

North Country Regional Economic Development Council
Meeting Summary
SUNY Potsdam
June 18, 2013

Public Session

Present: Jim Wright, Dan Wilt, Donna Wadsworth, Eric Virkler, Marie Regan, Bill Murray, Anne Merrill, Carl McLaughlin, Garry Douglas, Tony Collins, Jim McKenna, Paul Grasso, Hugh Hill, Billy Jones, Cali Brooks, Bill Farber, John Ettling, John Donoghue, Kate Fish, Randy Douglas

Also present: Kenneth Mix for Jeffery Graham, Cheryl Mayforth for Carolyn Fitzpatrick, Roseanne Murphy, Dennis Hefner, Mark Pacilio for Addie Russell, James Reagen for Patty Ritchie, Dick Ashlaw for Joseph Griffo

Absent: Ken Blankenbush, Janet Duprey, Bridget Ann Hart, Donald Kasprzak, James Langley, Betty Little, Jon Putney, Michael Tabolt, David Tomberlin, Mark Tryniski, Lisa Weber

Tony Collins opened Open Session at 1:25 PM

Tony Collins provided a summary of the Executive Session.

We have attended the co-chair's summit to report on our progress. We have reallocated funding from two projects to help small theaters in the region converting from film to digital.

We attended a Tax Free NY Summit. Numerous SUNY and private college presidents were there. Aside from the Tax Free initiative, there is also a Hot Spot incubator program. Being a designated incubator is critical for being eligible for \$150k to support the incubator. In each region, there will be a "Hotspot" and Clarkson is leading the charge on this effort and have built connections with other colleges. Clarkson could also locate into Watertown, Plattsburgh, Massena, Saranac Lake, and Ogdensburg with Clarkson serving as the Hub. Businesses entering into the Hotspot would receive mentorship and expertise from Clarkson at the Potsdam incubator and then graduate back into the five communities. Hot Spots are eligible for \$250,000 that would help to hire staff to provide assistance to businesses. Local direct financial assistance may be available to these companies. There could also be synergies with Tax Free NY program.

The Governor's Tax Free zone is imperative to improving the Upstate economy. The Tax Free zones at SUNY campuses will allow NYS to retain new businesses within the State. There are limits on who can participate and thus protect companies' competitive advantage. About 75% of new high-tech startups leave New York within their first year.

We have appointed new working group members and the groups have been very active. The process they go through will be the same as the past two years.

We talked about the new Opportunity Agenda initiative that will identify each region's impoverished areas that need help. In our priority project nomination form, we are going to combine the request for state funds with identification of an Opportunity Agenda area or Cleaner Greener Community.

We heard from our working groups.

We endorsed the Infrastructure Fund awards to nine projects in the region, all of which are linked to economic development. These are all partial funds of the whole projects.

We reallocated \$400,000 from two projects to AEDC to help small theaters across the region convert from film to digital.

We heard an update on our priority projects. Our region seems to be the most successful in getting projects going. As an example, the ReEnergy Black River biomass facility on Fort Drum was up and running within 15 months, created 33 jobs at the plant, 120 jobs created from about 11 companies supporting the facility with wood pellets. State agencies processed the permit applications very quickly and helped to move the project forward. This shows the private-public partnership.

We endorsed Hamilton and Franklin counties resolution regarding the classification of the former Finch, Pruyn and Co lands.

There is a significant amount of tourism funds available. Our tourism group is putting together a road map for tourism development and a process to plan for tourism in the region. This should help get more state funding.

We heard from HEARD, trying to connect them to industries or entities in the region that want a workforce tailored to the needs of our region.

We supported a request to encourage New York State to financially support in the ACUB program for Fort Drum.

There will be a public forum in each county.

There is a CFA Workshop after this meeting.

If you have projects, we are trying to collect those, even if they are embryonic, so we don't forget any good ones and can come back in future years and try to advance those that are good for the region.

We have two council meetings coming up on July 16 and August 6 because we have a lot of work to do.

Upcoming events include an Albany Matchmaker, Broadband Summit on June 20, APA public hearing on Finch Pruyn & Co land classification, and the Clayton hotel groundbreaking June 27.

Presentations:

Marcene Sonneborn: Solutions Fair and Regional Innovation. This is a new governor's initiative and is synergistic with Tax Free NY and the Innovation Hotspots initiative. The Regional Innovation Specialist initiative will run through CITEC. Four regional innovation specialists have been located throughout the state. A portal will enable people to log into the site to connect to State innovation resources and advanced material processing. Workshops will match invitees with individuals from across NYS that can offer solutions and assistance on various innovation issues.

Bill Murray: This program will educate the business community to help them solve problems.

Kim DesChamp: NYSERDA EDGE program description was handed out. The program works with economic developers to encourage usage of various NYSERDA programs. ANCA and CITEC are partners in this program. We want to help improve energy efficiency throughout the State. Kim DesChamp is the rep for the North Country region.

Upcoming:

Common Ground Alliance July 18 Newcomb High School, Newcomb, NY

Public Comment

Dennis Hefner, Interim President of SUNY Potsdam: Pleasure to meet most successful regional council in the State. I have three thoughts about SUNY Potsdam:

1. We are a major economic contributor with direct spending of \$143 million.
2. About 1000 yearly graduates help provide leadership in local communities. SUNY Potsdam is well above average for skills desired by employers.
3. Comprehensive colleges have faculty who apply research and leverage undergraduate research to provide work opportunities around the communities leading to entrepreneurial skills. SUNY Potsdam will continue to work with this Council and the region's other universities.

Pat McKeown, St. Lawrence Chamber of Commerce: "Fishcap" is our new program. We are trying to become the Fishing Capital of the World. We cannot stand to lose another job in St. Lawrence County and thus we are going to build upon our natural resources and we decided that fishing is a great resource. We have raised funds through private sources and no taxpayer dollars to push sport fishing. We are ready to expand our initiative to all of NYS to bring tourism dollars into the North Country economy.

Margot Gold, Executive Director of NC Healthy Heart: Thank you for all you have done. Socioeconomic status is #1 driver of healthy living.

Tony Collins closed the meeting at 2:00PM.