



Onondaga County Legislature

JAMIE McNAMARA
Clerk

JAMES J. ROWLEY
Chairman

TAMMY BARBER
Deputy Clerk

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PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 13, 2022 **TIM BURTIS, CHAIRMAN**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Gunnip, Ms. Kuhn, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Garland
ALSO PRESENT: Chairman Rowley, Mr. Ryan, Mrs. Ervin; also see attached

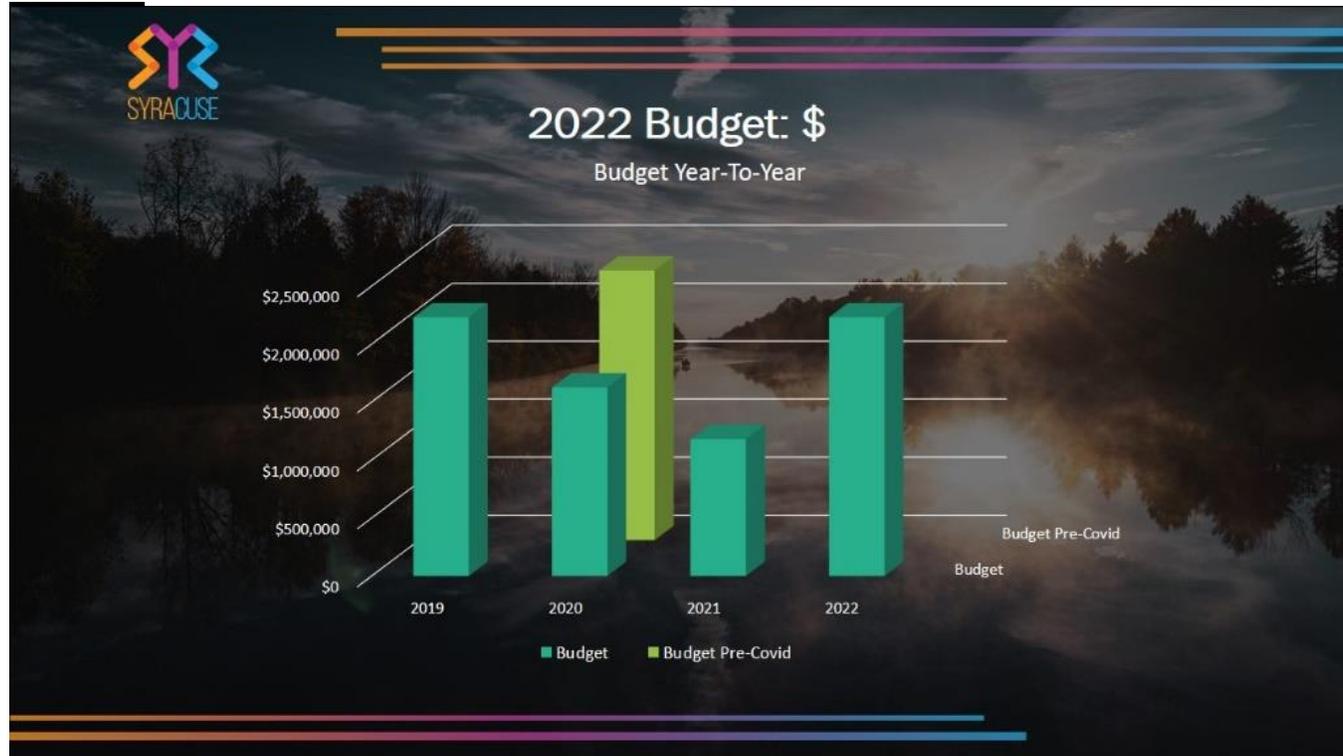
Chair Burtis called the meeting to order at 9:07 a.m. *The minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed, and there were no objections to waiving the reading. There were no corrections to the minutes, and the minutes were approved.*

1. **VISIT SYRACUSE**: Daniel Liedka, President/CEO
 - a. **Designating Visit Syracuse as the Agency Authorized to Make Application to the New York State Department of Economic Development and to Receive Matching Funds Therefrom Under the New York State Tourist Promotion Act for January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023**
 - Matching Funds Grant received from I Love NY and Empire State Development (ESD) every year
 - 2022 - Received \$50k from NY; projection looks the same for 2023
 - Matching funds have to be used, NYS has to approve use of those funds
 - Funds are put into an account and then NYS matches it
 - Funds typically used for website, visitors guide, photography
 - Funds are very helpful; without them, it is probably a position would have to eliminate
 - Visit Syracuse provides \$50k, NYS provides \$50k - \$100k total
 - Money must be in separate account prior to approval of match grant
 - Official website launch about 12 days away
 - Modernized website includes accessibility for hearing and visually impaired

A motion was made by Mr. Knapp, seconded by Mr. Garland, to approve this item. Passed unanimously;
MOTION CARRIED

b. INFORMATIONAL: 2022 Budget Update

BUDGET



- Funding 2019-2022
- Asked for sizeable budget increase for 2023

2022 SALES & SERVICE SUCCESSES

32,500
Definite Rooms
booked as of end of
August 2022

50,000
Projected Definite
Rooms booked by
end of year 2022

2022 SALES & SERVICES SUCCESSES

Major 2022 conferences/events: Science Teachers Association of NYS NYS School Boards, Nationals

115 groups serviced since January 1, 2022

Connected visitors with local businesses with 361 referrals so far for 2022 – 115 directly from conventions

Updated services items including new step & repeat, custom board for photo booth opportunities and new promotional items

- Sales in 2017-18 approximately 28-29k rooms per year
- Shadow 50k this year; hit numbers during COVID-19

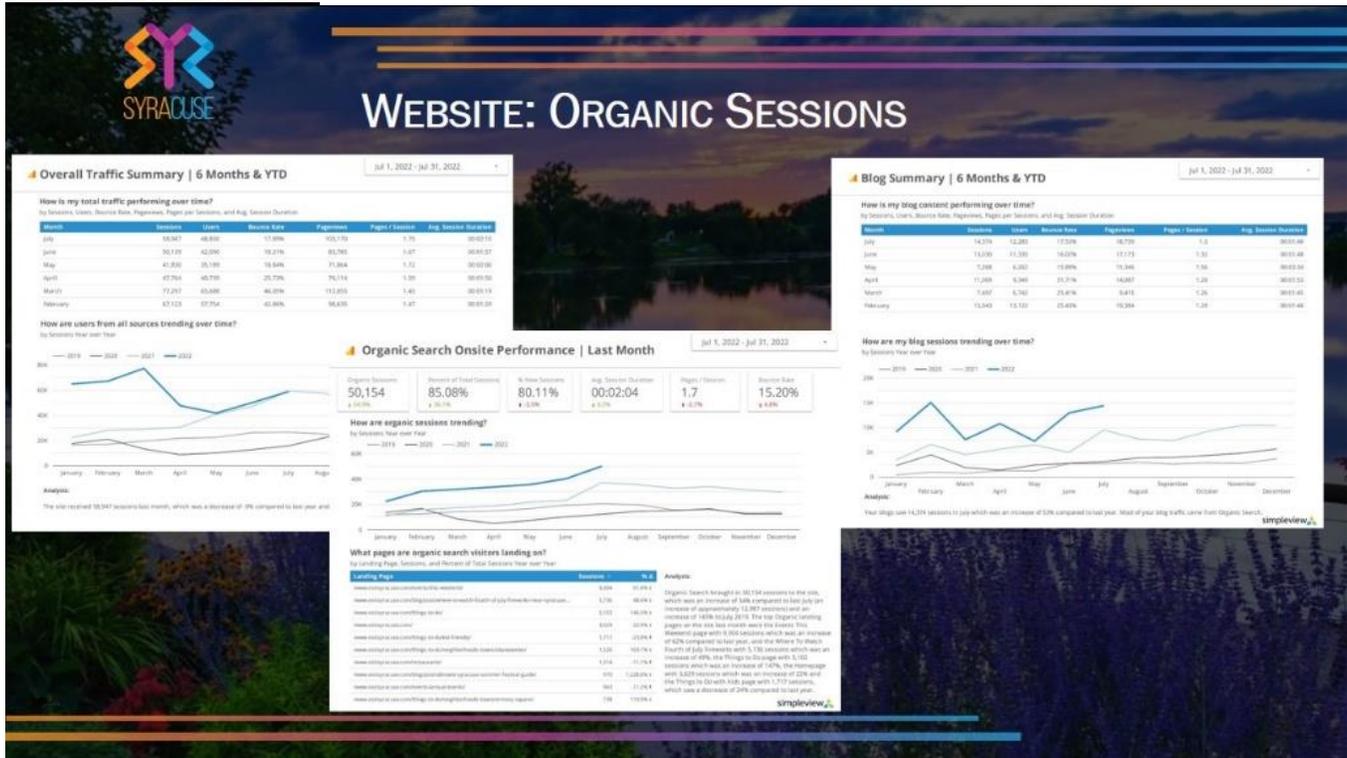
- 2022 will shatter previous years
 - Will easily hit 50k rooms with a stretch goal of 55k rooms
 - Approximately \$46 million economic impact for the County through these bookings
- Conventions
 - NYS School Boards are returning this year and every 3 years thereafter
 - Have not been in Syracuse since 1998
 - Syracuse Nationals
 - \$20 million economic impact on its own
 - Servicing Events
 - Provide transportation for events at the Oncenter
 - Conventions of 300 people or more require transportation from 4 or 5 hotels
 - Pre-COVID, could transport 48 people per bus
 - Cannot put more than 26 on a bus now for spacing reasons
 - Very costly
 - Spent close to \$200k this year on transportation due to rising costs, fuel, more buses
- Bed Tax Collection Numbers
 - Occupancy rates are on par with 2019
 - Room rates are on par with 2019
 - Expecting a good year for Bed Tax Collections

MARKETING SUCCESSES



- Website Design
 - Websites are all about video content now; video content is expensive and takes time
 - Getting traffic to website is all visual now
 - Have prepared the last few years for this
 - Plenty of assets
 - Plenty of ways to drive traffic
- Website is backbone of Syracuse Visits
 - Thank you to Legislators for stepping in support of website
- Navigation improved 1,000%

ORGANIC SESSIONS



- Overall Traffic
 - Completely transformed Team over the last 5 years
 - Relied heavily on outside Marketing firms; parted ways in May 2022 with local Marketing firm to do in house
 - March 2022 had 98k visitors to website
 - February 2022 had 112k visitors to website
 - April 2022 had 76k visitors to website - lost traffic because previous Marketing firm did paid ads with tags to website
 - July 2022 up to 103k visits to website (all in house)
 - 2023 budget will ask for another Employee for Creative - will drive traffic to website
- Organic Search (not paying someone to find website)
 - Finding website is 85% Organic
 - Top google searches for Syracuse and website are:
 - #1 search - What to do on the weekend
 - 4th of July fireworks (85,000 searches)
 - Kid friendly things to do
 - Showcase unique neighborhoods, restaurants, festivals
- Blog Summary
 - Hired local news personality to handle blog content
 - 2 year goal is to launch a YouTube TV channel that can be monetized and generate more revenue
 - New employee will do stories on local small business and go to big events
 - Blog traffic increased 30k people year over year from July
 - Hired a “Reputation Builder” - Google certified expert

VISITORS GUIDE

- In years past, Advanced Media did Visitors Guide
 - Cost was about \$45,000 per year
 - Printed about 50,000 copies
 - Visit Syracuse did lion’s share of content
 - Advanced Media handled the layout
 - Advanced Media sold the advertising and kept it
- Visit Syracuse is now handling the Visitors Guide
 - Printed the Guide for \$36,000
 - Sold \$32,000 in advertising
 - Cost \$4,000; with a net \$41,000

PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Started Upstate Eats Trail (UET) during pandemic
 - Partnering with Buffalo/Rochester/Binghamton
 - Due to success, Governor put additional few million dollars into it
 - Appeared in Food & Wine Magazine and Forbes
 - Visit Syracuse handles Instagram
 - Regularly host influencers, travel writers, journalists
 - Separate account getting money from the State for the UET
 - UET consists of Binghamton, Syracuse, Rochester, Buffalo (I-90 to I-81)
 - State provides money to the UET to fund website and advertising that goes with it
 - Visit Syracuse provides much of the content for the UET
 - UET asks to recognize 4 or 5 iconic restaurants
 - Heids; Coleman’s, Doug’s Fish Fry, Bull & Bear
 - Free coverage and traffic from media
 - 2021 Visit Syracuse invested heavily in data
 - Geo-fence restaurants and big attractions
 - Track monthly data on email addresses, credit card spend number of people visited
 - Personal information goes into database to target other ads that may be of interest

ADVERTISING



- Google and Facebook ads - Facebook ads are economical; can micro target age and location

MARKETING SUCCESSES
ADVERTISING

STILL TO COME
October 2022
New York Society of Assn. Executives ad campaign targeting meeting/convention planners throughout the Northeast

5-week summer/fall advertising campaign in Ottawa and Kingston

THE OTHER NEW YORK
VISITSYRACUSE.COM/CANADA

YOU
LEVY ADDS SOME SEX TO RESUME
KINGS, QUEENS & KIDS
WORLDWIDE NEWS

THE OTHER NEW YORK
VISITSYRACUSE.COM/CANADA

WORLDWIDE NEWS
Wetland conservationists warn of blue-green algae

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT
RE/MAX Finest

- Advertising in NYC and Canada
 - Has been in market for about 3 weeks
 - Ottawa is a feeder city
- Now able to measure the ROI - have the ability to know if choices made are good ones

SOCIAL MEDIA

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media channels have all seen immense growth throughout the year across all platforms (IG, FB, TikTok +) and objectives, including engagement rate, click-thru rate and number of followers.

Performance Summary
View your top profile performance metrics from the reporting period.

Impressions	Engagements	Post Link Clicks
5,062,284 \uparrow 399.8%	85,705 \uparrow 74%	26,157 \uparrow 80.6%

Engagement Rate (per impression)
1.6% \downarrow 66.3%

Audience Growth
See how your audience grew during the reporting period.

Net Audience Growth by Month

Engagement
Last 90 Days | Jun 11 - Sep 8
14,550
Comment Interactions
0% from ads
 \uparrow 100% on Mar 13 - Jun 10

Post Interactions
Last 90 Days | Jun 11 - Sep 8
3,303
Likes: 2,761
Comments: 71
Saves: 123
Shares: 272

Reels Interactions
Last 90 Days | Jun 11 - Sep 8
11,003 \uparrow 558%
Likes: 8,606
Comments: 434
Saves: 358
Shares: 1,023

Top Posts
Based on likes

Total Audience	46,121	\uparrow 10.7%
Total Net Audience Growth	4,016	\uparrow 538.5%
Twitter Post Follower Growth	362	\uparrow 1,473.3%
Facebook Post Page Likes	563	\uparrow 603.8%
Instagram Post Follower Growth	2,127	\uparrow 601.4%
LinkedIn Post Follower Growth	444	\uparrow 33.1%
TikTok Post Follower Growth	526	

- Launched TikTok end of 1st quarter 2022; picked up additional 90k followers
- Engagements - 85k Engagements; up 74%
- Impressions (when you scroll through and see an ad)
 - 5 million impressions so far this year; up 400%

- Clicks
 - Average time on click is 1 minute and 50 seconds
 - Currently ahead of competitors on click time
 - Up 26%



- This slide shows some examples of TikTok posts
 - Try to promote as many local businesses as possible
 - Below are links to 2 TikTok videos
 - <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTRaeVxPF/>
 - <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZTRaeqNAu/>

ONLINE BOOKING

Metric	Value
Room Revenue	\$13.57K
Reservations	38
Room Nights	58
ADR	\$234
LOS	1.5
Booking Window	21.3
Conversion	3.0%

Property	Reservations
Courtyard Syracuse Downtown At Armory Square	13.2%
Collegian Hotel & Suites, Trademark Collection by Wyndham	12.2%
Stratton Syracuse University Hotel & Conference Center	12.2%
Days Inn by Wyndham Syracuse	7.5%
Comfort Inn & Suites	5.5%
Sagen & Jay Wyndham	5.5%
Liverpool/Syracuse North Airport	5.5%
Hamilton by Wyndham East Syracuse Carrier Circle	5.5%
Marriott Syracuse Downtown	5.5%
Embassy Suites by Hilton Syracuse Destiny USA	5.5%
Residence Inn by Marriott Syracuse Downtown at Armory	5.5%

Property Type	Percentage
Hotel	100.0%

Within the first 30 days of switching our online booking engine, to RootRez we can show proof to partners that Visit Syracuse has provided their properties with over \$13K in bookings.

We look to run a campaign around booking through our site with this new platform as well as looking to partners for add-ons, additional tickets or things to do that can be added when placing your reservation.

- Stakeholders are hotels, Airbnb, Campgrounds, RV Parks, Bed & Breakfast
 - Commend Legislators for including Airbnb in bed tax
- Currently, Visit Syracuse is the only website for travelers to find local hotel inventory and rates
 - Have the ability to:
 - Know if they book
 - How much they spent while in town
 - Where they are from
 - Have all contact information
- Been online for 3 weeks and have produced almost \$14,000 in revenue for stakeholders
 - Valued partner for hotels
 - Public can opt out of data collection; opt out ratio is currently about 60/40

FESTIVALS



- Mission with Festivals and Economic Development projects
 - Offer assistance in Economic Development by:
 - Doing presentations for them to showcase the area
 - Offer assistance to Festivals in order to:
 - Help them understand how to properly do their social media
 - Drive traffic to their website
 - Place Facebook ads in markets to help get people to their event
- Jazz Fest
 - Received about \$10,000 for assisting with social media
 - Clinton Square was in top 5 most visited destinations in NYS excluding Manhattan for Jazz Fest weekend
 - Measured 450 hotel rooms
 - The economic impact over that weekend was well over \$500,000
 - Economic impact would have been better if Visit Syracuse had a full year to advertise
 - If location is turned on in (i.e.) Clinic Square, geo-fencing can access where they are from, how much they spent, what they spent it on, etc.
 - Additional information can and will be dropped to individuals

PARTNERSHIPS

MARKETING SUCCESSES
PARTNERSHIPS

On planning committees and Task Forces for:
 2022 Travel Unity Summit Northeast (featuring DEI approaches to Tourism Marketing)
 Hancock International Airport – Air Service Development Task Force
 Finger Lakes Regional Tourism Council – Board of Directors

Participate in ILNY programs and ILNY Media Marketplace PR events

Created & manage the Upstate Eats Trail Instagram account

Partner with Mets & Crunch

Oncenter Complex Seasonal Marquee Displays

BRUNCH, BREWS, BLOOMS, CUISINE, CONCERTS, CARNIVALS

IT'S SPRING IN SYRACUSE, IT'S SUMMER IN SYRACUSE

SYRACUSE SYRACUSE

EXPERIENCE THE SEASON AT VISITSYRACUSE.COM

EXPERIENCE THE SEASON AT VISITSYRACUSE.COM

CRUNCH

Upstate Eats Trail Instagram account

- Designed Marquee’s for the Oncenter and War Memorial
- On task force for the Travel Unity Summit (Diversity & Inclusion Convention)
 - Hosted first convention pre pandemic
 - Sponsoring October 2022 convention in Cayuga County
- NYS looks at Onondaga County two ways:
 - Tourism – Onondaga County is viewed as the Finger Lakes tourism region
 - ESD – Onondaga County is viewed as the CNY region (which includes contiguous counties; Onondaga, Cortland, Madison, Cayuga, Oswego)

THE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT & ESPN

MARKETING SUCCESSES
THE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT & ESPN

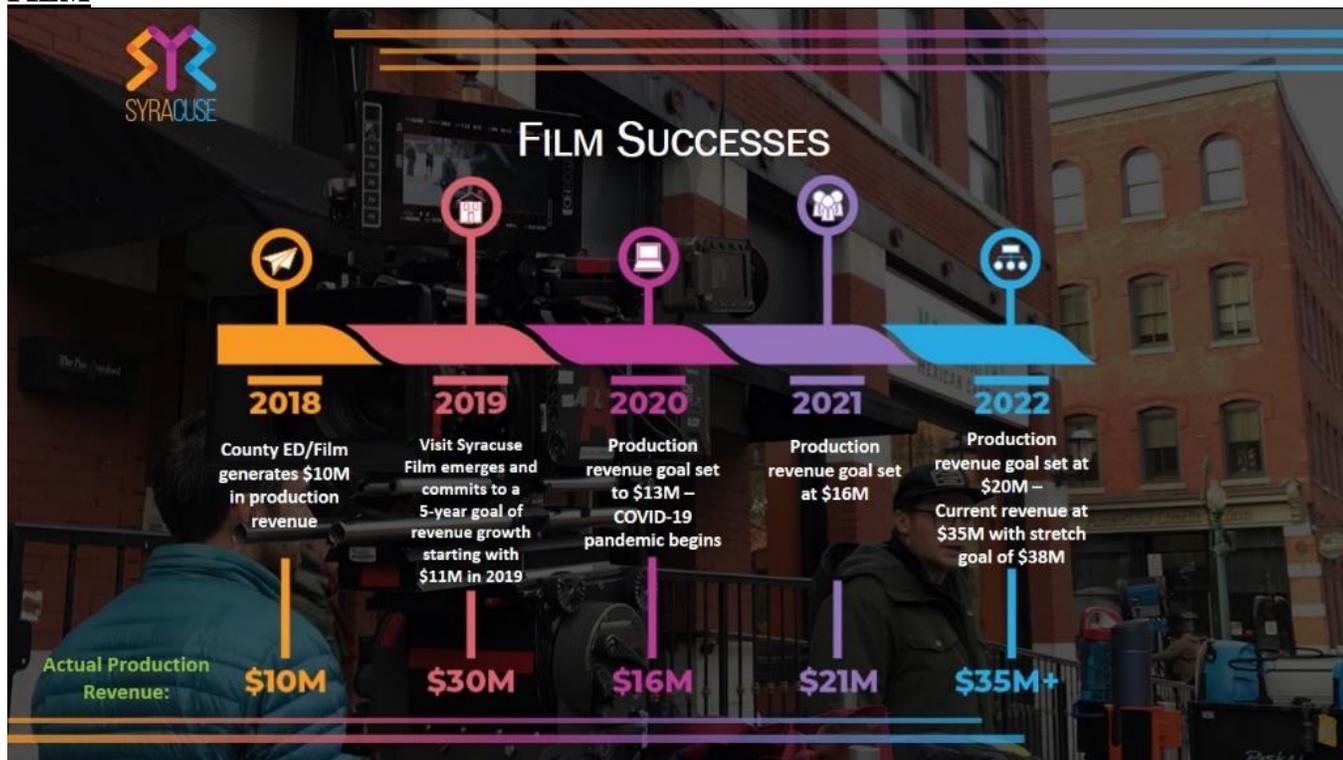
We hosted The Basketball Tournament for the first time since 2019, again at Onondaga Community College. With our partnership with TBT we were able to gain two 15-second ad spots, at a discounted rate, to play on ESPN during the tournament.

SYRACUSE SYRACUSE

AXA SYRACUSE

- Produced TV commercials which appeared on ESPN with a national audience for duration of tournament
- All images in commercial spots are the work of Visit Syracuse
- ESPN charged \$6k for commercials

FILM



- Return is close to \$125 for every \$1 put in

FILM STUDIOS

FILM STUDIOS

The Film Office has gained interest in the region from major studios, including the likes of Warner Brothers, HBO Max, MGM, Annapurna, Blumhouse, Netflix and Amazon Prime

The region has attracted 5 new production companies to film in the area, outside of American High & HULU and the likes of Danny Trejo, Kevin James and more!

Logos: HBO max, prime, WB, NETFLIX, BLUMHOUSE

- Film is taking off
 - Aggressive with geo-targeting at film festivals

- Appear in high level magazines that film producers receive
- Syracuse 1 of 2 cities in final running for \$50 million movie with A-List cast based on bestselling book
 - The other city was selected because it was where the history of the book took place
 - Per A-List Celebrity - Pitch deck better than any seen in Hollywood
- Visit Syracuse receives a script and determines what physical assets in County or region would fit the part
 - Utilize drone footage and photography
 - Script is sent back to the film maker outlining assets that line up with script
 - Provide information on tax credit

BINGHAMTON



- Binghamton hired Visit Syracuse to do their film
 - First step with Binghamton began January 1, 2022
 - First movie out January 1, 2023
 - Binghamton pays Visit Syracuse \$125k per year in a management contract
 - New employee in Binghamton to handle logistics
 - Worked out permits with police and local municipalities
- Goal is to have a film region from Oswego to Binghamton
 - Currently in communication with Ithaca in Cayuga county
 - Onondaga County benefits from filming in Binghamton because
 - They fly into Syracuse airport
 - Eat in local restaurants
 - Shoot some scenes in Onondaga County

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



- Redhouse and MOST are important because
 - Both are qualified as production facilities
 - Both have to shoot a scene to get a tax credit
- Film has been a major success story; American High – worked out a few more movies to stay
- Incentives
 - NYS offers approximately 38%
 - Another 4% local incentive through CNY Arts
 - Top 2 best incentives in the country
- CNY Arts
 - Visit Syracuse will train CNY Arts and other small agencies on how to access and put events on calendar
 - Events on calendar go through a review and approval process
- The system allows a way to measure the status of leads - contracts are out there waiting to be signed
- Roadblock
 - 81 project is a huge concern
 - Competitors use 81 project against the county
 - Need a comprehensive plan to get through the 81 project
 - Asking for big increase in budget
- Turning Stone is competitor that flies under the radar
- Everything is goal driven and is run like a business; everything is measured
- Can get numbers on geo-fencing
 - Went into a cooperative with other agencies
 - Got 30 locations for free
- Carrier Circle starting to rebound
 - 2-3 years ago a depressed area
 - Can get hotel occupancy rates by neighborhood

2. **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:** Martin Skahen, Director

- a. **Expressing Support for Onondaga County’s Application for Restore NY Funding for the South Presbyterian Church/Castle Restoration Project** (*Sponsored by Mr. Garland*)
 - Empire State Development (ESD) offering grant called “Restore NY Communities Initiative”
 - Competitive grant program

- Eligible to ask for up to \$5 million
- Program designed for revitalization of commercial and residential properties
- Webpage for Restore NY: <https://esd.ny.gov/restore-new-york>
- ESD is looking address blighted structures
 - Priority given to projects that leverage other state or federal development remediation or planning programs
 - Strong emphasis on projects from economically distressed communities
- City of Syracuse recommended the Castle project
 - Ms. Primo and County Executive McMahon on board with project; Legislator Garland supports project
- Castle is a project to transform vacant church into a multiuse venue
 - Developers are Chino and Evelyn Ingram
 - 30k square foot venue that will be an arena for
 - Professional Development, Awareness Building, Jobs, Health and Nutrition, Social Engagement
 - \$14 million project will include
 - Upscale lounge, large event space for banquets & performances, conference rooms, job training space; construct addition to hold state of the art kitchen
 - Received funding from:
 - National Grid, Allen Foundation, CNY Community Foundation, Gifford Foundation, Reisman Foundation, Jan McDonald Foundation, and 2 National Trust Preservation Fund Awards
- ESD awarded this project a \$1.2 million grant
- Submitted grant in August and was told it could move forward
 - Need to have application in on 10/11/22, need resolution from municipal body showing support of project
- Asking for \$5 million in Grant money
 - Per prior experience, Grant is typically not split up; all or nothing
 - Competing with everyone in the entire State for this grant
- Per municipality size, maximum Grant ask from ESD is \$5 million
- Must be severely economic disadvantaged area to meet the main criteria for the grant
 - ESD sends out rankings by number of disadvantages areas
 - Most disadvantaged is an 8; Clay would be a 2 and would not meet the main criteria
- Plan to use other funding sources as the match to the Grant
- Community Development will oversee the Grant
- Will reimburse as goals of the project are met
- Believe it is a 2 year period after go ahead is given
- Have not seen any stipulations in the Grant application; may be stipulation details in agreement if awarded money
- Developers are enthusiastic
- Starting point to transform the whole neighborhood
- King & King did schematics
- Will have a competent General Contractor

A motion was made by Mr. Garland, seconded by Ms. Kuhn, to approve this item. Ayes: 3 (Burtis, Kuhn, Knapp, Garland) Abstain: 1 (Gunnip); MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was adjourned at 10:56 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

COMMITTEE: **PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**
 DATE: **SEPTEMBER 13, 2022**

Respectfully submitted,



TAMMY BARBER, Deputy Clerk
 Onondaga County Legislature

NAME (Please Print)	DEPARTMENT/AGENCY
Danny Liedka	VS
Melissa Morgan	VS
Susan Boyle	Comm Dev
Marty Skaha	Comm Dev
Jate Heado	Comptroller's Office
Tenisha Murphy	CE Office
Darcie Leonard	Leg
Jim Beebe	Leg