

TUG HILL COMMISSION

MINUTES OF MEETING

June 26, 2023

Town of Castorland, 5185 State Rt. 410, Castorland, NY 13620

Chairman Bogdanowicz opened the meeting at 10:13 a.m.

Opened

Commission members included Messrs. Bogdanowicz, Maciejko, Boxberger, Scriber and Mdm. Cheresnoski and Ritter. Staff included Katie Malinowski, Gwen Decker, and Mickey Dietrich circuit rider (RACOG). Guests – Melissa Snavlin (C2AE), Lee Willbanks, counsel.

Attendance

On a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Maciejko members approved the agenda as presented.

Agenda Approved

On a motion made by Commissioner Maciejko and seconded by Commissioner Cheresnoski, abstained by Commission Ritter, members approved the minutes of May 15, 2023.

Minutes Approved

Chairman's report followed.

Chairman's Report

Chairman Bogdanowicz welcomed everyone and thanked the village of Castorland for hosting the meeting.

Welcome

Home rule legislation for the town of Lorraine has been passed by the senate and assembly. It is awaiting the Governor's signature (A6412/S6249).

The outside region policy subcommittee has met to review and update the 2003 policy. The committee includes Commissioner Bogdanowicz, Boxberger, Yerdon and Cheresnoski, and counsel Lee Willbanks. The committee has discussed what additional municipalities could be considered to receive commission services if they join a COG. This would require more staff to provide adequate support, and would require more money in our budget. Commissioner Scriber shared concerns that our section of executive law is specific and defines the limit of authority to provide services to communities outside our region. The commission has limited resources with budget and staffing and is currently low on staff and resources for expanding services. He suggested making a case for the senate and assembly to advocate for more resources for the commission. Mr. Willbanks and Mrs. Malinowski joined in the discussion.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz shared this is a work in progress and more discussions will take place. Going forward we need to get the senate and assembly involved. Additionally, there is a suggestion to have a Tug Hill Day in Albany to celebrate Tug Hill. Mrs. Malinowski will be in contact with Senator Walczyk.

Senator Walczyk sent his endorsement for the three expired Senate appointments. The three Assembly reappointments and one Governor reappointment are pending. A new Governor's appointment has been submitted to the Governor's office.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz would like to do Mrs. Malinowski's annual appraisal at the August retreat. He will send members information.

At last month's commission meeting Mr. Maciejko announced his retirement at the end of July. He was appointed in 1996 by Senator Joe Bruno. He has served on the commission

board for 27 years and will be missed. The commission would like Roger and Carolyn to be our guests at the annual dinner meeting in October 19 to celebrate.

Executive Director's report followed.

Executive Director's Report

Mrs. Malinowski reported that Chris Barboza accepted the planner position and will begin at the end of August or beginning of September pending Albany approvals. He has a bachelor's degree and had some exposure to planning during his internship. He is taking additional training over the summer to prepare for the position.

Administration

We are in pre planning stages for the 2024 LGC. In communication with Turning Stone for rooms, the per diem rooms are off site of main facility and would require shuttling. We are trying to get rooms at main facility for \$129 as Commission Boxberger suggested. The drone session the day before worked well. We are looking for ideas for a pre-LGC session for 2024. We followed up with attendees in the first Scott Chatfield's session and they appreciated us reaching out.

LGC

We have received one nomination, more expected to come.

Tug Hill Sages

The Local Leaders Survey was mailed to 381 with 212 surveys returned. The 55.6% return rate is just a little less than the 2018 survey. Survey results (handout) will go into a final paper that will go to legislators. The most important question should the commission continue, shows 82% strongly agree the commission should continue.

Local Leaders Survey

Planning for the annual dinner in October is in progress. We are working with Tailwater Lodge on the menu. Mrs. Malinowski has received communication that looks promising for the secretary of state. The video is coming together and should be finishing up soon.

Annual Dinner

Mrs. Malinowski received a memo from the state regarding adding a few items to our website to comply with state stipulations. Additional items that have been added included draft agendas and commissioners' appointment dates.

Website

Home rule legislation for the town of Lorraine has been passed by the senate and assembly. The legislation (A6412/S6249) is awaiting the Governor's signature.

MMR

Francis Yerdon, Osceola supervisor contacted Senator Walczyk for assistance with legislation on 480A and asked the commission for assistance. The commission provided Senator Walczyk information on 480A and will be working with him. There is a new executive director with the Rural Resources Commission.

480A

The Wildlife Management Area legislation - S5405/A2141 is in the assembly and senate, but unlikely to move.

Staff have been busy providing Metrocount services with the equipment the commission purchased, to Tug Hill communities.

Metrocount

The Black River Watershed conference was well attended. Mr. Boxberger was the emcee for the conference

Black River Watershed Conference

Our planners have been in high demand!

Planning

Scheduled are the Hiawatha First Nation and the Black River, Chief Laurie Carr, July 28 and Highway Departments and Town Budgets, Laird Petrie, August 23. We are working to

Upcoming Trainings/Workshops

present topics for this fall including an assessor workshop, Lake Effect Lightning with Dr. Steiger from SUNY Oswego , and G&W Railroad. The 2023 event list (handout) includes this year's past events and upcoming ones for this fall.

Staff has completed the following technical papers: Home Based Businesses, How to Write a ZBA Decision, Municipal Insurance Checklist, Municipal Websites, Drones, and GIS. They are all available on our website. **White Papers**

Assemblyman Gray is a member of the Tourism Committee and has been touring the area to promote tourism. We have been invited to sessions in Clayton and Oswego. **Tourism**

Mr. Dietrich reported the executive board will meet on Wednesday, June 28. Scott Burto and MRB Group will be speaking about Carthage Area Downtown Economic Resiliency Strategy. Also on the agenda, April Roggio, University at Albany, COG Interview; Department of Health Source Water Protection Program. **COG Report**

The associate circuit rider position will need to be filled once Mr. Barboza starts his new position as planner with the commission. There will be a Fort Drum intern coming on sometime at end of July or early August.

Surveys received from the RACOG Summit were positive. Champion is having a difficult time keep highway staff. We are discussing reaching out to BOCES and JCC for assistance for with upcoming students finishing CDL license programs. Discussion for RACOG banners to be updated on the bridge. LED lighting is almost complete. The village of Lowville has moved forward on their own with digital radar signs and are very happy with them. Castorland is interested in using the commissions Metrocount services. We should know on the grant for the Traffic Safety coordinator by the end of August. Town of Denmark may have a lawsuit issue. Town of Croghan is interested in a joint ZBA. Looking to do mapping with Friends of Black River. The village of Lowville has a rec program that pays for children within the region. Lewis County stepped up to pay for childing outside the region to attend. The village would like the county to take over the program.

The 2022-23 year to date financial statement (handout) is close to budget, slightly under. There is overage on IT support. More expenses have been incurred with them. We have debated the possibility of getting another IT provider. **Finance Report**

The 2023-24 financial statement (handout) looks go so far. The RAV purchase was allocated in last year's budget, but we did not receive it until this year. If the bill for salary increases passes the senate and assembly it would a 3% increase and one time \$3000 bonuses for all MC staff, that would have to come out of our budget.

Commissioner Bogdanowicz opened the floor for public comment. **Public Comment**

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Boxberger and seconded by Commissioner Scriber members adjourned the meeting at 11:35 a.m. **Adjourn**

These minutes were approved by the Board of Commissioners.

Tom Boxberger

Secretary