

MINUTES

Approved 6-10-10

CAPITAL PLAN REVIEW COMMITTEE

MAY 13, 2010 3:30 P.M. SCOTT HEYMAN CONFERENCE ROOM

Present: M. Robertson, Chair; K. Herrera; M. Lane

Excused: D. Kiefer and F. Proto

Staff: C. Covert, Clerk of the Legislature; M. Lynch, Public Information Officer; E. Marx, Commissioner of the Planning and Public Works; J. Mareane, County Administrator; A. LeMaro, Facilities Manager

Guests: G. Ferguson and J. Florino, Downtown Ithaca Alliance; S. Shackford, Ithaca Journal Reporter

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m.

Announcement

Ms. Robertson noted the Bar Association passed a resolution and read the following Resolved: "RESOLVED, that the Tompkins County Bar Association hereby urges the County of Tompkins to act without further delay in accommodating the needs of the Courts by vacating and relocating the Office for the Aging and the Legislative Chambers and by taking such further action as may be necessary to meet the requirements of the New York State Judiciary Law."

Changes to Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

Approval of Minutes

March 11, 2010

It was MOVED by Mr. Lane, seconded by Ms. Herrera, to approve the minutes of March 11th with the proposed changes submitted by Ms. Kiefer. Ms. Herrera stated that it is untoward for a Legislator to be rewording the remarks of staff and that any discussions that might take place around encouraging them to do so are also untoward. Although they may be viewed as clarifications, she expressed her concern. If there are any comments where it is being suggested to change wording of staff or for example a Legislator is considering the wording of another Legislator, she believes they should be strongly ill advised. Her concern is changing the public record under duress and believes the record taken by staff should remain the record when changes to staff remarks or other Legislator's comments are being changed.

Mr. Marx was asked if the following statement being proposed by Ms. Kiefer as an addition is accurate: "In answer to questions, Mr. Marx said "small" means approximately \$10,000, with homeowner putting up match. Mr. Franklin said he does not think this will increase assessment. Mr. Marx said one of the unsettled legal questions has to do with the seniority of the tax lien. Mr. Marx estimated that half the homes in Tompkins County could be retrofitted over 25 years at a cost of \$5 million/year." Mr. Marx does not believe the statement to be inaccurate, but also does not recall if it was what he stated or not. Ms. Herrera noted for example the quotes around the word small editorialize on the context.

The following is another example Ms. Herrera provided that she believes to be a factual statement and could support: "The PACE program started in California in 2008 and is now in 15 states. New York passed legislation November 17, 2009 to establish this program. The PACE program allows a

municipality to finance or help a property owner finance energy efficiency or renewable energy improvements in private buildings.”

Ms. Herrera requested further discussion on the minutes be postponed until all Committee members are present.

Mr. Lane withdrew his motion. MOTION WITHDRAWN.

The Committee agreed to postpone action on the April 8th minutes as well. Ms. Robertson commented that the minutes highlighting the revisions were sent to Committee members prior to the meeting with the intention of avoiding a lengthy discussion.

Chair's Report

Ms. Robertson said she did not have a report.

Report from the Commissioner of Planning and Public Works

Ms. Robertson said she met with Mr. Marx and Mr. Mareane last week to review where the Committee is and where the Committee should go and if there would be any recommendations for the 2011 budget that would need to be done by July.

Mr. Marx said any capital proposals for 2011 will be available for the Committee in June with recommendations being made in July. There are a number of important issues to discuss as the Committee moves forward:

- Facilities: A strategy for addressing deferred maintenance, possible a capital project to “catch up” on projects.
- Courthouse space report.
- Mental Health Building and Human Services Building space study.
- Old Library needs to be addressed. It is currently not being maintained at the standards expected of a public building. Mr. Marx and Mr. Mareane both strongly believe a decision needs to take place including the relocation of the operations currently occupying the building. Mr. Lane requested an estimate on the deconstruction of that facility. Mr. Marx said there is a report but it would need to be updated.
- Discuss next phase of energy improvements in buildings (efficiency, renewable energy).
- Review of the Center of Government proposal.
- Discuss alternatives to long-term additional office space. There is a significant trend nationally that more and more organizations are looking at alternative work space options such as work at home, change in work schedules, etc. to allow space to be used more efficiently.
- The Capital Program for highway is coming to a close. There needs to be an assessment done and a look at the long-term ongoing needs of the highway system and how that would be funded. He believes the Legislature will need to understand what the cycle of maintenance is for the highway system.
- Solid Waste Division and the Airport will be updating their Master Plans this year. The Solid Waste Division will be upgrading its facility to accommodate new operations. The Master Plan is a formal process that will identify capital needs for the foreseeable future and can be folded into the Capital Plan.

Ms. Herrera commented on three items Mr. Marx mentioned:

- Capitalizing Deferred Maintenance. She sees the need and this has been done in the past; although fiscal times have caused the deference of maintenance to be addressed in different ways.
- Energy Conservation and Alternative Office Space options: She understands that there is now technology that can secure work-at-home computers at a level County government needs.
- Highway needs. This is an area that always needs to have attention in the long-term. However, the cost of petroleum and other materials can be a factor in the County's ability to pay.

In response to Ms. Robertson, Mr. Marx suggested to continue moving forward that a couple of these items be presented at each meeting with enough information available in advance to begin discussions.

Ms. Robertson asked if any of the projects listed above that need to be begin the process of completing a PAR (Project Approval Request) form for the Committee to consider. Mr. Marx said he does not anticipate having any capital projects added to the 2011 budget. The only option he believes that could be discussed is deferred maintenance and any updates on projects that are already included in the Capital Program. He believes the items mentioned above would be for 2012.

Mr. Marx briefly reported on the energy improvements and said he anticipates more information next week from the NYSERDA proposals.

Mr. Mareane said one project that will be coming forward very soon and has not had a lot of discussion is the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) project, which will affect the 2011 Capital budget. Responses to the RFP are currently being reviewed and said that will be a seven figure proposal. He anticipates a preliminary review will occur in the next 4-6 weeks.

Mr. Lane spoke briefly about the Courthouse space and said he would like the County to also consider discussing moving the County Clerk's office out of the Courthouse. The office is heavily used by the public for accessing records. He believes they are using much less space now with the digitization of records.

Mr. LeMaro spoke about the two space studies underway and said a kick-off meeting was held last week for the Courthouse space study. He anticipates the study being completed in four months. There are two proposals being reviewed for the Mental Health and Human Services Building space study.

Ms. Robertson asked about the status of the Workplace Violence assessment. Mr. Mareane said Ms. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Thomas of the Personnel office are coordinating this and would recommend if more information is necessary that they be invited to a meeting.

Presentation – Downtown Ithaca Alliance Strategic Plan

Mr. Ferguson and Ms. Florino distributed and presented the following concept for the County and City to examine sharing building space:

DOWNTOWN ITHACA 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN BIG IDEA
A JOINT COUNTY/CITY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
Discussion Concepts
May 13, 2010

THE NEED

- Tompkins County has identified administrative and legislative space as a priority concern during the coming decade.
- The City of Ithaca has been struggling with space constraints in their City Hall building and has periodically discussed the need for additional or alternative space.
- To create additional office space in downtown, it will be necessary for the institutions of the community to play a key role, including the County and the City.
- The existing County and City administrative facilities have excellent alternative uses. The County Courthouse is coveted by the State for additional court space. City Hall could be converted into downtown housing.

A SOLUTION

- Create a new administrative facility that could be shared by both the County and the City.
- Select a downtown location under ownership by either the County or the City to facilitate development.
- Agree on a building program and a shared space program.

BENEFITS

- Both jurisdictions would receive new, custom tailored and flexible space.
- Project costs can be pro-rated and/or shared, resulting in potential capital construction savings.
- The County and City can also save resources by strategically looking for ways to collaborate on operations- including, but not necessarily limited to, security, information technology, and building janitorial and repair, as well as other possible collaborations.
- Both the County and City would enjoy an enhanced work relationship predicated on proximity and space sharing.

NEXT STEPS

- Form a County/City working group to further explore this possible opportunity

Mr. Marx commented on the meeting spaces for both governments and said that with as much public engagement as this community has in the decision-making process it has the poorest meeting spaces for accommodating the public.

Mr. Lane said the differences between the City and County would have to be looked at very carefully. For example the City now has security at its meetings and would hope the County would not move in that direction. He agrees that this is an area that could be discussed further.

Mr. Mareane agrees that it is time to examine this and questions whether there could be savings achieved with a more efficient organization of government space with a newer building.

Ms. Herrera said she is very intrigued by the proposal as a City resident. One of the issues she always hears from the public is about property being taken off the tax roll and said it is a larger issue in the City. She hopes that by sharing resources there could be an aim to lowering the amount of governmental property off the tax rolls. She understands that the bigger savings is with sharing resources such as security, but what the public sees is what properties are being taken off the tax rolls.

A brief discussion followed on the connectivity of downtown to the southwest area of the City.

Ms. Robertson believes there is interest in pursuing this, but understands there are cultural differences between the two governments. In response to Ms. Robertson, Ms. Florino said the City had a

Minutes
Capital Plan Review Committee
May 13, 2010

space needs assessment study done by Thomas Associates a few years ago but believes it is still applicable.

Following a brief discussion, the Committee agreed to have Mr. Mareane suggest how he would recommend proceeding and discuss it at the next meeting.

Executive Session

It was MOVED by Mr. Lane, seconded by Ms. Herrera, and unanimously adopted by voice vote by members present, to hold an executive session at 4:38 p.m. to discuss real estate negotiations. The meeting returned to open session at 4:50 p.m.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 p.m.