

# Special Town Board Meeting

11/2/2010

The Local Development  
Corporation

&

The Continuing Efforts for  
Economic Development

## **1. Programs and Committees Served by the LDC**

Here are some of the groups at which the LDC represents the interests of Seneca Falls, in some cases, acts as the sole representative of Seneca County;

IDA	SCACOT
Chamber of Commerce	Chamber Tourism Committee
Chamber Economic Dev. Committee	Greater Rochester Enterprise
FLCC Geneva Campus Comm.	Cornell Cooperative Extension
County Planning Department	Farm Bureau
Creative Core of Syracuse	Seneca Wine Trail
Cayuga Wine Trail	NY State Wine and Grape Growers
Seneca Falls Hist. Preservation Bd	NYS Department of Ag and Markets
Seneca Falls Business Association	Canal Corporation of NY
Finger Lakes Museum Comm.	Finger Lakes Advanced Manfctring Ent.
Workforce Investment Board	Seneca Falls School District
Farmer's Market Federation of NY	Genesee/FL Regional Planning Cncl
Department of Housing and Community Renewal (Main Street Grant)	
Genesee Regional Transportation Commission	

## **2. Background:**

In 2005 the Town and Village of Seneca Falls began to explore the opportunity to collaborate on developing and administering a Local Development Corporation. The intent is presented in this point taken from our economic development agreement with JGB Properties on behalf of the Hotel Clarence;

1. The Town and the Village of Seneca Falls (the "Village") have caused SFDC to be incorporated for the purposes of the planning and implementation of programs, projects and activities designed to create or stimulate economic and community development in the Village and Town, thereby reducing the burden of government in many ways, including:

- A. Creating employment opportunities for the Village and Town residents, particularly those employment positions that pay a living wage, offer health, retirement, and other employee benefits, and provide skills training;
- B. Increasing the property tax base of the Village and Town;
- C. Increasing sales tax revenues in the Village and Town;
- D. Encouraging and fostering entrepreneurship;
- E. Strengthening and expanding existing businesses;
- F. Bringing new businesses into the Village and Town;
- G. Revitalizing downtown and other commercial shopping areas;
- H. Stimulating tourism growth;
- I. Encouraging the environmental remediation and reuse of contaminated property;
- J. Promoting the development of land use policies designed to encourage development and preserve Village and Town neighborhoods; and
- K. Encouraging and supporting the development and maintenance of municipal infrastructure, recreational facilities, and other public facilities and services that support businesses and residential neighborhoods.

### **3) Unique Elements of the Local Development Corporation**

A – Retail Development – The Seneca County Industrial Development Authority (SCIDA) is, by law, prohibited from performing any retail recruitment or business support. This would mean that none of the businesses which have opened in Seneca Falls in the past year would receive assistance, in any form, from the IDA.

The LDC is uniquely positioned to offer assistance, guidance and support for local retail businesses in the form of financial advice, loans, grant applications or, thanks to Bob Buccieri's 20+ years in marketing communications, advertising/branding and marketing support.

B – Seneca Falls Focus – The LDC's sole focus is to see that ANY local or regional initiative in tourism or economic development at least consider Seneca Falls for inclusion or featured position.

With the IDA and the Chamber following a countywide strategy, there is no guarantee that this community will be given proper consideration for prospective business.

Bob Buccieri maintains a voice, and a perspective which makes certain that Seneca Falls is properly represented. This effort is unduplicated, and cannot be fulfilled by any existing individual or organization and will cease to exist without Bob and the LDC.

C – Grant Management – The LDC is able to act as grant administrator on behalf of businesses and projects within Seneca Falls. In the past three years Bob has fulfilled that role (or similar roles) for the Main Street Grant (as Local Program Administrator), the Agri Tourism Grant (for the Seneca Wine Trail) and two grants from Senator Nozzolio's Office; one for the Women's Interfaith Institute and the other for the Ludovico Sculpture Trail.

This is a critical role which it appears the county is unwilling to fulfill in future dealings, as it has made quite clear that at the conclusion of this year's Main Street Grant proceedings it will not again serve as Administrator for local grant programs. Also, Bob is an accomplished grant writer who succeeded in getting the Agri-Tourism grant, having written the entire document, gathered letters and prepared research, even though O'Connell & Associates stepped in at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour to mail the application.

#### **4) Programs in place**

a. Seneca Falls Farmer's Market – With 200 + weekly visitors, the Farmer's Market has brought people to discover People's Park and build foot traffic in the Village. In the three years of operation our critical achievements include;

Enhancing the relationship with ITT and the NY Chiropractic College through the use of coupons and employee communication regarding the market resulting in more employee awareness and a direct line of communications to senior management of this company

Enhanced relationship with Cornell Cooperative Extension who co-sponsors the event and is integral to the coordinating efforts of county agricultural business.

Built relationship with the Farmer's Market Federation whose annual conference was held in Seneca Falls in March of 2010 resulting in 80+ visitors, 300+ meals and hotel nights during the event and an additional 100+ hotel nights and meals in subsequent visits.

The market has grown each year adding another element of prestige and prominence for Seneca Falls, and a reason to make the town a destination during summer Wednesdays.

b. Seneca Wine Tour – The creation of the Seneca Wine Tour is the envy of many communities in the Finger Lakes and statewide as we can authoritatively claim to be the "Only Public Bus Service to Wineries in the Nation" . This grant funded program has grown each year and resulted in;

1500+ visitors to Seneca Falls over 2+ years of operation

Room nights and reservations at B & B's and hotels directly attributable to the existence of the Seneca Wine Tour.

Meals served to customers before and after their wine tour experience.

Enhanced the relationship between this community and the wineries of Seneca County who are responsible for over a million annual visitors a year to our area. Also the visitors who came as a result of the Wine Tour helped to stabilize or grow winery business.

Because of the wine tour and the research performed in support of the Wine Tour we uncovered the fact that Seneca County has 30+ wineries, the largest concentration of wineries in the state, and possibly the nation. This fact is now being touted in our tourism communication and used by businesses to attract visitors.

## **5) Ongoing Elements**

- a. Alternative Energy Exploration – Have initiated conversations between the school district and Seneca Meadows to explore practical applications of methane powered power generation for the community and school district. This is a continuing project which is being explore don the County level as well.
- b. Grant Management and Exploration – Have serviced, are servicing or have applied for the following grants;
  - a. Department of Ag & Markets Agri-Tourism Grant – Was awarded \$49,050 to build the Seneca Wine Tour. Also consulted with Cornell Cooperative Extension on their Agri-Tourism Grant to develop farm guide for Seneca County.
  - b. Responsible for Member Item disbursements in support of Ludovico Sculpture Trail and Women’s Interfaith Institute from Senator Mike Nozzolio.
  - c. Main Street Grant Program – Acting as Local Program Administrator for the completion of the 2007 grant program. The LDC was instrumental in reinvigorating this grant program and in assisting property owners and County personnel in completing this grant process. In addition, the LDC is acting as administrator in the application for 2010 funding through Main Street.
  - d. CDBG Funding Development – Although yet to be presented, we have a commitment to continue disbursements of CDBG funding in support of local businesses and the community. As the LDC we are able to act as a funding agent on behalf of the Town to disburse funds to local property owners.
  - e. In addition, there are several grant program in which the LDC acted as primary or sole applicant which failed to receive funding. Nevertheless, the LDC uncovered, researched and built the grant applications where necessary.
- c. Business Support and Recruitment – Develop mailings and communications dedicated to retail development of the main business district.
  - a. Revise supporting literature for Deer Run Park.
  - b. Explore additional space opportunities within the community.
- d. Website Development – The LDC has secured the ownership of the URL web address [www.nyeconomicdevelopment.com](http://www.nyeconomicdevelopment.com) and has begun production on content to attract new business. In addition we have been responsible for updating current information on local, county and affiliated business sites.
- e. Advertising Initiatives – The LDC has made overtures to Economic Development publications to build proposals for advertising both freestanding and in conjunction with other local ED organizations.
  - a. Support Retail Advertising – The LDC participates in the local co-op advertising program for SF businesses to help lower costs and increase impact for the community advertising programs. The Town is precluded from this activity by law.
  - b. Media Interface – Brought USA Today to SF to cover the “It’s A Wonderful Life” connection; got coverage for the Seneca Wine Tour in Insider Magazine; working with Rochester Democrat & Chronicle on agricultural tourism support piece.
  - c. Seneca County Tourism Guide – Secured back cover of this publication which is circulated throughout the country and into Canada with a business building message. Over 90,000 circulated and we received this premium position at no premium charge.

## **6) Event Support, Coordination and Assistance**

The LDC has given financial, material or personnel support to these events during the past three years;

Special Olympics

Neighborhood Arts Fest

Classic Car Show

Convention Days

Women's Dialogues Weekend

NWHOF Induction Weekend

Cycling the Erie

Bonton Roulet

It's a Wonderful Life Celebration

Cork & Fork Celebration (October 2010)

These events have or will bring over 10,000 visitors a year into the community supporting local businesses and enhancing the image of our community.

## **7) Future Plans**

In addition to the programs which we have presented as “ongoing”, we anticipate several additional elements to come into play in the coming months as we continue to refine and expand the economic development of Seneca Falls. Specifically we would like to discuss and review these ideas in greater detail with the Board;

A – Revision to the Strategic Plan

A strategic plan, by its very nature, must be a “living document” and, as such must constantly be reviewed and updated. We propose that at 5 years, it is now time to revisit our plan and to do so using Bob Buccieri who is an experienced Planner having written or edited strategic plans for major corporations, small retailers and public service organizations.

B – Local Shopping Initiatives

We wish to explore and develop a “shop local” campaign to promote the business and welfare of local, independent, single owner operator businesses. We see several opportunities in this area;

- a. Shop Local website – Coordinating efforts among local businesses to develop web presence including Twitter, Face book and dedicated website as well as combined group site to allow for greater visibility, promotion and development of programs
- b. Shop Local Ad Campaign – Develop graphic standards and overall campaign to appear in local press and as a unifying element to local advertising.

C – CDBG Programming

We are investigating the possibility of acting as an agent of the Town to disperse and regulate CDBG funding for community improvement. There are several aspects of fund usage (including business support and community beautification) which cannot be used directly by the Town but could be executed in partnership with the LDC.

D – Consolidation Assistance

While the elements of the Village/Town consolidation are currently under assessment, we are confident that the LDC would be a useful element for the process. We expect to explore this opportunity with the Town and Village and develop useful and practical outcomes for this process.

E – Marketing Plan Development

Create unified message, consistent look and overall message strategy to promote and present the community of Seneca Falls to new prospects in both Tourism and Economic Development. This will entail several elements including graphics guidelines, media plan, budget plan and strategic overview, among others.