

North Country Regional Economic Development Council
Meeting Summary
SUNY Potsdam
February 21, 2013

Public Session

Attendance: Tony Collins, Garry Douglas, Addie Russell, Cali Brooks, John Ettling, Kate Fish, Paul Grasso, Hugh Hill, Billy Jones, Cheryl Mayforth, Jim McKenna, Carl McLaughlin, Marie Regan, Mark Tryniski, Eric Virkler for Chairman Michael Talbolt, Donna Wadsworth, Lisa Weber, Daniel Wilt, Jon Putney, Anne Merrill, Bill Farber, Sen. Betty Little (via conference call), Sharon Addison for Mayor Graham (Watertown),

Also Present: Brian Quiara (Lt. Governor Duffy), Dick Ashlaw (Sen. Griffo) and Roseanne Murphy.

Absent: Ken Blankenbush, John Donoghue, Randy Douglas, Janet Duprey, Carolyn Fitzpatrick, Joseph Griffo, Bridget-Ann Hart, Donald Kasprzak, James Langley, Bill Murray, Patty Ritchie, David Tomberlin, James Wright

Tony Collins Opened the Public Session at 1:27PM.

A review of the previous year's activities was provided and noted that the Governor and his team visited the region during last year's assessment, and \$90.2 million in funding was awarded to the Region.

Changes to the Council's membership were highlighted, thanking Jon Greenwood and John Martin and former legislators for their work on the Council and introducing the following new Members: Billy Jones (Franklin County), Paul Grasso, John Putney (St. Lawrence County) and Michael Tabolt (Lewis County) and NYS ex-officio non-voting members Senator Hugh Farley, and Assemblymen Mark Butler, William Barclay and Dan Stec.

Tony Collins also noted that we are creating a new working group for Transportation to be headed by Paul Grasso. Also, Paul Grasso will join the Executive Committee as the Clinton County rep.

Tony Collins noted that our CDBG Community Renewal Fund will be going to a training project for a planned manufacturing facility and the remainder will be spread throughout the Region in a homeownership program.

The NCREDC Infrastructure Fund process was approved.

A canoe event was discussed and it was noted that it will bring national exposure.

The North Country Cleaner Greener Sustainability Plan was highlighted.

The Adirondack Film Society's digital screen fundraising program was discussed.

We also heard about Canadian Connections, our Pipeline project process, ConnectNY Broadband project, and proposals in the Governor's 2013 budget.

The Council endorsed the Franklin County Bed Tax.

Tony Collins: We will again go to the seven North Country counties in advance of the 2013 competition.

Tony then asked for any comments from the public.

Tony Goodwin: Representing Adirondack Recreation Trail Advocates. I would like to please ask the Council to support converting the Adirondack Scenic Rail Corridor to a rail trail for hiking, biking, and snowmobiling. We do appreciate the other projects supported by the Council but we disagree with keeping this as a railroad. The Rail Corridor Plan was supposed to be reopened after five years and it long overdue. Demand for passenger rail, particularly along this corridor, is small.

Jim McCulley: I am a member of Adirondack Recreation Trail Advocates as well as a snowmobile club. Snowmobiling is a major economic driver in the State and Region. This trail will align many high-residency areas of the Park and allow snowmobile trail along entire route. The lack of snowmobilers is harming our economy-we are missing out on about \$80,000 per week in additional spending.

Tony Collins: I urge our Council to look into issues of public input, state policy, and our strategic plan to get additional info on this topic.

John MacArthur: I am an engineer here on behalf of the Village of Malone. We have an impending disaster with a building on the verge of collapse. The building may fall into the Salmon River as well as the adjacent bridge, a neighboring building, the road and sidewalk, and a sewer main. We have a budget of \$800,000 to take the building down. If we are not proactive, the cost could be much greater. I wanted to raise awareness about the issue which has regional impact. The building was owned by a corporation in London, England that has since been dissolved.

Tony Collins: Please reach out to John MacArthur if you have any ideas on solutions.

Fred Hans: Village of Potsdam Planner and Economic Developer. We are pleased about the whitewater and flatwater challenges. The Raquette River has abundant paddling opportunities. Stone Valley in Potsdam is home to some of the best Whitewater paddling in the East Coast and I would like to advance that as an opportunity for the Challenge.

Jane Bardon: Sackets Harbor. I am a former economist. How can New York State be Open for Business when it has the highest tax burden and worst business climate in the US?

Scott Burto: Bernier, Carr & Associates, Mayor of the Village of West Carthage. Thank you for the time and commitment you put into the Regional Council initiatives.

Tony Collins Closed the Meeting at 2:05.