

## PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

May 1, 2019

**Members Present:** J. Burdick, P. Curran, W. Dibble, D. Healy, J. Hopkins, J. Ricci (Absent: G. Barnes, D. Root)

**Others Present:** T. Boyde, D. Decker, K. Dirlam, K. Graves, L. Gridley, S. Havey, G. James, C. Knapp, R. Lynch, B. Riehle, P. Stockin, M. Washer

**Media Present:** C. Potter – *The Spectator*, C. Dutton – *Cuba Patriot*

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 10:15 a.m. by Legislator Judith Hopkins.

### **State Forest Acres**

Planning Director Kier Dirlam presented a proposal from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation for the acquisition of land in the Town of Angelica for the purpose of creating a New York State Forest. It is approximately 615 acres along County Road 43 that is home to diverse wildlife, natural features, is comprised of productive upland forest, fertile pastures and cropland, floodplain forest, and significant frontage on the Genesee River. The plans for the State Forest include creating public fishing access, canoe and kayak launch sites on the Genesee River, conversion of the railroad beds to a multipurpose trail system, as well as installation of covered pavilions and picnic tables. Mr. Dirlam noted that he as well as the Genesee River Wilds are in support of this proposal. Legislator Fanton asked what assurance we will have from the DEC. Mr. Dirlam stated he cannot answer on behalf of them; however, they have indicated it would be a prime site for them. County Attorney Carissa Knapp added that the DEC has referred to it as a priority project due to its location. Legislator Fanton asked what the cost will be to the County. Attorney Knapp stated there will be an approximate decrease of \$.003 in the tax rate, which equates to a loss of approximately \$6,878.55 in property tax revenue.

Legislator Hopkins read the following email that was sent from Planning & Economic Development Chair Debra Root who was unable to attend the meeting.

*"I am sorry I cannot be here today. I support the sale of land for State Forest. After attending the National Trails Association Conference this week, it only confirmed to me that this amount of acreage would open many new opportunities here in the County. This could be a great opportunity for horse trails, hiking, and mountain bikes. It could also open up opportunities as a destination location. There are opportunities as an outbound destination working with youth groups within the County and from local urban areas such as Rochester and Buffalo. One take away from the conference is how much work we have before us, and how many opportunities there are for the economic development of these trails. I am speaking holistically about trails, not just ATVs. I hope the committee will be in support."*

Legislator Graves stated he is in favor of this but wants to advocate on part of those who he may see on the streets with questions. Legislator Graves asked if the Town of Angelica as well as the school will always be paid taxes or if there is a time limit. Attorney Knapp stated the State has to pay taxes as long as it is considered State Forest land; however, they do not have to pay the County. Legislator Hopkins asked if they will also be paying taxes to the Village of Angelica. Mr. Dirlam stated, no, it is outside the village. Legislator Graves asked if there are roads to the property and who will be maintaining them. Mr. Dirlam stated there are already driveways and farm roads in place, adding the State Forest will maintain them once they acquire the land. Legislator Healy asked if this will assist with other funding opportunities. Mr. Dirlam stated, yes, and it will also tie in nicely with the proposed Wellsville and Belfast local waterfront revitalization plan. Legislator Graves asked if there will be a loss of farmland. Mr. Dirlam stated potentially there could. The State Forest will analyze the best use of the land, but it is out of our control. Legislator Hopkins stated that at this point in time the committee is urging the Town of Angelica and New

York State to approve the creation of a State Forest located on this particular property. Legislator Decker asked if any of the buildings from Brentwood Camp are usable. Mr. Dirlam stated, yes, the ones that are usable they plan to keep. Legislator Stockin stated he is also in favor of this, adding they had a meeting three years ago with a group from Rochester, Genesee River Wilds, as well as the DEC, and this particular piece of land was discussed. Attorney Knapp stated she has met with representatives from the DEC, and one of the neatest things she learned was the last time the County had a State Forest was in 1934. Attorney Knapp continued that this is well situated on the Genesee River, has a nice road that does not see a lot of traffic, and it will do well for recreation. Legislator Healy added that there isn't much downside to the County or to our local governments, and there is a possibility for a lot of good things to happen. The draft resolution supporting the creation of a State Forest in the Town of Angelica was approved on a motion made by Legislator Dibble, seconded by Legislator Curran, and carried. **Prepare Resolution**

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. following a motion by Legislator Ricci, seconded by Legislator Burdick, and carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Meghan Washer, Confidential Secretary to Clerk of the Board  
Allegany County Board of Legislators