

Tompkins County IDA Approved Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2013
Old Jail Conference Room
125 E. Court Street, Ithaca, NY

Present: Martha Robertson, Will Burbank, Svante Myrick, Jim Dennis, Nathan Shinagawa, Larry Baum, Grace Chiang

Excused:

Staff Present: Michael Stamm, Heather Filiberto(recording), Mariette Geldenhuys

Guests Present: Kevin Urgo, Mathew Jalazo, Bill Holstein, Steve Reneiri (Urgo Hotels), Fay Gugakis, Jeff Furman, Nancy Bereano, Michael Cannon, Michael Talarski, Marcus Willamee, Chris Soule (UA Local 267), Pete Blanchard (WHCU), James Douglas (TC Workers Center), Jim Runckle, Frost Travis, Cynthia Brock, Philly DeSarno, JoAnn Cornish, Vicki Taylor, Gregor Brous, Nels Bohn (IURA), David Hill (Ithaca Journal), Kyle Robertson (Ithaca College), Joel Harlon, Joe Mareane, Fred Bonn (CVB), Peter Peters (Benjamin Peters), Fary Ferguson (DIA), John Bishop, Brian Eden, J. R. Clairborne, Theresa Alt

CALL TO ORDER The meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA - None

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Those who spoke during the privilege of the floor were speaking regarding the Hotel Ithaca Application.

Michael Cannon
Joel Harlin
Fred Bonn
Marcus Willmee
Chris Soule
Peter Blanchard
Fay Gougakis
Gregar Brous
JoAnn Cornish
Vicki Taylor
Philly DeSarno
Gary Ferguson
Jeff Furman
Nancy Bereano
John Bishop
Mike Talarski
Cynthia Brock

Theresa Alt
Brian Eden
J. R. Clairborne
Jim Rundle

BUSINESS

Hotel Ithaca Application – Final Approval

Ms. Filiberto gave an overview of the project and a report on the subcommittee findings.

Jim Dennis moved to approve the Hotel Ithaca Application. Svante Myrick seconded the motion.

Mr. Stamm commented that all IDA projects subsidize jobs by \$850 per job.

Mr. Burbank asked is the project would rework their diversity policy. Mr. Urgo stated that Marriot is an equal employment organization.

Mr. Shinagawa spoke in favor of the project. He suggested working hard to promote diversity in its employees; stated that the commitment to wages for housekeepers and the benefits offered were significant; and that local labor should be utilized in construction.

Mr. Myrick stated that the free market has failed when it comes to development. This abatement program was meant to combat that and spur development where we want it. It also gave us an opportunity to sit down with the developer and get more information. Is it perfect? No. But is good. The ROI of \$13 million in new taxes over 10 years speaks to that.

Mr. Burbank commented that he still feels that the project would happen without the abatements.

Will Burbank moved to amend the motion to add that every worker be paid 156% of the NYS minimum wage. Nathan Shinagawa seconded the amendment to the motion.

Mr. Urgo stated that they will pay competitive wages.

Mr. Baum stated he would not support the amendment to the motion. The hotel will have the best housekeepers in Ithaca. They also need to be competitive in the market place.

Mr. Dennis stated that the subcommittee met and discussed this issue and reached some agreement on this. He will not support the amendment.

Ms. Chiang stated she would not support the amendment.

Mr. Myrick stated that this request is too much to ask for.

Ms. Robertson stated that all should be paid a living wage. We have a real benefit in this project. She will not support the amendment.

A vote was taken on the amendment to the motion. The amendment failed 2 to 5.

A general discussion of the CIITAP policy and its outcomes was held.

Ms. Robertson stated that the project began in 2007. Initially the original developer was not going to come to the IDA for abatements but with the recession the financing of the project became for challenging. She reminded all that the IDA does have a clawback/recapture policy for businesses that fail to meet commitments. She also stated that the IDA does focus on high-tech companies and delivers incentives to those.

The public was thanked for paying attention and challenging the IDA to make a good project better. Pride in local construction labor has a benefit too. The developer was thanked as well.

A vote was taken on the motion on the table. The motion passed 6 to 1. Burbank Nay, Robertson, Baum, Myrick, Dennis, Chiang, Shinagawa Yea.

Mr. Urgo stated that they are looking to embrace the community. You will be proud of the project. The associates will be proud to work there and well compensated. He is very much looking forward to being in this community. This project will be a catalyst for other development.

Sub committee members were thanked for their service.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Stamm reported on the Governor's budget proposal to limit the IDA's ability to deliver sales tax abatements. The Governor has received pressure from many organizations. He is not budging. This is of some concern.

Mr. Stamm reported that the 2012 Audit will go to the audit committee and then to the IDA Board for acceptance.

Ms. Filiberto reported that the wind turbine project is on target with SEQR. This project will probably come back to the IDA subcommittee in the summer.

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Larry Baum moved to approve the board meeting minutes from February 21, 2013. Svante Myrick seconded the motion. Grace Chiang abstained. The motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM