

**Watertown Empire Zone  
Administrative Board Meeting  
April 2005**

The Watertown Empire Zone Administrative Board meeting was held on Thursday, April 28, 2005 in the City Council Chambers, City Municipal Building, 245 Washington Street, Watertown, New York.

**Members Present:** Chairman Peter Clough, Peter Sovie, James Fitzpatrick, Joseph Butler, Jr., Robert Lawlor and Phillip Gaffney.

**Also Present:** Michael N'dolo and Robert Camoin of Camoin Associates, City Manager Mary Corriveau, Mayor Graham, Planning & Community Development Coordinator Kenneth Mix, Douglas Schelleng of Empire State Development, Kevin McAuliffe of Green and Seifter, and members of the press and public.

Chairman Clough opened meeting at 3:30 with background on why the meeting was called.

Mr. N'dolo explained that he had asked ESD whether they would consider the zone's ongoing boundary amendment. ESD's administrative memo interpreting the recent law stated that a preliminary application would have to have been submitted prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> to be considered. However, upon further inquiry, he believes that the ESD interpretation was not correct. In fact, wording states only that the ZAB must have been "working with" a business for a boundary amendment to continue.

Mr. N'dolo discussed how the boundary amendment process had begun and that the ZAB had been working with and communicating with a number of businesses. He stated that the board should consider writing a letter to ESD to confirm that they can continue moving forward with the amendment as planned.

The board then discussed whether they should pursue making a case that their amendment request should continue. **Motion made by Pete Sovie, and seconded by Joe Butler to approve going forward with amendment and to write a letter to ESD to that effect. Motion passed.**

Discussion regarding the development of the letter to ESD requesting approval to go forward with amendment was then discussed. It was agreed that Mr. N'dolo would draft a letter, get legal review and have final review by Ms. Corriveau.

Mr. N'dolo then began discussing the Boundary amendment process and additional work to be completed by the ZAB. Zone Policy must be revised again by June 30. By the end of the year, the Zone Development Plan must also be completely revised and delivered to ESD for review. Based on Policy and Plan, the ZAB will then have to designate 3 areas, "separate and distinct areas", to allocate its 2 sq. miles of zone acreage.

Mr. N'dolo illustrated with a map how existing zone area has developed over the years. He explained that the ZAB will no longer have the ability to have individual parcels not part of the three "areas" and that the ZAB must designate all 2 sq. miles at once.

Discussion and questions from board members whether zone acreage will be lost and how to make lands contiguous. Mr. McAuliffe gave suggestions on how to make the land contiguous. He described requirements that must connect parcels by going down one side of a street when connecting.

Mr. Mix asked if a metes and bounds will be needed to describe three areas or whether by parcels lists. Mr. Gaffney asked if every parcel currently in the Zone now would remain in zone. Mr. N'dolo replied that most parcels would remain in the zone, but that some would be difficult to connect into the limited 3 areas based on their location and the rules for connecting them, which have not been made clear yet by ESD.

Discussion by board on the implications of eliminating zone acreage outside of the City and Town and outside of the three "areas" to be designated by the zone and how these companies would be impacted. Mr. N'dolo explained that businesses currently certified would continue to benefit under the rules of the former legislation, that the acreage would be eliminated, but that the benefits would run out under their nature terms.

Discussion by board on RPTL 485-e. Mr. McAuliffe explained that for those already receiving 485-e or that have already applied for 485-e would still receive benefits, but future certified businesses in which acreage removed would no longer be able to apply.

ZAB discussed how streets could be used to connect and reiterated the need to include all parcels along one side of street and whether it could continue and cross back and forth across street to make connections.

Mr. N'dolo discussed the need to update the Zone Policy before July 1<sup>st</sup> and then the Development Plan by December 31. The board will also need to establish its three areas by December 31. IT will also require that the Zone Designation Board approve yes or no on the Development Policy.

Mr. McAuliffe described how Zone Policies are to be approved by EZDB where previously it was left to ESD Zones Program.

Mr. N'dolo discussed how he sent out completed Zone applications by email for review by the board and that, in the future, they now needed to be approved by the ZAB and that the Zone's ZCO, Jim Mills, cannot sign off until ZAB approves. Mr. N'dolo expressed concern that, with critical dates approaching, quick approvals by the board would be important. The board agreed that it would need to be able to meet more regularly to discuss and determine zone certification applications.

**Motion to adjourn by Mr. Sovie and seconded by Mr. Gaffney. Motion passed.**