**Minutes of Meeting
North Shore Council of Governments
Wednesday, March 8, 2023, 2:00 p.m.
Constantia Town Hall
14 Frederick Street
Constantia, New York**

**Attending:**

**Cleveland**: Laureen Tackman, Robin Wilson **Constantia**; Ron Chapman, Richard (Rip) Colesante, Tom Moran, Frank Tomaino
**West Monroe**: Vern Sundet **NorCOG staff**: Paul M. Baxter **Tug Hill Commission**: Katie Malinowski, Matt Johnson

**Meeting called to order at 2:00 p.m. and attendees were introduced.**

**North Shore meeting participation**: Participation by member NorCOG materials was identified by the group as a problem. Vern contacted Central Square, and they said evening meetings were better for them.

**North Shore Economic Development Initiative**: Rip reviewed the history of this effort. The village of Cleveland is not interested in participating in a North Shore economic development study as currently defined. The group discussed pursuing this more incrementally, and discussed how to pay for a study. It’s possible this may take the form of a joint study between the two NorCOG towns rather than as NorCOG as a group. The village of Cleveland asked about the possibility of alternate funding sources, including New York Forward or the Downtown Revitalization Initiative.

Tug Hill Commission Executive Director Katie Malinowski brought up the possibility of an alternate approach to the $75,000+ study discussed at the January meeting. Communities in the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) area – West Carthage, Carthage, Wilna and Champion commissioned a much less expensive study of a strategy of downtown economic resiliency conducted by the MRB Group. A North Shore study would need to include the economic influence of Oneida Lake. Rip thought it was important to involve private enterprise efforts, as government along does not have enough reach. Vern added the need for economic diversity in support of business.

In terms of the general economic climate of the North Shore, Laureen mentioned that the bad winter had hurt support for local bars, restaurants, and diners.

**Tug Hill report**: Katie reported on state-level contacts made on behalf of North Shore communities and their interests. She spoke with state senator Mannion about reimbursement of municipalities for state-held Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs),and about Oneida Lake flood management. It is not acceptable to benefit Cross Lake at the expense of Oneida Lake.

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) Region 7 director has changed. The former Cleveland Elementary School, now owned by NYSDEC, is still under renovation, although NYSDEC may not be as interested now in its use due to internal realignments in the organization.

**COG membership and participation**: Discussion continued on measure to be taken to encourage participation by Central Square and the possibility of getting the town of Hastings to rejoin NorCOG. Hastings is not currently a member, but was a member of NorCOG’s predecessor organization, the North Shore Cooperative Planning Board, and NorCOG has periodically approached Hastings about joining NorCOG since.

**Micron**: There is an upcoming Oswego County meeting with county town supervisors and mayors about anticipated impacts on the county from the upcoming Micron chip plant development in adjacent Onondaga County. Katie has been in touch with county planning director Dave Turner. SUNY Oswego has been involved in the planning effort. There are expected to be housing impacts. Lack of internet access is a problem for Constantia, with an estimated $800,000 cost to expanding access townwide. Constantia and West Monroe could miss out on Micron due to successful lobbying by others – the town of Mexico, and the 481 corridor.

There has been an influx of money from out-of-state, including Texas and California. The price for Four Minnows in Cleveland went from $99,000 to $400,000.

**General discussion**: Vern and Rip advocated for efforts to make sure the North Shore was kept in line for ARPA funding by the county. As mentioned earlier, an economic development study would be vital to provide direction to efforts. Laureen mentioned that Cleveland had a new diner and had spoken with the owner. The owner was not concerned about cold weather slowdown. Ron commented that the owner had a good business plan. It’s a family owned business that does catering on the side. They have no plans to leave. Rip noted the lack of places to eat in town, and the need to reach out to businesses as part of an economic plan. Barados and The Sand Bar were mentioned.

There is a lack of motel space in the area, and Cleveland just lost some when a motel was converted into apartments. There is a new opportunity with the renovation of Vanderkamp, and those owners are interested in working with the community.

Vern noted what we don’t do is promote our towns and points of attraction such as Vanderkamp and the golf courses.

A division of Riccelli is engaging in sand and gravel mining of the old Ernie Corliss pit in Constantia, with more intensive activity than during the mining for the Onondaga Lake remediation project. There was speculation that it was being done to stockpile materials in advance of the upcoming I-81 reconstruction project in Syracuse and Onondaga County.

**Next meeting date, location, agenda items**: The group decided to meet next on Wednesday, May 3, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. at the West Monroe Town Hall; topics to include economic development, and preparedness for Micron impacts.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Paul M. Baxter
Municipal Management Consultant
North Shore Council of Governments