



**Board of Directors Meeting
October 23, 2018
Minutes**

Present: Sandy Morhouse, Peter Realle, Scott Hearburg, Chris Mallon, Bob Porter, Lance Clark and Nancy Archer

Absent: Pat Ida and Pam Nolan

Staff Present: Donna Wotton

1. Financial Report. No report

2. Board Business

A. Postponed Meeting with Elise Stefanik. Smart Growth America (which promotes economic development in rural communities), was encouraging economic development organizations to reach out to their congressional representatives to meet during Rural Communities Week (September 15-21) while they were in their districts. Invitations were extended to Elise Stefanik and Kirsten Gillibrand by TRA, TACC, PRIDE and TMSP on behalf of Supervisor Joe Giordano. Gillibrand's office didn't reply, but Stefanik's office could not work it into her schedule. We received another message from Stefanik's office in the first week of October suggesting a meeting on October 26. It was agreed with Supervisor Giordano that the meeting should be postponed to a future date.

B. Ticonderoga Economic Development Committee. Supervisor Giordano is potentially interested in forming a small economic development group in the coming months that would include fewer people than previous groups and be more focused on advancing economic development in the area.

C. 2019 TRA Budget. A proposed 2019 budget was introduced by Donna. The budget includes the full time salary of the Executive Director and minimal operation expenses. The fundraising goals for the upcoming end of year funding campaign is \$68,400 including \$10,000 from the Town of Ticonderoga for TRA to pursue work on the School of Applied Technology and Derelict Buildings, and begin work on business incubation. This goal is considerably higher than last year and will require the active participation of all board members.

ACTION: TRA Board members are encouraged to advocate the Supervisor and Town Council members to fund the Alliance in the amount of \$10,000 to pursue work on behalf of the town. This is an opportunity and means for the Town to demonstrate its support for the School of Applied Technology in particular. **Peter** will reach out to Wayne Taylor, **Sandy & Peter** will reach out to Joyce Cooper.

A motion to approve the budget as presented was put forth, seconded, and approved unanimously. See Appendix I: 2019 Budget

3. Committee Reports

A. Development Committee: Fall Fundraising Initiatives

Our fundraising goal for this fall is \$68,4000. As noted above an application for funding in the amount of \$10,000 from the Town of Ticonderoga was submitted. Town of Ti final draft budget will be complete the second week of November and approved at the December Town Board meeting. Funds will also be requested from the Essex County Board of Supervisors.

- a. Strategy and Goals for Funding. A Fall Newsletter will be ready by mid-November for distribution as part of the fall campaign. Components of the campaign are as follows:
 - i. Newsletter: Nancy and Donna have been working on articles for this. Emailed to all on Robly list (email week of Nov 5)
 - ii. Cover letter: to be include with newsletter for snail-mail print campaign (mails on Nov 12)
 - iii. Personal notes: Each board member will select names from the snail-mail list with whom they have a personal connection. They will send the snail-mail packet to those individuals with a handwritten personal note on the top of the cover letter. In the past, these personal notes have yielded donations from 80% of recipients.
 - iv. Personal visits: Larger donors will be visited by Donna, a Board member, or by the board member and Donna.
 - v. Giving Tuesday push for reminder and Sustaining Donor appeal.

ACTION: All Board members are requested to participate in the end of year fundraising effort by identifying persons for outreach within their network, writing a personal note and sending the Fall Newsletter to their contacts. Larger donors and persons that may be willing to increase their donations will be visited personally. If board members do not feel comfortable making the ask, Donna can do this or Donna and a board member.

ACTION: All Board members - Please review the attached Newsletter Cover Letter and provide in put. Appendix II: Newsletter Cover Letter.

ACTION: All Board members - Review the list of donors and identify persons to whom you will assume responsibility for contact, either via newsletter mailing with personal appeal, or personal contact.

B. Governance Committee.

- a. Lance reported that Jay Fortino has declined to join the board, but he is interested in participating in the School of Applied Technology.
- b. Donna reported that Jamey and Rowan Smith (Rowan Family Foundation) were not available to sit on the board, but will continue to follow TRA's work and be supportive.
- c. Agreed: With 9 currently active members we do not need to actively recruit any further members to the board at this time. As opportunity and interested parties become more involved in our work/projects, any board member is welcome to nominate additional members at any time in the future.

ACTION: Donna will send out a press release introducing Bob Porter and Chris Mallon as new members of the Ti-Alliance board. Appendix III: Press Release

4. Program Updates

- A. **NCCC School of Applied Technology (SAT).** JMZ is moving forward with analysis of the NCCC internal feasibility study and forward plans. There are to be four councils: Business, Fundraising, Curriculum, and Recruitment & Employment. In addition, there is an Executive Council to oversee the whole process. Each council is led by an NCCC staff member. There is at least one Ti-Alliance representative on each council. Executive Council: Donna Wotton, Joe Giordano
Curriculum Council: Bobby Porter, Chris Mallon, possibly Jay Fortino
Recruitment & Employment Council: Chris Mallon, Marion Abell (former high school counselor, Putnam resident, and friend of Ti-Alliance)
Business Council: Jeff Keefer (retired Fortune 500 consultant, friend of Donna, & Hague resident)
Fundraising Council: Donna Wotton, David Taylor (retired university VP of Development in North Carolina, friend of Donna & Hague resident).

The only council of the four that has been scheduled to meet is the Business Council.

Discussion: Donna raised the concern that other than the Business Council, which has only received one communication and has one scheduled meeting with JMZ, the other councils have not yet met. This is due in large part because JMZ views the process as linear with the development of the business plan first and then moving through to curriculum, recruitment, and finally fundraising.

In the previous generation of this project, and again in the beginning of this round of discussions, NCCC was highly criticized by many important influencers for not being inclusive of all the key stakeholders in discussions and the plan. It was a key part of why it failed the first time. There is a recognized pattern of not communicating with stakeholders, such as the Board of Supervisors, BOCES, the unions, and educators etc. as a critical part of the process.

This renewed process has been greatly strengthened with the active role of TRA and communication with a wide variety of stakeholders earning their initial support. But there is little direction from NCCC for JMZ to include these important stakeholders in detailed discussions prior to making their final recommendations this fall. They appear to be considering only the data, and not personal inputs that are important to the overall plan and we feel that this is a big mistake that will cost us the support of the key contributors.

Donna's active role as a driver of the process was recognized as being important and necessary to keep things moving forward.

ACTION: Donna contacted Steve Reed, NCCC Board Chair, to express concern of the Ti-Alliance Board at the slow pace of action and lack of participation of the Executive Council and other councils in the input and evaluation process with JMZ. Steve Reed agreed and apologized for his lack of involvement in the past month as they work toward the hiring of a new president and Dean of Admissions which have taken his time. He will contact both Steve and JMZ to hopefully steer them in a more inclusive direction. Donna offered her services to both Steve and JMZ to help convene and document the inputs of the councils.

ACTION: Donna to coordinate with Steve Tyrell to communicate with council members, Boards of Supervisors, etc to advise of the timeline and current progress, and schedule meetings.

B. Property Inventory. Scott reported on progress of the Alliance group (Rob and George Singer, Peter Reale and Scott Hearburg) investigating potential properties for location of the SAT. Criteria for property selection includes: proximity to downtown and NCCC; minimum required space of 25,000 square feet with additional space at NCCC (using existing underutilized space for classrooms). Some properties under consideration include:

- a. Old Grand Union/Peebles Building at 4-corners
- b. Meat Packing Plant at 4-corners – IDA needs to recoup their losses from Ward, and would like another meat packing operation in that building, depending on timing, they might be interested in cutting their losses for another purpose.
- c. Hacker Building – would likely need to come down and have asbestos remediation.
- d. Burleigh House – including their lot near the post office and/or the back end of the Cobbler’s Bench.
- e. Cobblers Bench - particularly back annex space, as well as some possible space in the CB building for administrative/classroom
- f. Roofers (old Mahalic’s bar across the La Chute behind Aubuchon) - connects to the town via an existing footbridge providing easy access to the other campus and downtown businesses
- g. Agway – teardown. Building owned by Doug’s heirs – about 10 of them and is somewhat complicated. Worth investigating.
- h. Undeveloped property above current NCCC building
- i. Chamber Building – with Nat’l Grid space in back

Scott has gotten real estate profiles of most of these properties from the Chamber and forwarded to Rob Singer who is coordinating the data.

At this time Lowe's is considered less attractive given its large size (130,000 sq. ft.) for the needs of the SAT (30,000 sq. ft.) and its large tax bill of \$100,000+ annually that could be an economic risk to the school and investors.

The team will continue to accumulate data and make a recommendation by the end of November as to viable location options for the SAT.

ACTION: Donna to set up meeting with JMZ and Steve Tyrell for Peter and Scott to firm up numbers on SAT requirements.

ACTION: Peter - Once the requirements are clear Peter will work on the numbers for renovation per square foot

ACTION: Sandy will contact Mike Diskin (Essex County) regarding the implications of Alliance purchasing the tax lien on the Hacker building.

C. Zombie and Abandoned Properties Project. The coordinators of the 75 projects of this type across New York State, LISC, have now approved the 12 months extension of the project until the end of September, 2019. The work to be carried out through this extension will be done within the same total budget of \$75,000 but with some changes. These include additional funds for carrying out asbestos surveys for 4-5 of the worst properties, and an additional \$4,000 to TRA to compensate for a fraction of our time in helping coordinate this project.

Alan Hipps, former Director of the Housing Assistance Program of Essex County (HAPEC), which is a major partner in this project, is taking the lead for drafting a funding proposal to the HOME program of New York State. We will be seeking several hundred thousand dollars for the acquisition, rehab, and resale of an initial two properties that are significant structural problems, but aren't so bad that they need demolition. If this initial effort succeeds, the intention will be to further expand to other properties in the future.

D. Business Incubation & Downtown Development. Though we will be devoting our full attention is on the SAT project to make it come to fruition, Donna will make a visit to the Shipley Center for innovation at Clarkson University in the coming weeks with Matt Courtright to explore incubation potential for Ticonderoga.

5. New Business/Old Business

A. Mid-Range Housing Shortage: Low inventory of homes in the \$150,000-\$200,000 range needed by professionals at the Mill and School. Could be an important component of the business incubation project as well. New housing development in this range will likely require expansion of the hamlet, but other avenues should also be explored.

ACTION: Bobby & Donna – Start by engaging Dan Kelleher from APA for ideas and consultation

ACTION: Bobby Porter & Donna - Need to develop the data supporting the need

- Professional employees of IP, Hacker, schools, Fort & other employers that currently live out of the Ti Area
- Data on current real estate availability in the price/size range for professionals at these employers
- How many students does school system lose that could be going to our schools
- Water/sewer areas
- Other options in the hamlet

B. Country Club Update: Sandy attended the CC Board meeting and discussed a possible role for Ti-Alliance. No further discussion has taken place.

Appendix I: 2019 Budget

Appendix II: Newsletter Cover Letter

Appendix III: Press Release

Ticonderoga Revitalization Alliance is a not-for-profit, local development corporation whose mission is to restore economic prosperity in the Ticonderoga region by serving as a catalyst for innovative ideas and resources, and for public-private partnerships and investment opportunities.