



OLEAN TIMES HERALD

County lawmakers to eye county-wide trail system plan

By RICK MILLER, Olean Times Herald

Nov 13, LITTLE VALLEY — Looking to capitalize on the success of existing trails, Cattaraugus County lawmakers are seeking a county-wide trail system plan.

Development and Agriculture Committee Chairman Howard VanRensselaer, R-Randolph, and Vice Chairman John Padlo, D-Olean, are sponsors of a resolution to hire a Rochester firm for \$50,000 to develop a county-wide trail system plan.

The resolution, which will be discussed by legislative committees on Wednesday, calls for Batton & Loguidice D.P.C., Rochester, to develop the study meant to integrate the preservation of the county's natural landscape, open opportunities for recreation seekers and capitalize on any outdoor-oriented tourism activity.

A \$28,000 grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission and \$22,000 in budgeted county funds will pay for the study proposed by the Department of Economic Development, Planning and Tourism.

The contract with Barton & Loguidice begins Tuesday and expires Aug. 31.

The goal is to try to expand existing trails such as the Allegheny River Valley Trail in Olean and Allegany and the Pat McGee Trail running from Salamanca to Cattaraugus, help trails just starting up such as the Ellicottville and Great Valley Trail System and promote new trails.

Another resolution sponsored by VanRensselaer and Padlo authorized County Legislature Chairman Paula Stockman, R-South Dayton, to apply for funding from the Local Initiatives Support Corporation for the Cattaraugus County Land Bank Corporation.

The state Land Bank Community Revitalization Initiative Grant Program will provide seed money for the county's new land bank, which the state Empire Development Corp. approved the formation of in March.

The purpose of the new Cattaraugus County Land Bank is "to fight blight in our communities by repurposing distressed and vacant properties, restoring them to the tax rolls, and provide quality housing opportunities," according to the resolution.

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The county may have more opportunities in the near future to pull blighted or distressed properties from the county auction of properties seized for nonpayment of back taxes.

Properties with two years of unpaid taxes will be seized next year. The current period before a property is seized for nonpayment of property taxes is three years.

Backers of the two-year window to pay back taxes said the three-year period didn't end up helping those who fell behind in their taxes, and properties often ended up with another year of deferred maintenance.

Earlier this year, instead of auctioning off several blighted properties it seized in Olean, county lawmakers deeded the properties to the city. The Common Council will decide whether to demolish the properties or renovate and sell them so they can be placed back on the tax rolls, or properties sold to neighbors.

VanRensselaer and Padlo are sponsors of another resolution to apply for federal funding to develop inventories of brownfields in the county, prioritize the sites, conducting community involvement activities, site assessments and cleanup planning.

The program is federally funded. The county Department of Economic Development, Planning and Tourism is eligible to apply for up to 10 percent of the grant funding for related program development and implementation activities.

OTHER RESOLUTIONS on the agenda for committee review Wednesday would:

Extend contracts until Dec. 31, 2017, to design an expansion of camping facilities near the county-operated Onoville Marina, and for Phase III engineering services for Haskell Road, Portville, by Hunt Engineers, Architects & Land Surveyors, Horseheads;

Authorize \$54,950 for two Sheriff's Department vehicles at state bid from a health insurance account; and Extend a contract with Motorola Solutions Inc. for labor and materials for installing emergency radio communications equipment at the new tower on Indiana Avenue in Olean; and Authorize a contract with CH2M Hill BWXT West Valley, for up to \$175,865 for on site security law enforcement services at the **West Valley Demonstration Project**.

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