

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & ENERGY COMMITTEE MEETING
Held Via Audio Webinar
Pursuant To Temporary Emergency Orders

Members: Chairman Gouldman, Legislators Jonke & Montgomery

Tuesday

6:00PM

February 16, 2021

The meeting was called to order via audio webinar at 6:01 P.M. by Chairman Gouldman who lead in the Pledge of Allegiance. Upon roll call Committee Members Jonke, Montgomery and Chairman Gouldman were present.

Item #3 - Discussion/Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival/Artistic Director Davis McCallum & Managing Director Katie Liberman

Chairman Gouldman thanked Legislator Montgomery for bringing this item forward. He asked if she would like to say a few words.

Legislator Montgomery introduced Artistic Director Davis McCallum and Managing Director Katie Liberman to hear about their plans on an exciting new project. She stated that the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival has been an economic driver for District #1 for 34 years. She explained their long history of bringing people together across any boundaries. She stated that this new project is the culmination of pure generosity from a local philanthropist. She provided some background of both Artistic Director McCallum and Managing Director Liberman and also mentioned the solid roots they have established in the Town of Philipstown.

Artistic Director Davis McCallum thanked the Committee members for inviting them to the meeting. He stated that they were excited to share what was coming up for their theatre and the transition they plan to make from a seasonal festival to a year-round cultural anchor for Putnam County and the whole Mid-Hudson region. He stated that Managing Director Katie Liberman would start the slideshow presentation.

Managing Director Liberman stated that they were honored to be here tonight to speak about who they are and what their future holds. She provided an arial photo of what has been the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's home for 34 years of the 35 years in the Town of Philipstown where they have been tenants at Boscobel House & Gardens. She explained that every season they bring more than 35,000 people to this community. She explained that the tent, actor dressing rooms and the concessions is temporary; seasonally going up and coming back down. She explained that they will soon have a permanent home.

Artistic Director McCallum explained that some of the slides were pictures of some of the productions they did over the years. He explained that the last 12 months have been tough, due to the pandemic, requiring them to close their 2020 season before it even got off the ground. He stated that they were hopeful to return to in person performances with social distancing in place this coming summer in 2021. He stated that while they have been connecting with their audience virtually this year, they have also been planning for a new permanent home for the Hudson

Valley Shakespeare Festival. He stated that thanks to the generosity of Garrison philanthropist, Chris Davis, the Shakespeare Festival will soon have its first ever permanent home on 53 spectacular acres overlooking the Hudson River, Storm King and Breakneck Ridge. He stated that it is currently part of the Garrison Golf Club, located in Garrison at the intersection of Route 9 and Snake Hill Road. He stated that it is a little south of where they have been performing as a tenant at Boscobel.

Managing Director Liberman continued with slides that showed the new site located on a portion of the 200-acre parcel which is currently the Garrison Golf Course. She explained that within these 200 acres, Chris Davis is donating the central parcel of 53 acres to the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival to be a permanent home. She explained that a smaller nine (9) hole golf course will be maintained that will continue on the westside of the property. She stated that from an economic development perspective, they see so much opportunity with the chance to have the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and performance where there is already an operating restaurant and bar. She explained how they will also have the chance to become much more of a year-round presence having the opportunity to run performances deep into the fall season.

Artistic Director McCallum explained that they are a 501C3 nonprofit organization and their mission is all about serving the public well. He explained that this incredible opportunity allowed them to focus on three (3) distinct areas and their vision of what the site could be. He stated that the first being a cultural place with the theatre company at the center, the second is community engagement having onsite education and third is environmental sustainability. He stated that as part of the gift agreement the parcel can be permanently predicted. He stated that these 53 acres will never be able to be subdivided further or developed for commercial or residential use. He explained how they will develop the property, building new structures and transforming the landscape with native meadows and restoring the wetlands on the property.

Managing Director Liberman explained that the Philipstown Planning Board has challenged them to envision their long-term vision on this site. She explained that the slide showed the entrance to the parking lot, where a welcome garden would be located and where the performances would be located. She explained how the theatre space will be permanent which will create new comforts such as; better acoustics, site lines, permanent dressing rooms and a better dining experience for audience members who will have access to the restaurant or to catered food from that restaurant to have picnics on the lawn. She explained that they are anticipating in the long term a potential year-round indoor theatre, allowing for multiple venues, as well as overnight lodging. She stated that currently the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival estimates their economic impact to the region to be approximately \$4.5 million per year. She envisions their permanent home to generate more job opportunities as well as a significantly expanded audience base.

Artistic Director McCallum explained that by being able to expand their season six (6) weeks into the fall they will also be able to bring in school children which will be a wonderful intersectional experience such as; the revolutionary history along that stretch of the river and the environmental history with a vivid story about the indigenous culture in the Hudson Valley. He believed it would be a rich experience for students visiting the site. He also explained how they

can partner with other Hudson Valley nonprofits to make sure this property becomes a hub for the community.

Chairman Gouldman stated that this is a wonderful program, and he believed this location will be a great asset to our community. He asked Putnam County Tourism Director Tracey Walsh to participate in the discussion.

Tourism Director Walsh had the privilege of seeing this presentation last week. She stated that this is so exciting. She explained that the new home of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival will be a destination that will entice more people to come to Putnam County and spend time here.

Managing Director Liberman explained that what was proposed to the Planning Board was a 20 room Inn as well as a few small cabins in the woods for visiting artists. She stated that the site is currently zoned to allow for lodging of up to 40 and only has eight (8) rooms in the Inn right now.

Tourism Director Walsh stated that she has received information for the I Love NY blue tourism signs because that is something that could take a few years to finish. She stated that with the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's new location directly off of Route 9 makes them eligible to be on one (1) of those signs, specifically the one (1) at the Fishkill exit; the old exit 13. She stated that she has also spoken to representative from Metro-North on how to promote this. She stated that the Revolutionary War history of that area, combined with the fact that Magazzino Italian Art is expanding, will make that Route 9 corridor a cultural tourism hub. She stated that this location also comes with ample parking. She stated that she sees so much potential for this to be a destination in Putnam County.

Artistic Director McCallum stated that they also have plans for a shuttle that will be able to pick people up from the Metro-North station in Garrison and Cold Spring. He stated that it will be accessible to people even if they do not have a vehicle of their own.

Chairman Gouldman also invited Putnam County Economic Development Corporation President Kathleen Abels to participate in the discussion.

President Abels stated that she has been a fan of the Shakespeare Festival since its inception over 30 years ago. She stated that what was presented tonight was an exceptionally well-planned evolution which will truly be a destination location putting Putnam County on the map. She stated that this is a very exciting project.

Legislator Jonke thanked Mr. McCallum and Ms. Liberman for their hard work. He explained that this is a positive move for them and Putnam County. He stated that this is a wonderful project that they have worked on.

Legislator Montgomery stated that she participated in a zoom event where over 100 people from the public participated. She stated that people wanted to know what will happen with this, what will happen with Route 9 and Snake Hill Road, which is a County Road. She stated that Mr. McCallum and Ms. Liberman will be going before the Putnam County Traffic Safety Board on

Thursday to present their plan. She stated that when she was involved in the Philipstown Planning Board there was an actual site plan created by Centerbrook Architects that was approved in 2005, which included 40 hotel rooms; 4 in the main building, 4 in the cottage, and 32 new two (2) story buildings near the pro shop. She believed what they were presenting to the Planning Board now would be a wonderful use of the beautiful landscape.

Legislator Sullivan stated that this sounds like a great project and he loved the cultural and sustainability aspect of it. He believed that it would be a tremendous resource for Putnam County to bring people here to see the natural beauty of the western side of the County. He stated that the County has great resources for grant writing. He stated that the County Executive is supportive of these economic development projects, especially one (1) of this magnitude. He asked Mr. McCallum and Ms. Liberman to reach out to the County Executive asking if there was anything that could be done on a County level to help move this project along. He explained that with Tourism Director Walsh's energy, knowledge, and love of the area, she will do a tremendous job in helping to bring this to fruition.

Legislator Albano thanked everyone involved in this project. He stated that it sounds like a well thought out plan on a beautiful site. He questioned when it was anticipated to be completed.

Managing Director Liberman stated that they were hopeful to reopen safely in the summer of 2021 as a farewell season at Boscobel and hoped to have their first temporary transitional outdoor season in the summer of 2022. She stated that they were hopeful the theatre facility and a lot of the audience facing facilities for the first grand opening summer to be completed in 2024.

Legislator Addonizio stated that this is wonderful news, and it was very exciting to finally have a permanent home for the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival.

Legislator Nacerino echoed all the sentiments of her colleagues. She stated that this is a wonderful expansion of cultural activities in Putnam County, and it will certainly be spectacular.

Chairman Gouldman stated that he also believed this was a wonderful project and it looks like you have 100% support from everyone in the County. He stated that it is great economic development for the western side of the County, and it is great for tourism and the public.

Managing Director Liberman thanked Chairman Gouldman for inviting them and stated that they look forward to updating the Legislature as they move forward on the project.

Chairman Gouldman thanked them both for the wonderful presentation.

Item #4 - FYI/Unemployment Report – Duly Noted

Item #5 - Other Business - None

Item #6 – Adjournment

There being no further business, at 6:43 P.M., Chairman Gouldman made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Legislator Jonke. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted by Administrative Assistant Ed Gordon.