



KAREN FELDMAN
Acting Chair

TERRY MARTINO
Executive Director

**DRAFT MINUTES
Economic Affairs Committee
March 15, 2019
DFK:ap**

**Economic Affairs Committee
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The Economic Affairs Committee convened at 9:30 a.m.

Economic Affairs Committee Members Present:

Art Lussi, Chair, Dr. Chad Dawson, Bradley Austin (ESD), Robert Stegemann (DEC)

Other Members and Designees Present:

Karen Feldman, Acting Chair, Dan Wilt, John Ernst, William Thomas

Local Government Review Board:

Gerald Delaney, Executive Director

Agency Staff Present:

Terry Martino, Sarah Reynolds, Keith McKeever, Sue Streiff, Robyn Burgess, Kathy Regan, Kate Lynn Knight, Dan Kelleher

Economic Affairs Report:

Dan Kelleher, Special Assistant for Economic Affairs, gave a brief report about a new initiative regarding age-friendly communities and age-friendly recreation in the Park. The initiative is being led by Mercy Care for the Adirondacks with a goal to improve the quality of life for the region's aging residents. Mr. Kelleher also provided a brief overview of upcoming presentations to local government and business groups.

Birch Boys Chaga (Garrett Kopp and Loretta Buerkle)

Garrett Kopp discussed his Tupper Lake-based business, Birch Boys Chaga. The company sells tinctures and teas made from locally-sourced ingredients and its flagship product is chaga tea. Mr. Kopp became interested in chaga through his grandmother and initially worked with her to sell his product at local farmers' markets. After initial market validation, Mr. Kopp determined that there was an opportunity to expand and grow the business.

Mr. Kopp identified that he expects to expand the business to include products made from other fungi as well as trees and plants found in the region. The company's

ingredients are all sourced within the Adirondacks, including on lands leased from the Molpus Woodlands Group. Mr. Kopp discussed various harvesting techniques for each ingredient.

The company sells its products through multiple channels including direct to consumer, wholesale, and bulk retail distribution.

Mr. Kopp explained the company's future plans, including a new storefront in Tupper Lake in coordination with a new Adirondack Store location in that community. The company will maintain a tea bar in the new Adirondack Store.

Mr. Kopp then introduced Josh Mclean, Quality Control Manager, and Loretta Buerkle, Administrative Manager for a brief question and answer session. The three were presented with a certificate of appreciation from Acting Chair Feldman.

Old Business

None

New Business

None

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.