part of the federal agenda.

Strategic Cluster-Bill Murray: The committee is made up of ten subgroups - collaboration with ESD. Dozens of people are involved. 9 out of 10 of the subgroups have met. The SWOT analyses are done; there has been a brainstorming of initiatives that will transform the North Country. Reports to date are excellent. Some of the sectors include clean energy, agriculture, Ft. Drum, etc.

Garry Douglas explained where the priority process currently stands: the Planning Committee will be distributing a template soon. In next two weeks, have meetings of your group and discuss priority projects. You need to do your best to prepare the information on projects and hone down to describe strategic approaches, values, really start crystallizing in the next two weeks.

He thanked everybody for their good work. A lot of people doing good work in the working groups around the region, around every facet that is important to the North Country. By the September 30th we will be in good shape.

Eric Virkler presented the PowerPoint presentation that will be used tonight in Plattsburgh at the Public Forum. Keith Tyo discussed the surveys that are now online and how questions will be incorporated. Information that is received will be distributed to the council members. Comments at public forums will be distributed to committee members.

Public Comment Session:

Bob Hest from Mountainview, congratulated and thanked members of the Council. The business people who have succeeded have overcome location, restricted access to markets and they are at the core of economic activity that we enjoy. We are really pleased the effort is underway. He echoed Jim Murphy's comments on small business development. How will we implement regional economic activity? Regional Council is helping to make that transition. Communities with "temporal" strategies - we need to bring in community work that has been done. What we offer in terms of lifestyle and quality of life is what should be brought into the discussion.

Robert Klemmons, he teaches at SUNY Canton and spoke of the need for balanced economics and alternative energy development. Trains people in energy audits. Multipliers for energy efficiency could be very important in the region, putting money into low-income people. Stated, we live in a very special place, and enjoy an important quality of life. He provided a study that has been sent to the Strategic Clusters WG.

Linda Quinn, Economic Development Director for Village of Canton. She discussed projects and need for balance. She asked how will the number of jobs factored into opportunities created by tourism and recreation/ waterfront of Grasse River/ Brownfield improvements; how will this be addressed? Garry Douglass discussed that the system for scoring and weighing various elements are cognizant of the need to recognize the council priorities in a very diverse region that is not traditional economic development. Those that have no jobs, or immediate jobs, may very well be important building blocks. "We are committed to a way of doing that."

Garry Douglas summarized accomplishments to date: vision statement, public participation plan worth 15 points in the final plan, consolidated funding application CFA endorsement criteria for use in a single application. Also, we are in final stages of developing project selection criteria for prioritization of projects with the aim to have a draft set of criteria for September 30. Work groups today addressed this and the outstanding body of work that is being done, particularly the complexity in this diverse region.

Tony Collins endorsed diversity of the region and work done so far. He also applauded the Lt Gov resolution of a seven-year regulatory issue in the Village, allowing transfer of property from DOT to the Village. The Lt. Governor and Governor are working to simplify rules and regulations and the symbolism of this effort and work is greatly appreciated.

Lt. Governor Duffy- Route 73 is now open! Following the hurricane and for those residents/ businesses in Keene Valley. Commissioner McDonald was very helpful with Hurricane response and with the Potsdam issue. Great progress is being made. Irene Baker has done a tremendous job with the application. The State is changing how it is doing business. Contact Roseanne Murphy with any issue involving any state agency. She is the point person to connect with the other agencies. This is the way the State will do business. He was very appreciative of everyone's work. He acknowledged the work of Ft. Drum and the 9/11 memorials throughout the State and the Region.