

River Area Council of Governments
June 28, 2023

Members present: S. Burto, R. Grunert, J. Jones, R. Mullin, P. Smith,
T. Widrick, and J. Zando

Others: M. Dietrich and K. Malinowski

Vice-Chair J. Zando called the meeting to order at 6:00pm at the V/Castorland Office.

Presentations

S. Burto and Tracy Verri, MRB Economic Specialist, presented the final report prepared for the Towns of Champion and Wilna and the Villages of Carthage and West Carthage including the Hamlets of Natural Bridge and Great Bend. The study/report is intended to provide strategies for economic resiliency. The presentation discussed the project scope, focus areas, proposed actions and their cost. Report add-ons included streetscape and resiliency tool kits. Key outcomes from the report were: 1) need for daycare facilities; 2) reuse of the hospital; 3) tourism and recreation; 4) streetscape and pedestrian improvements; 5) compatible downtown zoning; 6) business development; and 7) youth activities. The study and report were compiled with the cooperation and input from Sarah Bullock, T/Wilna Economic consultant, Richard Duvall, Carthage Area Hospital, Jennifer Premo, Carthage Central School, Robert Sligar, Carthage Federal Savings, Adam Fuller, Fuller Insurance Agency and the general public in addition to the core committee.

Colleen Bradley, NYSDOH, and Kristin Martinez, NYSDEC, presented information regarding Drinking Water Source Protection, informally known as "DWSP2". The program provides free technical assistance, water source mapping, inventories of potential contamination, and funding guidance. S. Burto asked if participation in the program would enhance funding opportunities to deal with EPA administrative orders. K. Martinez responded that it would not at this time.

Circuit Rider Report

M. Dietrich provided a summary of feedback from the 2023 Economic Summit and questioned if the Council supports a 2024 summit. Members unanimously supported a 2024 Summit and approved the rotation to a Jefferson County site.

M. Dietrich questioned if there was interest in replacing the original RACOG banners that had been displayed on the bridge between Carthage and

West Carthage and adding additional banners for other member communities. The Council agreed, by consensus, to not replace or add any banners. Members cited the banners already on display in a number of communities including military and businesses.

M. Dietrich and K. Malinowski reported on updates to the blackriverny.com website and an upcoming presentation by Laurie Carr, Chief for Hiawatha First Nation on July 28, 2023 at South Lewis School.

Discussions have been held with BOCES and JCC to determine if programs can be set up to provide training for water operators and persons desiring to obtain Class A commercial driver licenses.

The next RACOG meeting is scheduled for September. Motion by P. Smith, seconded by S. Burto to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:02pm.

Christina Vargulick
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RACOG Secretary