

**Watertown Empire Zone**

**Joint Informational Meeting With Watertown City Council and Town Board of Watertown**

November 10, 2004

4:00 p.m.

**EZB Members Present:** Chairman Peter Clough, Peter Sovie, Phillip Gaffney, James Fitzpatrick, and Thomas Cesta

**City of Watertown Officials Present:** Mayor Jeffrey Graham, City Manager Mary Corriveau

**Town of Watertown Officials Present:** Supervisor Joel Bartlett, Council Members: Stephen Rich, Susan Dandrow, David Prosser, Town Clerk Catherine Rich

**Camoin Representatives Present:** Robert Camoin, Zone Coordinator Michael N'Dolo

**Also Present:** Carol Bolam, Empire State Development

Mr. N'dolo presented the draft changes to the guidelines to those present.

**Section III. Industry Clusters- Targeted “Priority” Businesses:** The change to the **tourism section** was discussed and the fact that perhaps sometimes the businesses on the Black River would draw local residents to them, not necessarily a large amount of tourists.

Ms. Bolam explained that something like that would be fine with the state due to the fact that it is bringing in additional business. The business would be something new locating on the river. She also advised those present that these are guidelines and the state doesn't want to dilute the efforts in downtown.

Ms. Bolam also explained that the state looks at “Bass Pro” as a tourist destination and has no problem with retail businesses being a tourist destination.

Under the **agriculture section**, the state felt that it was too broad and therefore “value-added” was put into the change.

Mayor Graham commented that the board had the foresight to retain acreage to be used for development in the Town and the City.

Ms. Bolam remarked that the board can set the threshold and also commented that if acreage is taken away from downtown, a lot of jobs have to be created to justify it. She stated that the zone program is a job creation program, not a sales tax generating program.

Discussion centered on other tax incentive programs that are offered. Ms. Bolam explained that “big box” stores do not care about the zone incentives due to the fact that they would have to maintain job levels and they can’t be bothered.

Mrs. Corriveau suggested that a bullet be added for military related industries.

Mr. N’doldo suggested that those types of industries would be covered under the “other” section.

Discussion centered on multi-party agreements which would be required to be executed by all impacted municipalities, the zone and the applicant business if an applicant is selected for inclusion into the zone from outside the City and Town of Watertown. This would provide for a recapture by the Zone of the acreage in question if the applicant business fails to make substantial progress towards meeting the projections it stated on its application within the first twenty-four (24) months after inclusion into the zone.

Mr. N’doldo explained that at this time, the board has a policy stating that it should be returned. However, he doesn’t know if it is legally binding.

**Section VI. Certification Requirements:** After discussion it was agreed that the definitions of parcel categories would be changed to:

1. Industrial Park and Outlying Parcels
2. Anything Not List In #1

It was also explained that Cloverdale could qualify for zone benefits due to the fact that it would be commercial housing.

The third bullet on page 8 was removed from the draft.

Also on page 8 under tourism-related business, the percentage of sales associated with the business for non-residents was changed to 50%. The bullet on page 9 of the draft was removed.

Discussion was held relative to the wording on page 3 concerning priority for remaining acreage. It was suggested that a phrase indicating that “At this point in time, all of our areas for future growth are already included in the zone boundaries and we are looking for additional improvement in residential by using 485-e in within the City and Town of Watertown.

Mr. N’doldo will make the necessary changes to the draft.

**Administrative Staffing:** Discussion was held concerning this. Mrs. Corriveau remarked that the City Council would really like to have a local presence that could do outreach with business in the community.

Ms. Bolam explained that municipal employees administer some zones; some are done by LDC employees and some come under the city planning offices.

Mr. Clough commented that the zone board will need input from the City Council and from the Town Board. He also commented that the zone is supposed to be creating jobs and at this time, they have contracted outside the area for the service.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 p.m.