

North Country Region Economic Development Council
Indian Lake Public Forum
10/19/11
Public Speaker Notes

Hamilton County Chairman Bill Farber: Chairman Farber welcomed everyone. He discussed the role of the Adirondack Workgroup. He briefed the audience on additional meetings between the Local Gov't Review Board, Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages and APA. Chairman Farber advocated for more incentives for small businesses inside the Park. He indicated he was very optimistic ongoing discussions w/ APA would result in improved permit applications. APA working on a new permit for small scale businesses.

Questions from General Public:

Concern about allocation of funding. Will regions be limited to a set amount of funding on a yearly basis? If projects are funded in one year, will future projects be limited?

Local Hydro @ Indian Lake Dam – untapped form of energy. Abanakee Dam – second source of hydro. Will the Council link opportunities to investors?

Will you speak w/ groups composed mostly of women, seniors and young people?

Comments:

Jack Valentine: Thank you for attending. Presentation is improving; I can tell the Council is listening. Expressed concerns over the uniqueness of Park communities. Economy is much different inside the Park. Do not have industry or large scale agricultural. Our economy is based on small businesses and tourism is important component. Need long term strategic plan to encourage small/medium sized businesses.

Indicated critical need to reopen the local grocery store. Stated not just for jobs or local shopping, but because the grocery store is deeply woven into the fabric of the Indian Lake community. He closed with a plea to continue programs that revitalize downtown.

The DEC/APA smart growth program was instrumental in the renovation of the Indian Lake Theater. Regarding broadband, APA needs to be involved early to ensure any permitting requirements are addressed.

Doug Cole: Business owner in North Creek (Warren County). Stated the Council needs to include input from every ADK Park county into the NCREDC plan. Counties that are not part of NCR, but are inside the Park, need to be part of this plan. Work together as a Park community to continue to attract economic dollars.

Indicated broadband is critical. Discussed his recent trip to New Zealand. Felt they were very advanced as far as technology. Need to improve technology – move into the 21st century. Adirondacks have greater natural resource attractions than NZ. High speed internet – lobby legislature – no more rate hikes until high speed internet is implemented. Band together to demand high speed.

Community-Supported Agricultural (CSA) should be a priority. Many small scale farms producing food for local people in the Champlain Valley. Need to encourage more CSAs. CSAs are providing healthy food and excellent jobs inside the Park.

Wood product industry needs to grow – Emphasis on wood pellet stoves. Need to build wood products here. Value-added manufacturing for wood products industry is important. Stop shipping raw materials to Canada where they conduct value added and ship products back to New York.

Need to restructure how small businesses are regulated. Ease up on health code, insurance, building codes, etc... Flexible scale should be implemented to accommodate smaller businesses who do not have the resources to pay for costs or manage paper work.

Identified a small business located on State Rte. 28 where DOT will not allow road access from the state highway. Stated this is hurting the business by limiting traffic and diminishing its visibility. Felt APA not that big of an issue, but regulations related to telecommunication should be reviewed.

Commented on no sales tax collected at state facilities such as Whiteface/Gore. Felt this hurts similar private industry.

Ann Melious: (Hamilton Ctny Planning/Tourism/Comm. Dev.) Broadband identified as crucial for Hamilton County. Hamilton does not have broadband as defined by the FCC. Stated largest number of small businesses per capita are located in Hamilton County. Need technology and infrastructure to support and attract these businesses.

Bill Murphy: Lucky to live in Indian Lake. Great museum, art center, theater, school. He focused on utilization of broadband to rebuild the economy. More education is needed to improve technology skill level of general public. Suggested the Council fund a position at the county level to help identify telecommuting (work from home jobs) and then match the job w/appropriately skilled people. Believes there is a strong need to educate people to improve computer skills.

Pat Cunningham: We know how to make a living in the summer months up here. What is needed is a 12-month employment season. Recommended that the Council consider spending \$30 million to build a new downhill ski facility on Blue Mtn. Lake. Need to follow the economic example of Lake Placid. Stated downhill skiing is big contributor to local economies. For every dollar spent at a ski resort, five dollars are spent in the community. Save the economy through downhill skiing. Whitewater rafting important component as well – \$10 million in economic benefits annually.

John Vories – Stated he operates a local resort in the Indian Lake region and every year he trucks out large amounts of imported bottled water containers. Felt a local brand of bottled water would be very successful.

Council should consider adding a bottled water facility to its priority projects. Need an Adirondack brand of water.

Kevin Elkin: Tree Service Biz owner. Felt the Indian Lake Theater was the best community development to happen in this town in 10 years. Highlighted lack of cell coverage in the town was a serious issue. Presently no coverage in Indian Lake. Need to improve coverage.

He would like to hire employees, but onerous regulations and costs associated with operating a small business limit his ability to grow. Cited workmen compensation and unemployment insurance as an example of constraints. Felt too many dis-incentives to hire. Stated he was afraid to hire as a small business owner because of adversarial relationship between small business and State. State needs to restructure how it regulates small businesses to help grow private sector jobs.

George Virgil: Small business is the backbone of any small community. Presently in Indian Lake trade jobs such as plumbing, electrical are provided by people from outside the Town of Indian Lake. This is not a good model. Need locally-trained people to provide these types of services in town. Trade jobs are needed. Lots of opportunity with year-round and seasonal residents. Passionately stated that Indian Lakers need to come together to achieve our goals.

John Frey: – Inlet Supervisor. Asked for clarification on State in presentation that one dollar of state investment will require five dollars of private investment. Co-Chair Douglas stated that was only specific to the “competitive round of shovel ready priority projects.

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