

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD IN ROOM 318 OF THE
PUTNAM COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
CARMEL, NEW YORK 10512**

Members: Chairwoman Sayegh, Legislators Addonizio & Montgomery

Thursday

6:30 P.M.

April 25, 2019

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 P.M. by Chairwoman Sayegh who led in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call, Legislator Addonizio, Legislator Montgomery, and Chairwoman Sayegh were present.

Item #3 - Discussion/Climate Smart Community Pledge

Legislator Addonizio stated she has concerns with the fact that the County must match any grant awards. She questioned if these grants would preclude the County from other grant awards.

Legislator Montgomery stated the grants are for specific projects. She stated she has not heard of a municipality being unable to receive a grant if they have already received a grant through the Climate Smart program.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she spoke with the New York State Office of Climate Change. She stated the grants are for half of the cost of the project, while the County would pay for the other half. She stated Federal funds or other State resources could not be used to pay for the County's portion. She stated becoming a Climate Smart Community does not guarantee grant awards, but does add weight to the application. She stated the CFA (Consolidated Funding Application) Grants were announced today, so the process is beginning. She stated they are competitive grants and noted that 23 of 62 counties in New York that have taken the Climate Smart Community Pledge (Pledge). She stated there are 10 initiatives that must be committed to for the Pledge.

Legislator Montgomery read the 10 initiatives listed on the Pledge. She stated the County should want to complete these initiatives and have even already begun working towards some of them. She stated this has been discussed for a while and she is ready to move forward with this Pledge.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she wrote a memorandum to the Administration asking for input on what the County Departments are already undertaking and how passing this Pledge would affect the Planning Department. She stated she has not received an answer yet. She stated there are a lot of positives with this Pledge. She stated in addition to the potential grant money, it would help facilitate networking between municipalities. She stated the County values green energy and encourages everyone to participate in lowering their energy costs. She stated that is a real positive of the Pledge.

Legislator Addonizio stated the County has already started to partake in the 10 initiatives. She stated Orange County has 20 employees in their planning department so it is easier to handle undertaking these tasks. She stated this is why it is important to receive feedback from the County Planning Department on how they would handle it.

Legislator Montgomery stated the coordinator would go to the departments and take inventory

Chairwoman Sayegh stated many of the projects that would fall under the 10 initiatives in the Pledge have been discussed at recent Physical Services Committee meetings.

Legislator Albano stated the Article Nine (9) energy project is still ongoing.

Chairwoman Sayegh noted that the NY PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) financing program has also been discussed.

Legislator Albano stated the PACE program is to make it easier for businesses to finance solar panels on their property.

Legislator Jonke questioned which nearby counties have taken the Pledge.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Westchester, Orange, and Dutchess counties have.

Legislator Jonke suggested reaching out to those counties to inquire on what the impact has been. He questioned what the benefit of signing the Pledge is.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the benefit is having the weighted application for Climate Smart grants.

Legislator Jonke questioned who the coordinator of the Climate Smart program in Dutchess County is. He stated he would reach out and inquire about the impact.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated Dutchess has an extensive staff working on their Climate Smart initiatives. She stated their task force includes an Associate Dean from Dutchess Community College, a Senior Planner, a Village Mayor, a member of their County Legislature, the Executive Director for Sustainable Hudson Valley, the Supervisor of the Town of Pleasant Valley, and a science teacher.

Legislator Jonke stated Putnam County is not considering putting together a task force for this initiative.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that is part of taking the Pledge.

Legislator Montgomery stated Europa McGovern of the Hudson Valley Regional Council (HVRC) is the Dutchess County coordinator. She stated Ms. McGovern gave a presentation at the March Economic Development & Energy Committee meeting.

Legislator Albano stated there seems to be no downside to taking the Pledge, even if the County is unable to meet all the requirements afterwards.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the downside is man-hours and duplication of work. She questioned if the County needs another task force or volunteer board to complete tasks that the County is already working on. She stated she believes everyone is in favor of green energy, lowering costs, and saving the taxpayers money. She questioned if it will double the workload.

Legislator Montgomery stated it should be left up to the residents on if they want to volunteer to help. She stated the HVRC would guide the County through the process. She volunteered to be the coordinator and added she could easily put together a task force. She stated it is important as elected officials to take the Pledge because of the implications of climate change.

Legislator Gouldman questioned if the other 23 counties who have signed the Pledge have taken the model resolution as is.

Legislator Montgomery stated the resolution can be amended.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated she has looked at multiple resolutions from other counties and they are all somewhat different, but have the structure of the template.

Legislator Addonizio stated it cannot be changed much because the 10 initiatives have to still be included.

Legislator Albano suggested reaching out to the other counties who have taken the Pledge to gauge how much extra work is involved.

Legislator Montgomery stated in the meantime she will look into taking the Pledge herself.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated it is a Legislative decision that involves the whole County.

Legislator Montgomery stated she owes it to the residents to inquire to the County departments as to what steps have already been taken.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that question was part of her memorandum to the County Executive. She stated this has been discussed since 2015, so waiting another month to pass the Pledge would not be a big deal.

Legislator Montgomery stated she will be meeting with the Regional Economic Development Council to have a workshop on the CFA grants. She stated it is unfortunate that this will not be passed before then.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated the Pledge has to be passed by a municipality. She stated she does not believe anyone has said they do not want to pass it, just that more information is needed.

Legislator Addonizio noted that each Town in Putnam County could take the Pledge, like the Town of Philipstown did.

Legislator Albano stated he understands the concern with adding more workload with the amount of projects that are currently being handled by the County.

Legislator Montgomery stated this would acknowledge the work that is already being done.

Chairwoman Sayegh stated that was an aspect that the New York State Office of Climate Change noted, that this acknowledges the work of the County departments.

Item #4 - Discussion/Visitors Bureau/Contract Negotiations and Status

County Attorney Jennifer Bumgarner stated because this matter involves legal advice on contract negotiations, it would be more appropriate to have the discussion in executive session. She suggested addressing this item at the end of the agenda.

Item #5 - FYI/Unemployment Report – Duly Noted

Item #6 - Other Business

a. FYI/Putnam County Business Council/Legislative Priorities

Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to waive the rules and accept the other business; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Putnam County Business Council President Bill Nulk passed out the Legislative Priorities for the Putnam County Business Council. He stated they are very similar to priorities from past years. He stated the Business Council has been in contact with representatives from New York City who are looking to be more involved in the region.

Item #4 – Discussion/Visitors Bureau/Contract Negotiations and Status

At 6:58 P.M. Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss contract negotiations; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

At 7:21 P.M. Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to come out of Executive Session; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

No action was taken.

Item #7 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 7:22 P.M., Chairwoman Sayegh made a motion to adjourn; Seconded by Legislator Addonizio. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.