

Hamilton County Express
February 10, 2010

Local governments saying no to governor's selection

By PETE KLEIN, Staff Reporter

LAKE PLEASANT — The “noes” quickly became a conga line as local government leaders wrote strong objections to Governor David Paterson's recent nomination of boat builder and environmental activist Peter Hornbeck of Omstedtville to replace businessman Arthur Lussi of Lake Placid as the resident Adirondack Park Agency (APA) commissioner from Essex County.

The NYS Senate Environment Committee has delayed a confirmation hearing on Hornbeck until local governments have an opportunity to provide input on Paterson's choice.

First to issue statements were Adirondack Park Local Government Review Board Executive Director Fred Monroe and Adirondack Association of Towns and Villages President Brian Towers.

The Essex County Board of Supervisors overwhelmingly supported a resolution asking the governor to reappoint Lussi and a similar resolution, seconded by all, was passed when the Hamilton County Board of Supervisors met Thursday, Feb. 4.

ADVOCACY TIES

Hornbeck is a former chairman of the former Residents' Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (RCPA). The RCPA frequently filed lawsuits challenging APA state land actions, APA project approvals and Adirondack local governments' land use regulations and project approvals.

The RCPA has been closely allied with environmental groups The Adirondack Council and the former Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks, with which it merged last year to form a new group called Protect the Adirondacks!

Hornbeck is a member of the Protect the Adirondacks! Board of Directors, which is suing the APA for not classifying Lows Lake as Wilderness.

The APA Act requires five of the 11 APA commissioners to be residents of the Adirondack Park. The governor appoints eight of the commissioners; of those, currently three are former members of The Adirondack Council's Board of Directors.

IN THE DARK

Monroe said, “What ultimately concerns the Review Board is the lack of public announcement about the APA appointment - no public news release, no email.

“The APA commissioners have direct influence over the lives and livelihoods of everyone who lives inside the Adirondack Park and the private land owned by those people.

“We believe that Adirondack local governments should have input on the selection of their representatives on the APA.”

Lussi has served since June of 2006. His appointment expires in June.

The Hamilton County resolution states, “Lussi has demonstrated an ability to be an independent voice for the people of the park when interpreting the often complex APA Act with a vision for linking economy, community and conservation.”