

## Draft Minutes of the EMC

**Date:** June 9, 2016  
**Time:** 4:00 p.m.  
**Location:** Old Jail Conference Room, 125 E. Court St.

*Attendees:*

Name		Representation
Steve Bissen	P	Town of Dryden
Kenny Christianson	P	At-Large
John Dennis	A	Village of Lansing
Brian Eden	P	Village of Cayuga Heights
Bill Evans	P	Town of Danby
Pegi Ficken	P	Town of Groton
John Hertzler	P	Town of Ulysses
Roy Luft	P	At-Large
Jim McGarry	E	At-Large
Vladimir Micic	P	Town of Ithaca 10
Steve Nicholson	P	Town of Caroline 11
Susan Riley	P	At-Large 12
Tom Shelley	P	Ithaca CAC 13
		14

Name		Representation
Linda Spielman	P	Village of Dryden
Ron Szymanski	A	Village of Freeville
Roger Yonkin	A	At-Large
<i>Dooley Kiefer</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Scott Doyle</i>	P	<i>EMC Coordinator</i>
<i>Dan Klein</i>	P	<i>Associate Member</i>
<i>Anna Kelles</i>	P	<i>Legislature Liaison</i>
<i>Pam Pariso</i>	P	<i>Planning Staff</i>

**Guests in attendance:** Fernando de Aragon, Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC), Executive Director.

**Call to Order**-- The meeting was called to order by Steve Nicholson at 4:02pm.

**Privilege of Floor** – None

**Presentation:** Fernando gave an update on the Ride Share program. Tompkins County had funding (\$18,000/year for three years) to develop a program, but that funding ended. Now, the challenge is how to continue the program without that funding. One way the ITCTC seeks to overcome this is to make it more regional to share the expense with neighboring counties, businesses and agencies. Once new funding is in place, it will need to be publicized and promoted to encourage its use again. Cheaper gas makes it easier for people to ignore ride sharing, and that's the trend now. Ithaca still has all the negatives of car dependency with emissions and traffic congestion. Some 80 percent of people drive into Tompkins County alone in their cars: Fernando would like to see that cut to 60 percent.

The old phone app for Ride Share and the software is still there, but Enterprise now owns it. Public awareness of the program faded with funding cuts. There was a discussion on the history, data gathering and effectiveness. Originally it started as an app created by a Cornell student. Zim-Ride was working with universities at first, but Tompkins County asked them to develop it

1 as a community portal. Now the challenge is how to continue it. Fernando explained that the  
2 County bought it with the previously-available funding, and end users got it for free. Anna asked  
3 what if it went to a program where people paid for the app? Fernando said the goal was always to  
4 have no cost to the end user.

5  
6 ITCTC hopes to rekindle the program. Vladimir asked about potential incentives for people to  
7 share rides, such as parking privileges or car share spots. Roy Luft suggested that perhaps the  
8 new parking meters could take a code for giving parking incentives. Many innovative ideas have  
9 been discussed, but it's tough to get people to buy into the concept of ride sharing.

10  
11 **Changes to Agenda and Approval of Minutes** – Because the May 12 meeting minutes were  
12 distributed to the membership today, their approval will be accomplished at the next EMC  
13 meeting.

14  
15 **Committee Reports and Member Questions:**

16  
17 **Energy** – Brian spoke about his frustrations with communicating with the membership on the  
18 accelerating pace of climate change and asked for suggestions on how to engage folks to take  
19 action. Dan Klein said he appreciates Brian's emails to the committee, and said perhaps the  
20 committee finds the volume of information overwhelming. He suggested that he focus on a few  
21 core issues where we could all work together to make an impact. Anna suggested that it would  
22 help if EMC were in the subject line of committee emails. The committee also discussed making  
23 the committee larger for added energy and involvement. Ten seats are vacant -- five "at-large"  
24 are vacant, and five of sixteen municipalities are vacant, which are voting seats. Recruiting was  
25 discussed.

26  
27 Brian discussed the Climate and Community Protection Act which he lobbied for in Albany. It  
28 passed the Assembly but needs more Senate sponsors to pass the bill in that house. He's hopeful  
29 it will be passed. Last Monday, Brian went to Syracuse on a bus with other local folks to  
30 comment on the proposed Clean Energy Standard. The NYSPSC plan considers nuclear plants to  
31 qualify as clean energy because they do not emit carbon dioxide. The Maplewood  
32 Redevelopment project public hearing for the EIS scoping will be held at the Town of Ithaca on  
33 June 24. Ian Shapiro of Taitem is presenting on a green energy incentive proposal before the  
34 Tompkins County IDA as we speak. The rollout of the 2030 District program will occur at a  
35 reception at Holt Architects on June 28.

36  
37 **Environmental Review** – Since John was not in attendance, Brian reported on the NYS plastic  
38 bag legislation to prohibit the charging of a fee for single-use plastic bags. Since the adoption of  
39 such a fee by NYC, he said there's been a big push-back from the plastics industry. Plastic bag  
40 and shopping industry representatives argued that public sentiment used to oppose using paper  
41 bags to save trees, now we oppose plastic bags. They further stated that reusable bags "present a  
42 public health risk" because they contaminate food and surfaces in the store. The legislation has  
43 passed the Senate but is still in committee in the Assembly

44  
45 Brian thanked Susan for collecting data for the environmental review annual report. Comments  
46 are due on the newly promulgated NYSDEC solid waste regulations by July 15.

1  
2 **Unique Natural Areas** – Linda Spielman and Steve Bissen mentioned that the UNA Committee  
3 will meet next week to finalize the boundaries for the proposed Sapsucker Woods UNA changes.  
4 • The committee then reported on the Lake Street foreclosure parcels in the City of Ithaca and the  
5 many community members in addition to the EMC that gave input to support the demolition of  
6 the abandoned house there. The motion carried to demolish the house at the base of Ithaca Falls  
7 and to add it to the City’s Natural Area.  
8

9 **Executive Committee** – Steve Nicholson apologized for missing so many meetings due to  
10 family obligations. Brian reported that he, Steve Bissen, Pam and Scott met about updating the  
11 website. Much needs to be updated and restructured. The County used to have a full time person  
12 covering all committees, now Pam’s a half-time employee. The Annual Report also needs to be  
13 updated.  
14

15 **Legislation Liaison Report** – Anna Kelles reported on a recent PDEQ meeting to discuss the  
16 state’s scrutiny in taking back renewable energy credits (RECs). Two resolutions came from that  
17 meeting. First, the committee resolved to urge the State to reject steps to take back REC credits  
18 from entities that had received NYSEDA incentives for their renewable energy projects. A  
19 second resolution was proposed but not passed, which suggested that the County contribute  
20 funding for a lawyer to research and lobby against this proposal. Much discussion followed, and  
21 it was suggested that this would be a great future presentation topic.  
22

23 **Staff Report** – Scott Doyle reported five County Planning Department updates:

- 24 1. Annual Report will be drafted as soon as the ERC reports are provided.
- 25 2. Green Infrastructure program currently being drafted – would like to discuss more with  
26 EMC in the future.
- 27 3. Update on recommendations for the 2016 Foreclosure auction including parcels with  
28 UNAs.
- 29 4. Two grants currently being worked on: 1) Flood mitigation for Lansing / Ludlowville  
30 2) Agricultural easement for a Lounsbury farm in Caroline.
- 31 5. Boat tour event coming up June 21-22. Floating classroom trip on water quality/  
32 microplastics.
- 33 6. Greensprings Natural Cemetery recently put out a request for volunteers for maintenance  
34 and burials.  
35

36 **By-Law Revision Committee** – Members are needed for the By-Law Revision Committee.  
37 Steve Nicholson said the By-Laws used to state the EMC can receive property. Scott said that’s  
38 section still remains. Brian said the 1996 By-Law version on the EMC website were not  
39 modified after 1999 local law passed by the legislature. If interested in serving on this  
40 committee, please let Brian know. Dooley and Tom volunteered.  
41

42 **Presentation** – Bill Evans gave a presentation on artificial outdoor lighting and its effect on  
43 birds. He’s an ornithologist who specializes in nocturnal bird life. When TV towers went up in  
44 the 1940s, they had red lights for aviation obstruction which killed thousands of birds, including  
45 songbirds. In the 1980s, there was a shift in consciousness where some long-term bird studies

1 reported a reduction in songbird population, and sentiment shifted to determine the man-made  
2 hazards that caused this and rectify the situation.

3  
4 Bill did personal research from his Danby home on what lights bothered birds – red, blue, white  
5 and flashing or continuous. He showed the results of his study including the spectrum of lights  
6 and how they affected nocturnal birds. He gave an overview of what research is showing today  
7 on how different lights affect bird migration patterns and navigation. He also discovered,  
8 anecdotally, how night lights affect local moths. Locally we have about 1,000 different species  
9 of moths, and bright night lights affect them too. Light spectrum, wavelength and direction all  
10 affect bird and moths.

11  
12 Bill showed a photo of Ithaca lit up at night. The Ithaca City Code contains no language limiting  
13 the spectrum of lights, and perhaps there should be some recommendations from the EMC  
14 committee based on Bill's findings. He discussed how Flagstaff, Arizona, has done research and  
15 set precedents that perhaps Ithaca could follow. For example, if there's a push to go to LED  
16 street lights, they should have a short wave length in order to save bird and moth life. Down-  
17 shielding of light is known, but light spectrum is mostly unknown bird species. Bill said if Ithaca  
18 switches to LED lights, which is the new trend, it could make Ithaca six times brighter at night in  
19 some areas. This could negatively affect the local bird and moth population. This may be a good  
20 subcommittee and project for the EMC.

21  
22 **Member Items – None**

23  
24 **Adjournment --** The meeting adjourned at 5:55 PM.

25  
26 Respectfully submitted,

27  
28 Pamela Pariso, Administrative Assistant  
29 Tompkins County Planning Department  
30 Approved by Council on