

Watertown Empire Zone

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

January 14,2004

EZB Members Present: Chairman Peter Clough, Peter Sovie, Joseph Butler, Jr., Phillip Gaffney, William Welbourn, Robert Lawlor, Dave Cheney,

City of Watertown Officials Present: Mayor Jeffrey Graham, Council Members: Roxanne Burns, Stephen Bradley, Timothy LaBouf, City Manager Mary Corriveau

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

Camoin Representatives Present: Robert Camoin , Zone Coordinator Andrew Davis,

Mr. Camoin presented an overview outlining the various steps and processes that are necessary to develop a policy for the Watertown Empire Zone. He also outlined the steps needed to do revisions to the current policy. He advised those present that the policy should outline the certification process as well as the job and investment threshold.

Mr. Camoin gave a brief history of the zone program, explaining that the original intent was to be in areas needing revitalization. The scope then changed and spread out to include wider areas, which, in some cases, did not really need revitalization. Mr. Camoin also advised those present that the Watertown Empire Zone is a census track zone and not a county zone.

Mr. Davis distributed copies of the current Zone Development Policy. He explained that since the zone is a census track zone, the acreage used outside the City of Watertown must benefit Watertown.

Mrs. Corriveau asked how verification of this would be obtained.

Mr. Camoin explained that criteria would have to be outlined in the policy, such as a certain percentage of employees having to be residents of the City or that the jobs being created would be made available to those residents in the census track.

Mayor Graham commented that it begins a slippery slope when an Alexandria Bay business is in the zone because it employs a person who lives on Factory Street in the City. He remarked that the current written policy is not consistent with the policy the zone board has been pursuing in the last four to five years.

Mr. Davis responded that the development policy has sort of been forgotten in the recent years.

Discussion was held relative to the program's proposed sunset in July and the fact that the City and Town would be responsible for administering the zone even after the sunset time.

Mr. Camoin explained that the State Legislature and Governor have to be in agreement to support the extension of the program and if it is extended, changes may occur.

Mr. Davis advised that businesses have to have local approval by July 31st.

Councilwoman Burns referred to the current policy and remarked that it addresses what the zone should be addressing. She stated that she feels this is a good policy as it lists identifying growth opportunities, financial need and export opportunities as well as the significant affect to the overall economic impact upon Watertown.

Mayor Graham responded that the problem was that the County tried to take control. In the future, he would like to the City and Town recommit to the existing policy.

Mrs. Corriveau asked about the criteria for a business and the fact that these criteria should be included in the policy.

Supervisor Bartlett agreed that at least minimum standards should be in the policy. He also commented that the community goes beyond the City limits and he doesn't think it was ever intended to put it all in the City. He also commented that it would be difficult for the zone board, the City or the Town to tell businesses that they have to locate in a specific place.

Mr. Cheney responded that when there are three or four new jobs on State Street, it is an accomplishment. He said that if Redwood Bank had decided to open on State Street it would have been a great thing. He agreed that it is difficult to force businesses into certain areas.

Mayor Graham questioned if municipalities don't run into problems for giving incentives for things that would have happened anyway. He commented that municipal boards manage assets, they don't create jobs. He also commented that we don't have growth population wise, we just keep moving it around.

Councilwoman Burns commented that the policy shouldn't get so specific as to discourage anyone.

Mr. Butler commented that the policy can't be that good now if there aren't minimum thresholds in place.

Mayor Graham asked if a recruiter shouldn't be out talking to businesses instead of waiting for businesses to come to us. He stated that there doesn't seem to be any marketing effort and there should be. He commented that the goal is to maximize the impact on greater Watertown. He asked who would be doing the marketing.

Chairman Clough responded that the County should be doing the marketing automatically.

Councilwoman Burns responded that the Director of the Zone should be going to businesses such as Wise Buys and market the facilities that are currently available for businesses to set up in. She also commented that the zone board should focus efforts on the City and Town, although there may be some exceptions.

Discussion was held concerning the fact that Camoin Associates could do the marketing. However, the budget has already been set and this task would cost considerably more than what has been budgeted.

Mrs. Corriveau stated that the community does have economic development people and the Watertown Trust could do this.

Mr. Camoin also suggested advising local banks and realtors of where the zone is and what is available for development.

Mr. Davis will supply a copy of the zone map for everyone before the next meeting, which will be held in February.

Meeting ended at 5:30 p.m.