

STEBEN COUNTY NATURAL GAS TASK FORCE HOUSING SUB-COMMITTEE

Monday, November 29, 2010

1:00 PM

**Steuben County Office Building
Legislative Committee Conference Room
Bath, New York**

MINUTES

<u>Committee:</u>	Kathryn A. Muller, Chair Dawn Dowdle	Jeff Eaton, Vice Chair	Lisa Baker
<u>Absent:</u>	Robert Anderson, Ph.D. Marvin Rethmel	Robert Bates	Judy Celelli
<u>Other:</u>	Amy Dlugos Mark Schlechter	Edward Young	Peggy Coleman

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Muller at 1:00 PM.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – October 25, 2010 – Minutes Approved

III. OLD BUSINESS

1. Ms. Muller distributed a draft resolution memorializing the Governor and State officials. The Resolution identified a need for funding to support affordable and accessible housing opportunities for Steuben County residents. The Resolution further noted the County’s potential increase housing demand of Marcellus Shale drilling. Ms. Dlugos suggested sending a copy of this to Housing and Community Renewal (HCR). Discussion of funding options followed. Mr. Young suggested that we contact our Federal representatives as well as the Appalachian Regional Commission. He said that they seem to go out of the box better than anyone. Ms. Dlugos said that each year applications go to the State and then to the Appalachian Regional Commission for approval. There is Economic Development and Human Services type funding. Ms. Muller said we will do a separate Memorializing Resolution for the Federal representatives. Ms. Dlugos said that Marcia Webber at Southern Tier Central Regional Planning and Development Board might be familiar with what they are using it for in other states. Ms. Coleman suggested another organization that is in the area that also has grants available. She will go back to her office and get the information on this organization and let the committee know. Mr. Eaton said that Appalachian Regional Commission has also submitted a HUD planning grant that includes housing. Arbor Development has committed to being on the task force if in fact it is funded. Ms. Coleman asked if it was possible to identify the number of people the Department of Social Services place in hotels. Ms. Muller said that these numbers are being pulled and the data will be added to this resolution. Ms. Muller asked if anyone has any additional changes or comments please send them to Amanda Chapman. Ms. Dlugos asked what committee Ms. Muller was going to take this to for approval. Ms. Muller responded that she will take it to the Human Services/Health and Education Committee on December 6th for the first step and then on to the full Legislature at the end of the month. The resolutions will be forwarded to the National Gas Steering Committee as well as the Housing Committee members.

Ms. Muller said that once we get some hard numbers on what we are expecting for housing we can better identify a plan. We will need to consider the staffing and operational costs for housing opportunities. Ms. Coleman asked what the room capacity and how many rooms were at the old Infirmary. Ms. Muller said it is a 120 bed facility. Ms. Coleman asked if there would be an option to lease that building to the drilling companies. They could absorb the utility costs, etc. This would also add jobs for people to work there. Mr. Eaton said that that would be something worth exploring. Ms. Coleman said that it could be part of the contract with the drilling companies that they are required to invest a percentage each year in maintenance and upkeep so when they are ready to pull out the building will be ready for other uses.

Mr. Eaton said that some of the comments from people in Tioga County Pennsylvania is they are rethinking the idea of renting to the oil workers because of the big trucks and the wear and tear on properties. One of the things they have created in Sayre is “Lodging and Training Facilities”, also known as “Man Camps”. Mr. Young said they are also building one in Towanda. This is where they have food preparation as well as training facilities. Ms. Coleman asked is there a way for us to see those facilities? Mr. Young said that if we called the Towanda office he is sure they could arrange that. Mr. Eaton said that part of the issue they are finding is that we don’t have the workforce that they are looking for. People who are looking for work don’t want to work those kinds of hours. Ms. Dlugos was at a workforce meeting that was held in Chemung County where they were discussing training the workforce. It was reported that this part of the country has the lowest turnover rate of employees in the industry. People are getting into the industry and deciding that this is what they want to do. Mr. Young said that once they get a good trained workforce, the hours will be cut back.

2. Ms. Dlugos spoke to the planners in the city of Hornell and Corning. Hornell isn’t seeing any rent increases at this time. At this time Hornell does not keep any records of vacant homes or vacant buildings. Corning isn’t seeing any rental increases either. The Elmira area is experiencing rental rate increases. Additionally, drilling employees are finding that they are going to be in the area for 3 or 5 years and are buying houses instead of renting. Mr. Young added that there was an article in the Star Gazette a few weeks ago saying that Chemung County is ranked #1 in the United States in housing sales. They are saying that this is because of the drilling industry. Mr. Schlecter asked about the possibility of leases/mortgages for the drilling industries. This would be good information to find out. Also to check on financing related to drilling.

3. Ms. Dlugos also went on the Penn State website and reviewed information that was discussed at the last meeting. She distributed a “Housing Needs Projection” that she had put together. The website had used Sublette County, Wyoming as an example. There is a big difference in this county and Steuben County. Sublette County is extremely rural. The committee reviewed the numbers and projections. Mr. Young added that Pennsylvania is already seeing the numbers that are projected for Steuben County. Mr. Eaton questioned if these numbers are seasonal or non-seasonal. Ms. Dlugos will double check the Census Bureau to verify information. Ms. Coleman asked if we know any numbers of people that may be commuting and commute times. We may see people in the beginning phases commuting. Ms. Dlugos hadn’t seen any data on this particular study.

4. Ms. Dlugos distributed a map that her office created that has locations of water and sewer systems with existing infrastructures in Steuben County. Discussion followed on water treatment plants and the possibility of upgrading these. The Department of Environmental Conservation would oversee water treatment. Mr. Young suggested requesting information on what the capacities that the water treatment plants have now. This is going to be an issue with the fracking fluid from the drilling. Ms. Dlugos will continue to look for more data and get mortgage leasing information that she can find.

IV. NEXT MEETING DATE

The next meeting will be held on January 24, 2011 at 1:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted by

Donna Evingham
Confidential Secretary
Department of Social Services