

**Tompkins County Industrial Development Agency
Board of Directors Meeting Final Minutes
June 8, 2022 – 2:30 - 4:00 PM**

Via Zoom and LiveStream

Present: Rich John, Faith Vavra, Jeff Gorsky, Shawna Black, Mike Sigler, John Guttridge, Todd Bruer

Guests: David Gould (Sunbeam Candles), Stephanie Redmond (Town of Enfield)

Staff: Heather McDaniel, Ina Arthur (IAED), Russ Gaenzle, (Harris Beach)

CALL TO ORDER

Rich John called meeting to order at 2:51 pm.

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Todd Kurzweil - email sent June 8, 2022, read by Heather McDaniel

This email is intended for distribution to IURA Board & TCIDA Board as public to be heard submissions at your next public meetings. These are pictures (attached to email) on the first level of the Rothschild Building directly East of Sunny Days in the same building. Photos taken last night. No building permits posted in front or rear interior door of that space. This is an active work zone. Uncle Toddy IthacaN Flea Market.

Rich John asked Faith Vavra to follow up with the City of Ithaca regarding posting a building permit for the project.

Shawna Black asked if the enforcement fall to the TCIDA or the City of Ithaca? Enforcement would be done by the City of Ithaca.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA – None

BUSINESS

Sunbeam Candles - Application

Heather McDaniel introduced the project application. Sunbeam Candles is a small local organic candle maker. They moved into Tompkins County in 2010 and TCAD helped them with a small loan to purchase a building in the Town of Enfield. They have outgrown their building and are purchasing two buildings in the Town of Danby. They will be renovating the two buildings and putting up a new solar PV array that will offset a significant portion of the business's electricity needs. They are a small manufacturer and the IDA by right can provide incentives to an industrial project. The total incentive package is less than \$100,000 therefore there is no need to hold a public hearing.

David Gould thanked the board for the opportunity to speak. He gave an overview of his candle making business. Sunbeam Candles was created in 2004. They have outgrown their current facilities. The candles are made with domestic beeswax. Everything is made by hand. They sell to locations in 23 states. They are a green company and ship using the US Carbon Neutral Program and do not use any plastic in their packing materials.

Shawna Black commented that she enjoyed reading the application. The fact that your staff has been with you so long speaks to your leadership style. She is looking forward to supporting this application.

John Guttridge commented about following the diversity and inclusion policy of the TCIDA and the local labor policy. He also echoed Shawna Black's comments that it is nice to see a local business benefit from the IDA incentives.

Jeff Gorsky asked about the bee's wax supply - is it from all over the US? Yes, due to the lack of local availability. Also, the majority of bee's wax is produced in the mid-west and west of the US.

Todd Bruer also expressed is pleasure with the application.

Rich John asked if a public hearing was needed? What is the sense of the board?

Russ Gaenzle stated the legally there is no need to hold a public hearing as the incentives are less than \$100,000.

John Guttridge made a motion to approve the authorizing resolution to approve the incentives for the Sunbeam Candle application. Todd Bruer seconded the motion. the motion was approved 7-0.

(An amended resolution naming the holding company, Hilltop Paradise, LLC was previously circulated to the Board. Both the holding company and operating company will both be held to the IDA's policies.)

BVSHF III Project CHDF Payment

Faith Vavra made a motion to approve the resolution approving the modification of covenants made in connection with the Tompkins County Community Housing Development Fund payment by the BVSHF III Ithaca, LLC Project. The resolution also ratifies the TCIDA's prior approval authorizing the increase in certain financial assistance to the project. Jeff Gorsky seconded the motion. The motion was approved 4-3 (John, Vavra, Gorsky, Sigler Yes/ Black, Bruer, Guttridge No)

Rural Community Input - Discussion

Rich John introduced the discussion. He attended a meeting of Town Supervisors. Applications for solar projects in the towns in the County was a topic of discussion.

Stephanie Redmond, Supervisor Town of Enfield joined the meeting. The town has felt unrepresented by the TCIDA especially when it comes to energy development. She referenced the most recent solar project in the Town of Enfield which she feels has not worked in the best interest of the town in terms of not agreeing to a community host agreement. She feels that the IDA did not help with linking a community host agreement with the PILOT agreement. The subsequent public hearing for this solar project was held in the Town of Enfield which she feels was not in the best interests of the community. The hearing was held in the middle of the day on a workday and since, it was during COVID, options for the public to view remotely other than via Livestream on YouTube were not made available by the IDA.

She feels that the IDA could have handled things differently to get more community input.

She is highly concerned with environmental issues and how rural solar sites are becoming industrial sites and marring the landscape. She is looking for more representation on the IDA to have the town's concerns addressed.

Mike Sigler agrees with all that was said. The Town of Lansing will be the sight of a very large solar project that NYS has taken over oversight.

Todd Bruer also agreed with Ms. Redmon's comments. He voted against the solar project in question. He asked about getting local municipalities to approve the projects in their jurisdiction into the IDA's policy.

Russ Gaenzle stated that these issues have come up across the State. Host benefit agreements are difficult in terms of IDAs. It could be construed as a PILOT agreement that all other taxing jurisdictions would have a portion of the host agreement.

Rich John pointed out that the IDA did get the blessing of the Town of Enfield for this project and then the request for a community host agreement came up.

Heather McDaniel commented that IDA incentives for solar projects came about when things in NYS had prohibited solar projects. On solar and other projects, the IDA does not have any prevue on local land use. The local municipalities have that control. The IDA's solar policy does require local municipality support.

Todd Bruer asked about the IDA stepping in regarding some of the issues. Russ Gaenzle stated that if the Town of Enfield had zoning perhaps.

Stephanie Redmond stated that the Town of Enfield does not have zoning in place.

John Guttridge commented that perhaps the IDA should review what its authority is with these kinds of situations in order incorporate in its policies.

Stephanie Redmond stated that what the biggest issue is that the Town of Enfield was unhappy with the financial agreement that came from this project. She felt that the denial of the community host agreement and then having no further recourse was discouraging. The Town felt very unheard by the IDA with no representation. The timing and access for the public at the public hearing was not what they wanted.

Heather McDaniel stated that there are specific requirements for posting notices for public hearing. The request for zoom access came one day before the hearing date and the notice had not included this information.

Rich John agreed that public hearings should be accessible to the community. It is unfortunate that the developer did not live up to other agreements. He commented that having zoning laws in place can offer protections when it comes to land use. He also pointed out that he feels that the IDA does pay attention to the rural communities in the County. There have been a number of projects in our Towns, and they have been good ones. The IDA has dramatically improved the County tax base and all the Towns get real benefit from that tax base. Development impacts for any project can be difficult but the trade for other benefits is something to consider.

CHAIRS REPORT - None

STAFF REPORT - None

MINUTES

Shawna Black made a motion to approve the May 11, 2022, board minutes. Jeff Gorsky seconded the motion. The motion was approved 6-1- 0 (Bruer abstain).

The meeting was adjourned at 3:42 pm.

Minutes were approved at the September 14, 2022 meeting.