

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES – JULY 21, 2020

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT: Fedler, Hicks, Shaw, Skellie, Griffith

AGRICULTURE, PLANNING, TOURISM & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

ABSENT: Campbell, Rozell

SUPERVISORS: Hall, Henke, O'Brien, Hogan

Debra Prehoda, Clerk of the Board

Chris DeBolt, County Administrator

Roger Wickes, County Attorney

Al Nolette, County Treasurer

Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director

AGENDA AS PRESENTED IN COMMITTEE NOTICE:

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Accept Minutes – June 22, 2020
- 3) Washington County Soil & Water – Project Work
- 4) Laura Oswald, Director of Economic Development
 - a) Tourism Contract Discussion
 - b) General Updates
- 5) Other Business
- 6) Adjournment

Chairwoman Fedler called the meeting to order at 1:00 P.M.

A motion to accept the minutes of the June 22, 2020 meeting was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Mr. Skellie and adopted.

PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOURISM – Laura Oswald, Economic Development Director, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Broadband – Rural Digital Opportunity funding is out there and available. Eligible areas were released on a map, attached. Technology funding sources relating to schools: Smart Schools Bond Act, CARES Act and discussion on the legislative level for a program called Homework Gap.
- Assessors LGE – As discussed last month, the contract was bounced back from the Comptroller's Office, they have followed up but the program division does not communicate with the fiscal division so they are still working on trying to get the status of this contract.
- Unemployment – Statewide the numbers went from 14.5% in May to 15.7% in June. The Glens Falls metro area went from 11.2% in May to 17% in June. The County was technically 10% in May and expecting it to come in today for June at 16% to 17%. The unemployment filing is slightly up from last week; 219 claims filed last week.
- Census – The County's response rate at 56.4% still lagging behind the State at 57.7%. Towns lagging behind include Argyle, Putnam, Dresden, Salem and Whitehall. Cambridge has the highest response rate in the County right now.
- CEG – Center for Economic Growth, a regional economic development entity, gives direct assistance to businesses and it is a membership organization that a lot of our large businesses are members. The Executive Director has left and CEG is now merging with the Albany County Chamber of Commerce. They cover different territories. She hopes they will continue to work with us and the Adirondack Chamber and help area businesses. They have reached out to her and reaffirmed that any assistance available prior to the merger is still available.
- Tourism:
 - I Love NY Funding & Budget – Mentioned at the last meeting not sure what was going to happen with the I Love NY money. Normally, I Love NY deposits the annual allocation

around March. This is a 50/50 match. What they have agreed to do is pay 50% of our first quarter expenses, the second quarter expenses are a maybe and no commitment on the second half of the year but her guess is that it is not likely to happen. So, given that information, together with Andrew Meader, Eightof8, they went through the budget for the current year and determined what they believe they need to keep minimally operating this year, handout attached. They plan to cut off all activities except keeping the website going and also keep social media going. Both of those are very critical and have made a lot of headway with social media. The budget also included funding for Cornell Cooperative Extension in the amount of \$10,000 and projecting to do about \$3,000 out of that which will cover work in the first quarter and maybe some later in the year and Lakes to Locks was budgeted for \$5,000 and set aside \$2,000 for them. Janet Kennedy, Lakes to Locks, has informed her because of the Scenic Byways funding it is anticipated to not be available until 2022, Lakes to Locks intends to go dark during 2021 and do not intend to ask us for any funding and will talk in late 2021 about funding them in 2022. The 2020 budget included \$92,500 funding from the County and \$60,000 from I Love NY funding for a total budget of \$152,500. As of the end of June had spent \$65,000 leaving a budget of about \$87,000. They need \$35,000 for the rest of the year; detailed on attached handout with different I Love NY funding scenarios. Andrew Meader stated they keep the website updated with the latest information on what is open and available to do and they have had a lot of engagement on the site. They have seen an increase since March and hate to lose the momentum they have gained and want to keep it going. The Economic Development Coordinator is looking for conceptual approval of this budget for the remainder of the year. The County Administrator stated after conversations with the Budget Officer they are not looking to make budget amendment reductions to the budget at this time and the department head cannot proceed with going over the budget without coming back to committee first. General consensus of the committee was approval of the direction they were taking and conceptual budget.

- Black Dog Contract – The tourism contract is with Black Dog and they sub-contract out to everyone else. The contract expires at the end of the year but there is an option in the contract for a one-year renewal. If the committee wants to go out for an RFP for these services it is a time consuming process and needs to get started now. The attached handout includes the general scope of work tasks proposed for 2021 program. She recommends a one-year extension of the Black Dog contract with the tasks listed as a scope of work and finalize the budget later on. At this time, they do not have a breakdown of the funding for each task. A motion to approve one-year extension of Black Dog contract was moved by Mr. Hicks, seconded by Messrs. Shaw and Skellie and adopted.
- Airbnb – Andrew Meader stated he had success contacting someone at Airbnb. They have provided the County with an agreement and the County Attorney has reviewed and found no issues with it. Airbnb have agreed to collect the money. The agreement states collection of 4% like the Occupancy Tax. Mr. Meader stated the only part he does not like is there is no look back. He stated any money we get from them will help. He is also working on agreements with VRBO and Home Away which will take a little longer. Once Airbnb receive the percentage and approval of the agreement from the County to move forward, the earliest they can start collecting is September 1st if they receive the approval by the end of the month. If the Board has to approve, the next meeting is scheduled for August 21st and the County Attorney suggested having the County Treasurer as an elected official sign the contract and he agreed. A motion to support the County Treasurer signing agreement

with Airbnb to collect 4% revenue and sign the contract on behalf of the County was moved by Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Skellie and adopted.

CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION – Brian Gilchrist, Executive Director, updated the committee on the following items:

- Agriculture - Ag staff has been busy working with ag businesses – farms and ag employers. They are required to have some kind of basic farm business safety plan. Past few months working with farm stands and you pick operations on having safety protocols in place in order to open. The farm business manager worked with farms on PPE loans. Partnered with NYS Ag & Markets to distribute hand sanitizer to ag producers and distributed over 800 gallons. Monitoring the drought issue in the County. Ag education and youth activities are hoping to resume meeting by the end of the month. The Ag Educator is developing and moving forward with a series of zoom meetings on various topics.
- Parenting Education Program & Parents Apart – Programs have been on hold. A two-hour video has been prepared for the Parents Apart course for court compliance.
- Consolidated Ag District #6 – Planning to begin to move forward with the review of the district and meet with the Ag and Farmland Protection Board.
- Farm Stands – The County Administrator stated the NYS Pause hot line is receiving complaints on farm stands not following proper COVID safety protocols. Cooperative Extension does have hand sanitizer and masks available.

WASHINGTON COUNTY SOIL & WATER – Corrina Aldrich, Executive Director, updated the following items with the committee:

- Project Work – A couple of very large projects wrapped up this spring; Twin Brooks Farm in Hartford and Landview Farm in White Creek. Heritage Hill Farm in Fort Ann will be restarting their project. Ideal Dairy wrapped up their project late last winter. Hicks Orchard project is almost complete; agrichemical mixing facility. Starting a couple of new projects in the next few weeks. COVID has made project work more difficult and slower.
- Four employees back in the office working and one working remotely. Staff are working on forestry plans for landowners, nutrient management plans and trainings.
- Received hydro seeder obtained through a grant and will be contacting towns in the Champlain watershed.
- Fun project beginning with a partnership with US Fish & Wildlife, Trout Unlimited and a private landowner, Coulter Brook in Battenville – habitat connectivity – fish through culverts.
- Rexleigh Bridge – Private landowner on the south end that has public fishing rights is going to do some site improvements and they are working with her and NYS DEC. This is a high traffic site. She has a permit and expect to see some changes.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Planning to schedule an Ag & Farmland Protection Board meeting in the near future.

The meeting adjourned at 1:52 P.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors

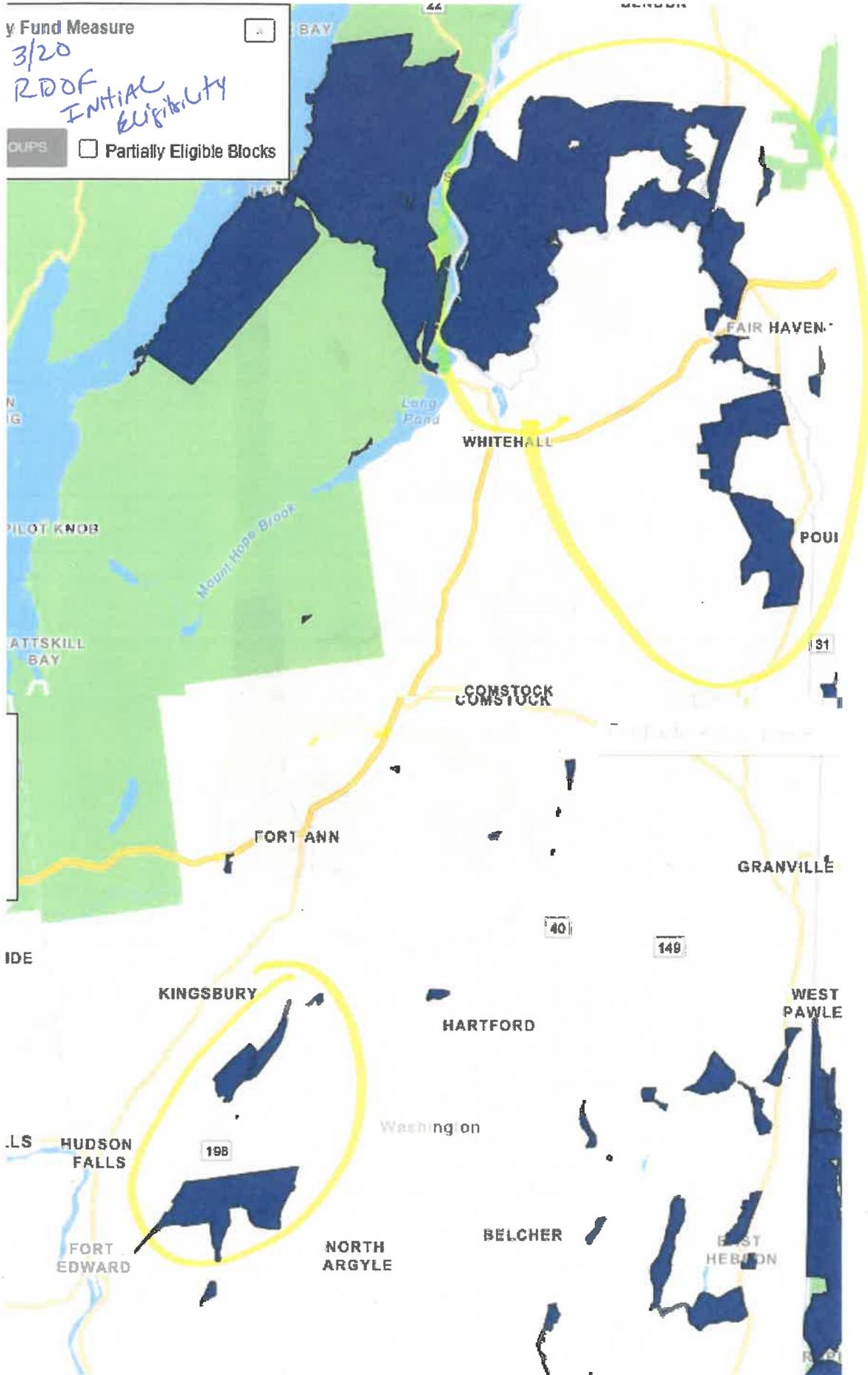
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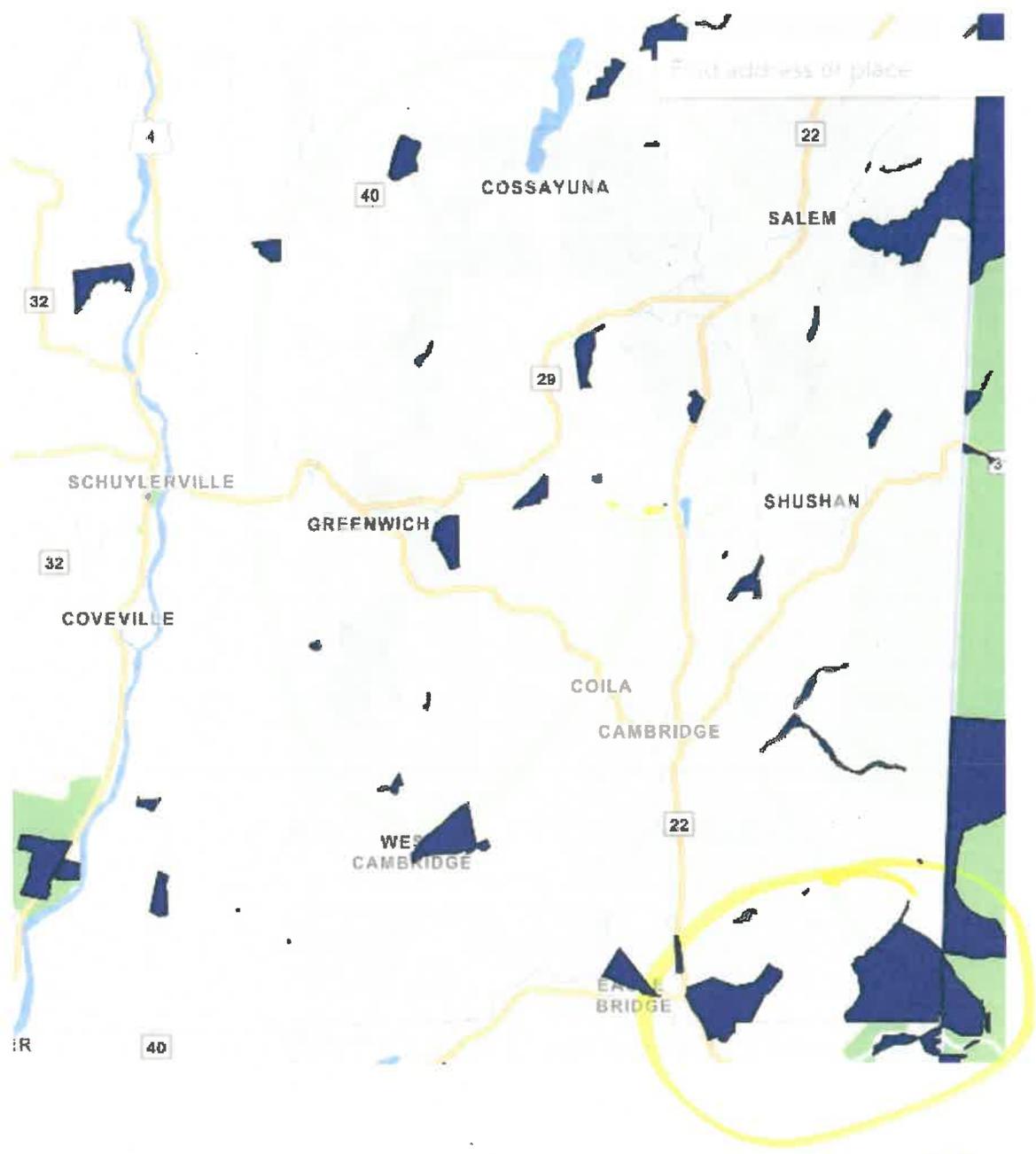
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INITIAL
Eligibility

COUPS

Partially Eligible Blocks



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Tourism 2020 Funding and 2021 Program

Tourism Operations July to December 2020

Minimum Operating; Social and Website	Funding/Budget	Original budget	76% NY cut 8% County cut	76% NY cut 22% County cut
Eight of 8	\$15,000	County/CCE	\$92,500	\$85,400
Website/database/ social media	\$15,000	I Love NY	\$60,000	\$14,600
CCE	\$3,000	Total 2020 budget	\$152,500	\$100,000
L to L	\$2,000	less YTD spent	\$65,000	\$65,000
		Remaining	\$87,500	\$35,000
Total	\$35,000	Q2 + possible 13K	\$48,000	\$35,000

Scope of Work Tasks proposed for 2021 Program

Marketing Strategy Development
 Web Updates, Campaign Development, Database Admin
 Graphic Design
 Photography and Video
 Website/database fees & Renewals/subscriptions
 County Social Media and Newsletter
 Media Purchasing and Production
 Promotion Contests
 Printed Collateral
 Editorial Content
 Capital Saratoga Contribution
 Cornell Cooperative Extension